La Plata County
FOOD ASSESSMENT

Presented by the Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado
La Boca Center for Sustainability
The Garden Project of SW Colorado
Turtle Lake Refuge
The Southwest Marketing Network
The Southern Ute Community Action Program
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7. IGNACIO NOVEMBER 2006 MENU

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document has been the work of many individuals. The following is a list of those who contributed their time and expertise to the completion of the La Plata County Food Assessment Report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community food assessments are conducted to provide a community with a greater understanding of its food needs and resources while addressing a wide range of food-related issues and concerns. Food assessments take a systematic and participatory approach to understanding the entire food system, including information about production, distribution and consumption.

In 2005, we, the Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado, were funded by the US Department of Agriculture’s Community Food Projects Program to initiate and lead a community-wide food assessment. Our assessment took place in La Plata County, a community located in southwest Colorado that is diverse in both its people and geography. With over 60 years of combined experience, the five Growing Partners organizations each bring unique experience and qualifications to the partnership.

Nearly 500 voices are shared in the final report, representing 35 farmers and ranchers, 36 non-profit and service agencies, 36 restaurants, 13 grocers, 100 youth, 123 consumers, 96 forum participants, 25 schools and 5 medical and nutritional experts. The assessment began in October 2005, and the final report was unveiled to the public in February of 2007 at Homegrown, a two-day local foods conference, co-sponsored by the Environmental Center at Fort Lewis College. 200 people were in attendance to hear the summary of the report and the recommendations made for food system change.

The assessment covers four main areas:

- **Food Production** – a historical profile; current information and future projections regarding the obstacles and opportunities for regional food production; and food resources including charitable food programs, gleaning projects, farmers’ markets, and community gardens;

- **School Food Programs** – school lunch, school gardens and Farm-to-School;

- **Food Security** – its definition and impact;

- **Community Food Projects** – their definition and ability to address the issues in each of these areas.

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1 www.sustainableswcolorado.org\cfa.htm
METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

Data collected for the community food assessment focused on both qualitative and quantitative data. We approached the project as members of the community and regarded our community as the experts behind understanding the food system. We came to the table first as experienced farmers, growers, educators and community members, and second as individuals dedicated to the research component. As interviewers, our responsibility was to present a blank slate to the community, and our only agenda was to allow all participating interviewees and respondents to speak without restraint about the food system. Interviews and surveys ranged from a 15-minute consumer survey to a 6-hour in-person interview. They were each tailored by population, resulting in separate surveys for farmers and ranchers, youth, school administration and staff, non-profit and social service agencies and consumers from different ethnic backgrounds.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Community food security framed the assessment and its results. Based on the responses from hundreds of interviews, La Plata County residents define community food security as a situation in which all people at all times have access to healthy, local, affordable and culturally appropriate food, produced in ways that are sustainable. A look at local food production and access determined whether we currently meet that definition.

Interviews indicate that people feel there are deeply entrenched cultural, climatic and economic challenges that make agricultural operations difficult in the region. There were, however, many suggestions for creating a system to work within the current parameters to make agricultural ventures more successful. Additionally, local food production does not currently meet the demand of consumers and retailers for local food. But it is this demand and a look to our agricultural history that demonstrate there is great potential for successful agriculture in the region.

Despite our isolation and lack of production, La Plata County, in normal circumstances, does not suffer from food shortages. As related by many La Plata residents and specifically service agencies, we do suffer from shortages of quality foods - healthy, high quality and whenever possible, local food. We also lack access to affordable, culturally appropriate foods that are accessible to the community at large regardless of location, income or culture.

With these predominant themes of lack of food production and lack of accessibility to quality foods, it is fair to conclude, based on our community’s definition, that La Plata County is not food secure. This assessment’s recommendations to increase our food security address the issue of food security in relationship to production and access.

In order to increase the amount of available local food, greater support is needed for those interested in growing food. Such support should:

(1) improve access to agricultural land and growing spaces,
(2) encourage alternative and existing production systems,

(3) increase the marketing, storage and distribution of local farm products and

(4) provide consumer education to promote local food and agriculture.

Because of the fundamental differences that exist in La Plata County for different populations, and their effect on food access, these differences must be considered to effectively and equitably build a local food system. Special considerations in developing food projects must address both rural and urban food needs; resource, income and financial asset disparities; cultural differences and the different resources and needs of our local schools.

Considering the need for more food production in order to address the various disparities in our community, community food projects should address the need for:

(1) wider Farm-to-School efforts,

(2) links between low-income program recipients and local food resources,

(3) better farmer training and support and

(4) access to more growing spaces.

Through the assessment’s examination of local food production, distribution and consumption, new possibilities now exist for La Plata County residents to work together to create a food system that is more equitable and self-reliant. This project sparked community interest in the food system, and local farmers gained a clear understanding of the demand for local products. Schools learned about the possibilities of Farm-to-School programs, and public and private agencies were encouraged by the number of possible projects available to enhance their existing programs. By clarifying the components of the local food system and defining food security, this assessment served as an excellent tool with which to speak to the community and identify the community food projects needed to strengthen both of these.

ABOUT THE REPORT

The community food assessment report is broken down into chapters, not only for readability, but to direct readers to their specific area of interest. However, each chapter is related to the others, and builds upon the preceding chapter; they are connected as equal components of our local food system.

Chapter I, the introduction, provides a detailed description of the key organizations involved, the assessment methodology and the goals and objectives of the assessment.

Chapter II provides a profile of La Plata County - the social, cultural, economic and environmental characteristics that most likely shape the face of food and agriculture in our community.
**Chapter III** offers a historical and present day profile of agriculture for the broader region of southwest Colorado. It details the obstacles and challenges of agriculture as noted by a diverse group of farmers and ranchers.

**Chapter IV** covers existing food resources including charitable food programs, such as food banks and soup kitchens, and provides a profile of the region’s farmers markets, community gardens and CSAs. In this chapter, there is a harvest calendar and sample local foods menu detailing available crops, wild foods, wild game, and culinary herbs available in the region.

**Chapter V** looks at the local school food programs in both public and private school system, covering school lunch, gardening, nutrition and agricultural programs. In the chapter you will find a list of 16 schools in the county who currently offer gardens and greenhouses.

**Chapter VI** shows a profile of health and nutrition through the eyes of a diverse group of medical and nutritional experts in the community.

**Chapter VII** defines community food security through the eyes of La Plata County residents. It also tackles the issue of food security for specific underserved populations including: Latinos, Native Americans, older adults and rural residents.

Finally, **Chapter VIII** summarizes a broad and extensive list, compiled from interviews, of the possible solutions and community food projects that could improve the local food system. This list refers to and builds on cited needs and resources identified in previous chapters.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND
2. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
3. ORGANIZATIONS AND STAFF
4. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY
5. EVALUATION

1. BACKGROUND
Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado (Growing Partners) is a collaborative effort between five service and non-profit organizations. Growing Partners is dedicated to implementing a sustainable local food program that reaches all incomes, ages and cultures and seeks a culturally-rich approach to food security among a tri-ethnic and low-income population in Southwest Colorado. With this joint mission, the organizations came together in 2004, forming a partnership to collaboratively provide community food projects with an emphasis on underserved populations, youth, schools and food producers. The five organizations involved are the Southern Ute Community Action Program, The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado, La Boca Center for Sustainability, Turtle Lake Refuge and Southwest Marketing Network. In 2005 they applied to the USDA Community Food Projects Grant Program (CFPCGP).

Goals of the initial project were:

- Meeting the food needs of low-income families while increasing self-sustainability;
- Creating linkages between existing food networks and social service organizations and schools;
- Promoting health and wellness;
- Providing environmental education that emphasizes the connection between food, land and culture.

In response to the initial grant application, Growing Partners was funded by the USDA CFPCGP to initiate and lead a community-wide food assessment (CFA). The assessment was designed to identify the current needs and resources of the local food system, address the specific needs of underserved populations in accessing healthy food and to encourage community participation in the planning and evaluation phases of the assessment. Since the organizations involved had already centered their programs on underserved populations (including, but not limited to, people with mental and physical limitations, older adults, high-risk and disadvantaged youth and low-income families), it was a natural fit to center the assessment on these populations as well. The CFA also profiled other factors affecting our food system.
including economic, social, cultural, environmental and agricultural factors. Other populations profiled in the CFA included food producers, distributors, consumers, youth and schools.

Each organization involved in the project brought unique experience and qualifications to the partnership. Combined, the partners have over 60 years experience providing a variety of social services to underserved populations.

The partnership operates under the fiscal management of the Southern Ute Community Action Program (SUCAP). For more than 40 years, SUCAP has implemented and managed a wide range of social service programs and has been recognized by the federal government for their responsible fiscal management.

Located on nearly 200-acres of irrigated farmland, the recently established La Boca Center for Sustainability can provide the land, water, volunteer workforce and technical expertise necessary to implement future community food projects.

The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado provides an educational and therapeutic component to the project and has been providing programs to disadvantaged and low-income youth in the Durango area since the late 1990s. This program expanded in 2004 to assisting older adults and people with disabilities.

Since 1997, Turtle Lake Refuge has been increasing local organic food distribution and experiential nutritional education in the community, and the Southwest Marketing Network addresses policy issues affecting local food systems.

Together these five organizations provided the necessary expertise, resources, networking capabilities and fiscal management to successfully implement the Growing Partners CFA. (Each organization is described in more detail below).

**Geographic and Social Populations Served**

The community food assessment provided a comprehensive assessment of La Plata County along with a partial assessment of surrounding counties – all within the San Juan Basin of the Four Corners area. The San Juan Basin encompasses a tri-ethnic population of Native American, Anglo and Latino residents. La Plata County has a total population of 43,941.\(^1\) While the assessment focused primarily on the consumers of La Plata County, the food producers profiled were from La Plata and the surrounding counties. In Colorado the counties included were La Plata, Montezuma, Archuleta, San Juan, and Dolores counties. Also included was San Juan County, New Mexico. Primary considerations in designing the CFA included cultural, health, environmental and economic factors of the people served.\(^2\) Growing Partners centered the assessment on underserved populations including but not limited to people with mental and physical limitations, high-risk and disadvantaged youth, older adults and low-income families. This was accomplished by involving organizations that serve these populations.

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1 Durango’s in-town population is 14,802, Ignacio (658), Bayfield (1,565) with the remaining population rural: 27,697 (Census 2000 La Plata County).

2 For more information on the population served by the food assessment, the socio-economic, environmental and agricultural demographics of our county see Chapter II.

1.2 GROWING PARTNERS OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT
2. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The assessment was designed to identify the current needs and resources of the local food system and address the specific needs of underserved populations in accessing healthy food. It was also designed to encourage community participation in the planning and evaluation phases of the assessment. As stated, Growing Partners has centered its programs, and thus the community food assessment, on underserved populations, by involving organizations that serve these populations. The CFA provided a profile of the factors affecting our current food system including economic, social/cultural, environmental, and agricultural factors. Populations profiled in the CFA consisted of food and agriculture producers, consumers, underserved populations, youth and schools.

Goals of the Community Food Assessment were to:

- Identify resources and needs regarding a) the local food system, b) underserved populations, c) Farm-to-School, and d) key stakeholders;
- Strengthen links between existing food system groups;
- Promote community learning and participation through the community food assessment;
- Use the results of the community food assessment to plan effective Community Food Projects.

3. ORGANIZATIONS AND STAFF

Table 1 lists the organizations responsible for implementing the Growing Partners grant and provides principal contacts for these organizations. All of the organizations collaborating in the implementation of the CFA are established non-profit and/or volunteer organizations that currently work to improve living conditions in disadvantaged communities of La Plata County. Each organization, including its mission, existing programs and operating history is described below.

**TABLE 1. RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS AND CONTACTS**

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<td>Delegating organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southwest Marketing Network</td>
<td>Delegating Organization</td>
<td>970-588-2292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOUTHERN UTE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (SUCAP)

SUCAP was established in 1966 by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to serve the entire community. SUCAP employs 140 people in 11 counties, helping thousands of individuals and families each year. Family programs include Southern Ute Head Start, Dare to Be You, Ignacio Senior Center, Peaceful Spirit and Peaceful Spirit Youth Services. Youth programs include Youth Activities Center and Teen Court. Employment Programs include The Training Advantage and Road Runner Transit. SUCAP’s mission is to promote the well-being of families and neighbors through social, educational, and economic growth. In addition to SUCAP’s role as fiscal manager and their exemplary record, the organization serves as a valuable resource to Growing Partners in recruiting volunteers and identifying low-income families and other underserved groups to participate in garden programs.

THE GARDEN PROJECT OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO (TGP)

The mission of TGP is to build healthier communities through the promotion of sustainable local food systems and the facilitation of year-round educational and therapeutic garden programs. TGP focuses its goals around education, horticultural therapy and community food security issues. TGP combined the efforts of two existing programs, the “Greens and Things” Children’s Gardens, and the “Growing Community Food Project.” Because of shared missions to provide educational and therapeutic gardening programs, these organizations merged in 2002.

The educational and therapeutic garden programs of TGP reach all age groups and income levels, and are well integrated with existing and developing community social programs such as La Plata Youth Services, Neighborhood Network Center, and Youth Build. Garden sites for 2005 include Durango Housing Corporation (north and south locations), Riverhouse Children’s Center, Manna Soup Kitchen, Prugh residential community garden and Sunshine Gardens, an assisted living facility. In 2006, the focus of the Garden Project was geared towards the community food assessment, training participating garden leaders and its residential community garden plot.

LA BOCA CENTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY (LBCS)

The mission of LBCS is to create an atmosphere that nurtures curiosity and inspires creativity and compassion in human beings while integrating respect and responsibility toward the natural world by shaping the balance essential to sustaining healthy ecosystems and human communities. La Boca is on the map as an old southwest Colorado farming and ranching community, and as a former stop on the Durango and Rio Grande Western narrow gauge railroad. It has historically been one of the largest ranching operations in Southwest Colorado. La Boca has begun the process of revitalizing its past by implementing programs that build community, distribute goods and knowledge to local communities, and provide food security through sustainable agriculture.

A Colorado non-profit since 2003, LBCS is a young organization with a strong determination to address food security through networking and building alliances between people dedicated to the same goal. LBCS is designing solutions to issues of food sovereignty and integrating those solutions into other aspects of sustainability. Utilizing examples, education, research and social change, LBCS will serve as a hub for sustainable development.
In the fall of 2004 La Boca began the LBCS Community Supported Agriculture project (CSA) to supply members with organic free-range eggs, goat milk, goat cheese and produce, and CSA intends to serve as a teaching model for replication. The CSA organizes bulk orders to reduce the cost of high quality goods not produced in the area. LBCS began efforts in 2004 towards the creation of the Ignacio Farmers’ Market in an effort to link producers and consumers in and around Ignacio, Colorado.

**TURTLE LAKE REFUGE (TLR)**

TLR’s mission is to celebrate the connection between personal health and wild lands. Established in 1997, TLR aims to create a more sustainable community by linking the value of a healthy internal environment (our bodies) with a healthy external environment (the earth). TLR promotes eating locally grown foods, wild harvested foods and living foods, all of which decrease the stress on our bodies and the earth. TLR grows local food in gardens and greenhouses and harvests wild foods. Both are then distributed to the community through educational workshops, “Local Wild Life” Lunches, health food stores and the Durango Farmers’ Market. They are educators and stewards of sustainable practices. For example, TLR employs a bicycle-powered blender, bicycle-powered wheat grass juicer, solar dehydrators and delivers by bicycle and a vehicle powered by vegetable oil. TLR strives to live in harmony with the earth and its inhabitants while building a strong and integrated community. TLR received its 501(c) 3 in 2000.

**SOUTHWEST MARKETING NETWORK, SW COLORADO PROJECT (SWMN)**

The goal of the SWMN is to ensure that new, existing, and prospective Southwest producers, especially small-scale, alternative, and minority producers, have the connections, technical and financial assistance, marketing information, business and marketing skills, and peer examples needed to improve their profitability, viability, and numbers. This is done through SWMN’s annual conferences, website (www.swmarketingnetwork.org), quarterly newsletter to over 3000 readers and demonstration projects.

The Southwest Colorado Project is a demonstration project of the SWMN. This project has developed and distributed 1000 copies of the *Mesa Verde Guide to Local Sustainable Food and Fiber*, a directory of local direct marketers. This publication is also available at a local website, www.sustainableswcolorado.org. The SW Colorado Project has also begun a Food and Agriculture Policy Working Group which is identifying policy issues that impact the local food system, alternative and direct marketing and sustainable production in the region. From the policy group, a Farm to School group has formed to tie local agriculture to educational and nutritional needs of schools. The group is working to enhance student awareness and understanding of local agriculture, to improve the overall nutritional quality of food in the local schools and to bring local foods into the schools.

**THE STAFF**

**SHARI FITZGERALD,**

*Program Director and Founder of TGP and Project Director for Growing Partners*

Shari Fitzgerald is the co-founder and program director of The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado. She has served as the Director for the youth garden programs since 1997. Shari’s responsibilities have included providing gardening lessons, advocacy, and program development for the youth, school and community garden programs. Previous work
included serving as Executive Director for the Rape Intervention Team, and over 8 years volunteering for rape services and child abuse programs in Colorado and in the Midwest. Shari received a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Fort Lewis College in 1998. Shari is the project director for the Growing Partners grant. Her portion of the assessment focuses on youth and schools, health and nutrition and restaurants.

**KATY PEPINSKY,**
*Local Foods System Activist and Agricultural Marketing Consultant*
Katy received her BS in Botany from Auburn University in Alabama in 1999 and her MA in Agriculture from Colorado State University in 2005. Since 2003, she has advocated for and partnered with Colorado producers to develop markets and distribution networks for locally grown and processed foods. She has also worked with The Western Sustainable Agriculture, Research, & Education (WSARE) Program and Southwest Marketing Network (SWMN) on agricultural research. Katy joined the Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado in January of 2006. Her primary role with the food assessment has been focused on low-income and Latino residents, and agricultural networking and research.

**CHESTER ANDERSON,**
*Director La Boca Center for Sustainability*
Chester Anderson received his B.A. in Ecology and Evolution from the University of California, Santa Barbara and his M.S. in Entomology from Cornell University. He conducted basic research for 15 years in stream ecology and in high elevation lakes at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory and has been involved in numerous stream monitoring and research efforts for a variety of agencies and companies throughout the Southwest. In 1995 he began his own consulting business. Through that experience he has developed water quality monitoring studies that include macroinvertebrates, fish, periphyton and water chemistry parameters. He has designed a number of monitoring studies to identify the degree of impacts and the sources of pollution from point and non-point sources including acid mine drainage, agricultural and urban runoff. In 1997 he began managing a 180-acre farm and ranch in southwestern Colorado and, with his partner, founded the La Boca Center for Sustainability, a non-profit dedicated to sustainable agriculture. The non-profit has overseen a number of projects designed to reduce the impacts of grazing and other agricultural systems on the natural world. Chester has administered an intern program as well as numerous grants, and currently manages a lab that offers a number of water quality and agricultural services. He recently graduated from a soil-food web class with Dr. Elaine Ingham. Through LBCS as a Growing Partner, Chester has helped with administration of the food assessment.

**SUE BRUCKNER,**
*Horticultural Therapy Program Director and Founder of The Garden Project*
Sue has completed training at The Horticultural Therapy Institute in Denver, a program supported by Colorado State University. Sue specializes in working with older adult and mentally and/or physically limited citizens. She hopes to present workshops in the future on horticultural therapy and adaptive gardening techniques. She is responsible for the implementation of the horticultural therapy programs at youth and enabling gardens for The Garden Project. Sue's role in the assessment is to survey the needs and resources of seniors and people with mental and physical limitations.
KATRINA BLAIR,  
*Director and Founder of Turtle Lake Refuge*

As the director of Turtle Lake, Katrina is responsible for facilitating and teaching workshops and classes on wild food identification, gathering and preparation, as well as sustainable practice classes. Katrina coordinates volunteers, interns and work-study students. Her other responsibilities include managing “Local Wild Life” lunches, greenhouse and garden planting, administration, advertising and program management. Katrina’s role in the project is focused on the youth population and providing information on wild plants and gleaned food resources in our community.

JIM DYER,  
*Director Southwest Marketing Network, Project Evaluator*

Jim Dyer assists program evaluation through coordinating and facilitating quarterly meetings with the key partners of Growing Partners. Jim also serves as Growing Partners’ Farm-to-School liaison. Jim is a part-time Executive Director of the Colorado Organic Producers Association, the Project Director for the Southwest Marketing Network, and consults on agriculture, water, and environmental issues. He has also taught at the college level both full and part-time over the past 30 years.

EILEEN WASSERBACH,  
*Executive Director, Southern Ute Community Action Program*

Eileen is the Executive Director of Southern Ute Community Action Programs, Inc. SUCAP is a human service-based non-profit providing programs in early childhood development, substance abuse treatment, senior citizens needs, employment training, youth activities and transportation. As the Fiscal Manager for this project, SUCAP applies its 40 years of grant management expertise to assure compliance with federal funding documents and audit requirements. SUCAP’s many programs are also interested in participating with efforts to provide fresher and more nutritious foods, especially to the economically disadvantaged citizens it serves.

CHRIS BARKER,  
*La Boca Center for Sustainability*

Barker served with Growing Partners until March of 2006. His primary role included interviewing farmers and identifying existing county and national research.

GABE EGGERS,  
*Turtle Lake Refuge*

Gabe served with Growing Partners from October through March of 2006. Gabe left his role with the assessment in the spring of 2006 to complete a program at the University of California at Santa Cruz on Agro-Ecology and Sustainable Food Systems. Gabe’s primary role was as volunteer coordinator.
4. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Data collected for the community food assessment focused on both qualitative and quantitative data. We approached the project as members of the community, and regarded our community as the experts behind understanding the food system. Only a few of us on the assessment team had a background in interviewing, data collection and analysis. However, we came to the table first as experienced farmers, growers, educators and community members, and second as individuals dedicated to the research component. As interviewers, our responsibility was to present a blank slate to the community, and our only agenda was to allow all participating interviewees and respondents to speak without restraint about our food system.

Before beginning the assessment, we spent several months planning the project, defining our goals, audience, methods, and internal and external evaluation procedures. This process involved researching other community food projects and their methodologies, identifying existing county and national research and identifying a broad spectrum of questions and topics on which to focus. We then sought the support and advice of the community on how to narrow the focus of the assessment and reach those goals. Specifically, we distributed a planning survey to the local Farm-to-School Working Group and other community members to define the parameters for the youth and school portion of the assessment. We made a presentation to the Southern Ute Tribal Council to inform them of our project and identify possible areas of interest for the tribe, and we circulated a flyer and media campaign that sought support and feedback from the community. Lastly, we held a community-wide food forum in Ignacio. The forum, open to all community members, had the goals of educating the community on the CFA and seeking community feedback on the areas of focus for the food assessment.

Data for the food assessment was collected in the following ways:
1. Written interviews and surveys (in-person and by phone)
2. Consumer surveys
3. Community food forums
4. Secondary data resources and other county assessments
5. Coalition meetings

In addition to conducting research, Growing Partners used the data gathered during the assessment to produce educational materials that were then distributed to the community. A harvest calendar, a local foods menu, a Farm-to-School product list, a Farm tours booklet and an informational brochure on Growing Partners and the goals of the community food assessment were all produced, some of which can be accessed at www.sustainableswcolorado.org\cfa.htm, in the full food assessment report.

Written Interviews and Surveys
Interviews and surveys were tailored for specific populations resulting in separate surveys for farmers and ranchers, youth, school administration and staff, non-profit and social service agencies, Latino residents and consumers. Each of the surveys were comprised of some common questions and themes such as: What are our greatest community food needs? What are our greatest community food strengths and resources? What does food security mean to La Plata County residents?
A total of 469 surveys have been collected to date, representing 35 farmers, 36 agencies, 36 restaurants, 13 grocers, 123 consumers, 96 forum participants, 100 youth, 25 schools and 5 medical and nutritional experts. Interviews and surveys ranged from 15-minute consumer surveys to 6-hour in-person interview. In-person and phone interviews provided more in depth data, as well as more opportunities for education and networking among Growing Partners and participating individuals and organizations.

**Consumer Surveys**
A consumer survey was distributed between April and October of 2006. The survey was designed to reach as many La Plata County residents as possible to connect socio-demographic information with food choices, perceptions, needs and interest in food projects. Surveys were administered in numerous locations and at several events in the county in order to get a wide range of participants. Some of the locations or events included The Taste of Durango, Cinco de Mayo, Farmers’ Appreciation Day, The Durango Farmers’ Market, Mountain Valley Market, USDA Commodities Food Distribution, and The San Juan Basin Health Clinic.

**Community Food Forums**
As part of the planning and data collection process, two public forums were held. The first was in the town of Ignacio and the second in Hesperus. Over 60 people attended the Ignacio forum in February 2006. With great community support, a free, locally-grown and prepared dinner was provided. Participants were asked to identify areas for research as well as individuals and organizations to include in the assessment.

The second forum was held in August 2006 in Hesperus. This forum focused on reaching the residents of the Fort Lewis Mesa District, where much of the agricultural land in our community is located. The second forum was designed around food and agricultural needs and resources in the western region of La Plata County, with a focus on agricultural and rural food security.

**Secondary Data Resources and Other County Assessments**
Growing Partners utilized existing county information from a variety of national and locally published resources. Survey information was collected from other county assessments including the 2006 Grassroots Visioning Projects, 2006 Healthy Lifestyle Coalition health assessment, Operation Healthy Communities Pathways Index (a socio-economic profile), and the Fort Lewis Mesa 2006 Planning survey. The Durango 9R School District and the Nutrition Task Force also provided Growing Partners with the results of a district food services study and 500 parent and student surveys.

**Coalition Meetings**
Growing Partners attended regular meetings with the local Farm-to-School group, Nutrition Task Force, Sustainability Alliance, Healthy Lifestyle Coalition and the Fort Lewis Mesa Planning Group. Growing Partners staff participated in the meetings to reach its goal of strengthening and expanding food networks as well as gathering data about the food needs and resources of these existing community groups.
5. EVALUATION
Growing Partners used several methods of evaluation including development and the use of a logic model, monthly management team meetings, monthly progress reports and the use of the common output tracking form. The Growing Partners staff used a monthly progress report to categorize the amount of time spent on various project tasks, including research, data collection and analysis, volunteer recruitment and networking, evaluation, administration/staff meetings and contact.

SWMN’s Jim Dyer served as the team’s evaluator. At an initial meeting of the project team in October 2005, the draft logic model was selected to serve as the basis of quarterly progress assessments. The logic model's goals and corresponding outcomes were listed previously in this report. These quarterly project team assessments were conducted on Jan 18, May 15 and Sept. 25, 2006. At each session, the goals and outcomes were re-examined to assess whether changes were necessary. This review process resulted in no substantive changes. Subsequently, the team assessed progress toward each outcome, noting whether we were on target for achieving the outcome by the end of the project, and making necessary adjustments. This review process resulted in changes to specific priorities, the dropping of some tasks and the substitution of others. The most common adjustments were decisions to bring in additional stakeholders deemed necessary for new insights. In each session, team members were queried as to the effectiveness of internal communications, workload and similar work situations. This resulted in streamlined communications, work shifts among team members and clarified responsibilities.
CHAPTER II
A PROFILE OF LA PLATA COUNTY

1. SUMMARY
2. CULTURAL DEMOGRAPHICS
3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHICS
ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE – A Contribution from Tyler Scheid, Ecosphere

Environmental Consulting Services

1. SUMMARY
La Plata County has three major communities, the City of Durango (the county seat), and the Towns of Bayfield and Ignacio. Historically an area home to Native Americans and Latinos, La Plata County developed into a "traditional west" community in the late 1800's because of Anglo development of mining and land and cattle operations. Since the 1970s, La Plata County has been in transition from a traditional rural county to a more urban environment in which tourism is the number one industry. People moving in for quality of life issues drove population growth in the 1990s. The natural environment, and the amenities it provides, are behind much of the growth and have become the larger region's chief economic asset. The county supports a commercial airport, a two-year and a four-year college, a ski resort, casino, national forest, and natural gas and coal industries.

Land
The county is comprised of 1,083,085 acres (1,692 sq. miles). Of these, 43% are private lands, 16% are tribal lands (Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute), and 41% are state and federal lands. Agricultural land comprises 25% of the total land in the county. The foremost issues that the county currently faces are population growth and coal bed methane development. Implications of such growth include increased demand for services; infrastructure needed to serve development; changes to the environment; loss of agricultural lands and open space; and impacts on the overall quality of life in the county. Planners (county, city, and tribal) are in the process of developing strategies to cope with these issues.

Population
In 2002 the county's population was 46,239. According to the 2000 Census the median age was 35.6. Males comprised 51% and females comprised 49% of the total population. The average household size was 2.43 people. Between 1990 and 2000, La Plata County averaged 3.13% annual growth, with most of the growth occurring in Durango and in the unincorporated areas of the county. The City of Durango grew by an average of 1.13% annually; in the Town of Bayfield there was 3.58% average annual population growth in the last decade. In the Town of Ignacio, population has been slowly declining but with the advent of casino gambling on the Southern Ute Reservation and other expanding tribal enterprises, growth is probably inevitable.

1 Much of the information in this section comes from La Plata County CEDS Report & Operation Healthy Communities – Pathways to Healthier Communities Index [http://www.operationhealthycommunities.org/path.html] unless otherwise noted.
2 LaPlata County Tax Assessor’s Office, 2005 figures.
2. CULTURAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Tri-Ethnicity
La Plata County, traditionally a land occupied by Native Americans and Latinos/as, was settled by Anglos in the 1880’s when mining, homesteading and ranching operations began to appear and prosper. Anglos are currently the ethnic majority in La Plata County, constituting 87.3% of the population. Latino/as make up 10.4% of the population and Native Americans 5.8%. Asians account for 0.4% of the total population, African Americans 0.3%, and Pacific Islanders 0.1%.

Over time this regional blending of the three predominant cultures (Anglo, Latino/a, and Native American) created what is now commonly referred to as a ‘tri-ethnic’ racial dynamic.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHICS

Although unemployment is low, (4% in 2002), it is dependent largely on low paying retail wages and service sector jobs in the tourist and resort industry. The service sector provides 35% of jobs and 35% of employment income. This includes health services, casino employment, amusement and recreation services and lodging. The trade sector accounts for 23% of jobs but provides the lowest average wage of all sectors. Construction is also an important sector, providing 10% of employment and 13% of employment income in 2001.

Tourism
Tourist spending in 2000 was $171.9 million in La Plata County. The county, however, only retained 34.2% of that income.3

Agriculture
The Wilderness Society published an economic profile of La Plata County in 1997. This document illustrates how the community has changed economically over a 25-year period.4 As has happened in many areas of the country, they show that between the years of 1970 and 1997 agriculture has been in steady decline since its peak in 1975. “Agricultural-related income in the county as fallen from 5% of total personal income in 1972 to 0.4% in 1997, and agricultural-related employment has declined from a 10% high in 1970 to 4% of total employment in 1997.” This decline is credited as a response to a decrease in agricultural commodity prices and the significance of agricultural income as other sectors of the economy such as service and retail, construction and trade have expanded.

Within the agricultural employment sector there has been an increase in employment in the agricultural services category. This encompasses off-farm, agriculturally related jobs such as machine repair, bookkeeping, administration, science, research and transportation.5

4 The Wilderness Society, in order to help citizens understand how the community has changed over the past 25 years, has published a series of economic profiles for Colorado counties. “Economic Profiles for Colorado Counties – La Plata County”. (www.wilderness.org).
Livable Wage Estimates for 2005, Operation Healthy Communities (OHC)
A livable wage, as defined by OHC, is “a wage that addresses the essential financial needs for basic living tools such as shelter, healthcare, childcare and nutrition.” Because the cost of housing (average home price and rent) in the area has increased dramatically in the past five years and wages have not, many residents struggle with the issue of affordable housing. The estimates below, determined by OHC in 2005, set a baseline for a livable wage in the county.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural La Plata County:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Person, renting a one bdrm at $605/mth - $9.81/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Parent, one child, renting 2 bdrm at $775/mth - $18.18/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of 4, renting 3 bdrm at $1050/mth - $25.44/hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Durango:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Single Person, renting a one bdrm at $675/mth - $10.21/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Parent, one child, renting 2 bdrm at $900/mth - $18.91/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of 4, renting 3 bdrm at $1150/mth - $26.02/hr</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bayfield:</th>
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<td>Single Person, renting a one bdrm at $550/mth - $9.49/hr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single Parent, one child, renting 2 bdrm at $875/mth - $18.78/hr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family of 4, renting 3 bdrm at $1050/mth - $25.44/hr</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ignacio:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Person, renting a one bdrm at $605/mth - $9.81/hr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single Parent, one child, renting 2 bdrm at $575/mth - $17.03/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of 4, renting 3 bdrm at $850/mth - $24.29/hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income
In 2001, Total Personal Income (TPI) in La Plata County was $1,298,515,000 (adjusted). The largest proportion (65%) of TPI is generated through employment (farm and non-farm). In 2001 La Plata had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of $28,013. This PCPI ranked 17th in the state and was 84% of the state average ($33,455), and 92% of the national average ($30,413). The 2001 PCPI reflected an increase of 4% from 2000. In 2000 an estimated 11.7% of the county population was living in poverty.

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6 According to OHC, the median home price in Durango in 2003 was $257,250. That year, 52% of families in Durango were unable to afford a home based on their annual income.

7 Note: The city of Durango has the highest livable wage estimate. Because Bayfield and Ignacio are rural communities the cost of living (rent) is not as high.

8 Total personal income is the sum of residents’ wages, proprietors’ income, government and business transfer payments, rents from land, and interest and dividends from financial assets, all less contributions to social security.
4. ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

Land Cover
La Plata County encompasses 1,083,085 acres (1,692 sq. miles). La Plata County is relatively rural with less than 1% of the county area comprised of high intensity urbanization. According to GIS data, approximately 25% (270,771 acres) of La Plata County is classified as agricultural and 11% (29,785 acres) of the agricultural land is irrigated. Close to 65% of the county is woodland where lower elevations grade from pinon and juniper woodland to ponderosa forest and spruce and fir forest as elevation increases. These woodlands provide essential habitat and seasonal migration corridors for productive deer and elk populations. The lower elevation winter habitat woodlands receive less protection than the spruce and fir forests because most private land and urbanization is taking place in these areas.

“We can grow most vegetables and many fruits to very high quality, including organic, because of abundant sunshine, and can grow great warm season and cold season crops. One hindrance and benefit is the unpredictable freezes and cold weather. This aspect of our climate produces stronger hardier crops and helps control pests, as long as it does not freeze the crops.”

Greg Vlaming, Horticulture Agent, CSU Cooperative Extension, La Plata County

Southwest Regional GAP Program Landcover Dataset, 2005.
Southwest Regional GAP Program Landcover Dataset, 2005.
Climate
The climate in La Plata County is characterized by a steep gradient where average annual precipitation ranges from 44 inches in the highest elevations to 13 inches in the lower elevations of the county (Figure 2)\(^\text{11}\). The following graph shows the relationship between elevation and land area of the county, where approximately 40% of the county is above 8000 feet. At that elevation and higher, the snowpack typically accumulates throughout late fall to early spring.

![Hypsometric Curve for La Plata County](image)

The growing season for these high elevation areas is often shortened by frost in the late spring and early fall. The 25% of the county that falls above 9000 feet can reach sub-freezing temperatures throughout the year. The growing season in the lowest elevations of the county, where most agriculture is concentrated, is approximately 100 days.

The primary sources of precipitation in the county are winter snowfall and late summer monsoonal thunderstorms. The winter snowpack is an essential element of water storage for crops, where the volume of water stored in the snowpack is typically far greater than agricultural demand and the storage capability of area reservoirs. A number of reservoir projects have been completed in order to store water after the snowmelt season, the largest of which are Lemon and Vallecito reservoirs.

\(^\text{11}\) NOAA Annual Precipitation Dataset, 2005.
**Surface Water**

The three main drainages in the county, in order of decreasing size, are the Animas River, the Pine River and the La Plata River. These drainages are sourced in the high alpine areas of the San Juan Mountains, where winter snowpack stores water that is released during spring and early summer peak flows.

Two reservoirs, Vallecito Reservoir on the Pine and Lemon Reservoir on the Florida River (a tributary of the Animas River), store winter precipitation and regulate water stream flows for agricultural purposes. An extensive network of canals and diversion structures brings water from each drainage and their tributaries to the irrigated lands of the county (Figure 1). The Colorado Division of Water Resources, through the authority of the State Engineer (and the Bureau of Indian Affairs within the Southern Ute Indian Tribe’s Reservation), administers water rights and allocates water to these irrigation systems.

Almost all of the water in each stream is allocated to various agricultural users. Two small storage systems have been proposed that would increase available water, but the likelihood of these being built in the current political climate is small.

Water in Colorado is regulated by the Colorado Doctrine, which is also known as the Appropriative Rights Doctrine. Users with priority rights get all their water before those with less senior rights get any water. In drought years, such as was experienced in 2002, a number of agricultural users will only have water for a small part of the growing season. There also exists in Colorado what is known as water law “use it or lose it” provisions. These mean that if someone with water rights does not exercise those rights, they may lose them.

Given the poor state of the distributions system, the laws that regulate water and the means by which that water is administered to the land, there exists a substantial amount of room to improve efficiency and thus increase both the acreage and the productivity of acreage irrigated with the existing water resource.

Given the predictions for climate change for the Southwest – decreasing winter precipitation and increasing variability – food production will likely become more uncertain, as seen by the recent drought where a number of agriculturalists went out of business. Agriculturalists require a certain amount of predictability to stay in business from year to year, and with less winter precipitation, the current water storage system becomes less effective.

Water quality is generally thought of as good due to the proximity of the county to the source waters. However, acid mine drainage from the high elevations and nutrient discharges in the lower elevations of the county have caused concern for sustaining water quality in the long term. Point sources of nutrients include facilities that discharge organic material into the river. Non-point sources of nutrients include urban drainage and agricultural runoff. The agricultural runoff is primarily due to inefficient irrigation practices and poorly operated and maintained distribution systems. Impacts to the river system can also result in excess nutrients where the assimilative capacity of the river is compromised. Floodplain interactions with the river play an important role in mediating the nutrient cycle and biological
functioning of river ecosystems.\textsuperscript{12} Therefore, nutrient enrichment can be seen as caused by the amalgamation of nutrients from point and non-point sources, as well as disruption of the assimilative capacity of the river system from channel modification or other disturbance to the floodplain.

**Groundwater**

Many residents of La Plata County get drinking water from private domestic water wells or water systems. In fact, most residential developments in the unincorporated areas of the county rely on groundwater wells. In La Plata County, there are over 7,000 well permits with groundwater as their source. There are 46 community water systems (63\% of which have groundwater as the primary source), and 70 non-community water systems (78\% of which have groundwater as the primary source).\textsuperscript{13}

Rapid population growth in La Plata County has caused increased reliance on groundwater as a source of supply for suburban and rural residents. In many developing areas, such as Florida Mesa, groundwater recharge is highly dependent on infiltration of irrigation water. As an example, Florida Mesa winter water levels in (domestic) wells generally are lower than summer water levels because of the lack of irrigation recharge during the fall and winter. As development occurs and agricultural land is taken out of production, there is a potential for groundwater to become depleted. Continued high rates of development in areas lacking central water systems increases the potential for dewatering aquifers and impact to existing wells.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} La Plata County Energy Council (Waterfacts website 2006, http://www.energycouncil.org/waterfacts/groundwater.htm).
\textsuperscript{14} La Plata County Energy Council (Waterfacts website 2006, http://www.energycouncil.org/waterfacts/groundwater.htm).
CHAPTER III
A REGIONAL PROFILE OF AGRICULTURE

1. HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE
   • SUMMARY
   • A HISTORICAL COMPARISON OF FOOD PRODUCTION IN LA PLATA COUNTY: A Look at the US Census of Agriculture

2. AGRICULTURE TODAY
   • CURRENT AGRICULTURAL ATMOSPHERE
   • THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE
   • THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE
   • THE FORT LEWIS MESA PLANNING GROUP: Ranching & Land Use Planning: New Prospects – A Contribution from Erick Aune

3. A PROFILE OF AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
   • JOHNSON RANCH: Creating Healthy Rangeland & Healthy Cows
   • ADOBE MILLING: The Anasazi Bean Revival
   • AN INTERVIEW WITH STONE FREE FARM: A Diverse, Profitable, Three-Acre Vegetable Farm
   • SAN JUAN BIO-DIESEL: A Possible Opportunity for Area Producers

1. HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE

Assessment Methodology
Much of the information compiled in this section came from the research of Jim Fitzgerald. His graduate dissertation written in 1982 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education at the University of Colorado, Boulder provides valuable data, long-term resident interviews and insight into the historical settling of this region. Jim, and his wife Terry, also provided historical and agricultural information for the assessment in an oral interview. The rest comes from farmer interviews and secondary research.

SUMMARY
La Plata County was historically a land occupied by Natives and Latinos. Not until the late 1800s was the area settled by Anglos.

The Ute tribe, a hunter-gatherer society, traveled here from Utah in the 13th century to live and hunt in the mountains. In 1877 the U.S. government established the Indian Agency near Ignacio, which later became the permanent home for the Southern Ute Indian Reservation, in 1895. At this time, the U.S. government began to parcel the land into 160-acre allotments for the head of each household and 80 acres for each child of that family. These parcels were allocated to Indian families for the purpose of farming, and could only be sold after a period of 25 years. Once the Utes were each allocated their parcel, the remaining land, 523,000 acres, was sold to non-Indian homesteaders at $1.25/acre. Historically, in order to help the
Utes transition to production-based agriculture, food rations were given by the government to each Indian family.

Jim Fitzgerald, a respected sociologist and long-term resident of La Plata County, wrote his graduate dissertation in 1982 on the relations between the communities and schools of Ignacio from 1900 until 1982. It provides valuable data, long-term resident interviews and insight into the historical settling of this region.\(^1\) Annie is a woman Jim interviewed for his dissertation. She is a member of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and was raised in La Posta in the 1930s. In this excerpt from Jim’s paper, she recalls the food rations and subsistence agriculture she experienced during her lifetime:

> We were very poor, but we were happy…. We didn’t have contact with anything else except going to Ignacio for rations and coming home…. We struggled, you know. There were days we didn’t have anything, near anything to eat. We didn’t starve either. My grandmother had sheep, and if she thought we were on the verge of starving, she’d kill one of the animals…and they she’d feed us and dry the rest. The rations weren’t enough. If my dad hadn’t planted… in the summertime he’d plant squash and corn. If it weren’t for that, the rations wouldn’t last very long. He’d raise his own wheat… take it clear to Red Mesa to have it milled. He hunted, and my grandmother would prepare it.\(^2\)

Mexico once stretched much farther to the north, encompassing New Mexico and southern Colorado. After the Mexican-American War of 1846-48, when under the Treaty of Guadalupe these lands were ceded to the U.S., many Latinos remained in the area. They were traditionally ranchers and subsistence farmers with strong ties to the land. Latino farms traditionally were not heavily mechanized and produced a great deal of food for home consumption. Fitzgerald reports: “In Ignacio, Spanish homes could often be detected by the presence of vegetable gardens, chicken coops, and rabbit hutches in their front and backyards.”

In the late 1800s, however, many Mexicans in the area were attracted to employment in the construction of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad and Ute housing projects. During that time many Latinos also began to sharecrop with the Utes.

Anglos first settled the Durango area in the 1880s, when mining, homesteading and ranching operations began to appear and prosper. Easterners or British immigrants traditionally owned the land and cattle companies, two of which were the HD Cattle Company and the Beaver Creek Cattle Company. Anglo farms and ranches tended to be larger in size than Ute and Latino farms and were more heavily mechanized and better irrigated. One interesting observation is that many cattle barns were built in the early 1900s and they continued to grow in size where operations moved into the highlands. The winters in the West were rough, and barns provided shelter for animals in the cold weather and a place to store hay for winterfeed.

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\(^2\) There is a contemporary Tribal Ration System currently in place in Ignacio. See Castorn Farm interview.
Because many of the land and cattle operations used the Ute Reservation for grazing, conflicts arose between the Utes and the Anglo cowboys. The violence ultimately forced some of the Utes farther southwest to the town now know as Towaoc, the current home of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe.

By the time the towns of Durango, Bayfield and Ignacio were incorporated (in 1880, 1906 and 1913, respectively), the area was scattered with Anglo, Ute, and Latino settlers on diverse small farms and a series of market towns which served the rural areas. At this time it was common to have families who raised wheat, potatoes, oats, milk, butter, cream, wool, meat and eggs. People would travel to the market towns on a regular basis to buy, sell and trade these commodities. Food production and market towns both prospered in the early 1900s.

In a recent talk at the Colorado State University Research Station in Hesperus, Jim Dyer³ spoke about the town of Marvel and how the town and its inhabitants were extremely self-sufficient in the early 1900s. According to Jim, Marvel history books indicate Marvel once supported three stores, a garage (repair), a shoe repair shop, a blacksmith, The Marvel State Bank, a restaurant, a pool hall, a dance hall, an ice cream shop, a flourmill, two churches and a school.

The 1930s to the late '40s were hard on agriculture everywhere. Hit by the depression of the 1930s, many farmers and ranchers couldn’t survive a bad crop year, drought or declining markets and had to sell their land or find work off of their farms to make ends meet. Then came World War II, which changed the face of agriculture for many reasons. Not only did it draw young men off their families’ farms and into war, but the byproducts that came from warfare were transformed into never before used chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers that allowed farms to operate on a completely different scale using completely different practices. With the development of a national agricultural market, small farms became more and more a thing of the past. Also, many of the cattle companies that came to the area to build prosperous enterprises had, by the 1930s, folded due to harsh weather and the relative unreliability of the cattle market.

In the 1940s, the natural gas market emerged and a new class of Anglo gas workers moved into the area. Because the gas workers were new to the West, there was a large cultural divide and a lack of acceptance between them and the “locals.” At the same time, many local men were drawn away from their farms to the stability of a paycheck from the oil and gas industry.

In the 1950s, Fitzgerald reports, despite 80 years of U.S. government effort to turn them into farmers, most Utes did not engage in full-time farming. Rather, they received cash income from the newly developed gas fields and leased their arable land to Anglo farmers and ranchers.

³ Jim Dyer and his wife Pam live in Marvel. They raise churro sheep and sell their wool at the Durango Farmers’ Market. Jim is also Director of the Southwest Marketing Network and The Colorado Organic Producers’ Association.
La Plata County still has strong agricultural ties; certain aspects of the industry remain the same, while others have changed dramatically since the 1950s. What remains are the cattle farms and the production of hay and forage. What has changed in the past fifty years, however, is the growing influence of the oil and gas industry on agriculture, the fact that family commercial dairies have decreased from about 50 to zero, and the overall diversity of crops has declined, as has the concentration of food production. A look at the Census of Agriculture gives greater insight into these differences.

**A HISTORICAL COMPARISON OF FOOD PRODUCTION IN LA PLATA COUNTY: A look at the US Census of Agriculture**

The first agriculture census was taken in 1840 as part of the sixth decennial census of the population. The US Department of Agriculture’s National Statistics Service now conducts the Census of Agriculture. To this day, it is the only source of statistics on American agriculture showing comparable figures by county.

Table 1. A COMPARISON OF THE CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE IN LA PLATA COUNTY, 1945 – 2002

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>2002</th>
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<td>Number of Farms:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
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<td>1-9 acres</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-49</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-199 (179)</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;200 (180)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish potatoes</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk cows</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickens</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1945**

Interestingly enough, even after the impacts of the Depression and WWII, agriculture in La Plata County in 1945 appeared to be doing well. The 1945 US Census of Agriculture reports 28,000 bushels of apples, 24,000 bushels of potatoes and 2.2 million gallons of milk produced in the county, showing that amidst all of the obstacles of the time, this area was producing a significant amount of food.

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4 All 2002 Census of Agriculture figures and information can be found at: [www.nass.usda.gov/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/).
6 In comparing Census of Agriculture data from the years of 1945 and 2002, it must be noted that these are rough figures, as the way data is recorded has changed.
7 This number is based on the total number of farms reporting acreage. Only 844 out of 936 farms reported this number.
8 This information is for type of crop grown on a given farm. The numbers indicate which farms, of the 936, were raising any of these crops in 2002.
9 Broilers and layers
10 Vegetables raised were for household use.
11 Although there was still high productivity, the Depression brought low prices for agricultural products. For those who still farmed, WWII brought with it a rebound in prices at continued high production.
2002
Since 1945, how data is recorded for the US Census of Agriculture has changed. In 2002 the items under “selected crops harvested” for all Colorado counties are not milk, apples, and potatoes, as they were in 1945. Today they are recorded as corn for grain, corn for silage or greenchop and wheat for grain (all including winter wheat and spring wheat, both for grain). Livestock and poultry are still listed items and measured by farm number, and so they have been included in Table 1.

In 2002 the Census of Agriculture reports the top crop items in La Plata County as forage, oats, corn for silage and apples. It is clear that since the early 1900s until today, this area has remained focused on livestock production. In fact, the total number of cattle and calves raised in La Plata County hasn’t changed much in over 60 years. What has changed, however, is the amount and diversity of food that is being produced.

CONCLUSION
Although it is somewhat difficult to compare census information from different eras, what has undoubtedly changed since 1945 is that La Plata County agriculture does not concentrate on food production to the extent that it once did. The number of farms that raise chicken, beef, milk, potatoes, apples and vegetables for household use has decreased since 1945. And thus the diversity of what was once grown here has also decreased.

Positively, this information illustrates what can be grown in La Plata County. It shows regional potential for greater food production by supporting the idea that agricultural production in the Southwest was once more varied, and that there were simply more people raising food.

2. AGRICULTURE TODAY
Assessment Methodology:
Quantitative data for this section comes mostly from the US Census of Agriculture and the La Plata County Tax Assessor’s Office. The qualitative information was gathered through surveys and in-person interviews. Those interviewed can be classified into three general categories:

- Farm and Ranch Interviews: With special attention to include a diverse cross-section of farms exhibiting variations in size, location, and practice.

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12 Planted acreage
13 Land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and greenchop
14 According to Jerry Zink, owner of SunnySide Meats Processing Facility in Durango, “In the early 1900’s there were vast numbers of sheep in the area. Since the 1960’s, however, many cow-calf and sheep operations were replaced by horse operations.”
• **Agricultural Expert Interviews:** With people working in the private or government sector of the agricultural industry. Examples of the industry include: The San Juan Basin Research Station; San Juan Research, Conservation and Development (RC&D); La Plata County Cooperative Extension and The Southern Ute Custom Farm.

• **Agricultural Focus Groups:** With groups working on issues related to food and farming. Examples include The Farm-To-School Working Group, The Fort Lewis Mesa Planning Group and The Red Mesa Community Food Forum.

**CURRENT AGRICULTURAL ATMOSPHERE**

A look at the Census of Agriculture will tell you that the number of farm operations in La Plata County is not going down. In fact, small farm numbers\(^\text{15}\) are increasing.

**HOUSE BILL 35**

Agricultural land continues to be subdivided, and many of these smaller parcels are now used to raise horses or left fallow. This is a very sensitive subject in the county, because according to some experts, a great portion of farmland in the region has been subdivided to the point where it cannot be made profitable anymore. House Bill 35, passed in the 1970’s, allows property owners to subdivide their land into 35-acre or larger parcels without going through the county government for approval. Basically, it gives large landowners the opportunity to sell off parcels of their land, and in La Plata County this has happened all over. What this has created is an area that appears “chopped up” into a large number of smaller farms, some of which may not be very productive.

According to Doug Ramsey, who works with San Juan Research, Conservation and Development (RC&D), “Most people who buy these (35-acre) parcels spend all of their money buying the land, but then can’t afford the equipment to manage it properly.” Doug worries about the intentions of these landowners and their knowledge of farm practices. “They may put a couple of horses or cows on it, but isn’t managed properly. Putting a couple of animals on the land is also sometimes done to keep taxes in the agricultural bracket – it’s cheaper. What you end up with is a house every 35 acres.”

According to the County Tax Assessor, in 2005 there were 272,930 agriculturally taxed acres in La Plata County, approximately 25% of the total county land base. For tax purposes, agricultural land is classified based on the primary use of the land, which must be raising an agricultural product for sale. This could be anything from a horse to a vegetable farm.

\[^\text{15}\text{ The USDA defines small farms as enterprises earning less than $250,000 per year from farm income.}\]

“Land owners only have to report some agricultural activities to be taxed at a lower agricultural rate, a rate which is considerably lower than residential.”

Doug Ramsey
THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)
There are also an abundant number of acres in the federal CRP Program in La Plata County. This is a program in which farmers agree to set aside acres for a 10-15 year period to let the land rest. The government in turn pays a rent for this rested land. This program provides agricultural income on land that may otherwise be sold off to development.

COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR RECORDS
The tax assessor’s office keeps the most detailed records of agricultural land in the county based on irrigation type and crop selection.\(^\text{16}\) This information begins to assess the types of crops grown in the county, most of which are grass and hay grown for the cattle industry this area has historically supported. Dairy hay, however, sells for a premium, and since there are no commercial dairy operations in the county that require outsourced feed, most dairy hay is now exported to New Mexico and Texas, and in some cases, due to its high protein content, even to Great Britain.

A breakdown of county agricultural lands, as recorded by the La Plata County assessor in 2005, paints a more detailed picture of the current state of agriculture in the county. (Table 2)

Table 2. LA PLATA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LANDS BASED ON FARMLAND TYPE & CROP SELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmland Type</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Crop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grazing Land</td>
<td>180,240</td>
<td>Grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Irrigation</td>
<td>38,761</td>
<td>Grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry</td>
<td>30,643</td>
<td>Wheat, oats, canola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow Hay</td>
<td>15,091</td>
<td>Grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprinkler Irrigation</td>
<td>8,147</td>
<td>Alfalfa hay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard Land</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Apple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>272,930</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCTION
To discuss the regional state of agriculture, agricultural experts and farmers were asked to discuss the present challenges and opportunities of the current agricultural system. Throughout the course of the assessment, several themes regarding the current state of agriculture were identified. These themes are addressed below in a format that addresses systematic challenges along with the opportunities they inspire. The sections are referenced by interview and survey data.

Themes regarding the current state of agriculture in La Plata County:
- LARGE-SCALE FARMING AND RANCHING IS DECLINING
- THERE IS AN OVERALL LACK OF LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

\(^\text{16}\) County Tax Assessor’s Office’s 2005 Assessor Report. There is a state website for all Colorado county property tax information: www.dola.state.co.us/propertytax/publications, search under “Colorado Assessed Values 1982-2005”.
• THE RISING COST OF LAND MAKES LARGE-SCALE FARMING OPERATIONS DIFFICULT DUE TO CASH FLOW
• WATER AVAILABILITY IS AN ISSUE FOR FARMERS
• THE LOCAL CLIMATE CREATES A MARGINAL GROWING SEASON
• THE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY AFFECTS LOCAL AGRICULTURE

LARGE-SCALE FARMING AND RANCHING IS DECLINING
La Plata County, an area known for land and cattle companies, has lost many of the large ranches it once supported. Development pressure and a lack of youth interested in taking over the family farm drive this trend.

CHALLENGES
A growing local population has created immense pressure on agricultural land for development. Since agricultural land is found on much of the immediate outskirts of town, this land has been some of the most desirable for new development, and also the most affordable. This trend has driven up the cost of land in much of the county. For the farmer, the prospect of making more money through development than could be made keeping it in production is reason enough to sell off pieces of land.

Another reason for a decline in production agriculture is that family farms are having a hard time staying in the family. Many children of farming and ranching families now choose to leave the farm for the opportunities an urban life can provide. As fewer and fewer young people choose farming as a way of life, the average national age of the farmer will keep going up. It is now around age 55.

OPPORTUNITIES
Some of the children of family farms, however, have chosen to stay in the business, and are doing quite well. James Ranch, located on Highway 550 just north of Durango, is now divided into several micro farm operations on one family farm. Although beef is still the primary focus, one of the five James children is now making cheese and sells it at a roadside stand, the Durango Farmers’ Market and to some grocery stores. Another sibling has turned a portion of the ranch into a diverse vegetable and flower garden and is selling her products to the local market.

Beth LaShell, of the San Juan Basin Research Station and Fort Lewis College, talked about Cole Ranch, located East of Elmore’s Corner, as another example of children returning to invest in the family farm. Traditionally a hay and cattle operation, one of the family’s grandsons returned to the farm and is now growing vegetables and raising pork to sell at the Durango Farmers’ Market. “Their grandson is doing things differently and teaching the grandparents that it can be done,” Beth said. “The grandparents (the traditional farmers) see the money and are attracted to that.”
THERE IS AN OVERALL LACK OF LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION
Although there are farms dedicated to producing food for a local market, the overall lack of food production is an issue.

CHALLENGES
A look at the Census of Agriculture’s data from 1945 to 2002 illustrates this point. It shows fewer farms in La Plata County dedicated to producing food crops in 2002 than in 1945. Once an area that supported an array of food crops such as potatoes, apples, milk, beef and chicken, the area now lacks this diversity in the same capacity. Take dairy as an example: In 1945, 730 farms in the county had milk cows. In 2002 the number was 55. Each food crop has specific reasons for its decline. According to Doug Ramsey, of San Juan RC&D, a decrease in milk production happened in part due to economies of scale and a lack of support for bottling. “The milk had to be shipped out of the area to be bottled and then shipped back for sale. The price of milk was only $10 per hundredweight. You would have to have a lot of cattle producing milk in order for the operation to pay you back. Economics of keeping it profitable made it very hard to nearly impossible.”

OPPORTUNITIES
Positively, this information illustrates what can be grown in La Plata County. It shows regional potential for greater food production, by supporting the idea that agricultural production in the Southwest was once more varied, and that there were simply more people raising food.

The demand for local food exists and is on the rise. It has been expressed (via the assessment) by schools, restaurants, by consumers and by retail stores.

THE RISING COST OF LAND MAKES LARGE-SCALE FARMING OPERATIONS DIFFICULT DUE TO CASH FLOW
Large land payments, taxes and the inherent costs involved in getting a large-scale farm operation off the ground are some of the challenges a new farmer must overcome to make an operation profitable.

CHALLENGES
This is especially true for new farmers trying to establish an operation. There are many costs associated with starting a farm operation, the largest being the cost of the land. Depending on its location and water availability, land in La Plata County costs anywhere between $2,000-$5,000 per acre. This problem has become so challenging for locals that it is not uncommon to hear comments like Kevin Mallow’s. “I
don’t feel someone could come into the area, purchase land and make a living at it, unless they have $1,000,000 to buy the land outright,” he expressed in an interview.

Doug Ramsey pointed out that commodity prices have changed very little over the past fifty years. In other words, crops are not making more money than they used to at market. What have increased, however, are the cost of living and the cost of farm inputs like fertilizer and diesel to run farm equipment.

All of this makes creating an economically viable large-scale farm operation difficult. For a farm operation to truly cash flow, there must be money left over from the gross income for a person to live on. Doug Ramsey takes a realistic approach to relying on farming as a way of life: “If you really look at numbers and do a business model, if you need $40,000 to live, you need to sell $100,000 worth of product to take some of that out to live on.”

OPPORTUNITIES
Locating more affordable land is challenging, but not entirely impossible. Doug believes Montezuma and Dolores Counties (just north and west of La Plata County respectively) are more feasible areas for starting up agricultural operations in the region. “It’s not easy, but it’s possible. In those areas you can make enough money to live on.” It’s also true that if a farmer owns his or her land outright, or as in the case of the James and the Coles, has a son or daughter return to a farm that is already paid off, the farmer or his offspring will be in a better position to make the operation a success.

There also exists the opportunity to purchase small parcels of land, one to two acres, and to farm bio-intensively using practices that increase yields and use less land to grow food. Rosie Carter and Chuck Barry, who own Stone Free Farm in Cortez, are living testament to the amount of food that can be produced on a small acreage farm. Although they own 62 acres, Rosie and Chuck only cultivate three to sustain their farm business. They grow lettuce mix, carrots, tomatoes, beets and other vegetables, and they sell 90 percent of them at two farmers’ markets. They sell the rest to area restaurants.

Local ideas for a Land-Link Program, one that would connect regional farm resources (such as available, arable land) with people interested in farming, was also suggested to address the issue.

WATER AVAILABILITY IS AN ISSUE FOR FARMERS
Although the area is known for water issues, which seem to be on everyone’s mind, surprisingly few growers mentioned water issues in detail. The Fort Lewis Mesa Planning Group, however, has spent vast amounts of time tackling this issue. Because the Fort Lewis Mesa District is located on the “dry-side” of the county and is predominantly zoned agricultural, they face many water allocation use and need issues.
CHALLENGES
Trent Taylor, whose family owns a dry land wheat operation in the Red Mesa District of the county, talked about the challenges he deals with when it comes to water for his farm. According to Trent, “A big issue is that the best water rights service the land with lower quality soil, and the areas with the best soil are left without water.” Doug Ramsey, who raises sheep for fiber and meat near Hesperus in La Plata County, also has concerns about water for his farm operation. Unexpectedly, he had no irrigation water in 2002. This year (2006), he ran out of water by June 1st.
For many farmers in the area who raise livestock, a lack of water means not being able to raise pasture or forage crops for their animals. Some ranchers feel feeding their animals hay makes them smaller, and does not finish them as well as grazing could. Ultimately, it means buying feed, making an already challenging operation harder to afford.

OPPORTUNITIES
There are areas of the county that do receive an efficient, steady supply of water. According to Kevin Mallow of Tribal Water Resources, “The northwest side of the county receives very consistent irrigation.”

THE LOCAL CLIMATE CREATES A MARGINAL GROWING SEASON
La Plata County does not support a year-round growing season, at least not one that can be accomplished without a greenhouse and some kind of costly external heat source. Some believe the growing season to be only 90 days, and in some parts of the county this is true. Regardless, it is a short growing season, and the area experiences unpredictable weather with high force winds, hail and drought.

CHALLENGES
It is widely recognized that variances in elevation and temperature make it hard to grow crops in the area. Frost dates on the dry side of the county, near Hesperus, are typically recorded as late as June 13 and as early as September 18. These temperatures, however, are extremely variable depending on where in the county they are recorded.
Having a three-month growing season also limits the types of crops that can be grown. According to Kevin Mallow, “The things that you can produce a lot of here you can grow anywhere. We have a short growing season. You can grow radishes, spinach, and squash. Things that don’t need a lot of heat.”

OPPORTUNITIES
Some farms, located further south in areas like northern New Mexico and in Montezuma County, have less temperature variation and longer growing seasons. These counties supply the Durango Farmers’ Market and other regional retailers. Rosie Carter, who farms near Cortez, said, “Speaking for Montezuma County, we have relatively inexpensive land (for the Rocky Mt. region), abundant water, and not much competition in sales.”
But the ones who remain in the immediate area must appreciate the local climate as being both a benefit and a hindrance. Greg Vlaming, former horticulture agent in La Plata County, is most optimistic about local growing conditions. “We can grow most vegetables and many fruits to very high quality (including organically) because of the abundant sunshine that exists here. We can grow both warm season and cold season crops. One hindrance and benefit is the unpredictable freeze and cold weather. This aspect of our climate produces stronger, hardier crops and helps control pests, as long as it does not freeze the crops.”

Greg is also a proponent of season extension practices and built a cold frame that produced greens through the winter of 2005-2006 to prove his theory. “We have such abundant sunshine and enough light to produce throughout the entire winter.” During the winter of 2005 Greg raised greens in a cold frame heated by two layers of plastic, Christmas lights, and a basin of water creating thermal mass. He was able to market his greens to a restaurant in Telluride, which took all that he could produce.

Zane Baronowski, a certified nutritionist and local manufacturer of health food bars, is also an advocate of greenhouse production. He feels greenhouse production is a good idea due to the specifics of the regional climate: low humidity, abundant sunshine, temperature fluctuations and drought. “If we took every acre growing any kind of crop and put that (same crop) under greenhouses,” Zane stated, “we would use ten times less water and produce ten times the food year-round.”

THE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY AFFECTS LOCAL AGRICULTURE

CHALLENGES
The oil and gas industry, which emerged in the area in the 1940s, pulled many men away from farms as an attractive, off-farm income source. The industry sparks much of what boils down to a love-hate relationship with the county and its inhabitants. Sterling Moss is one who believes the oil industry has done some good for people in the region, namely farmers. According to Sterling, royalty payments and off-farm income from work in the gas fields is what allows people to dabble in farming. He believes the oil and gas industry is providing the opportunity for agriculture to continue in the area, even if it must take a different form than in the past. “If it weren’t for oil production in the county, due to cost-shares that fund various Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) projects, the NRCS would look very different.”

Because most of the land in the county is devoted to production that requires irrigation practices that are less labor intensive, such as rain and flood irrigation, the system allows for off-farm employment. “It’s one thing to be a part time farmer when you are growing grass, but if you are growing row crops it requires so much more time to irrigate and to harvest,” Sterling stated.

17 Greg recently moved to the State of Michigan to farm, selling his farm in La Plata County.
OPPORTUNITIES
Although gas work provides an income, it is difficult to produce row crops for food production without devoting full attention to the farm. As Sterling sees it, “Agriculture will probably continue the way it has been lately, unless we come up with a huge shortage somewhere else in the country creating demand that is attractive to producers. Everything always changes gradually.”

CONCLUSIONS
Respondent themes that emerged via the assessment indicate that people feel there are deeply entrenched cultural, climatic and economic challenges that make agricultural operations difficult in the region. There are, however, many suggestions for creating a system to work within the current parameters to make agricultural ventures more successful. And, there is great optimism for the future of agriculture in the region.

THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCTION
Although one person reported, “agriculture is dead in our region,” most were optimistic agriculture will continue to exist as a vital part of the local economy. There are apparent signs that agriculture is important to the community, and there are clear visions on how to take regional agricultural development in a positive direction. To begin to address challenges with identifiable opportunities, community members were asked to name resources of the current system and specific examples of projects that could foster successful agricultural development. These are listed below.

RESOURCES

1. THERE IS GROWING SUPPORT FOR A LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY
There is a growing support for local food produced by local farms and ranches. Schools, restaurants, consumers and grocery stores have all expressed interest in purchasing more local products.

- “There is a demand for local food. The La Plata county area is very well educated and informed and wants a quality food source. People here are food savvy.” Peg Redford

- “People are starting to be more conscious of a locally based market.” Rosie Carter

2. THERE IS POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP SMALL SCALE SPECIALTY MARKETS
There is a lot of enthusiasm around market potential in the region. Since the number of producers growing food crops is so small, there are many people who believe there is great opportunity for people to sell what they grow, as demand seems to greatly outweigh the supply in the region.

- “Right now direct market opportunities are extremely underused. There needs to be local empowerment through education, and more backyard and small-scale farms and gardens. We have the benefit of local food and agriculture sensitivity.” Greg Vlaming
3. THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY
There are examples of area livestock producers successfully marketing what they raise. Two examples are James Ranch, which sells the animals raised on the ranch to local buyers, and Fox Fire Lamb, located near Ignacio, which raises, processes, and sells its organic lamb locally.

According to Sterling Moss, the livestock industry currently has more potential than any other sector of agriculture in our region. He suggests, “If we converted 80% of the horses out here to cattle, then we could get a lot more value out of the land. Feed is already being raised here, but is mostly being given to horses. We could improve the livestock situation here. We do have a lot of pasture, but it’s not being used most efficiently to produce beef. We have Sunnyside Meats to do the processing.”

4. THERE ARE SPECIFIC MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS
Public and private schools, restaurants and natural food stores have all expressed a desire to carry more local foods. Consumers have also indicated they would like to see more farmers’ markets, farm stands and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs. It was also identified that farmers need to know the specific products people are looking to purchase.

PROJECTS THAT COULD FOSTER SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. SUPPORT FOR THE MARKETING, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL FARM PRODUCTS
Many farmers and retailers expressed the need for a distribution system. This project would address a lack of dependable delivery systems for receiving or delivering local products, and could offer support to farmers who don’t have time to do their own deliveries.

- “A community storage and distribution center for local goods is needed. The small farmers, and even the larger ones, cannot afford to have their own marketing, storage and distribution services.” Trent Taylor
- (We need) direct marketing to restaurants. Participant, Red Mesa Forum

2. CONSUMER EDUCATION TO SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
It is clear from farmers that there is a need for an educational campaign that would increase community awareness on the benefits of buying local. This would build on existing momentum and increase support for local agriculture.

- “(We need) an education program so local people will start purchasing local.” Dave James
- Farm tours. Participant, Red Mesa Forum
3. TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR NEW FARMERS

More technical training for new and inexperienced farmers is needed. This would create a bridge between agricultural development and the need to foster new farmers.

- More education on “what you can grow” given the type of land and amount of water. Participant, Red Mesa Forum
- Demonstration gardens. Participant, Red Mesa Food Forum
- Season extension. Participant, Red Mesa Food Forum
- Education on food resources including wild foods, storage, season extension, preservation, how to eat seasonally and how to grow. Participant, Ignacio Food Forum

4. A LAND-LINK OPPORTUNITY

A network between landowners and non-owners or small-owner producers to make use of land, production and water is needed. This would be a system that could connect those with agricultural resources to those without resources who are interested in putting land into production.

- Talk with landowners who are interested in leasing their land. Preferably those landowners with water. Participant, Red Mesa Forum
- Leasing partnership between people who want to farm and raise livestock and people with land. Participant, Ignacio Food Forum

AN EXAMPLE OF LAND-LINK: Jerry Zink, who owns a ranch and meat processing facility near Sunnyside School, has noticed an interesting trend on his county road that he never thought he would see. He thought that when residential development came to his neck of the woods, the three-acre lots would only be used for residential use. But what he is seeing instead is small-scale organic plots put into residential sub-divisions. The cost of the land seems to be relatively low. The owner of the land will lease out the land for very little to the farmer.

“A single lot owner can put in organic production on their place, half of their neighbor’s place, and then skip a plot and put in on the next plot of land. There are many lots that don’t have water, and don’t have good soil, but in his area this works well. This would never work on large scale, but works well on a small scale. The residential property owner would rather see their back acre used to farm organically than have it grow into weeds.” Jerry Zink

5. SUPPORT FOR MORE GROWING SPACES

The need for more food production could be addressed and encouraged by individual community members, agencies and organizations, as well as by seasoned practitioners.

- Better food access for low-income families. Participant, Ignacio Food Forum
- Community gardens. Participant, Ignacio Food Forum
A recreation center with growing spaces. Participant, Ignacio Food Forum

Seed exchanges. Participant, Ignacio Food Forum

FORT LEWIS MESA PLANNING GROUP: Ranching & Land Use Planning; New Prospects

For over 12 years a dynamic group of community members have been engaging local government with the challenge to provide leadership backed by policy that reflects the unique values of the local community. The group is organized on many levels, but in many ways it is distanced from the decision-making that occurs in Durango City Hall.

This may be changing, with the recent adoption of a District Plan that is truly a product of the local community. For over 18 months, members of the Fort Lewis Mesa Planning Group have quietly and not-so-quietly debated the finer points of water scarcity, land development, agriculture/ranching, rural atmosphere and the opportunity that is their future.

It is not the plan that demonstrates the significance of the work this group is engaged in, but the establishment of an ethic or culture that looks at local land use tools as a means of preserving the agrarian character of the district.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Fort Lewis Mesa District Plan lays the foundation and establishes a capacity to begin putting in place substantive policy that offers resources for the agrarian community.

Scope: Derived from the willingness to “plan for agriculture” the Fort Lewis Mesa Planning District is committed to expanding the resources available to La Plata County government and the community. In order to develop these tools and resources, engaging the appropriate organization that has broad-based experience in agricultural preservation is required. The following methodology frames the willingness to plan and the opportunity to use tools previously overlooked.

- Help communities build support for land protection, and create effective land protection programs. Training and outreach programs will be established to garner support.

A Contribution from Erick Aune

“Despite their embrace of the community’s moral claims, agrarians have generally been reluctant to transform moral duties into binding legal ones. Land-use laws in particular are often suspect, given their perceived use by outsiders as tools to disrupt and restrict local life. Outside the land-use realm, individual agrarians can successfully resist outside pressures they dislike – by home schooling and religious worship, for instance. But there are many other pressures, economic and land-use related ones in particular, that can easily crush an unorganized people.”

The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture and the Community of Life, Edited by Eric T. Fryfogle, 2001
• Work with existing efforts and groups such as the Growing Partners Community Assessment, Farm-to-School and the USDA’s Resource Conservation and Development Council.

• Raise awareness about the economic, environmental, cultural and other benefits farms and ranches provide to individuals and communities.

• Develop a countywide assessment of all stakeholders within the agricultural industry and subsequently outline an economic and social framework that is geo-politically appropriate for La Plata County. This will add value to all efforts for the preservation of agriculture. Surveys and focus groups, feasibility studies, agricultural economic development program assessments, funding assessments, drafting and reviewing ordinances, strategic land identification and task force facilitation should be the tools utilized in this process.

• Create a customized approach to local preservation utilizing a combination of the policies, tools and practices listed below:

  **Land Use Policies and Programs** – Purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, agricultural districts, zoning, right-to-farm and tax relief, and conservation easements.

  **Economic Development Tools** – Agritourism, direct marketing, branding of local agricultural products, value-added processing and product diversification.

  **Conservation practices** – Integrated pest management, nutrient management and grass based farming, water conservation, dry land farming, etc.

If the planning process continues to be successful, the end product could be a customized *Farm and Ranchlands Protection and Conservation Program* for the district and possibly the greater agricultural community. This will allow diverse groups to capitalize on the strength of local, regional and global resources.

### 3. A PROFILE OF AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**Assessment Methodology:**
These profiles were compiled with interview and survey data, site visits and secondary research. Although approximately 20 farms were surveyed, only four are included in this section. The other interview and survey data from other farms and ranches was included previously in this chapter.

**INTRODUCTION**
For the purposes of this section, each profile exhibits a different sector of the regional agricultural industry, providing a diverse cross section of regional agricultural entrepreneurship and opportunity. Each is written as a personal account, experienced by the researcher, and presented as an educational piece.

- **JOHNSON RANCH:** *Creating Healthy Rangeland & Healthy Cows*
- **ADOBE MILLING:** *The Anasazi Bean Revival*
PROFILE

JOHNSON RANCH - CLYDE, JANICE, & JOEL JOHNSON:
Creating Healthy Rangeland and Healthy Cows

In mid-September, as the first wet snowflakes of the season fell onto the “dry side” of La Plata County, Clyde Johnson and I met his cattle on a section of rented land where his animals can graze on healthy, native grasses.

Clyde and his wife Janice purchased their first cows in 1996 and now have a sizeable herd, which they attempt to maintain at 35 head. “Living on the dry side and trying to raise your cattle on grass has its challenges,” Clyde said, as he began to explain the intricate system he has developed to holistically manage the livestock he and his family raise.

A man of strong principles, he strives to raise his cattle closely in sync with the natural world. The animals he has currently, 9 heifers, 22 calves and 1 bull, feed off the land (he only supplements what they forage with occasional bales of hay and salt licks). They procreate naturally without artificial insemination; one bull eventually gets to all of the heifers in a given year, and he encourages them to travel across the landscape, only grazing on the land as long as it can sustain them before moving on to greener pasture.

The pasture on the dry side isn’t your typical green grass pasture of heavily irrigated alfalfa. The landscape looks more like rocky desert than a place where cattle would comfortably make their home.

“Contrary to popular belief, we have a wealth of native grasses out here that, when properly managed, can make for good forage,” Clyde said. “We have yellow grass, blue gramma, Indian rye grass and galleta grass here. We also have sage and rabbit brush that the cattle love to chew on and, I’ve found, is considerably high in protein.”

As a land specialist with the Bureau of Land Management for 32 years, Clyde has many years of experience monitoring livestock grazing on public lands. This experience has taught him many valuable techniques that he now uses in his own livestock operation. He mentioned how properly grazing animals on areas prone to noxious weeds can eventually eliminate them from an area.

“If you get livestock on knapweed, yellow toad flax or even thistle before it flowers, they will chew it down to the ground, preventing it from ever flowering and thus spreading more of its seed.”

18 Clyde and Janice Johnson. (970) 588-3470. 3611 C.R. 100. Hesperus, Colorado 81326. cj@johnsonranchcolorado.com
Profile researched and written by: Katy Pepinsky
Clyde and his cows have created a system based on self-reliance and adaptation. He believes his cows are less apt to predation because they breed in sync with the deer and elk in their area, and they develop thicker skins, so to speak, because they must forage for their food and become more independent.

As we drove around through Kline, Hesperus, and out to U. S. Highway 160, Clyde pointed out parcels where his cattle grazed during the past year. “Moving my cattle every two to four months, depending on the amount of rainfall dictating how fast the grass grows, is critical for healthy cows and healthy rangeland,” he said. This is a practice Clyde promotes through living example, with grazing permitees (people issued permits) via the BLM, and by educating his customers on how their food was raised.

Clyde sells most of his beef in bulk, instead of individual cuts, because this way he can keep down the price of the end product. He prefers to sell whole, half and quarter animals, which he receives orders for (with deposits) in the year. In many cases, these orders provide a year-long beef supply to a given family.

Clyde used to market a portion of his beef nationally through a mail order system. Recently, however, he has turned his focus to the local market, which he greatly prefers. He believes in producing food that his neighbors can afford, that is healthy and nutritious, and is raised in a way that takes care of the land that surrounds them.

Because Clyde sells all of his beef -- and a few chickens he raises each year -- directly to his customers, he uses the opportunity to educate them on how the animals were raised. He has given the books The Grassfed Gourmet, by Shannon Hayes, a cookbook and guide to the benefits of grassfed beef, and Holy Cows & Hog Heaven, by Joel Salatin, which also promotes grassfed livestock and local food options, to customers when they pick up their orders. The Johnsons take a holistic approach to producing food in the region. They believe in a system that offers real economic profits to the producer, and at the same time encourages sustainable land management.

PROFILE

ADOBE MILLING:
The Anasazi Bean Revival

Adobe Milling was started in 1983 to locally process the abundant supply of dry beans grown in the Dove Creek area. It is an area well known for dry bean, corn, and grain production. It is also an archaeological center, located on an agricultural plateau that was once home to thousands of ancestral puebloan indians who lived there for centuries and cultivated corn, squash and the Anasazi bean. These people built cities at Hovenweep, Chaco Canyon, and Mesa Verde.

The Anasazi bean was one of the few crops cultivated by the ancestral puebloans. Presently the beans are grown at 7,000 ft. of elevation on the same land the ancestral puebloans inhabited. Once a staple for natives, Anasazi beans are presently recognized as an heirloom, gourmet bean variety, and are sold as such.
HISTORY

In the 1980's, a member of an archeological team from UCLA was looking for remains of pygmy elephants that roamed the earth thousands of years ago in the area now known as New Mexico and came upon these beans. The beans were in a clay pot sealed with pine tar and were determined by radio carbon dating to be over 1,500 years old. When planted, some of the beans germinated. The beans were simply called "New Mexico Cave Beans" after the discovery of the half dozen or so found in a cave once inhabited by native people.

DESCRIPTION

The Anasazi bean is a member of the *Phaseolus* family and is related to the pinto bean. Fresh Anasazi beans are white with brownish-purple markings, while the dried ones are browner. When cooked, the beans are about half an inch (1.25cm) long, and their color fades to pinkish-beige.

The Anasazi bean provides a good example of a native food crop variety that has been revived and planted in an area where it was once a staple to the native population. It is also a crop adapted to the local environment, and even centuries later, produces well in the area. This bean is what Gary Nabhan of the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University refers to as a “heritage” variety, and gives insight into the types of food once enjoyed in the area. According to Gary, heritage foods exhibit exquisite historical flavors and provide a cultural legacy for future generations.

PROFILE

AN INTERVIEW WITH STONE FREE FARM

*A Diverse, Profitable, Three-Acre Vegetable Farm*

INTRODUCTION

Rosie Carter and her husband, Chuck Barry, are the owners of Stone Free Farm in Cortez. Since 1995 they’ve been producing over 20 different varieties of vegetables and herbs for local customers. Although they own 62 acres, they only cultivate three of those for their business.

Every week from mid-May thru October they harvest their crops by hand and deliver them directly to customers at area farmers’ markets and fine restaurants. They grow as nature intended, without the use of synthetic amendments of any sort. Instead, Rosie and Chuck utilize sustainable practices including crop rotation, water conservation and cover cropping. In this interview, Rosie provides insight as to how to run a successful farm operation, with examples detailing the growing and selling of agricultural products locally.

19 Story provided by Ellen’s Kitchen: [http://www.ellenskitchen.com/recipebox/beanspeas2.html](http://www.ellenskitchen.com/recipebox/beanspeas2.html)
Q. How long have you been farming? What brought you or your family into farming?
Rosie: I've been working on small-scale organic farms for 18 years and got into it when I was going to school in Santa Cruz, Calif., where there's a huge organic farm scene. Both my husband and I grew up with large, extended family gardens.

Q. Please describe your farming practices.
Rosie: We follow organic methods – crop rotation, cover cropping, drip irrigation, monitoring soil fertility, mechanical weed control, row covers to protect from insects, very few organic pesticides – encouraging diverse insect, bird and animal populations.

Q. Which of the crops, or value added products, are the most profitable for your farm and why?
Rosie: Lettuce mix, carrots, tomatoes and beets are our top four because they are popular items that we sell a lot of at a good price.

Q. How would you describe your experience farming in the Southwest, and what changes have you made seen since you began farming?
Rosie: Overall it's been a great experience – we have a successful business that allows us to work outdoors and to work seasonally. Since we began farming, the primary changes we have made have been to narrow down the crops we grow to only those that bring us a good return, and to hire more employees so that we don't have to kill ourselves.

Q. How do you sell your products?
Rosie: We sell about 90% at farmers' markets and the rest to restaurant accounts. All locally.

Q. If you have ever sold your products through a CSA, please tell us about your experience, the benefits and challenges.
Rosie: Yes, we had a small CSA for 8 years. It was a good way to market our produce and build our customer base when we started out, but we realized that it required a lot of extra work organizing people and we didn’t make any more (money). Also, we had to grow a wider variety of produce — vegetables that weren't very good moneymakers otherwise — so that people would have a good variety.

Q. Do you currently sell to any local restaurants, businesses or schools?
Rosie: Yes – Rico Hotel and José de Mancos.

Q. Do you have suggestions for food projects?
Rosie: Yes, farmers’ markets, farmer education / training, and cooking classes

Q. In what ways could you, or are you currently, participating in these programs? What resources would make participating in one of these programs easier for you as a farmer?
Rosie: We sell at two farmers’ markets, and I do the organization for one of those (Cortez). I've had talks with people about the idea of a farm-training program at the San Juan Basin Tech College, but it's still talk. I do not participate in cooking classes, although I like the idea. My main hurdle with all of these is lack of time.
PROFILE
SAN JUAN BIODIESEL:
A Possible Opportunity for Area Producers

Through construction of a locally and cooperatively owned bio-diesel production facility in the Four Corners area of southwest Colorado, San Juan Biodiesel (SJB) seeks to promote a strong agricultural sector, improve national security, produce air quality benefits and promote access to renewable fuels for a sustainable economy.

Jeff Berman, director of the San Juan Biodiesel (SJB) Project, became interested in the regional availability of biodiesel when he worked with Colorado Wild to encourage area ski resorts to use biodiesel to run their fleets of vehicles. At the time he learned biodiesel was hard to find, and that was when he began working with farmers to grow oil seed crops. He also began to think about what kinds of quantities could be grown in the local area.

Jeff knew he had to get farmer buy-in, and so he began to talk about his idea with area producers at the Durango Farmers’ Market. Two of the producers he approached initially were Trent Taylor and Greg Vlaming, who both became involved in the project.

Initial research to find available agricultural land for the project led him to Montezuma and Dolores counties, whose mainstay is agriculture, where he believed the project would be more feasible. This area could support the quantity of seed he would need, at a price he could afford. At this time, Jay Allen, the mayor of Dove Creek, also a farmer, became interested and involved in the project.

Jeff knew he also needed the support of area fleet owners, who would be the buyers of his product. So, he went to the fleet leaders (the potential biodiesel users) to do a feasibility study and began talking with a lot of farmers. The Colorado State University Extension Office in Dolores County, NRCS, Basin Cooperative and Farm Service agency staff all became involved at this point. In order to determine how much land needed to be put into production for the project, SJB completed a feasibility study of sunflower, safflower and soybean for oil.

According to Jeff, there are added benefits to growing oil crops beyond economics. “Sunflower is another value added crop that provides growers with more diversity in crop rotation. It allows them to spread out harvest and planting times.”

To make a Four Corners oil press and bio-diesel production facility a reality, SJB needed to assess the acreage that growers are likely to produce. Last winter, with the support of Dolores County Cooperative Extension and Basin Co-op, SJB sent 1,000 letters to farmers asking them for their support in the project and encouraging them to attend a workshop.

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22 Information for this profile came from both an in-person interview conducted by Katy Pepinsky with Jeff in June of 2006, and from SJB’s website: http://www.sanjuanbiodiesel.org/.
23 Colorado Wild works “to keep homes safe from naturally occurring forest fires, sustainably use forest resources without degrading the land, and to preserve the natural splendor of the Colorado Mountains for both native wildlife and a robust economy”.

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3.22 GROWING PARTNERS OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT
sponsored by Extension and Basin Co-op. The workshop served to teach growers about SJB, basic oil seed production techniques and to solidify grower interest and commitment.

Surveys were used to help SJB gauge how much acreage and on-farm storage could be available for production, and which of the oil seed crops (canola and sunflower) growers were likely to plant, given anticipated yields and oil seed rates. They began contracting for crops in April of 2006. SJB currently has 23 farmers signed up on 3,300 acres of land. In the contract they are offering a guaranteed price for products, and to pick up the crop from farmers.

Table 1. SUNFLOWER GROSS RETURNS COMPARED AGAINST OTHER CROPS IN THE FOUR CORNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Yield</th>
<th>Basis</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Gross ($)/acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunflower – Dry</strong></td>
<td>1200 lbs/acre, Current Projection, 11.0 c/lb.</td>
<td>$132.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beans – Dry</strong></td>
<td>500 lbs/acre, 10 Year Ave., 19.20 c/lb.</td>
<td>$96.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheat – Dry</strong></td>
<td>16.5 bushel/acre, 10 Year Ave., 3.24 / bu</td>
<td>$53.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunflower – Irrigated</strong></td>
<td>2600 lbs/acre, Current Projection, 11.0 c/lb.</td>
<td>$286.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oats – Irrigated</strong></td>
<td>90 bushel/acre, Current price, $2.06/bu</td>
<td>$185.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bio-diesel as a food resource?**

According to Jeff, when you press oil seeds only one third of what comes out goes to make the fuel. The rest comes out as meal, the remains of the seed. The meal (since it is such a considerable amount of what the plant will produce) needs to be sold to make the enterprise work. Jeff claims that when the plant is up and running, SJB will have the potential to produce two semi-truck loads of meal per day.

Because it has a high level of protein and fat, the meal is being considered as a livestock feed for area dairy cows, cattle, horses, poultry and hogs. Jeff feels that having a local livestock feed source could in turn create the opportunity to get a local dairy up and running again. There is also the possibility of making fish food with the meal. Jeff is also interested in whether the meal could be fed to humans. He is looking into what local industries exist that could use it in a food product, such as an energy bar.

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24 Initially, SJB anticipated offering 11.0¢/lb. Local sunflower test crops yielded an average of 1,266 lbs/acre, resulting in a $139.26/acre gross. Based on CSU sunflower trials in eastern Colorado, SJB expected between 2,200 and 3,000 lbs/acre sunflower irrigated. SJB anticipated being able to offer 11.0¢/lb for canola as well. Summer irrigated canola trials at the CSU Yellow Jacket experiment station yielded between 1,589 and 2,988 lbs/acre.
CHAPTER IV
A PROFILE OF FOOD RESOURCES & FOOD PROJECTS

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   • RURAL FOOD OPTIONS
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1. A PROFILE OF FARMERS’ MARKETS

Assessment Methodology: Each of the markets listed below was researched for information regarding date, time, and location. Several interviews were conducted with market managers and farmers to address the issues surrounding and faced by markets and to discuss the community and food resources they bestow. Also, in consumer surveys, participants were asked to identify food resources in the community. When this question was asked, a common response was the farmers’ market.

USDA STATISTICS

- The number of farmers’ markets in the United States has grown dramatically, increasing 111 percent from 1994 to 2004.
- According to the 2004 National Farmers’ Market Directory, there are over 3,700 farmers’ markets operating in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

All over the country, farmers’ markets have captured the heart and the spirit of the people in the communities they serve. Historically the only way to access fresh foods, consumers are returning to open-air markets and realizing the many benefits of purchasing food directly from the people who produce it.

The San Juan Basin is home to several markets, and following national trends, many new markets keep appearing. In 2006 eight were identified in the region.

Each of the markets profiled is unique in its own right. Some markets boast they only carry products from a 60-mile radius, and others have no limitations as to where the food comes from. Some simply ask vendors to show up when they have anything to sell. Some are producer-run, while others hire outside managers to run them.

THE FARMERS’ MARKET DIRECTOR PERSPECTIVE

Peg Redford, who has managed the Durango Farmers’ Market (DFM) for two consecutive seasons, spoke in length about how many aspects of community development a farmers’ market supports.

“Many people come (to the market) for the community connection. The personal connection and enthusiasm is phenomenal. All of the growers are passionate about what they are doing. The market creates a place for slow food. People stop and spend time at the market for three hours. People stay and visit with each other.” Peg Redford

1 http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/facts.htm
THE CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE

It’s clear the community at large views a farmers’ market as a food resource in the community. When asked to identify food resources for the purposes of the CFA, farmers’ markets were listed consistently.

Farmers’ markets have been identified as venues that support:

- Quality food that people want
- Education
- Community exchange
- Kids’ activities

PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

As an example of very basic market research, two farmers’ market coordinators were asked what items there could be more of at their markets. Peg identified a few items that either sell out very fast at DFM, or could be good items for local producers to consider: “Farm eggs, because no one can bring that many eggs. Vendors bring 10-12 dozen and sell out very fast. Goat cheese and yogurt could be a possibility. Although, these items have more complex regulations for processing and selling.”

Rosie Carter, who sells at the Cortez Farmers’ Market, suggests growers think about fresh berries. “Someone could do really well with berries. More fruit would do really well. No one in Cortez is making an effort to grow fruit.” She also suggests there could be more produce offered in Cortez, and that a business offering bread and other baked goods and snacks is something the Cortez market is lacking.

The Farmington and Aztec Farmers’ Markets have slightly different products available. New Mexico is home to a warmer climate and has greater cultural support for ethnic foods. Green chilies, melons, squash and fruit are common items at New Mexico farmers’ markets.

SUPPLY

There is a demand for more local food. However, in order to expand markets there must be enough local supply to support the expansion. On the consumer end there have been requests for one more market a week held in a variety of locations and venues. For this to happen there must be producer interest and willingness to participate in more markets and to simply grow more food.

Expanding production can be a scary thing for producers, who may already be pleased with their current circumstances. According to Peg Redford, “Right now supply and demand are pretty equal (at the DFM), but most definitely the demand is growing. Bread Bakery cannot bring enough product; they always sell out. Vendors such as James Ranch Artisan Cheese, Stonefree Farms and Sutherland Farms all have lines five-people deep before the 8 o’clock chime rings. At the end of market everything is gone! People are sold out.” The DFM receives between 600 – 1,000 customers a week.
CLIENTELE DIVERSITY

Each market hosts a slightly different clientele. In Durango the patrons are mostly Anglo, which is something Peg Redford would like to change. She wants the Latino population to feel comfortable at the DFM, but she realizes they aren’t at this point. She attributes this to several factors. “Latinos don’t perceive the DFM as ‘their market’. Many don’t own land here, so they can’t be vendors. This means they cannot purchase food from other Latinos. Also, many don’t speak enough English to ask about prices… they can’t communicate this and are shy to come to the market.”

To address some of the issues surrounding ethnic diversity at the DFM and to increase access of fresh, local foods to the low-income sector of the local population, Beth LaShell, Professor at Fort Lewis College and Research Associate at the San Juan Basin Research Station, has proposed a series of creative solutions. In December of 2006, Beth submitted a grant proposal to the Western Division of the Sustainable Agriculture, Research, and Education Program (WSARE) to connect county WIC recipients to local food sources. According to Beth, the project hopes to “strengthen local agriculture in Southwest Colorado by increasing awareness and education (through) monthly farm tours and general nutrition and cooking training for low-income program participants.” She also hopes it will expand the customer base at the DFM to be more inclusive. This should ultimately result in new relationships between customers and producers that will encourage greater sustainability in the production of local foods.

The Cortez Farmers’ Market (CFM) is a different scene. According to Rosie Carter, though the market has changed as Cortez has changed, it still supports a pretty diverse clientele. When Rosie first began selling products at the CFM twelve years ago, the market had the reputation for being the place to go to get cheap food. At that time, items were hawked by the bushel or in bulk, rather than sold individually as is more commonly seen today. What you see more of now, she says, is that “farmers’ market prices are more competitive with grocery stores; farmers seem to be selling things to actually make a living.”

The Farmington Farmer’s Market (FFM) hosts an EBT Program, meaning they accept food stamps for farmers’ market goods, and a WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. Both of these programs attempt to diversify the farmers’ market atmosphere by making locally produced, fresh foods available to Food Stamp and WIC participants through coupons redeemable at the market. For this reason, the FFM now hosts an additional market each week, on Tuesdays, as the organizers found low-income customers were more likely to shop on a weekday evening rather than on the weekends.

“I would like to see more outreach to low-income, WIC recipients, and the Native American and Latino populations that I don’t see at the DFM. These people deserve to have whole, fresh foods as well.”

Peg Redford
A FARMERS’ MARKET DIRECTORY

AZTEC
Location: Westside Plaza in Aztec, NM
Time: Wednesdays, 4:30PM – 6PM
Description: The Aztec Farmers’ Market hosts an EBT Program, which means Food Stamps are redeemable at the market.

BAYFIELD
Location: Bayfield Town Park, Highway 160 just west of Bayfield, CO
Time: 8:30AM – 12PM
Description: This market started 16 years ago in Gem Village. It is now housed in beautiful Town Park off of Highway 160 under the cottonwood trees that line the Pine River. The market hosts approximately 10 vendors, mostly producers and some craft people. The market welcomes anyone interested in selling his or her products and does not charge for membership. This market was started by a group of dedicated regional farmers who first hoped to sell their products in the city of Durango. The market later moved to its current home of Bayfield Town Park. The Bayfield Farmers’ Market (BFM) is still very loose in structure. In fact, the person who runs the market prefers it this way and hopes that this type of market will continue to encourage backyard gardeners and those interested in trying to farm to, in essence, test their products for market in this comfortable, laid-back setting. The BFM tries to encourage as much local product be sold as possible, but occasionally it does have vendors re-selling products from the Palisade region of the state.

CORTEZ
Location: Cortez Courthouse Parking Lot on Main Street in Cortez, CO
Time: Saturdays, 7:30AM – 11AM
Description: The Cortez Farmers’ Market is hosted by the Montezuma Cooperative Extension Office and has been running for 27 years. It has approximately 40 vendors who sell all types of fresh produce, dry beans, honey, beef and lamb. They also host live music every weekend and host a wellness tent that offers massage, aromatherapy, facials and more.
DOLORES
Location: Town Hall Parking Lot, 420 Railroad in Dolores, CO
Time: Wednesdays, 4PM
Description: Five years ago, the owner of the Dolores Food Market, Tazwell Vass, started this farmers’ market in his grocery’s parking lot. Eventually outgrowing this location, it moved to Town Hall and now has about 15 vendors. The market is laid-back in nature; vendors pay no fees, show up when they have something to sell and stay until they are sold out. The Dolores market hosts many backyard gardeners as well as production-size farms.

DURANGO
Location: First National Bank Parking Lot, 8th Street in Durango, CO
Time: Saturdays, 8AM – 12PM
Season: Mid May – the end of October
Description: “It is the mission of the Durango Farmers Market (DFM) to strengthen community ties to agriculture by providing a venue for regional agricultural producers to sell their products. By preserving open space, by promoting healthy farming practices and by providing educational benefits through hands-on experience, the DFM seeks to improve the quality of life for all community members.” The DFM is a locally based market, sourcing food, fiber, and crafts from within a 60-mile radius. They host approximately fifty vendors, kids’ activities, a Master Gardener booth and live music.

FARMINGTON
Location: Animas Park, off Browning Parkway in Farmington, NM
Time: Saturdays, 8AM – 11AM, Tuesdays, 4:30PM – 6:30PM
Season: First week in July – mid October
Description: This market is run by the Cooperative Extension Office and the Farmington Chamber of Commerce. It hosts farmers and ranchers from within a 100-mile radius from backyard to full production scale. The market has been in operation since 1992 and has up to 30 vendors. It hosts a WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, where WIC participants are issued coupons specifically for fresh market produce, and in 2007 will host a Food Stamp EBP Program to accept food stamps for market produce. The Extension Office offers recipes, food preservation tips, some cooking demonstrations and gardening fact sheets to customers.
MANCOS
Location: 300 North Willow Street, at the corner of Willow and Hwy 160 in Mancos, CO
Time: Thursdays, 3PM – 6PM
Season: June – October
Description: This market just completed its first year. It was started by the people at Zuma Natural Foods in Mancos, whose goal is to support ethical consumer choices and local food systems.

TELLURIDE
Location: South Oak Street in Telluride, CO
Season: June – October
Time: Fridays, 12PM – 4PM
Description: Started just 4 years ago, the Telluride market is home to approximately 15-20 local vendors. The market carries fresh organic fruits and vegetables, grass-fed elk, buffalo, lamb and beef, and items such as honey, juice, cider, jams, fresh breads, herbal tinctures and fresh-cut flowers.

2. CHARITABLE FOOD PROGRAMS

Assessment Methodology: The information for this section came from 23 Growing Partners Program Surveys completed as in-person interviews by staff and volunteers. Due to time restraints, some of the surveys were completed without interviews. The surveys were completed between May and September 2006. The surveys were presented as a tool to identify the food needs and resources of the communities the programs serve, and to provide a baseline of information on all the programs in the area that either offer food or may be interested in future community food projects.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A RESOURCE GUIDE

A need for an accessible list of charitable food programs was expressed by two agencies serving low-income individuals and their families in La Plata and Archuleta counties. They wanted a guide to serve low-income program recipients and agencies, leading these people to further available food resources. Although it does not currently contain contact information for the programs it mentions, the guide is meant to create greater awareness about the agencies that offer food-related programming in the area. It is the hope of Growing Partners to further develop this section of the assessment to meet the needs of specific organizations and individuals.

Note: This request was made by an agency that serves the Latino, and mostly recent, immigrant population. Their hope was that there could be a guide to serve those just arriving to the county, who were not familiar with charitable programs, with those resources available to them in the community.
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5. MANNA SOUP KITCHEN
6. SOUTHERN UTE FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM
7. WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN PROGRAM (WIC)

1. USDA COMMODITIES, THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)

Mission or Goal
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) supplements the diets of low-income needy persons, including elderly people, by providing emergency food and nutrition assistance.

“This program is available to all people within the guidelines regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap, according to quantities available.”

Commodities Food Distribution flyer

Background
Emergency Food Assistance is distributed in Durango at the La Plata County Fairgrounds for the Durango and Ignacio communities, and in Bayfield at the Senior Center. The distributions are made by the Durango Food Bank on a quarterly basis. Quantities are limited, so they are distributed on a first come, first served basis.

Population served
Participants must qualify based on monthly income levels. Income is based on household size compared to monthly earnings. For current income guidelines, contact the Durango Food Bank.

2. DURANGO FOOD BANK

Background
This service is only offered to participants once every three months. Thus, it is designed to help people in an emergency situation. The Food Bank distributes exclusively on donated food from places like City Market, Albertson’s, food drives (at the Post Office) and donor bins in the City Market and Albertson’s grocery stores. They also receive leftover items from the Food Share Program’s distributions.

Population served
Participants can be anyone living in La Plata County who obtains a referral to the Food Bank from an accredited agency. These referrals verify the clients’ need for service by requiring the applicant to fill out a form that provides basic information about them. Referrals come from agencies like Human Services, the VOA Shelter, the Safe House, Community Connections and local churches.
3. FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Mission or Goal
Food Stamps Make America Stronger: The Food Stamp Program helps people with little or no income buy nutritious food.

Background
The La Plata County Food Stamp Program office is housed in the Office of Social Services in Durango. For someone to qualify, he or she must submit an application. Food stamps are issued in monetary allotments based on the number of people in the household who qualify. They can be used at local grocery stores and convenience stores that accept food stamps to purchase food. Food stamps cannot be used to buy alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, household supplies or other non-food items. They cannot be used for food that will be eaten in the store, or for hot foods that are ready to eat.

Population served
Participants are required to have a Social Security Number and must qualify based on income. Other resources, such as bank accounts, household resources and assets, must be below a certain level.

4. FOOD SHARE

Mission or Goal
The goal of Food SHARE is to help families save about 50% on their groceries, while encouraging the building of relationships with their neighbors in the community.

Background
Food SHARE is a once-a-month food program that operates much like a co-op buying club. Participants can order food through the Archdiocese of Denver, which purchases food in bulk and ships orders from a central warehouse facility in Colorado Springs. Regionally, Cortez, Aztec, Mancos, Dolores and Durango receive Food SHARE deliveries.

Population served
If you eat, you qualify.

5. MANNA SOUP KITCHEN

Mission
We provide nourishing meals for those who are hungry in the name of Jesus Christ.

Goal
To assure that in this community of plenty, no one goes hungry. A hot nutritious meal is served seven days per week to all those in need.
Background
Manna Soup Kitchen was founded in May 1986. In the winter of 1985 a woman died from starvation and exposure at the Durango Fairgrounds in a horse stall. Written on the wall were the words “Nobody cares.” This tragedy resulted in a small group of Christians organizing to provide food for the hungry. Meals were served in motor home parking lot on tables carried from the basement of the Spanish Assembly of God Church. This became Manna’s permanent home for the next 8 years. In 1992, Sacred Heart Catholic Church offered their parish hall to serve meals. By 2000, plans were made for a facility to serve over 150 persons a hot meal, out of the rain and snow. The new facility was completed in 2002.

Population served
All hungry persons, including college students, single parents, low income families, the working poor and anyone else in need. There is no geographic boundary for the population served; Manna has clients from Farmington, Ignacio and other communities. In 2005, the soup kitchen served 36,124 meals, which works out to be approximately 100 meals per day.

6. SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE, FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM
Mission or Goal
To provide food assistance to Tribal members.

Background
Historically the Bureau of Indian Affairs would distribute food rations as federal food assistance to the Tribe. The US Government allotted food rations to each native family at a time when they were trying to convert many of the Utes into subsistence farmers. Dave Sanford, of Tribal Extension Services, recalls, “Truckloads of food would be ordered from all over the state. In the old days this is how many of the Tribal members got their food, their staples, and they would hang on to these and use them throughout the year.” This system, mostly due to tradition, is still in place today. Although it has changed slightly, it is now administered by the Tribe. Similar to the USDA Commodities Program that serves La Plata County, this program offers federal commodity shipments, but they are exclusively for Tribal members.

Population served
Southern Ute Tribal members.

7. WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN PROGRAM (WIC)
Mission or Goal
“WIC was established more than 30 years ago to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. It provides nutritious foods to supplement diets (in the form of grocery store vouchers), as well as providing

“We provide people with a warm, safe, communal place to go.”
Kim Workman, Manna Soup Kitchen

“Sometimes the food provided by WIC is the only food available to a family.”
Betzi Murphy, M.S. R.D., WIC Director
information on healthy eating, breastfeeding, and referrals to other health care and social service programs.” Betzi Murphy, Area WIC Director

**Background**

The WIC foods offered at no charge to participants often include milk, cheese, eggs, cereal, juice and peanut butter or beans. Currently, changes in the foods packages are in the works and may soon allow for more variety and flexibility in what is offered.

Examples of some agencies and programs that WIC staff may refer their clientele to include: Medicaid, Head-Start, San Juan Kids, the Nurse-Family Partnership program, Dept. of Human Services, Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs, prenatal and family planning care, doctor and dental offices and immunization programs.

**Population served**

Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding (up to 1 year after delivery), non-breastfeeding women (up to 6 months after delivery), infants up to 1 year of age, and children up to age 5 are eligible. They must meet a state residency requirement and income guidelines. The San Juan Basin Health Department WIC serves La Plata, San Juan, and Archuleta counties.

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**OTHER AGENCIES OFFERING FOOD PROGRAMS WITH AN INTEREST IN COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS**

There are over 100 non-profit and public service agencies in La Plata County. Many of these agencies, while it is not their primary mission, offer food related programming and services. This is a list of agencies and some of the food related programs they offer.

This by no means is a complete list, but can be used as an example of how connecting with other agencies in a community creates a stronger, diverse network in which to offer and address food-related programming.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS INCORPORATED**

*Mission or Goal:* To educate businesses, families, and communities to be advocates for change and to promote independence and to provide opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

*Population served:* The developmentally disabled

*Food related programs offered:* Grocery services, nutrition and cooking classes.

*Community food projects of interest:* They have a greenhouse and garden space that they would like to get up and running. They also have interest in farm tours for their participants and cooking classes.

**DURANGO COMMUNITY SHELTER**

*Mission or Goal:* To serve as an advocate for the homeless, as a community resource center, to provide community education, and to treat people with dignity and respect.

*Population served:* Homeless children, women, and men in La Plata County

“There needs to be communication between agencies so resources are pooled, not abused.” Angie Raulston, First United Methodist Church
Food related programs offered: The shelter provides three meals per day. Individual and group nutritional and dietary information is communicated. There is a garden located on shelter property. Community food projects of interest: Transportation initiatives, community gardens, and cooking/nutritional workshops.

FAMILY CENTER OF DURANGO
Mission or Goal: To provide support for families through parent education and family support programs.
Population served: Low-income families in Durango are served through the Family Support Program and all community members are served through the Parent Education Program. In 2006, the parent program (La Plata Family Centers Coalition) served 4,000 individuals in La Plata County.
Food related programs offered: Food Bank and Food SHARE program referrals and assistance, mini food pantry access and emergency food relief programs.
Community food projects of interest: Affordable cooking classes that incorporate education, community garden programs, and school gardens.

FAMILY CENTER OF FORT LEWIS MESA
Mission or Goal: To provide support for families through sponsoring activities, support services, referrals to Family Center programs etc.
Population served: 900 residents in Fort Lewis Mesa, Rafter J, Mancos Hill, May Day: up to the state line
Food related programs offered: Food Bank and Food SHARE program referrals and assistance, mini food pantry referrals, referrals to LDS Church for support, school does a food drive and delivers to food to 5 families; this is PTO sponsored.
Community food projects of interest: Transportation; seniors could be taken in for shopping.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF DURANGO
Mission or Goal: To offer emergency assistance to those in need.
Population served: 25 adults in La Plata County. They deal one-on-one with people in need and do not advertise.
Food related programs offered: The church refers people to the Durango Food Bank and to Manna Soup Kitchen after offering them $10 City Market Cash Cards. They also have funds donated by members so that they can offer assistance apart from Charitable Food Programs.
Community food projects of interest: Transportation services

HAR SHALOM
Mission or Goal: Har Shalom is an unaffiliated Jewish community for the Four Corners area.
Population served: Jews and their families
Food related programs offered: NA
Community food projects of interest: Har Shalom would like to be a conduit between food related issues in the community and the Jewish population. They are interested in starting a garden, but are concerned about maintenance.

LA PLATA COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES
Mission or Goal: La Plata County Senior Services is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all people and helping them age with dignity and purpose. Through information, advocacy, and service, we are committed to building a healthier community.
Population served: Seniors
Food related programs offered: La Plata County Senior Services offers a variety of services for Durango, Ignacio, and Bayfield residents including nutritional meals, home chore services, transportation, family caregiver support, information, referral and outreach. Congregate meals are served at the Durango/ La Plata Senior Center, 2424 Main Avenue, Durango at 12:00 noon Monday through Friday. Meals on Wheels are also delivered to homebound seniors daily. The SUCAP Senior Center in Ignacio prepares and serves congregate meals at 115 N. Goddard Avenue, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Meals on Wheels are delivered to homebound seniors in Bayfield and Ignacio Monday through Friday. Congregate meals are available for Bayfield seniors on Fridays at the old Middle School, 110 South Street. The suggested donation price for all sites is $3.00 for adults age 60 and over. Cost for adults under 60 is $5.

Community food projects of interest: Having an intergenerational horticultural therapy program. Raised beds.

LA PLATA YOUTH SERVICES
Mission or Goal: To prevent further penetration of the juvenile justice system.
Population served: La Plata County youth, ages 7-18
Food related programs offered: As part of “Growth Education,” La Plata Youth Services psycho-educational support group program, youth participate in a session that focuses on health and nutrition. They have been the volunteer work force for The Garden Project of SW Colorado since 1998, assisting with garden education and maintenance.
Community food projects of interest: Cooking classes for youth, attendance at a farmers’ market with a mentor or parent more than 1 time/week and planting gardens to lower the cost of organic fresh vegetables.

SAN JUAN BASIN HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Mission or Goal: To enhance the personal and environmental health of our community through education, advocacy, collaboration, and the direct provision of services; preventing disease and disability, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, preserving and restoring the environment and assuring basic health services for all.
Population served: La Plata and Archuleta counties; some service to San Juan and Montezuma counties also.
Food related programs offered: The San Juan Basin Health Department is home to WIC, Promoviendo la Salud, and Prenatal and Family Planning offices. All personal health programs may have a nutrition component.
Community food projects of interest: Food Banks with healthier choices, enabling gardens, and cooking classes.

SAN JUAN BASIN HEALTH DEPARTMENT – Prenatal and Family Planning Clinic
Mission or Goal: Family Planning: Contribute to a reduction in unintended pregnancy, provide preventative health screenings, and improve reproductive health of individuals and communities. Prenatal: Provide prenatal healthcare and education, contribute to healthier birth weights, and support healthy families through partnerships with community based and other public healthcare providers working with at-risk populations.
Population served: Adults and youth in La Plata and Archuleta counties
Food related programs offered: Referrals to WIC, Share Our Strengths (SOS)
Community food projects of interest: NA
SAN JUAN BASIN HEALTH DEPARTMENT – Promoviendo la Salud

Mission or Goal: To reduce health disparities among Latinos in La Plata and Archuleta counties. Population served: Latino population in both La Plata and Archuleta counties: established families & new immigrants
Food related programs offered: Cooking classes, sponsored by Share our Strength: Operation Frontline, a nutrition education and financial planning program nationally sponsored by Tyson Foods, Inc.
Community food projects of interest: Cooking classes and grocery store tours — having someone go to Wal-Mart and take people around the store to tell them more about certain products. Teach people how to read labels, to understand things such as serving size, salt content, sugar content: breaking the language barrier for those people who can barely read English.

SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION

Mission or Goal: To promote responsible care of natural and cultural resources through education and hands-on involvement that inspires respect and reverence for our lands. Population served: Outdoor recreationists, school children, and families
Food related programs offered: Edible plant walks, working with schools (in Dolores) on a greenhouse project
Community food projects of interest: Service learning projects for youth aimed at connecting them with the land (gardening, etc.), edible plant walks, and wild food cooking classes.

SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS

Mission or Goal: To empower individuals to positively impact their lives, their communities, and the environment. Population served: People in the San Luis Valley, Southwest Colorado, Southern Arizona, Western New Mexico, and Southeastern Utah.
Food related programs offered: Southwest Conservation Corps uses the Durango Food Bank, food SHARE, and various distributors and grocery stores to provide food for their crews, trying to source healthy, organic foods for participants. Crews cook together while camping on 11-day hitches.
Community food projects of interest: Community gardens, and they might have a plot to contribute for a garden in the future.

SOUTHWEST SAFEHOUSE

Mission or Goal: To provide a temporary home for women and children survivors of domestic violence and other violent crimes and to encourage a positive and successful lifestyle, free from fear and violence. Population served: Women and children survivors of domestic violence and children and their mothers who are victims of child abuse
Food related programs offered: Gardening and occasional individual and group meetings to discuss nutrition. They supply three meals per day to residents of the shelter, and often, past residents enjoy meals at the Safehouse. They also provide food boxes to past residents when extra food is available.
Community food projects of interest: Transportation services, community gardens, and cooking and nutritional workshops.

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1 Operation Frontline, a direct service program of Share our Strength, offers short and long-term solutions to malnutrition through education by providing hands-on knowledge and skills for daily living. www.strength.org/oflcolorado
SUN UTE RECREATION CENTER

Mission or Goal: To expand and improve the quality of life for the Southern Ute Tribal Members and surrounding communities by stimulating social, physical, emotional, mental, cultural and spiritual growth through recreational activities.

Tribal Vision: Mankind has a universal need during milestones of time to gather together in celebration of where we have been and what we want to become. Native Americans celebrate mind, body and spirit through events that share wisdom; through participation in games and physical contest; and thus renew cultural values to a higher power. Toward this end, we strive to constantly improve ourselves for the membership we serve.

Population served: Ignacio: Tribal and non-Tribal members

Food related programs offered: The Senior Program combines social orientation with healthy eating and physical activity. They host a Friday breakfast serving healthy options and offer low cholesterol and diabetes conscious cooking classes.

Community food projects of interest: Linking food and agricultural projects to Native agriculture, cooking classes, and youth community gardens.

SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO

Farm-to-School Working Group

Mission or Goal: To ensure that our Pre-K through College students consume the highest quality, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate foods from local farms and ranches.

Population served: Pre-K through college students throughout the county is the target population.

Food related programs offered: Currently small, but very nutritious amounts of local greens are being supplied to nine local schools with salad bars as one of the first steps in this program. Special event meals featuring local foods.

Community food projects of interest: Farm tours, farmer/rancher presentations in classrooms, school gardens, and cooking classes all support the goal of more local foods consumed by school children.

3. GROCERY AND RETAIL FOOD OUTLETS

Assessment Methodology: Volunteers completed grocery store data collection between March and September of 2006. They were asked to retrieve information on commercial, local, and organic price points from each store. In addition to price points, volunteers interviewed staff and store managers to ask questions about who are the major food distributors, and where are they based; about availability of and demand for culturally appropriate foods; about the challenges and benefits of working with local food vendors and distributors; and about transportation and access to the store.

INTRODUCTION

A survey of grocery stores and other retail food outlets was completed to assess availability and affordability of various foods in rural and urban parts of the county. Thirteen supermarkets, local markets, convenience stores and one buying club were surveyed to compare the availability and price of certain products.

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4 All numbers, with the exception of BLS statistics, listed in this chart are based on the lowest available product price/brand. Due to fluctuations guided by the national market, it must also be taken into account the price of these goods constantly changes.

This data is used to show price differences in La Plata County versus a national average. Because affordability of local and organic foods is a common concern for the support for a locally based food economy, this data also compares the cost of commercial foods, locally produced and processed foods and organic options.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides an average U.S. city price for food items. These prices were taken into account to compare the information drawn from La Plata County grocery stores to those on a national scale.

**PRICE POINTS & AVAILABILITY OF LOCAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

Table 1. LA PLATA COUNTY COMMERCIAL, LOCAL, ORGANIC PRODUCT PRICE POINTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>BLS September 2003 average prices</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Organic</th>
<th>Food Buying Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ gal. nonfat milk</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ gal. whole milk</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ gal. soy milk</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 oz. cheddar</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 oz. mozzarella</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 dozen eggs</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. chicken</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>6.9914</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. turkey</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. dried lentils</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. dried beans</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 oz. can tuna</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. ground beef</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whole wheat bread, 1 loaf</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. rice bulk</td>
<td>0.4617</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 oz. bag rice</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 oz. bag spaghetti</td>
<td>0.87/lb</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flour tortillas (12)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn tortillas (12)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. apples</td>
<td>1.0218</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.1619</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6 All La Plata County data for commercial, local, and organic price points is based on averages from 11 grocery stores.
8 This information applies to in-season products.
9 ShopNatural is a local food buying club based in Tucson, AZ that makes monthly deliveries to Durango. www.tcwfoodcoop.com
10 Data is not available for these food items from BLS.
11 The most recent BLS data for milk is only for the whole variety in 1997. http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost.
12 Grade A, large
13 Fresh, whole
14 This item is a boneless, skinless chicken breast. It is listed to show that there is a local chicken option, even though the price is for another variety of chicken.
15 The most recent BLS data for ground beef is from September 2006. http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost.
16 Only available data is for white bread: The most recent BLS data for bread is from September 2006. http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost.
17 White, long grain, uncooked
18 Red delicious variety
19 Most of the local apples now come from local, urban, hobby backyard gardens. DNF used to carry apples from White Buffalo Farm in Paonia, but as gas prices increased, this prohibited the farm from making any more deliveries to Durango. Also, Kiva Orchard, an organic orchard in Durango that supplied the Durango farmers’ market, a CSA, and local grocery stores, went out of business last year.
### LOCAL OPTIONS

Although the prices on many local food items are slightly more than the conventional food price, comparing local food options to more conventional options is like comparing apples to oranges – the products are very different in their make-up and in their social implications. Local food, for the purposes of this study, is food grown, raised or processed within a six county radius. (La Plata; Archuleta; Montezuma, San Juan, CO; San Juan, NM and Dolores.) This food, because it travels a shorter distance, can be picked “ready to eat” at peak ripeness. Because the food travels a short distance, it uses less fossil fuel to transport from farm to table. And, because in many cases the food is delivered directly by local farmers and ranchers, more of the food dollar spent on that food goes directly into the pockets of the people who produced it.

Durango Natural Foods, Nature’s Oasis, and Mountain Valley Market, the “natural” food stores, seem to be the most committed to working with local purveyors. As locally owned, independent stores, they can choose where they source product and can use a variety of vendors. Although these stores may have more flexibility, they have less buying power. They must often place small orders and do not receive the type of price breaks the large chains or conglomerates enjoy.

The Welkers, who opened Mountain Valley Market in Bayfield two years ago, also own a farm. Being farmers themselves, they wanted to open a store committed to working with local farmers and ranchers. They currently work with Chimney Rock Farms, RAS Farms, Sunnyside Meats, and Desert Sun Coffee. They also carry apricots, raspberries and other fruits from local folks. The Welkers have a 3,000 square foot greenhouse, which they plant with greens, tomatoes, peppers, herbs and other items to sell in the store.

Durango Natural Foods (DNF), a cooperative market, and Nature’s Oasis, a locally owned natural food store, are committed to carrying local products. Both DNF and Nature’s Oasis receive produce from Chimney Rock Farms, RAS Farms, and Stone Free Farms, who all make seasonal deliveries to the store. In addition to the items listed in our chart, these stores are carrying local items such as flour, chocolate, jelly, honey, pesto spreads, and a line of raw, organic snacks from the local non-profit Turtle Lake Refuge.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Local Price</th>
<th>Conventional Price</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. oranges</td>
<td>1.48 20</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. onions</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. carrots</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.25/bunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. tomatoes</td>
<td>1.91 21</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. salad greens</td>
<td>0.95 22</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>5.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. bananas</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. potatoes</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. coffee</td>
<td>3.17 23</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>8.82 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 oz jar peanut butter</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 The most recent BLS data for navel oranges is from September 2006. [http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost](http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost).
21 Field grown varieties: The most recent BLS data for tomatoes is from September 2006. [http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost](http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost).
22 Iceberg: The most recent BLS data for lettuce is from September 2006. [http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost](http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost).
23 Ground roast: The most recent BLS data for coffee is from September 2006. [http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost](http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost).
24 Although coffee beans are harvested from all over the world, there are several Durango-based coffee roasters and packers. Each of these companies practices Fair Trade and has organic options.
ORGANIC OPTIONS

Once only available at “natural food stores” organic products are making their way onto most grocery store shelves. This is evident in La Plata County, where most stores are now carrying at least some organic products.

There are also stores in the county that are committed to providing almost exclusively natural and organic food products. The greatest organic food selection in La Plata County is still found at DNF, Mountain Valley Market and Nature’s Oasis. City Market North and South have the greatest selection of organic products for chain grocery stores in the county, and Mountain Valley Market has a great selection for a rural market.

As seen in the news, Wal-Mart is making a commitment to carry more organic products. Our survey, which took place in July, notes that Wal-Mart currently offers organic milk, natural meats and few organic produce items. Where they seemed to have more organic options were in the canned and processed food aisles. These include items such as organic stewed tomatoes, canned fruits, jams, jellies, granola bars and cereals.

The main organic distributors are Veritable Vegetable, a produce provider out of Los Angeles, CA; Rainbow Distributing, a provider of organic and natural grocery items owned by United Natural Foods Incorporated (UNFI), which has a warehouse in Denver, CO; and Nobel Sysco, a provider of restaurant/deli items that has started to carry more organic options.

A local buying club

ShopNatural Cooperative 25 is a company based out of Tucson, Arizona that delivers natural and organic foods at reduced, wholesale prices to established buying clubs. This enables individuals to buy organic food at prices just above what most grocery stores pay for their food. The Durango area receives a shipment from ShopNatural once a month, and buying clubs meet the truck to get their delivery. 26 The general manager, Reggie Smith, is currently trying to develop ways to work with more regional producers to carry their products.

RURAL FOOD OPTIONS

As is evident by the data, national food cost averages are lower than what is available in La Plata County. 27 Prices vary depending on product as well. In some cases, local is less expensive than organic, and rural less expensive than urban. What is evident is that there are more choices in the urban setting, and for this reason many rural inhabitants tend to use urban markets to make their food purchases.

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25 ShopNatural, formerly known as Tucson Cooperative Warehouse, has been in business for over 30 years. They now offer more than 7,000 products to thousands of individuals in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. They also accept Food Stamps. For more information, see their website: www.tcwfoodcoop.com.

26 A partial list of ShopNatural’s products and their prices is available in Table 1.1. For a more complete list, or to find out how to get involved in the Buying Club, see their website.

27 Let it be noted, however, these are city averages, and due to La Plata County’s rural and isolated aspects, these prices are less applicable.
Table 2. RURAL VERSUS URBAN GROCERY STORE PRODUCT PRICE POINTS28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>BLS September 2003 average prices</th>
<th>URBAN</th>
<th>RURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ gal. nonfat milk</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ gal. whole milk</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ gal. soy milk</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 oz. cheddar</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 oz. mozzarella</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 dozen eggs</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. chicken</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. turkey</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>4.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. dried lentils</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. dried beans</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 oz. can tuna</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. ground beef</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 loaf whole wheat bread</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. rice bulk</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 oz. bag rice</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 oz. bag spaghetti</td>
<td>0.87/lb</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flour tortillas (12)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn tortillas (12)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. apples</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. oranges</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. onions</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. carrots</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. tomatoes</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. salad greens</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. bananas</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. potatoes</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. coffee</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 oz jar peanut butter</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expanding rural food options and increasing rural food security

As consumer demand for both local and organic food options has increased in La Plata County, so too has the supply of these products in all grocery stores, rural and urban. The two ‘natural’ food rural markets that opened in the past two years in La Plata County, Mountain Valley Market and Mesa Mercantile, are each the passionate venture of a local farm and ranch family to bring healthy, sustainable food options to the communities in which they live.

**HESPERUS**

The Mesa Mercantile, in Red Mesa, has reopened under the ownership of a local rancher dedicated to carrying local and organic food options for her neighbors. Denise Boheimer, the owner, works with ShopNatural and Rainbow Natural Foods (UNFI) to receive natural and organic foods for the store. Denise is committed to carrying as many local products from area farmers as possible, however she did note that obtaining availability lists from producers was a challenge. She currently carries Blue Horizons flour and Butter Sweet soaps, both from producers in the Fort Lewis Mesa District located close to her store.

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28 All products listed are commercial price points. For more information about organic and local options in rural markets, please see the section: “organic and local choices in rural markets” on the following page.
BAYFIELD

Mountain Valley Market offers local products close to home. Dedicated to selling as many local products as possible, the Welker’s opened their store close to their own farm in Bayfield.

The Grocery Store in Bayfield has an adequate selection of organic options for a rural, mostly conventional, grocery store. They carry organic milk, soymilk, butter and bagged lettuces. These products are integrated into the store, i.e., there is no separate organic section. Although these make up a small portion of product carried in the store, the owner, tries to get what organic products he can from the one distributor he works with, Associated Foods out of Amarillo, TX. He has worked with Miller Farms to carry some seasonal produce like squash. However, he mentioned that ordering from several vendors creates more work for his small staff, and is a segment of his store he currently chooses not to expand. Other rural grocery stores carry organic soymilk, and some local beans from Adobe Milling in Cortez.

Rural consumer demand affects product availability

Although some rural market owners are committed to carrying local, organic products, this may not be what is most in demand from their customers.

Mesa Market at the corner of Highway 160 and 172, also known as Elmore’s Corner, is a good example of how consumer demand can directly affect a stores’ product availability. The owner, Jody Gans, who has been living on the northeast side of the county for 15 years, remembers when he would have to drive to South City Market to pick up a food item. “There just wasn’t any other option, and I wanted to provide a place where people could pick up something they may need for a recipe without driving into town.”

Over time, Jody has developed his stores’ product list based on what sells. His top selling items are frozen, convenience foods – items that customers can pick up on their way home and cook easily without much time – like frozen pizzas and frozen dinners, candy, and tobacco products²⁹, in that order. He only carries a few fresh fruits and vegetables. When he does, he only carries one variety of each, not multiple varieties of apples, oranges and other fruits. On September 8, the day of the survey, he did have fresh tomatoes, lemons and limes.

Jody works with local vendors to source some of his products, and although they don’t sell as fast as candy and tobacco, as a small local business owner, he is committed to supporting other small local businesses. Some of the local products he carries include: elk jerky, Durango Diner chili, CJ’s Burritos and products from Adobe Milling and Honeyville.

Lake Vallecito Market is a rural market/convenience store that caters to tourists and non-locals. Due to the nature of their clientele, they have food available mostly in “weekend quantities” and a very limited number of choices. They have a restaurant on site and do offer a large selection of food choices there. According to the volunteer that completed the survey, the Vallecito Market is geared towards a tourist crowd and serves many more processed, easy to prepare items.

²⁹ Jody had to keep increasing the amount of tobacco products that he carries. Now makes up over 20% of his TOTAL sales.
CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOOD OPTIONS FOR LATINOS

Expanding culturally appropriate food options for Latinos in La Plata County

As noted in our Latino interviews\(^{30}\), the availability of culturally appropriate food choices for Latinos in La Plata County is an issue. In fact, many Latinos travel to Farmington, NM, 50 miles from Durango, to make their food purchases. In Farmington there are more Latino grocery stores and food options.

There is, however, hope for more culturally appropriate food choices in La Plata County on the horizon. In completing a restaurant survey with Fiesta Mexicana, a Mexican food restaurant located on North Main Street in Durango, staff reported plans to open a Mexican foods grocery store in the white stucco building next door. Although there is not much more to report at this time, the potential for more Latino food options is one that generates a lot of local excitement.

CONCLUSIONS

This data provides a good jumping off point to discuss local, organic, and culturally appropriate food options and availability by showing all of the options available to consumers in a retail setting. It also illustrates there is a commitment and interest from rural communities to increase local and organic food options, and from the Latino community to address the lack of culturally appropriate food options.

The data does not, however, make any correlation between the cost of food and its setting. Things such as fresh produce seem to be less expensive in rural stores, whereas other processed foods seem to cost less in urban stores. What is clear, however, is that there is greater availability of food choices in urban stores and this may be what causes rural community members to purchase more of their food in an urban setting.

What is not addressed, but what could provide more insight into these issues, is the quality of foods in a rural setting versus an urban setting. Community food security relies on the premise that all people at all times have access to enough food that is fresh, affordable, safe and produced in ways that are sustainable. As pointed out by storeowner testaments, working with fresh, local food sources is important to more and more people these days. What is lacking, however, is this concept’s widespread community knowledge and acceptance.

\(^{30}\) See Chapter 5, Low-Income – Latino section, for more information about Latino interviews.
LOCAL FOODS MENU

INTRODUCTION
In order to address the issue of local foods being more expensive, and thus less accessible as a food option, a local foods menu was established to price out the difference between a meal prepared with local ingredients versus a conventional meal. For purposes of the menu, local ingredients are defined as items grown and/or processed within a 500-mile radius of La Plata County, with a preference towards items closest to the county. Conventional items were chosen from City Market grocery store and were average in cost when compared with similar items. When there were no local ingredients available, such as cooking oil, the item/s were not included in total price. The local foods menu was developed as a research and educational tool for future community food projects.

SAMPLE MENU PLAN: Cost Comparisons between Local & Non-Local Products for a Family of Four

BREAKFAST:
- Local pancakes — using Blue Horizon flour, local eggs, Horizon organic milk: $5.14 vs. Aunt Jemima pancake mix: $4.77
- Eggs and Sausage: $6.98 vs. Non-Local: $4.78
- Toast with Jam or Honey and Fruit $10.98 vs. Non-Local: $9.57

LUNCH AND DINNER:
- Pasta with pesto: $11.06 vs. Non-Local: $11.46
- Local Stir fry with rice — using local spinach, peppers, zucchini, onion, and Lundberg bulk rice: $10.45 vs. Non-local stir fry — using Kroger brand rice: $8.55
- Beef stew (4lb) — using James Ranch stew meat, local onions, potatoes, & carrots: $9.96 vs. Non-local: $7.06

...A BREAKDOWN IN PRICE

BREAKFAST — For a Family of Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL Eggs and Sausage:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nada Agua Eggs, 2.39/doz</td>
<td>Hermosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosar Sausage, 4.59/lb</td>
<td>Monte Vista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total cost:</strong> $ 6.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eggs and Sausage:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kroger Eggs, 1.29/doz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee Pride Sausage, 3.49/lb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total cost:</strong> $4.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COST DIFFERENCE:** $2.20

LOCAL Toast with Jam or Honey and Fruit

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread bread, 3.19/loaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’hara’s jam, 0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

31 Prices for both conventional and local items were collected in the summer of 2006.
Honeyville honey, 0.37
Chimney Rock Strawberries, 3.99/lb
Horizon butter, 0.64 ½ stick
**Total cost:** $10.98

**Toast with Jam or Honey and Fruit**
Bread, 2.79/loaf
Smuckers Jam, 0.79
Dole strawberries, 2.99
Land O'Lakes butter, 0.54/ ½ stick
**Total cost:** 9.57

**COST DIFFERENCE:** $1.41

**LUNCH/DINNERS – For a Family of Four**

**LOCAL Hamburgers:**
James Ranch beef, 4.99/lb
Rudi’s Bakery buns, 2.99
Colorado lettuce, 1.99
**Total cost:** $9.97

**Hamburgers:**
Ground beef, 3.29/lb
Kroger buns, 1.19
Lettuce, 1.69
**Total cost:** $6.47

**COST DIFFERENCE:** $3.50

**LOCAL Pasta with spinach, pesto, and bread**
Enchanted Valley pesto, 4.69
RAS Farm spinach, 1.99
American Beauty pasta, 1.89
Bread baguette, 2.49
**Total cost:** $11.06

(This meal could be made with chopped local basil, instead of pre-made sauce from Enchanted Valley, to keep cost down)

**Pasta with spinach, pesto, and bread**
Buitoni pesto, 4.99
Spinach, 1.99
American Beauty pasta, 1.89
French bread, 2.59
**Total cost:** $11.46

**COST DIFFERENCE:** (-) $0.50, in favor of local

GROWING PARTNERS OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT 4.23
4. RESTAURANTS

Assessment Methodology:
Surveys were delivered in person to nearly fifty restaurants in La Plata County, from fast food to fine dining, including coffee shops, ethnic restaurants, those with Southwest cuisine, breweries and diners. Of the fifty surveys, thirty-six were returned. Special effort was made to include restaurants known to carry local food. When possible, in-person interviews were conducted.

The restaurant survey was designed to gather information about the county food system through the eyes of local restaurant owners and their customers, to identify the obstacles and advantages of carrying local food, to determine interest and demand for local food, and to identify potential community food projects that could strengthen the local food system.

INTRODUCTION
La Plata County’s restaurants range from fast food to fine dining. They carry an array of products, some of which are local, and work with a variety of purveyors. Because restaurants may have greater flexibility to incorporate smaller product amounts into nightly/weekly specials and in their seasonal menus, the possibility to pilot local food items in restaurants was seen as a way to strengthen the local food system. What was found, from interviews and surveys, was an interest from many restaurants to use more local products, but also legitimate concerns regarding the logistics of doing so.

The following is a summary of those interviews including comments about the local food supply, obstacles chefs and restaurant owners face when working with local distributors, their community food projects of interest, and thoughts about a Farm-to-Chef Program for La Plata County.

THE 36 RESTAURANTS SURVEYED:

1. Cyprus Café
2. Gaucho's Restaurant
3. Durango Bagel
4. Durango Doughworks
5. Mahogany Grille
6. P is for Peanut Café
7. Steamworks’ Brewery
8. Kat’s Frozen Custard
9. Scoot n’ Blues
10. Guido’s
11. Durango Coffee Company
12. Carver’s Brewery
13. Zia Taqueria
14. Pickle’s Restaurant
15. The Aspen Café
16. East by Southwest
17. Serious Texas BBQ
18. Skinny’s Restaurant
19. Durango Natural Foods – Deli
20. Homeslice Pizzeria
21. Farquart’s Restaurant
22. El Patio Restaurant – Ignacio
23. Smokin’ Moes – Ignacio
24. Francisco’s Restaurant
25. Raiders Ridge Café
26. Pizza Hut – Durango
27. Subway – Durango
28. Kentucky Fried Chicken – Durango
29. Taco Bell – Durango
30. Dairy Queen – Durango
31. McDonald’s – Durango
32. Burger King – Durango

“The culinary scene in Durango is said to be one of the hottest in the country per capita. With the trend of fusion, we can combine flavors from around the world to the town’s southwest heritage; steaks to sushi, tacos to tabouli.” Josh Rosenthal, President of the Durango Chapter of the Colorado Restaurant Association and Co-owner of Skinny’s Grill

GROWING PARTNERS OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT
Some of the local products served in La Plata County restaurants:
This list is an example of some of the products being used by restaurants in La Plata County that were interviewed. This by no means is a complete list, but can be used to demonstrate the diversity of crops available and restaurant interest in their use.

1. Meat, Pork: Sunnyside Meats, Durango and James Ranch, Durango
2. Coffee: Desert Sun Coffee, Durango
4. Mushrooms: Mas Mushrooms, New Mexico
5. Tea: Hummingbird Herbals, Durango
6. Lavender: Dancing Willow Herbs, Durango
7. Organic Lamb: Foxfire Farms, Durango
8. Select Produce: Chimney Rock Farms, Chimney Rock
9. Sprouts & Wheatgrass: Turtle Lake Refuge, Durango
10. Tortillas: Tortillas Mas Finas, Bayfield
11. Baked Goods: Serious Delights, Durango
12. Mustards: San Juan Mustards, Durango

THE SUPPLY & DEMAND OF LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS
Restaurants, although they may have more flexibility than other food outlets, require a great amount of consistency in the product they receive. Providing a product as promised, in the quantity needed is a necessity when working with chefs. Regardless of apparent supply issues, chefs and restaurant staff seem to be interested in working with local producers to incorporate their products. The following are comments from interviews and surveys regarding the supply of and demand for local products from restaurants and their customers.

SUPPLY
The perception from restaurant owners regarding the supply of local products is there is not enough local product to supply consistent, reliable deliveries.
- “There is not enough availability and consistency of local products
- “There is not enough local produce available to supply one restaurant alone
- “We would love to buy all of our eggs (15 dozen a day) locally, but we can’t find a local supplier to keep up with that demand. At times, we have spent over $3/dozen buying organic eggs from City Market instead.” Durango Doughworks
- “I wish I could find a local dairy producer here. Instead, I have to go through Meadowgold and requested a specific Colorado producer to get my cream for the restaurant.” Kat’s Frozen Custard

DEMAND
There is, however, a desire from chefs and restaurant staff to work with local producers. They are interested in the benefits of serving local food, and they feel their customers are as well.
- “There is a strong local community here that appreciates and supports quality food
- Serving local food appeals to locals and tourists
- “We would like to use as much local food as possible. We would prefer to work directly with local farmers and then from New Mexico and Front Range ranchers.” Homeslice Pizzeria
- “I would buy local all day long if there was more infrastructure and consistency in product availability.” Aspen Café

CONSUMER SURVEY
A consumer survey was administered to 94 respondents in a variety of venues and indicated the demand for locally grown ingredients in restaurants.

To understand more about food access and the importance of locally grown ingredients when making food choices, participants were asked: “How often do you eat outside of the home?” and “What about the restaurants/establishments you most frequent keeps you coming back?” Of the 94 respondents, 44% responded “about every day” to “a few times a week,” signifying that people in the county eat outside of the home on a regular basis. Of the people surveyed, 12% responded “locally grown ingredients” on restaurant menus is what attracts them to the restaurants/establishments they most frequent. This response was fourth to taste (40%), price (19%), and convenience/location (18%).

These surveys indicate that locally grown restaurant ingredients are important to a significant portion of La Plata County residents. It has also been noted that in order to increase this number, a consumer focused educational campaign is necessary. In interviews and surveys, restaurants indicated the importance of a community-wide educational campaign to educate the public on the importance of eating local foods.

The Healthy Lifestyles Coalition, a group of health providers, nutritionists, educators, and community activists whose mission is to support healthy eating and active living, is currently applying for funding to initiate such a campaign. Activities would include creating two logos for restaurant menus, one that would indicate locally grown ingredients, the second healthy food options. The group is also aware of the Buy Fresh, Buy Local – Foodroutes’ Toolbox to promote locally grown foods, and is looking into their software as part of their campaign.

FARMERS AND RESTAURANT OWNERS WORKING TOGETHER:
A Farm-to-Chef Program in La Plata County?
Restaurant owners interested and committed to supporting and serving local products had several justifications for the extra work currently needed to source local ingredients. Those included the inherent quality and freshness of the product, but most often the responsibility and desire to support local agriculture and the local economy.

“Food needs to have quality and responsibility.”
Area restaurant owner

32 For more information on Consumer Surveys, see Chapter 1 – Introduction, section on administration of Consumer Surveys.
33 Foodroutes is dedicated to reintroducing Americans to their food – the seeds it grows from, the farmers who produce it, and the routes that carry it from the fields to their tables. Their “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” Toolbox features affordable, professional marketing and campaign materials. www.foodroutes.org
At the same time some restaurants are quite hesitant about the impact carrying more local ingredients could have on their current practices. One local restaurant said, although they currently sell burgers made from a local processor, they have hesitations about carrying more local products. “It would be great to offer more local food without having to gauge customers with menu prices and/or take hits to profitability.” For them, it appears local food menu items may mean their customers will be paying more for their meals.

There are also restaurant owners who feel carrying local food and supporting local farmers is more important than their bottom line. Of the restaurants surveyed that currently carry local products, few say they charge more for them even when the product can cost as much as two times the conventional price. Alison Dance, owner of Cyprus Café, in downtown Durango, said in an interview: “As restaurant owners, we should make the commitment (to carrying local food) because it is the right thing to do. It is not all about making money.” The owner of Durango Doughworks agrees. “We focus on using as many organic ingredients (as we can), and when possible, from local suppliers.” Apart from having consistency in the availability of supply, other logistics are necessary to make a farmer-chef relationship a success. Chefs mentioned things like better distribution and storage of local products, a greater number of patrons that support local food, better local product marketing, and the ability to source certain items as suggestions to help solidify these relationships.

There is explicit interest from farmers and chefs to begin a Farm-to-Chef Program in La Plata County. As one restaurant owner explained, a “Farm-to-Chef Program that could support itself would be helpful. It could help with the marketing, publishing, and printing costs to support this initiative and support clientele education.” Such a program could support each of these things and allow food to travel a much shorter distance from farm to table.

One hundred percent of all restaurants surveyed said they experienced increases in delivery surcharges in the past year that were directly related to the increase in fuel prices. This means each restaurant experienced an increase in the cost they paid for food. Most of the restaurants, however, did not increase or only slightly increased their menu prices to compensate for the charges.

In addition to the creation of a Farm-to-Chef Program, restaurateurs made other suggestions that connect fresh, local produce and eating places. P is for Peanut, a children’s restaurant in downtown Durango, suggested a communal garden. “I have often thought that a communal, restaurant garden would be a wonderful project, and it would allow restaurants to grow exactly what they really need.” Other suggestions included a wholesale food market, acceptance and support of the health department, farms with a restaurant CSA option that would grow certain products for a chef, and a worm project to create good soil and reduce restaurant kitchen waste.

CONCLUSIONS
There are already a number of restaurants in La Plata County working directly with farmers and ranchers to serve local products. Some of these items are advertised on menus and recognized by customers. In fact, at times they directly contribute to customer patronage. For chefs who utilize locally grown ingredients, freshness and quality of the product and social responsibility seem to outweigh some of the challenges they encounter in obtaining and using the ingredients.
There are, however, issues that exist when making farmer-chef connections. Obstacles such as availability of supply, delivery and distribution logistics, and price barriers make the idea of working with local suppliers prohibitive to some restaurateurs. Hopefully, some of the projects mentioned in this section, such as an organized Farm-to-Chef Program, restaurant gardens, and restaurant CSAs, could begin to remove some of the barriers chefs and farmers associate with working together. And a consumer educational campaign to increase widespread support for the availability of locally-grown ingredients is also important to make this connection more of a reality.

5. HARVEST CALENDAR

*Assessment Methodology:* This guide was created using input from La Plata County Cooperative Extension, the Durango and Southern Ute Divisions of Wildlife, and the knowledge of Growing Partner staff.

It is used to demonstrate the availability of food that can either be cultivated, or which is found wild in the region. Due to variations in elevation, solar gain, and microclimates, La Plata County is home to a wide range of climatic zones, therefore, the guide must be used with the understanding that not all areas of the county will support each and every species listed.

A tri-fold brochure of the Harvest Calendar was printed by Cooperative Extension in November 2006, and is being distributed throughout the community. It is being used as educational material for the La Plata County Food Assessment and to promote the local food system. The brochure is listed as an Appendix to this report.
### La Plata County Harvest Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Apr</th>
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</table>

Please keep in mind this is a general guideline for La Plata County and Southwest Colorado. For your specific area, please contact your local County Extension Office. Conditions will vary with specific locations.

*Must be started inside, 6-8 weeks before the last frost, and then transplanted outside 1-2 weeks after the last frost.*
**Wild Game Availability**
The following list was compiled with help from The Durango Division of The Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Southern Ute Division of Wildlife. Below are the most common edible wild game species found in the San Juan Basin of Colorado.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Game</td>
<td>Elk, Deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Game</td>
<td>Blue (Dusky) Grouse, Chukar, Mourning Dove, Duck (teal), Gambel Quail, Turkey, Geese, Cottontail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Rainbow, Cutthroat, Brown &amp; Brook Trout, Kokanee, Salmon, Northern Pike, Yellow Perch, Channel Catfish, Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Black Crappie, Bluegill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invertebrates</td>
<td>Crayfish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I think people often underestimate the value of wild foods in the diet. Also, as we look for ways to save energy - wild foods (a product of solar energy vs. fossil fuel dependent) are an energy bargain.” Patt Dorsey, Area Wildlife Manager, Colorado Division of Wildlife

**Wild Foods Harvest Calendar**
The following was compiled by Turtle Lake Refuge. For more information on identification and appropriate use contact Turtle Lake at [www.turtlerefuge.org](http://www.turtlerefuge.org).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Juniper Berry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Chicory Root, Licorice Root, Thistle Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Mallow Weed, Wild Mustard, Wild Grasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Wild Asparagus, Dandelion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Wild Rose Blossoms, Lambs Quarters, Plantain, Nettles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Pie Cherries, Apricots, Serviceberries, Town Strawberries, Amaranth leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Alpine Strawberry, Oregon Grape, Serviceberries, Apricots, Hermosa Cherries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Acorns, Chokecherry, Raspberries, Peaches, Plums, Barberries, Thimbleberries, Bilberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Yucca Fruits, Elderberries, Acorns, Amaranth Seeds, Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Hawthorn Berries, Apples, Rosehips, Osha Root, Buffalo Berries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Skunkbrush Berries, Sumac Berries, Piñon Nuts, Burdock Root, Town Walnuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Ponderosa Pine Needles</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Wild foods grow naturally without cultivation. This schedule is for Durango, Colorado and the surrounding area at an approximate elevation of 6,000-8,000 feet.*
Culinary Herbs of Southwest Colorado

The following was compiled by The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado. It is a list of culinary herbs suitable for growing conditions in Southwest Colorado, including the edible part of the plant. Specific harvest times and practices should be used when harvesting herbs. Contact your local nursery or the County Extension Office for more information.

Angelica all parts, perennial
Basil leaves, annual
Bee Balm leaves, perennial
Blessed Milk Thistle leaves, biennial
Borage edible flowers, annual
Calendula edible flowers, annual
Caraway roots, dried seeds, biennial
Catnip leaves, perennial
Chicory leaves, perennial
Chives leaves, perennial
Cilantro leaves, seed (coriander), annual
Common Juniper perennial
Dame's Rocket leaves, biennial
Dandelion leaves, flowers, perennial
Dill leaves, annual
Fennel seed, perennial
Flax seeds, perennial and annual varieties
French Marigolds leaves, annual
Garlic root, annual bulb
Hops cones on female, shoots, perennial
Johnny Jump Ups (violas) edible flowers
Lavender leaves, perennial
Lemon Balm leaves, perennial
Lemon Verbena annual
Ligusticum leaves, perennial
Lovage leaves, perennial
Mallow leaves, annual
Mint leaves, perennial
Mustard leaves, annual
Nasturtium leaves, seed (pickled) and flower, annual
Oregano leaves, perennial
Parsley leaves, biennial
Plantain leaves, perennial
Poppy seeds, hardy annual
Purslane leaves, annual
Red Valerian leaves, perennial
Rosemary leaves, annual
Roses flower, perennial
Rue perennial
Saffron
Sage leaves, annual and perennial
Savory leaves, annual
Sunflower seeds, annual
Sweet Marjoram leaves, annual/tender perennial
Tangerine or Lemon Gem Marigolds flowers, annual
Tarragon leaves, perennial
Thyme leaves, perennial
Wild Celery root, annual
Southwest Colorado Medicinal Herbs

This list was compiled by The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado. It is a list of common medicinal herbs that are suitable for growing in Southwest Colorado. Please contact your local nursery for more information on suitable growing and harvesting conditions.

Amaranth
Chamomile
Clover
Comfrey
Cornflower
Echinacea
Evening primrose
Feverfew
Field holly
Horehound
Hyssop
Mullein
Nettle
Oxeye daisy
Pennyroyal
Sorrel
St. John’s Wort
Vervain
Woodruff
Wormwood
Yarrow

6. COMMUNITY GARDENS

INTRODUCTION
Community gardens are planned garden plots designed to provide local produce for neighborhood communities, residential use, or otherwise. Community gardens provide opportunities to bring diverse personalities together to plan, problem solve, cooperate, work and share responsibilities, and produce food. They can be designed in several formats including dividing parcels into individualized or family plots, or by sharing the harvest, and thus the responsibility, among all members of the garden.

Community gardens give local businesses and residents an opportunity to actively participate in their community and feel part of the development of underserved populations. By gathering support from many facets of the community, gardens bridge gaps and build ties between youth organizations, local businesses, public schools, and other community organizations by providing a venue for greater community interaction.

In addition, they provide a way for community members to share with others through the giving of vegetables, recipes, and garden and farm stories. In addition they are an inspirational display of community support.
TWO EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY GARDENS IN LA PLATA COUNTY:
The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado & Shared Harvest Community Garden

THE GARDEN PROJECT OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO
The Garden Project is dedicated to building a healthier community through the promotion of a sustainable local food system and the facilitation of year-round garden and educational programs. They focus their goals around education, horticultural therapy, and food security.

The Garden Project has three primary goals:

1) To promote individual and community health and wellness;
   - The Garden Project promotes individual and community health and wellness through the use of Horticultural Therapy, nutritional education and community participation.

2) To increase environmental education;
   - Gardens provide an excellent means for celebrating and honoring present day and past cultures. The Garden Project’s educational programs include organic gardening, local food issues, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, ecosystems, cultural differences, pest management and other related topics.

3) And to promote sustainable local food systems.
   - The implementation of community garden programs, year-round greenhouses, and the support of local food initiatives and community food networks will assist The Garden Project to support sustainable local food systems, thus promoting community food security.

The Garden Project is unique in that it targets a wide range of community needs and interest groups, and brings gardens literally to peoples’ backyards. Some programs include youth and school gardens, demonstration community gardens, horticultural therapy programs and farm tours. Since its inception in 1998, The Garden Project has facilitated the development and creation of eight community and youth gardens in the Durango area. The Garden Project also serves as resource to other groups, agencies and schools interested in offering educational or therapeutic gardening programs.

SHARED HARVEST COMMUNITY GARDEN
Bob Kauer has developed a community garden in the truest sense of the word. Located on County Road 234 east of Durango, Shared Harvest is a one-acre garden where over 60 individuals raise food and flowers. When there is excess, food is donated to agencies such as the Manna Soup Kitchen in Durango.

The acre is divided amongst teams who tend to an assigned row and are responsible for the planting, weeding, and maintenance of that row. When it’s time to harvest, all members can do so from any area of the garden, taking their share of the bounty. This system allows Bob to farm his land, which he wanted to do but not on his own, and gives individuals an opportunity to access land for production that they may not otherwise have.
Bob hosts potlucks to celebrate community and food, and is commonly found in the garden sharing tips or indicating certain items ready to be harvested. The cost to participate in 2006 was $50 per family, which helps Bob cover what he pays for seed, tools and the water he provides all season.

Shared Harvest is seen as an important food resource in the community. When asked to identify community food resources in the Consumer Survey, many people identified the garden as an asset. Because Shared Harvest is not accessible by public transportation and can only serve 60 families, however, there is a need for an in-town community garden that could cater to youth, seniors and others who may not have access to personal vehicles.

CONCLUSIONS
It is clear community gardens are a priority to La Plata County residents. In the Consumer Survey, 17% of all respondents indicated the desire to have more garden space allocated with affordable growing plots for all community members. It is also important to note that as more people learn and have space to grow their own food, the result will be better food security.

7. COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE IN LA PLATA COUNTY: A Profile of Three Active CSAs

Assessment Methodology:
Information to support this piece came from farmer interviews, local CSA brochures, consumer surveys, and literary research.

INTRODUCTION
Community Supported Agriculture, better known by its acronym CSA, is the term for a subscription service for farm products. There are many variations of CSA’s in the world, and the most popular model involves a consumer paying up front to receive one share of a farm’s harvest throughout the upcoming season. This situation has many benefits for the farmer, for the consumer and for the community. Using this model, 100 percent of a consumers’ food dollar is in the hands of the person who produces the food, rather than in the hands of the truck drivers, packing and processing warehouses or the grocery stores that typically connect consumers to their food supply.

At a time of year when growers need cash flow, a CSA program provides capital from community members for them to invest in seeds, equipment, and preparation for the upcoming season. Farmers are also guaranteed a market for their crops once they begin to produce. This means farmers do not have to worry as much about where and to whom they are going to sell their products.

Consumers who pay in advance for their food from a local farm have a direct connection to where their food is coming from. Farm fresh produce is just that, fresh. It is typically delivered within 24 hours from when it is harvested; therefore it lasts longer, tastes better, and is more nutritious.

CSA participants also have the opportunity to spend time on the farm and with the farmer producing their food. Some farms host workdays, where consumers can spend a day...
experiencing life on the farm, and have the option to learn how to harvest some of their own food.

Some CSA’s require that participants travel to the farm to pick up their share, others deliver it, and some bring shares to the farmers’ market. Some choose to pre-pack shares, so they are waiting in bags for members. And some use a buffet-style pick up where members create their own share from a menu board that tells them what is available.

Regardless of details, the basic principles of the CSA are the same, and the concept is growing. Since 1990, when the number of CSA’s in the United States was estimated at 50, their number has grown to over 1000.34

LOCAL CSA’S

If CSA’s are such a good idea, then why isn’t every farmer doing it? According to Greg Vlaming, former Horticulture Agent in La Plata County and small farm owner, “As an extension agent, I feel there’s opportunity for local CSA’s. But as a grower, I am not interested. The CSA potential is here, but I would rather sell through direct markets.” Greg’s response as a farmer to the lack of interest in starting a CSA is not uncommon. CSA’s bring with them an expectation for the farmer to provide a certain quantity, quality, and variety of foods, which for some, adds a lot of pressure to an already difficult line of work. Some producers try to address these issues by talking with community members up-front about what can happen to a farms’ production if an early frost hits, or hail destroys a crop. Farmers must also plan for the unpredictability by doing things like diversifying their crops, planting in succession and even over-planting. In 2006 there were three active CSA’s in the Durango area. They are profiled below.

La Britt Farm

La Britt Farm is located on County Road 225 next to Riverhouse School outside of Durango. Dave Banga is the owner of the farm, which is “small-scale, locally based, and dedicated to using agricultural methods that steward the land and community.” Dave started a CSA in 2006.

Season: June 3rd – October 18th (20 weeks), 15 shares available
Payment: $500 – full share, $300 – half share
Delivery: Home delivery
Products available: Arugula, basil, beets, bell peppers, bok choy, broccoli, brussel sprouts, green beans, carrots, cabbage, cucumbers, cilantro, chard, corn, chives, claytonia, celery, dill, eggplant, garlic, hot peppers, kale, leeks, lettuce, melon, onions, green onions, pumpkins, potatoes, squash, snap peas, radishes, & tomatoes.

Dave includes a ‘disclaimer’ on his CSA sign up sheet stating: “I (your name) am making a financial commitment for the season. I understand my investment is non-refundable. Furthermore, I

34 This information is from Local Harvest, a web service to locate farms and farm products by zip code. They also allow you to search CSA’s: http://www.localharvest.org/csa/.
appreciate that the nature of agriculture is unpredictable and though I am guaranteed fresh produce for the season, there are no absolute guarantees on the availability of certain items.”

PeaceTree Organix
PeaceTree Organix is located on County Road 222 outside of Durango. Dave Travieso is the owner of the farm. PeaceTree’s goal is “to provide the public with naturally holistic food, free of any chemicals, gene manipulation, or bad energy.” Dave started PeaceTree’s CSA in 2006.

**Season:** Second week of June – second week of October

**Payment:** $450 – full share, $100 – per monthly share; Dave offers two CSA options, a full-season membership, and a monthly membership. The monthly membership runs from the beginning of each month to the last week of the same month. He suggests this as a good option for people who have plans to be away for part of the season, people who have their own back-yard gardens, and for those who cannot afford a full-season membership. They also offer a payment plan.

**Delivery:** Pick up at the Durango Farmers Market on Saturdays, 8-12 PM. They also offer home delivery at a small additional fee.

**Products available:** Salad mix, braising greens, carrots, beets, peas, broccoli, garlic, garlic scapes, radishes, herbs, spinach, green beans, onions, leeks, tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, squash, eggplant, potatoes, & sweet potatoes.

Regional Agricultural Supply (R.A.S.)
RAS Family Farm is located on County Road 216 in the south Animas Valley. Tom and Sarah Buscaglia are the owners of the farm. They farm using bio-intensive methods from the Eliot Coleman School. They are not certified organic, but use a traditional organic approach to farming. This is their second year running a CSA Program.

**Season:** Two Seasons: June – 3rd week of September (18 weeks) & fall CSA: 4th week of September – November (8 weeks), 15 shares available

**Payment:** $400 – full share, $225 – half share (pick up every other week), $175 – fall CSA

**Delivery:** Pick up at the Durango Farmers Market on Saturdays, 7:30-12PM.

**Products available:** Salad mix, spinach, radishes, beets, carrots, garlic, potatoes, kale, chard, onions, zucchini, peas, tomatoes, corn, cucumber, broccoli, beans, & winter squash.
8. GLEANING

INTRODUCTION
Gleaning can be defined as the practice of harvesting and utilizing within the community where the local foods would otherwise go to waste. Local foods commonly gleaned are from fruit trees such as apples, pears, apricots, plums, cherries, crabapples and walnuts. Gleaning requires connecting with neighbors or businesses that may have fruit trees or other local foods on their property they do not harvest. It is a common practice to harvest some of the food for the owner or to bring them some finished product made with the food, such as fresh pressed apple juice from their apples. It is often a benefit for all involved because the food may not have been harvested due to lack of time or to limited physical ability, as can be the case with elderly landowners. Gleaning has the potential to create lasting friendships that may not exist without the fruit trees providing an incentive to bring the relationship into being.

The Durango area is fortunate to be abundant in fruit trees. Many of the fruit from these trees, however, is left unused. As a community, we can create more local reliance and increase food security within our region by encouraging the gleaning of our local abundance. The quality of the fruits collected locally is often higher than much of what is bought in supermarkets.

TURTLE LAKE REFUGE
Turtle Lake Refuge has incorporated gleaning into local educational programs by partnering with school systems. Various school groups have helped Turtle Lake glean apples from unharvested orchards. Some of the kids took home apples for their families, and others helped press them into apple juice for their school snacks the following day. Some kids glean apples and cherries, which were made into cobbler for several 9-R School District public schools and for other events, including a school family fundraiser.

Gleaning is a win-win endeavor that benefits many different members of the community from its practice. Gleaning creates more integrated relationships with the foods people eat and the land, greater health for both the individual and the environment and lasting relationships based on the joy of harvesting good local food.
9. THE MESA VERDE GUIDE TO FOOD & FIBER

**Current participating farms are:**

Ames – Burgess Ranch LLC
Battlerock Ranch & Sutcliffe Vineyards
Blue Horizons Farm Inc.
Blue Clouds Farm
Blue Mountain Gardens
Circle A Garden
Clear Water Farm
Cole Meat & Veggies
Common Ground Farm
Cottonwood Creek Farm
Dyers Wool
E.A.S. Enterprises
Evening Star Farm
Fox Fire Organic Grass-Fed Lamb
Horse Logging & Farming Coop
Isgar Farms
James Ranch
Johnson Ranch
Labrit Farm
Linnaea Farm
Little Yankee Ranch
Lone Cone Mountain Wool, LLC.
Mayday Wool
Napier Family Farms
Oakhaven Permaculture Center
Outrun Ranch
Peacetree Organix
Purple Sage Goat Ranch
Regional Agriculture Supply, Certified Ital Farms
Rio Grande Alpacas and Icelandic Sheep
Rolling T Ranch and King Club Lambs
Rude Becky’s Flower Farm
Saddle K Ranch
Santa Rita Ranch
Shear Perfection Ranch
Song Haven Farm
Stone Free Farm
Sutherland Farms
The Bee Tree
Turtle Lake Refuge
Zuma Natural Foods

**INTRODUCTION**

The “Mesa Verde Guide” is a listing of producers in the region who are willing to sell directly to consumers or to local food stores, restaurants and other local institutions. Each producer’s listing tells where and when their products are available, their contact information, and provides a description of what is unique and sustainable about the products and the way they were produced.35

**WHY THE DIRECTORY WAS PRODUCED**

- To bring attention and increased income to those local farmers and ranchers who are willing to sell their sustainable products directly to local consumers.
- To help consumers find food and fiber that is both local and of high quality.
- To promote sustainable production methods.
- To encourage more farmers and ranchers, existing and new, to sell locally.
- To increase communication between producers and consumers about sustainable agricultural practices and products.

35 For producers who may wish to be listed in the MVG, a registration form can be found as an appendix in this report.
CHAPTER V
A PROFILE OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL FOOD SYSTEM:
The Case for Farm-to-School

1. INTRODUCTION
2. SOUTHWEST COLORADO FARM-TO-SCHOOL WORKING GROUP
   - SOUTHWEST COLORADO FARM-TO-SCHOOL LOGIC MODEL – A
     Contribution from Marcus Renner
3. FOOD SERVICES
   - SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS
   - USING LOCAL INGREDIENTS IN THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM:
     Interest and Obstacles
   - OFF-CAMPUS-LUNCH PROFILE: Hot Spots for Durango Youth
   - SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES: An Opportunity for Community Involvement – A
     Contribution from Jim Dyer
4. FOOD RELATED SCHOOL PROGRAMS
   - NUTRITIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
   - COMPOST & WASTE PROGRAMS
   - FARM TOURS: A Booklet
   - A PROFILE OF SCHOOL GARDENS IN LA PLATA COUNTY
5. YOUTH SURVEYS

1. INTRODUCTION
   **Assessment Methodology:** Data on the La Plata County youth and school food system was collected between January and September 2006. Before beginning the research, a planning survey was distributed to various groups including members of Growing Partners, the Southwest Colorado Farm-to-School Working Group (described later in the chapter) and other community members, to prioritize populations and focus on areas for a school lunch and food program survey. The planning survey determined three focus groups: youth, food services administrators, and school administrators.

Data for this chapter was collected via a number of surveys. These included:
- **A Consumer Survey and Producer Interviews**, which addressed the interest and support for a Farm-to-School Program.
- **A Food Service Survey**, which was distributed to each school district and each private and preschool in the county.
- **A School Food Program Survey**, which was distributed to each school in La Plata County, private and public.
- **A Youth Survey**, which was distributed to approximately 100 La Plata County youth.
• A review of The Durango 9R School District’s School Lunch Program Survey, which included information from parents and students in each of the elementary schools, cafeteria managers, a 2004 survey of the school lunch program and its facilities/cafeterias conducted by Icon Services, and recent surveys distributed to all parents in the winter of 2005.

• An Off-Campus-Lunch Restaurant Survey, which was used to identify the off-campus-lunch ‘hot spots’ of Durango High School (DHS) students.

2. SOUTHWEST COLORADO FARM-TO-SCHOOL WORKING GROUP

When asked, "Which of the following food programs would you like to see in La Plata County?" the number one response from the Consumer Survey was a farm-to-school program.

Table 1. CONSUMER SURVEY DATA – WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FOOD PROGRAM(S) WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN LA PLATA COUNTY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Program</th>
<th>Farm-to-School</th>
<th>Community Garden Plots</th>
<th>Community Kitchens</th>
<th>Horticultural Therapy</th>
<th>Food Buying Clubs</th>
<th>WIC Farmers Market Program</th>
<th>Affordable Food Purchasing Classes</th>
<th>Farm to Chef</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local farm-to-school programs offer many benefits to the community. For youth, a farm-to-school program offers health and nutritional benefits, enhances academic performance and provides creative educational opportunities. According to research from established farm-to-school programs, farm fresh fruit and vegetables rank among students’ favorite meal options. When combined with nutritional education, farm visits and school gardens, students can develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. In doing so, they can decrease the risk of nutrition-related diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

According to Mark Winne, local foods activist and author of *Why Local Food is Better, Feeding Young Minds*, a farm-to-school program offers benefits for the entire community. “Healthy farms provide jobs, pay taxes and keep working agricultural land open. Undeveloped farmland has its own set of benefits which include lower costs for community services, more open space, diversified wildlife habitat, greater food security and flood control.”

Farm-to-school programs also offer perks for school food services. By developing links with local food producers, school districts may be able to buy fresher and more nutritious items than they can from other sources, while eliminating some of the handling and transportation costs incurred from the long-distance suppliers. A program can also increase their access to new varieties of produce and increase participation in a school’s lunch program, therefore increasing federal school reimbursements and the overall school food services budget.

The benefits of a farm-to-school program for farmers include the potential for new buyers and long-term buying relationships, exposure and advertising. The program can also
stimulate other new accounts for growers with grocery stores, farmers’ markets or CSAs through greater community exposure.

The USDA currently estimates that almost 1.9 million farms in the United States, or 94% of all farms, are small or limited-resource farms with fewer than $250,000 in annual gross receipts. On average, these small and limited-resource farms provide an average net income of only $23,159 per year. Direct sales of fresh and processed fruits, vegetables and other high value agricultural products to local school districts may be able to provide an important source of income for these small farms.

**SOUTHWEST COLORADO FARM-TO-SCHOOL WORKING GROUP:**

*A Program Description*

The purpose of the Southwest Colorado Farm-to-School Program is to ensure that our pre-K through College students consume the highest-quality, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate foods from local farms and ranches.

**THE GOALS**

1. Increased understanding about healthy food, sustainable food production and local agriculture among students, their parents and the public at large (by providing curricular materials, farm tours, producer visits to the classroom and public education).

2. Increased acceptance of high quality, culturally appropriate, sustainably produced local foods by students, their families and the general public (through school gardens, cooking classes, tasting events, special event meals and similar participatory activities).

3. Increased production of these foods in our area coupled with local value-added processing and an appropriate distribution system.

4. Increased consumption of these foods in our schools to the greatest extent possible given current state and federal policies.

5. Partnerships with other groups to change state and federal policies to allow greater inclusion of these foods in our schools.

6. Increased participation in Farm-to-School programs on the part of students, their parents, school administrators, community leaders and the general public through an increased understanding of the importance of Farm-to-School programs, the obstacles involved, and what can be done by community members to promote these programs.

---

1 How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers Are Building Alliances. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service January 2003.

**FTS PURPOSE**
To ensure our pre-K to college students consume the highest quality, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate food from local farms and ranches

**Goal 1:** Increased understanding about healthy food, food production, and local agriculture among students, parents, and general public

**Goal 2:** Increased acceptance of local foods by students, their families, and the general public

**Goal 3:** Increased production of local foods coupled with local value-added processing and an appropriate distribution system

**Goal 4:** Increased consumption of local foods in schools to the greatest extent possible given current policies.

**Goal 5:** Partnerships with other groups to change state and federal policies to allow greater inclusion of local foods

**Goal 6:** Increased participation in FTS on the part of students, parents, administrators, community leaders, and the general public

**Key Audiences:** youth, parents, teachers, administrators, school board, food service directors, producers, policy makers, restaurants, civic associations, general public

**Outreach Approach:** To create an emotional connection to the idea of local food and farm to school programs among specific people within our key audiences who can grow to become change agents and help broadcast positive stories of change to the larger community

**Outreach Strategies**
- Provide curricular materials
- Farm tours
- Producer visits to classroom
- Special event meals
  - Tasting events
  - Cooking Classes
  - School gardens
- Increase understanding about program’s importance, the obstacles involved, and potential community action
3. FOOD SERVICES

Assessment Methodology: A Food Services Survey was given to the Food Services Directors in the Bayfield, Ignacio, and Durango school districts and distributed to each private and preschool program in the county. Information was requested about school demographics, their school lunch program, the interest and/or obstacles surrounding serving local food during school lunch, their free and reduced lunch programs, their budgets and menus.

The goal of the Food Services Survey was to identify areas of opportunity and interest to implement future farm-to-school programs and to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence the school lunch program.

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS
Bayfield
K-12
Total Enrollment: 1177
1 Elementary (552), 1 Middle School (309) and 1 High School (419)
Food Services Director: Carrol Shaver

Durango 9-R
K-12
Total Enrollment: 4592
7 Elementary Schools, 2 Middle Schools, 1 High School and 1 Charter School
Food Services Director: Krista Garand (formerly Kim Cotta)

Ignacio
K-12
Total Enrollment: 750
1 Elementary (270), 1 Intermediate (160), 1 Junior High School (135), 1 High School (267)
Food Services Director: Barbara Barnes

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS
All three school districts offer a school lunch program to each of their schools. Each district also has its own set

“Food services is often the last district partner to be brought into the change process, but it is one upon which all others rely on for success.”
Marilyn Briggs, Connecting Health with Environment, Rethinking School Lunch

“Making the school lunch period - and the process of cooking and eating- a true learning experience, helps children understand that they have choices about the kinds of food they put into their bodies, reinforces the idea that there is a real connection between their health and the food they eat and encourages them to learn even more about how what they eat affects their lives every day.”
Rethinking School Lunch

1 Food Service Survey was administered to: Durango Food Services 9-R, Ignacio Food Services, Bayfield Food Services, Durango Early Learning Center, Children's House, and Riverhouse Children's Center. The public schools' Food Service Survey was conducted in person and over the phone. Interviews averaged 4 hours to complete.
2 www.bayfield.k12.co.us
3 www.durangoschools.org
4 www.ignacio.k12.co.us
of guidelines and influences which are used to make decisions about the school menu. All
food services districts in La Plata County are part of the National School Lunch Program.\textsuperscript{7}
Below are some other factors that shape school meals, as listed by the food services director
at each district.

**Bayfield**
The Colorado Department of Education’s guidelines,\textsuperscript{8} Bayfield Middle School’s Nutrition
Committee, The HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) Safe Food Handling
Program and the Bayfield Wellness Policy.

**Durango**
The Colorado Department of Education’s guidelines, The Nutrition Task Force, The
Durango School District’s Wellness Policy\textsuperscript{9} and HACCP.

**Ignacio**
The Colorado Department of Education’s Guidelines, The Ignacio School District’s
Wellness Policy, The Student Advisory Council, CHAB (Comprehensive Health Advisory
Board), and HACCP.

### Table 2. DAILY STUDENT AND ADULT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL
LUNCH PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>Bayfield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Durango\textsuperscript{10}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Total: 1.14 million in 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Program tries to keep its plate cost under $1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Estimated annual produce purchase: $45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allocated funds received for produce: $24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non Department of Defense (DOD) purchases: $21,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ignacio\textsuperscript{11}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Total: $375,035.00 in 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food costs: $135,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\textsuperscript{7} School lunches must meet the applicable recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual’s calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Regulations also establish a standard for school lunches to provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories. School lunches must meet Federal nutrition requirements, but decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made by local school food authorities. For more information USDA, FNS, School Meal Programs www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/notices/naps/NAPS.htm and www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/AboutLunch/NSLPFactSheet.htm

\textsuperscript{8} http://www.cdc.state.co.us/edchad/download/bdregs_301-3.pdf

\textsuperscript{9} http://health.durangoschools.org/wellness.php

\textsuperscript{10} Durango budget information was obtained from Kim Cotta in an in person interview on 2/13/2006 and written survey completed 7/2006.

\textsuperscript{11} Ignacio budget information provided by Barbara Barnes in an in person interview on 9/21/2006.
• Other budget costs include labor and non-food supplies.
• The school budget is funded through meal charges and federal reimbursements and receives approximately $70,000.00 in district funds. Ignacio meets criteria for “severe need,” and therefore receives additional program federal funds.

THE REDUCED LUNCH PLAN AND NON-PAYMENT ISSUES
Understanding the free and reduced lunch plan can play a very important role in increasing the school lunch budget and increasing opportunities to improve the overall quality of the school lunch program. Children in households who receive food stamps and most foster children can receive free meals, regardless of income. Children can also receive free or reduced meal plans whose families’ income falls into the federal limits. The greater number of free and reduced lunch meals, the higher the federal reimbursements for the meal. Additionally, a school with a higher percentage of students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Plan will also receive more federal funds for what is considered “severe need.” Ignacio School District currently qualifies as a severe need school for their breakfast program and receives additional funds.

Most of the support the USDA provides to schools in the National School Lunch Program comes in the form of a cash reimbursement for each meal served. Table three identifies the current (July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005) basic cash reimbursement rates.

Table 3. FEDERAL CASH REIMBURSEMENT MONIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Free lunches:</th>
<th>Free snacks:</th>
<th>Reduced-price snacks:</th>
<th>Reduced-price lunches:</th>
<th>$2.24</th>
<th>$0.61</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1.84</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
<td>$0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$0.21</td>
<td>$0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to each of the three food services directors, each year there are families who qualify for Free and Reduced School Lunch who do not apply. The food service directors continue to look for ways to encourage parents to fill out the applications. Applications are included in the school menus and available on some of the schools’ websites. Notices are also sent home, encouraging parents to fill out the application. The directors have worked to eliminate the stigma that was once tied to the application. Students are no longer aware of or identified by their lunch payment status. Both Bayfield and Durango use a Point of Sale (POS) system, in which a number or code identifies students when they pay. In Ignacio, it is important to Food Services Director Barbara Barnes that the children are identified by name. She only keeps track of the payment status for recordkeeping and accounting purposes.

‘NON-PAYMENT’ ISSUES
For The Durango School District, non-payment for school meals has become an increasing problem. In the 2005-2006 school year, Durango had approximately $8,000 in outstanding

12 Durango 9R Free and Reduced Lunch Plan application
13 Higher reimbursement rates are in effect for some schools with high percentages of low-income children.
meal charges. According to Kim Cotta, former Food Services Director, these outstanding payments greatly affect the department’s ability to have any flexibility in their food budget. On the flip side, Kim emphasized that no student was ever refused a meal.

Durango no longer allows students to charge meals. Family plans are available which encourage families to pay ahead of time, by the week or month. According to Barbara, the same problem is seen in Ignacio. “Non-payment is a huge problem in our school district. We give verbal reminders to the students on a continuing basis. We send written notices, and then we give peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and milk instead of the meal. We still have lots of outstanding receivables.”

The Bayfield Food Services Director says that non-payment is not a problem for the Bayfield program, and that a verbal reminder is usually enough to get payment.

**Table 4. SCHOOL LUNCH – FULL PRICE VS. REDUCED LUNCH PRICES PAID PER MEAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Durango 9-R Full vs. Reduced</th>
<th>Ignacio Full vs. Reduced</th>
<th>Bayfield Full vs. Reduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/Intermediate</td>
<td>1.75 0.40</td>
<td>1.50 0.40</td>
<td>1.75 0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/Junior</td>
<td>2.00 0.40</td>
<td>2.00 0.40</td>
<td>2.25 0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2.25 0.40</td>
<td>2.00 0.40</td>
<td>2.25 0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults and Staff</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Durango 9-R</th>
<th>Ignacio</th>
<th>Bayfield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside 40%</td>
<td>Elementary 76%</td>
<td>Elementary 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Mesa 35%</td>
<td>Intermediate 64%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Lewis Mesa 35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animas Valley 37%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needham 28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park 35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview 21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalante Middle 29%</td>
<td>Junior 60%</td>
<td>Middle 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller Middle 21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango High 12%</td>
<td>High 64%</td>
<td>High School 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel 36%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Updated 2/2006</strong></td>
<td><strong>Updated Fall 2006</strong></td>
<td><strong>Updated Fall 2006</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOOD DISTRIBUTORS
A school’s food distributor can provide important information on the availability of products, the purchasing flexibility of schools, identifying competitors to compare prices, and possible educational opportunities. Some food distributors may also have the ability to distribute local products. For example SYSCO of New Mexico currently works with some local producers as part of their “Born in New Mexico Program.” Below is a list of the food distributors who work with each school district.

Bayfield
SYSCO; US Foods for soaps & detergents; Meadowgold for milk products; Andrews Food Services (of Pueblo, Colorado); Zanios Foods; The Co-op: SW Colorado Food Bid Program.

Durango
The Co-op: Andrews/ CC Star for 97 percent of their food purchases; Meadowgold for all milk; Aunt Hathier for all bread products; and SYSCO of New Mexico for 3% of their purchases.

Ignacio
SW Colorado Food Coop (with Cortez, Mancos, Dolores, Dove Creek, Bayfield, and Pagosa Springs); primary vendor for the coop is Zanios; Sysco, New Mexico fills in with the non-bid items; Andrews Produce delivers commodity products; and Meadow Gold Dairies delivers milk, fresh eggs, and cottage cheese.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA AND FACILITIES
All schools were surveyed on school kitchen facilities, including their cafeterias, kitchens and storage capacities. Gathering this information helps the local Farm-to-School Working Group determine what the distribution and storage needs are at the various schools. Ample cold and dry storage will determine which products can be stored at the schools. If a school is interested in preserving and canning local products, such as pickles, canned applesauce or tomatoes, kitchen managers need to know whether or not they have adequate space.

Bayfield
The elementary has a full service kitchen. It is the central kitchen and serves up to 200 students. According to Food Services, they could use a bigger freezer and storage area. The middle school has what is known as a satellite kitchen, meaning they receive prepared meals from the elementary; it is in need of remodeling. The high school has a nice cafeteria, but the kitchen lacks some big equipment such as mixers and an adequate stove. More space is needed at the high school for dry and freezer storage.

Durango
All Durango Schools, with the exception of Escalante and Animas Valley middle schools, were remodeled in 2004. This project made great improvements to the schools’ kitchens and their capacity to produce school lunch. The greatest need (as indicated by former Food Services Director Kim Cotta) was the need for small kitchen wares such as pots, pans and utensils. These are needed when they are preparing homemade meals.

14 As a member of CC Star, Coop, Durango has a contractual agreement to buy 85% of their products from Andrews.
Ignacio
Ignacio has ample storage and kitchen space at the elementary school. According to Barbara Barnes, Food Services Director, the elementary kitchen is a great facility with plenty of storage capacity. The elementary kitchen is often used as the central warehouse and storage for all Ignacio schools. The intermediate school cafeteria lacks size and production capabilities, and doubles as the school gym. The junior and high schools share a common cooking facility.

DINING ATMOSPHERE
The importance of dining atmosphere is often overlooked when making improvements to a school lunch program. Dining atmosphere includes the sights, sounds, smells, and overall atmosphere found in a school cafeteria. According to Steve Marshall15, “Students are highly influenced by the school meal environment and often make decisions to eat, or not to eat, based on their experience of the dining room.”

In a 2002 survey, over 500 Durango elementary parents and students voiced their opinions on the school lunch program. The most common complaints were about the dining atmosphere. Students complained about music and noise, about not being able to sit with friends, and about the amount of time allotted for meals.

Although only three school cafeterias were observed as part of the food assessment, one positive observation should be noted. In the Ignacio Elementary School’s cafeteria, the mealtime atmosphere provided a very smooth and relaxed environment. The cafeteria workers referred to each child by his or her first name, while encouraging all of them through the lunch line. Even the kindergarten and first graders, who had only been at the school one month, were still greeted by name. That day there were also eight parents sitting with the kindergarten and first grade students.

There is a special table for parents in the Ignacio Elementary School where a child, and two of his or her friends, can sit together. Barbara Barnes, Food Services Director, shared a few reasons why so many parents come to eat with their kids. “This may be the only time of the day they have to be with their kids, and this is one of the most inexpensive meals in town. We make special effort to advertise our lunch program to the community at large.” The school is not large, but they still see around five to fifteen parents per day.

15 Rethinking School Lunch, The Center for Ecoliteracy.
TIME ALLOTTED FOR SCHOOL MEALS

According to the 2002 elementary surveys\textsuperscript{16}, the number one complaint from both students and parents of the school lunch atmosphere was that students did not have enough time to finish their lunch. Although the amount of time for each school and grade level was identified, other factors affecting the actual time students had to eat were not. Some parents and teachers noted that students, once they made it into the cafeteria, through the lunch line and to their tables, had as little as three to five minutes to finish their lunch.

Things that make an impact on actual mealtime include the number of students present during one lunch period, the ease of the lunch line and/or salad bar, and whether recess is offered before or after lunch. According to Kim Cotta, former Durango 9-R Food Services Director, “The more lunch periods, and thus fewer numbers of kids, the more flexibility and time students have to finish their lunch.”

Table 6. TIME ALLOTTED FOR SCHOOL LUNCH BY DISTRICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayfield</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>40 minutes, two lunch periods</td>
<td>45 minutes, two lunch periods, 15 minutes for AM break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango\textsuperscript{17}</td>
<td>20 - 25 minutes, number of lunch periods varies at each school</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour, 5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignacio</td>
<td>30 minutes, with recess after lunch</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCHOOL MENUS

Many factors go into determining a monthly school menu.\textsuperscript{18} The primary factor affecting the school lunch menu is the food service’s budget. In addition, menus are planned based on nutritional content and analysis and the availability, popularity and diversity of products.

**Ignacio**

Barbara Barnes, Food Services Director in Ignacio, shared some of the other details that determine her school menu. Barbara has been the Ignacio Food Services Director for 10 years and in Food Services for 20 years. Barbara started as a dishwasher and then moved on to cook, secretary, and now director.

\textsuperscript{16} In 2002, each of the seven Durango elementary schools was surveyed by the Durango Nutrition Task Force. Over 500 students and parents responded to the survey with comments on the school lunch menu and atmosphere.

\textsuperscript{17} A complete breakdown of times, number of lunch periods was provided to the Farm-to-School Working Group, updated spring 2006.

\textsuperscript{18} To review one of the school’s monthly lunch menus, visit [www.durango.k12.co.us](http://www.durango.k12.co.us); [www.bayfield.k12.co.us/lunch](http://www.bayfield.k12.co.us/lunch) to view Ignacio’s November 2006 menu, see the Appendix.
Ignacio’s school lunch program operates on a menu that rotates every six weeks. Approximately 80 percent of the meals in the September menu had a homemade item such as chicken enchiladas, chili, lasagna, cinnamon rolls and bread sticks. “Kids don’t get a lot of homemade stuff at home, so we try to offer those here,” she said.

Homemade dishes take more time for cafeteria staff to prepare, so Barbara plans meals that contain both homemade, labor intensive dishes with easier to prepare items. She also takes student menu requests to heart and has been known to sit down with students to explain the menu in detail.

Barbara also has to consider the age group she is feeding when creating her menu. For younger kids, things like apples need to be cut up. Kids who are losing their baby teeth or are in braces are considered as well. Barbara likes to provide the kids with the opportunity to assemble their own lunch, which means more time in the lunch line. She also tries to incorporate culturally appropriate foods. Mexican items are always popular items. She has inquired about native Southern Ute Tribal foods, but has found it hard to get suggestions, except for stew. Favorite meals are chili, Frito pie, pizza, chicken fajitas and oven-baked chicken.

The School Lunch Program in Ignacio is a “food based program” with a required 2 oz of protein, 1% milk (white and/or chocolate), and 2 fruits or 2 vegetables every day. Fresh fruit is served every week, and fresh vegetables are served one to two times per week. According to Barbara, “Many kids don’t get these same fruits and veggies at home, nor do they get the variety, so we try to offer that at school.”

Barbara does her own nutritional analysis, and it is averaged on a weekly basis. She uses Nutra-Kids, a software program used by the state government, to audit the Ignacio school meals.

Bayfield
Bayfield is also on a 6-week rotating lunch menu, and tries to use freezer and commodity items first and then add some variation to these items. The Middle School serves two entrée options a day and serves 175 meals plus the extra entrée. The second entrée option was implemented at the request of students and the principal. According to Carrol Shaver, Bayfield’s Food Services Director, “Students and staff are more and more into the healthy food options.” At the elementary, they also asked for second meal option, but we had to decline at this point because there are too many students and not enough time in the lunch period.” Carrol also started as a dishwasher, and later became a cook, kitchen manager and now serves as Director of Food Services for Bayfield schools. Regarding nutrition in the school lunch program, Carrol stated, “Nutritionally, we try to make sure they have all four food groups.” The Colorado Department of Education provides Carrol with an overall review and comments on her program. “Kids (in Bayfield) are given a lot of variety. We serve frozen and fresh vegetables in the summer, and primarily canned ones in the winter.” When Carrol was asked about the greatest success of Bayfield’s School Lunch Program, she...
spoke of addressing student requests for healthier food choices and more homemade goodies. Offering the students a second entrée has also boosted participation at the middle school. In addition, kids seem to be more receptive to the homemade meals that include homemade bread, buns and rolls. The most popular meals at Bayfield are the chicken nuggets, hamburgers, pizza (with reduced fat cheeses) and spaghetti. Above all accomplishments, the greatest joy is when a child comes to Carrol with no teeth and says, “that is the bestest tasting spaghetti I have ever had.”

SCHOOL SALAD BAR
The salad bar can be a great first step in introducing local produce into the school lunch menu. According to Krista Garand, Durango 9-R Food Services Director, it is much easier to incorporate local produce into the salad bar because it does not affect the entire school lunch menu and changes can easily be made. There is more flexibility with quantity and availability, which also allows for smaller farms to participate, even if they cannot supply the entire district with food for school lunch meals.

In October of 2006, The Turtle Lake Refuge began selling sprouts (pea shoots, mung bean, buckwheat and sunflower) to the Durango 9-R School District. The sprouts are mixed into the salad bar at nine of the local schools. The Farm-to-School Working Group hopes to eventually highlight a new local product each month in the salad bar. Meetings are currently being held with local farmers to identify other produce possibilities for the salad bar.

### SCHOOL SALAD BAR AVAILABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayfield</td>
<td>Daily salad bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Mesa</td>
<td>Tues thru Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animas Valley</td>
<td>Tues thru Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Tues thru Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview</td>
<td>Tues thru Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needham</td>
<td>Tues thru Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>Tues thru Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Lewis Mesa</td>
<td>Boxed salads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel</td>
<td>Satellite kitchen only, no salad bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalante</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller Middle</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango High</td>
<td>Daily, started spring 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignacio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High</td>
<td>Daily salad bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Daily salad bar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. SCHOOL SALAD BAR DAILY STUDENT AND ADULT PARTICIPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Durango 9-R</th>
<th>Ignacio</th>
<th>Bayfield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
<td>Elementary n/a</td>
<td>Elementary 30 - 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside n/a</td>
<td>Intermediate n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Mesa 30 – 40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Lewis Mesa n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animas Valley 40 – 50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needham n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park 40 – 50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview 75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>Junior and</td>
<td>Middle 45 – 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalante Middle 30 - 40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller Middle 30 – 40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>High 30 - 220</td>
<td>High School 35 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango High 25 – 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Participation</td>
<td>Adult participation is included in the total</td>
<td>Adult participation is included in the total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 at high school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Salad bar Notes and Considerations*

Schools are often hesitant to use a salad bar with younger students. There are complaints about the amount of spill, waste, and the amount of time it takes for younger students to move through the salad bar. Kim Cotta, former 9-R Food Services Director, requested help from parents of elementary students to serve at the salad bar to ease the confusion for younger students. The Bayfield School District only offers the salad bar to students once they reach the fifth grade. Ignacio also waits to serve the salad bar to students until they reach Junior High.

In Ignacio, there are typically twenty-one compartments, or containers, that make up the salad bar. A couple of those are for fruits, four are for proteins and the rest are for vegetables and bread products. Boxed salads are served in the intermediate school with a mix of lettuce, vegetables and protein sources.

Barbara Barnes, Ignacio’s Food Services Director, provided the Farm-to-School Working Group with a list of vegetables she uses in the salad bar. The list will be used by farmers to identify local produce they could provide for the salad bars. Durango 9-R also provided a list of produce they buy for their salad bars and boxed salads. The average 9-R salad bar includes two side salads, three proteins, unlimited vegetables, two fruit choices (at least one fresh) and additional sides (seeds, granola, bacon bits).

*“Other school food programs have added 50% organic vegetables as part of a mix of new local and commercial salad bar items. In these schools, there was an increase in 25% to 29% in the amounts of fruits and vegetables consumed in the year after the school salad bar was introduced. After a farmers’ market salad bar was introduced in a Santa Monica school, the number of children regularly choosing the salad bar for lunch increased from 10 to 125, out of 500 children.”* Healthy Options for School Food Service
OTHER MEAL PROGRAMS: Breakfast, Snack, A la Carte Items, Teacher and Parent Meetings, and Vending

Other school food service meal programs were surveyed, such as breakfast, snack, a la carte items, teacher and parent meetings and vending, in order to identify opportunities to introduce local products.

Bayfield

Because coordinating the times with buses and the schools has been difficult, Bayfield does not currently offer a breakfast program. There is, however, a mid-morning break at the high school that includes things like juices, cappuccinos, breakfast burritos, muffins, and danishes. Food Services is not responsible for vending or other snack programs.

Durango

Breakfast is offered daily at the middle schools and high school, and offered four days a week in the elementary schools. It is served for thirty minutes. Kim Cotta, former Food Services Director, stated, “Breakfast has been served daily for the past 15 years, but participation is still low. Our goal is to offer breakfast in the classroom. Doing so has shown to improve (student) participation and overall performance in (other) schools.” After school snack programs exist at each of the seven elementary schools.

Ignacio

Breakfast is offered daily in each of the Ignacio schools.

Table 8. SCHOOL BREAKFAST- FULL PRICE VS. REDUCED PRICES PAID PER MEAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Durango Full vs. Reduced</th>
<th>Ignacio Full vs. Reduced</th>
<th>Bayfield Full vs. Reduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/Intermediate</td>
<td>0.75 0.30</td>
<td>0.75 0.30</td>
<td>n/a n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/Junior</td>
<td>0.80 0.30</td>
<td>1.00 0.30</td>
<td>n/a n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>1.00 0.30</td>
<td>1.00 0.30</td>
<td>n/a n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults and Staff</td>
<td>2.00 and a la carte items are available.</td>
<td>There is an AM snack available at high school. It is a la carte only.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRESCHOOL AND PRIVATE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS

Below is a brief description of two preschool lunch programs recognized by parents as being exceptional. Although the quantity of food served and number of kids each day is vastly different than in the public school system, there are opportunities to learn from these commended programs.

The Riverhouse Children’s Center

The Riverhouse’s food program is based on whole foods and high protein content, and serves as much local and organic food as possible. Almost all of the meat served there is

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19 The Riverhouse is a daycare facility for children zero to five.
organic or hormone-free beef, chicken, or turkey. Riverhouse continues to keep its food costs low by offsetting expensive meals (i.e. meals with organic turkey) with low cost meals (i.e. lentils and rice).

School meals at Riverhouse incorporate nutritional education with a family-style setting, which means the food is served on platters at the table with cloth napkins, and the students and teachers take time to give thanks for the food together. The Riverhouse also uses produce from an on-site garden\(^{20}\) and parents’ gardens for school snacks and their lunch program. Lindsay Sherman, Director of Riverhouse, expressed interest in incorporating more local food into the school’s lunch program.

**The Children’s House\(^ {21}\)**

The Children’s House Montessori School serves an all-vegetarian menu of forty meals, which they rotate. The school tries to serve as much organic and high-quality ingredients as possible. They keep their meal costs low by using a lot of whole and bulk foods and very little pre-packaged or processed foods. They do most of the prep work themselves, such as using dried rather than canned beans. For approximately $150 per week in food costs, Children’s House serves 38 kids and 6 adults one lunch and one snack each day. Plate cost for their lunches and snacks are around $1.50 per student or adult.

Alicia Zepeda, the director at the school, feels that although most of the families don’t eat vegetarian diets at home, one of the reasons they choose to send their kids to the Children’s House is because of their high-quality lunch program.

**USING LOCAL INGREDIENTS IN THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM: Interest and Obstacles\(^ {22}\)**

Using local ingredients in a school lunch program has many benefits for students, staff and parents. Local foods provide a nourishing meal that is often fresher than meals made with other ingredients shipped long distances. Local foods also provide the opportunity to incorporate dynamic forms of curriculum into a school’s educational programs. Subjects such as math, science and social studies can all be addressed based on local food. Educating students about their food and where it comes from has also been linked to better nutritional understanding.

To date, Durango is the only public school district in La Plata County to have incorporated local products into their school lunch and snack programs. In 2005 and 2006, Durango 9-R District incorporated local food into their all-staff orientation breakfast, which served nearly 600 staff members. The breakfast was held prior to the beginning of the school year and was a great education and media tool for staff members on the benefits of a farm-to-school program.

In the fall of 2005, Kiva Orchard’s certified organic apples were distributed to Needham school as part of their snack program. In the spring of 2006, Turtle Lake served cherry cobbler to Needham Elementary students and staff made from locally grown and gleaned...
Hermosa cherries. Sprouts raised by Turtle Lake Refuge can now be found in nine Durango 9-R District salad bars.

Neither Bayfield nor Ignacio public schools report using any local food products to date. They have only been approached to do so through the Southwest Farm-to-School Working Group and one local producer. Both food services directors indicated interest in learning more about local product availability, as well as attending future farm-to-school meetings. Plans are being made to hold a farm-to-school meeting in both the Bayfield and Ignacio areas.

Barbara Barnes, Ignacio Food Services Director, has spoken with the nearby Southern Ute Academy (a private school for Tribal members) and knows about their intention to use greenhouse products for their school’s meals. According to Barbara, “We could use fresh farm or greenhouse produce in our salad bar at the (public) High School, but we would not have enough product (for a school lunch item) for even the elementary. There is a big difference in quantity between the Academy’s needs and ours.”

**OFF-CAMPUS LUNCH PROFILE**

*Assessment Methodology:* A survey was conducted in the Durango area to identify the most common places for Durango High School students to eat. Area restaurants were asked three questions: how many high school students on average do they serve per day during the lunch hour, what are the top three items ordered, and how much do students usually spend per meal?

**INTRODUCTION**

Off-campus lunch is a difficult issue for food services, educators, and students and parents. Below is a breakdown of the different district policies on off-campus lunch and insight into where and what area local high school students are eating when they travel off campus.

**Bayfield**

Seniors have been allowed off campus for the past five years. According to Carrol Shaver, Bayfield Food Services Director, the seniors usually go to the Conoco Gas Station, Long John Silvers, A & W, and the Mini Mercantile when they travel off campus for lunch.

**Durango**

Offers off campus option to all grade levels at the High School.

**Ignacio**

Select high school students are given special passes for off campus eating. Students allowed off campus must have a certain attendance report.
TOP 20 LUNCH HOT SPOTS FOR DURANGO YOUTH:
An Off-Campus-Lunch Survey - In order of reported number of students

1. **Subway** (60-80/day, meal sandwich, chips, drink, turkey, chicken, $5.25/meal)**
2. **Serious Texas Barbecue** (60-70/day, Texas Taco $4.00/meal, $2/sandwich)**
3. **Griegos** (60/day, $5/meal, burrito plate, fills the restaurant)**
4. **Taco Bell** (50-70/day, taco, burritos, crunchwrap, $3-6.50/meal)
5. **Dairy Queen** (50/day, double cheeseburger, fries, drink $3-5/meal)**
6. **Durango Bagel** (40/day, egg/sausage bagel for $5, cinnamon raisin with raspberry cream cheese for $3)
7. **Durango Doughworks** (30/day, doughnuts, quesadillas, breakfast burritos, $3/meal)
8. **East by Southwest** (30/day, deep fried sushi rolls, $5/roll)
9. **McDonald's** (30/day, $1 Menu for fries, burgers, drinks, $4/meal)
10. **Wendy's** (25-30 day, bacon burger, chix nuggets, $5-6/meal)
11. **Burger King** (25-30/day, $1 Menu for tacos, Whoppers, or chicken, $2-$4/meal)
12. **Exxon Gas Station on 25th Street** (25/day, candy, chips, soda, $3-4/meal)
13. **Diorio’s** (20-25/day, 1-2 cheese pizza slice special + drink, $4 or $5.50)
14. **Nini’s** (20/day, quesadilla, small, $4-7.50/meal)
15. **Homeslice Pizza** (20/day, pizza slice and garlic bread $5 average/meal)
16. **Kentucky Fried Chicken** (15-20/day, popcorn and chix snackers, potato wedges, $3-$5/meal)
17. **Zia Taqueria** (25/day, burrito, quesadillas, student special $5 with drink, $3-$5/meal)**
18. **Durango Coffee** (10-15/day, coffee drinks, smoothies, pastries, $1.50-$5.00/meal)
19. **Pizza Hut** (10/day, pizza buffet, $6.50 with drink/meal)
20. **Stonehouse Subs** (8-10/day, turkey with avocado or bacon sub 5.25-$7.00/meal)

**These restaurants offer a special student price to encourage participation.

SUMMARY
Several of the high-volume restaurants say they fill their entire capacity during the school lunch hour and that their proximity to the high school makes a big difference to how many students they get. Freshman often can only go where they can walk, and older students often try to eat somewhere where there are no freshmen, avoiding the restaurants closest to the school.

After reviewing the list of Durango spots, it was evident that students were not choosing to eat off campus because of money or the quality of food. Off-campus eating is a social choice; it is about finding a place to gather with friends outside the school. The high school offers a salad bar, several menu choices (many the same items they are choosing outside the school) and a very low meal charge of $2.25, yet still only 20% of Durango youth eat at the school cafeteria.

The amount of money local teens spend on school lunch daily was also noteworthy. Some of the most popular dining spots charge anywhere from $5.00 to $7.00 for a meal, and choices range from double-cheeseburgers to pizza buffets, deep-fried sushi rolls and the popular Serious Texas Barbecue Texas Taco.
SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES:
An Opportunity for Community Involvement

A Contribution from Jim Dyer

Federal Guidelines required that all schools participating in federal school meal programs establish Wellness Policies prior to the 2006-07 school year. These policies are intended to address nutrition, nutrition education, and physical activity. Since they must include public participation, they present a great opportunity for community involvement in all three areas. Growing Partners and the Farm to School group have been in contact with the public schools in the county on development of these policies, and will continue to offer assistance in implementation.

THE REQUIREMENTS
As described in the 9R Policy, federal and state requirements include:

Federal Law
Public Law 108-265 reauthorized federal child nutrition programs, which include the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Section 204 of this law requires that, not later than the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, local educational agencies participating in the school meal programs must establish a local school wellness policy that, at a minimum:

1. Includes nutrition guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day;

2. Provides an assurance that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture;

3. Includes goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines appropriate;

4. Establishes a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy; and

5. Involves parents, students and representatives of the “school food authority” (i.e. school nutrition program), the school board, school administration and the public in development of the local wellness policy.

State Law
The 2005 Colorado state legislature passed SB05-81. It addresses Colorado’s growing problem of overweight children and childhood obesity by giving local control to all Colorado school districts to design, implement and adhere to their own nutrition integrity policy. Specifically, SB05-81 encourages school districts to adopt policies that ensure that every student has access to:

1. Healthful food choices in appropriate portion sizes.
2. Healthful meals in the school cafeteria with adequate time to eat.

3. Healthful items in vending machines pursuant to SB04-103, the healthy vending bill passed last year.

4. Healthful items for fundraisers, classroom parties, and rewards in school.

5. Fresh produce from our own Colorado farms, when practical.

6. Access to an adequate amount of drinking water throughout the day.

7. Access to age-appropriate physical activity.

8. Access to age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instruction designed to teach lifelong healthy eating habits and a healthy level of physical activity.

School Districts are encouraged to adopt a local wellness policy as provided for in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This act says that each school district participating in a program authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act of the Children’s Nutrition Act of 1966 shall adopt a local wellness policy by June 30, 2006 that includes much of the above.

POLICIES IN OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS
The Southwest Colorado Farm to School Group worked with the Durango 9R District in development of their policy. With guidance from the excellent sample Wellness Policy from the Center for Ecoliteracy (www.ecoliteracy.org), the group provided suggested provisions regarding including local foods in school menus, including local agricultural knowledge in nutrition and agricultural education, and including farm tours, farm presentations, cooking classes, tastings, and school gardens in the experiential aspects of curriculum. The final policy included these provisions and can be viewed at http://health.durangoschools.org/wellness.php

Links to other Wellness Policies from area schools can be found on the Farm to School pages of the SASCO website: www.sustainableSWcolorado.org

4. FOOD-RELATED SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Assessment Methodology: All schools in the La Plata County area, private and public, received a school survey in the spring of 2006. Surveys were sent to the school principal and the school secretary and/or school nurse/counselor or program director. Follow up was done by phone and e-mail for the schools which did not fill out the first survey. Support was given by the human resources director to aid in completing surveys. All

“Research on nutrition education methods increasingly suggests that there is a link between long term healthy eating behaviors and experiential learning that begins early in life. The more a child is involved with food – either through gardening, farming, cooking or other “real life” food experiences- the more likely it is that he or she will adopt healthy eating behaviors as a lifelong practice.” Mark Winne, Why Local Food is Better
private schools received a follow-up phone call in August. Sections of the survey were divided into School Garden and Greenhouse, Nutritional Education, Agricultural Education, and Other Food Programs including Farm Tours and Compost and Recycling Programs.

Finding ways to encourage schools to participate in the survey was challenging in a few cases. Schools which offered specific programs, such as gardens or greenhouses, were more likely to respond to phone calls and/or surveys.

The goals of the survey were to gain baseline data about the existing food related programs in the area and gauge the level of interest and resources available to implement farm-to-school programs. The survey and accompanying material also provided education and outreach on the Farm-to-School Working Group. Seventeen of the eighteen public schools responded to the survey.

There was a large discrepancy in the number of hours school officials said they spent on nutritional education each year. This was most likely due to a flaw in this survey question: “How many hours of nutritional education are taught per year.” When asked this question in the Durango School District for example, school principals indicated anywhere from 3 to 3000 hours of nutritional education. The survey did not indicate how each school accounted for the number of nutritional education hours taught per year, per student, per class or in total. This information is not included in the assessment because it was determined to be statistically invalid.

**NUTRITIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The surveys indicated that nutritional education not only can be incorporated into a variety of programming, but can be taught by a variety of staff and outside resources. The school nurse, health teacher, home economics teacher, culinary teacher, primary teachers, physical education teacher and the district’s health team were all identified as those who share responsibilities for teaching nutritional education. Public schools also identified the ways nutritional education is incorporated into the school day. In addition to the required school curriculum on health and nutrition, school administrators noted incorporating nutritional education through family nutrition nights, physical education units on health and wellness, cooking classes and snack programs.

Some of the agricultural education activities listed on the survey included greenhouse activities, classroom lessons on plants, lessons on water properties and its connection to agriculture in the southwest, science fair with agricultural elements and water conservation, farmers and producers in agricultural presentations in the classroom, student participation in the county 4-H Program and farm tours.

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23 Bayfield Schools: Bayfield Elementary & Bayfield Middle. Ignacio Schools: Ignacio Elementary, Ignacio Intermediate, Ignacio Middle, & Ignacio High School. Durango Schools: Riverview, Sunnyside, Fort Lewis Mesa, Needham, Park, Florida Mesa, and Animas Valley, Escalante Middle, Miller Middle, Excel Charter, and Durango High School.
No response was received from Bayfield High School.
Private Schools included: The Children’s House Montessori, Riverhouse Children’s Center, Durango Early Learning Center, Southern Ute Head Start/ Montessori, Florida Mesa Head Start and Fort Lewis College.
COMMENTS REGARDING THE BENEFITS OF AGRICULTURE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

- Agricultural education “keeps our roots alive. We live in a rural agricultural part of the country.” Bayfield Elementary

- Agricultural education “validates what the kids see at home and in their community. So many kids leave the farm and don’t return. Now maybe they will.” Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary

- The benefits of agricultural education are “life-long learning and health.” Escalante Middle School

- Agriculture education encourages “more responsible citizens, appreciation for nature and healthy living.” Animas Valley Elementary

- Agricultural and garden education provides opportunities for “science applications, life skills, and nutritional education.” Bayfield Middle School

Some obstacles to agricultural, nutrition, and garden education were mentioned. Those included things like simply having the time and accountability for these activities; finding trained staff members to complete the activities; demonstrating to staff the need for such programming; and the obstacles that arise for staff to design and integrate these ideas into their curriculum.

PRESCHOOLS
According to the surveys, most nutritional education in the county occurs at the preschool level. Each preschool interviewed expressed how they share nutritional information with children and parents. Nutritional information is shared during the cooking of meals and/or snack preparation, which the kids take part in. The Children’s House, Riverhouse, SUCAP Head Start, and Florida Mesa Head Start all indicated their students share in preparing snacks for their classroom. It is also incorporated into lunchroom conversation. As the grade level increases, nutritional education is incorporated into classroom changes. Nutritional education for older age groups is more often taught in blocks of time or units.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS
Three Durango schools were chosen as pilot schools for a new nutritional program as part of a comprehensive health education grant. The schools include Animas Valley Elementary, Needham Elementary and Escalante Middle School.

Additionally, Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary received a wellness grant. These new programs are expected to make considerable changes in the nutrition programs of the schools. The school principals and other school administrators, who expected to see changes in their nutritional programs due to the new policy, also referred to the expected impact of the wellness policies in each district.
The Durango School District’s Wellness Policy and Wellness Team attended an Evaluator Training Session in the fall of 2006, which may lead to a structured method of accounting for nutritional education. Through use of the School Health Index, the Ignacio School District has also made great advancements in their physical education programs by extending their number of physical education hours each day. Further improvements in their nutrition and health programs are expected in 2007.

OTHER FOOD RELATED PROGRAMS
COMPOSTING AND RECYCLING
The Riverhouse Children’s Center and Fort Lewis College were the only schools that noted having a composting program.

Fort Lewis College
After a year of researching other composting programs and the level of kitchen waste generated by the school, Fort Lewis College began using an Earth Tub Composter (ETC) in the fall of 2006. The ETC holds 3.5 cubic yards of compost waste. The waste is generated from the school cafeteria and then composted. Estimates show that there are 327 pounds of waste generated by the River Rock Café per week. In one week the school’s composter can produce as much as 820 pounds of compost. The compost must sit in the tub for three weeks and then sit in the sun for an additional three weeks. The compost will later be used in landscaping around campus.

FARM TOURS
The surveys showed great enthusiasm from their staff and students about the tours. The majority of La Plata County’s elementary schools participate in annual farm tours, with Sutherland Farms in Aztec as the primary destination. Other tours to farms and food related locations include James Ranch, Durango Nature Studies, the Fish Hatchery and some restaurants.

The survey also asked whether there was a desire for a Farm Tours Booklet to indicate farms willing to host children’s groups and to provide background and educational information about the farms. All of the schools surveyed were interested in receiving a Farm Tours Booklet, which was then created by The Garden Project as part of the La Plata County Community Food Assessment.

In June of 2006, The Garden Project sent a letter and questionnaire to each farmer listed in the Mesa Verde Food and Fiber Guide of 2005 in order to identify farms and ranches interested in being included in a farm tour booklet. The goal of the Farm Tours Booklet is to create better access for local schools and organizations to available farm tours. Farm tours are an excellent means of connecting the community and youth with the food they eat through hands-on experiential learning. Each farm’s write-up includes a description of its mission, its farming/gardening methods, the farm’s products and possible activities at the farm. The booklet allows teachers to choose a farm that is convenient and conducive to their curriculum, and includes the information needed to schedule a field trip.
**Durango Nursery**
271 Kay Lee Lane, Durango  
Established in 1999  
May through October  
Accommodate up to 20 Business  
Not handicap accessible  
(970) 259-8800  

*Durango Nursery’s primary products are trees, shrubs, perennials, soil amendments, and landscaping rocks.*

**BIOGRAPHY**

Durango Nursery has been established with the specific goal of educating the community about the possibilities of gardening with Native and Xeric plants. We encourage our customers and the community to explore native plants and to become more accustomed to using less water in their landscapes. We have hosted many events with speakers that have native and xeric gardening experience. We also strive to offer a large variety of native and drought- tolerant plants. We also have a very cool water plant selection in a pond with goldfish and koi.

**What could youth and community members gain from an experience at Durango Nursery?**

Youth and community members can gain a connection to the Earth and to plants by coming to Durango Nursery. A nursery can inspire people to desire a better connection to their own yards. In addition, one can experience the life cycles of plants by seeing them in different stages of production in a nursery setting.

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**Land and Water Info:**
We have rights to pump water out of the river to water our plants. It is pretty windy and hot here in the summers. We bring in all of our soils.

**Location/Design:**
Our nursery is located on 6 acres close to the Animas River.

**Pest Control Methods:**
We occasionally spray “round-up” for weeds. We spray permethrin for insect control. We use time released fertilizers called Osmocote.

**Durango Nursery’s View on Local Agriculture:**
Local agriculture should be a priority for a consumer. In our situation our customers usually prefer to buy nursery stock locally because the plants tend to be more suited for this climate.
Fox Fire Farms
5737 CR 321, Ignacio
Established in 1916
Spring/Summer
Accommodate 25
Fieldtrip waiver available
Family ranch
Not handicap accessible
(970)563-4675 | (970)563-3186 | www.foxfirefarms.com

Fox Fire Farms’ primary products are lamb, goats, and wine/viticulture.

BIOGRAPHY
Richard and Linda Parry are the owners and operators of Fox Fire Farms. The Parry family has been ranching and farming in Southwest Colorado since 1913. Despite the rapid commercial and residential development of Southwest Colorado, our farms are a true haven to the people who live and work here, our livestock and the abundant wildlife.

We have developed a local and national reputation as practitioners of sustainable agriculture. Richard acts as a sustainable agricultural consultant, participating as a speaker in many local, national and international conferences. Richard is a regular contributor to "The Stockman Grass Farmer", a magazine for "Grass Farmers." We believe that the consumer would like to have a more personal relationship with the people who raise their food. It is our goal to provide healthy food for health conscious consumers.

We take care of the animals and the land and they take care of us and our customers. We have established goals of biodiversity and sustainability for the lands we manage. Our grazing lands are a true pasture salad of clovers, grasses and other forbs. Fox Fire lambs are raised and finished on these lush pastures the way nature intended. We are managing for an abundance of species. Everything from earthworms, butterflies, deer, elk and people benefit from this management.

What could youth and community members gain from an experience at Fox Fire Farms?
Appreciation for local sustainable/organic agriculture and what it provides: open space, wildlife, habitat, clean water and clean food.

Land and Water Info:
We are Southwest Colorado’s largest organic farm and ranch. We have variable ecosystems of hills with trees and irrigated meadows. This has lead to a diversified approach to ranching including multi-species grazing.

Pest Control Methods:
Certified organic

Fox Fire Farms’ View on Local Agriculture:
Local sustainable/organic agriculture provides us with open space, wildlife habitat, clean air, clean water and clean food.
Oakhaven Permaculture Center
Christie Berven and Tom Riesing
4179 C. R. 124, Durango
Available all year
Accommodate up to 25
Not handicap accessible
(970) 259-5445** www.oakhavenpc.org

Oakhaven’s primary products are tomatoes, figs, persimmons, asparagus, and medicinal herbs. Special attention is paid to making sure that agricultural practices are always helping to ‘build good soil.’

BIOGRAPHY
Oakhaven began as a traditional organic garden in the late 1990s. In 2001, we began switching to a Permaculture type garden (no tilling or digging) with the construction of our 2200 sq. ft. greenhouse botanical garden. We believe that all things are connected, so we began like a pebble in a pond, with one integrated garden system at a time, and many hands to help us. This community of people, as well as of plants, has developed into a product of “swadeshi,” Gandhi’s word for a celebration of local self-sufficiency, feeding ourselves and others.

With timed irrigation systems throughout, we have discovered that perennial gardens at 8,700 feet supply us very nicely with a lot of food. We have enjoyed watching the magic of nature inspire so many people of all ages. As a ‘retired’ teacher of 34 years, I welcome kids from 5 to 95 years of age. Come and get your hands dirty and your soul inspired!

-Christie Berven, co-director

Land and Water Info:
Slightly acidic soil; oak & pine ecosystem; elevation 8700; Parrot Creek runoff with ponds.

Location/Design:
Garden guilds are small and are developed within the natural landscape to create little or no natural disturbances.

Pest Control Methods:
Guild and companion planting draw beneficial insects.

Oakhaven’s View on Local Agriculture:
“Think, grow, eat, and buy locally!”
Outrun Ranch
Keith and Mary Fassbender
1189 Airport Rd, Durango
All year
Accommodate 1 class at a time
Fieldtrip waiver available
Family ranch
Handicap accessible
(970) 259-7097

Outrun Ranch’s primary products are lamb and wool.

BIOGRAPHY
The ranch began years ago as a dairy. It originally included the airport property and beyond. My husband ran registered angus cattle, then got into sheep as well about 15 years ago. We sold the cattle out about 8 years ago and now just raise sheep. We have about 250 ewes. We have a closed flock, which means we don’t buy sheep, but raise any replacement ewes. We do buy our bucks. Most of our ewes are white face (generally a wool-sheep) and we breed these to black face bucks (a meat sheep). That way we can have high quality wool and meatier lambs to sell. I think we are the only sheep operation that uses border collies to the extent we do to help run the ranch. My husband gives lessons and trains them for competition and often gives demonstrations. People seem to enjoy that the most.

-Mary Fassbender

What could youth and community members gain from an experience at Outrun Ranch?
Our society in general is getting farther and farther away from the basics of life. People, children and adults, who come out here leave with a better idea of what it takes to get that wool sweater in the store and to enjoy that lamb chop at the restaurant. We also train border collies and folks love to watch them work the sheep.

Land and Water Info:
We are high desert and fairly dry; irrigation plays a huge part in our operation.

Location/Design:
215 acres of high desert ranch land.

Pest Control Methods:
We spot spray noxious weeds. We use curtail, usually. We fertilize using urea, but not every year. We shoot disease bearing rodents.

Outrun Ranch’s View on Local Agriculture:
It would be great to see people buy more locally.
Turtle Lake Refuge
848 East 3rd Ave. Durango
Established in 1997
Available year round
Accommodate up to 25+
Community Building-
Handicap accessible
(970) 247-8395 | www.turtlelakerefuge.org

Turtle Lake’s primary products are local, wild, and living food creations, sprouts and wheatgrasses. Other products include sauerkraut, ice cream, chokecherry macaroons, flax seed crackers, phat nettle oatsies, rosehip granola bars, sprouted rye breadsticks, wild mint magic, silent paradise, pea shoots, sunflower greens, and buckwheat lettuce.

BIOGRAPHY
Turtle Lake aims to manifest their mission through sustainable living education. Turtle Lake promotes and prepares, harvests, and grows local, wild, and living foods. We serve a “local wild foods” lunch every Tuesday and Friday from 11:11 am until 2:22 pm. We use a bicycle Wheatgrass juicer, make deliveries by bicycle to local stores with our wild food treats. We use solar food dehydrators and run our truck on vegetable oil. We have many activities to participate in and celebrate in our local abundance.

ACTIVITIES:
- Hand Crank Apple Juice Pressing
- Growing your own Salad Greens Year Round
- Bicycle Blender Smoothie Making
- Vegetable Oil Truck Demonstration
- Becoming a Sprouting Master
- Make a local and wild foods meal
- Wild Food Identification

Land and Water Info:
Greenhouses, grow rooms, and community gardens in various locations.

Location/Design:
Rocky Mountain Retreat Building on East Third Avenue, access via alley

Pest Control Methods:
We eat our Weeds!

Turtle Lake’s Mission:
To celebrate the connection between personal health and wild lands.

Apple Pressing with youth from Los Amigos Tutoring Program.
A PROFILE OF SCHOOL GARDENS AND GREENHOUSES IN LA PLATA COUNTY

Schools were surveyed on existing garden programs and their level of interest and resources in starting a school garden. Of the nearly 40 private and public schools in our county, 16 of the schools have a school garden or greenhouse. Several other schools indicated an interest and willingness for starting a garden.

A complete list of all the school gardens and greenhouses follows. This can be used to learn more about school garden programs and how schools incorporate their programs into their daily activities.

1. Riverhouse: flower and veggie
2. Children’s House: flower and veggie
3. River Mist: flower and veggie
4. Durango Early Learning Center: flower, veggie
5. Excel: flower
6. Needham: xeric garden and indoor sunroom
7. Park: learning preserve and raised bed gardens
8. Durango High School: greenhouse
9. Ignacio High School: greenhouse
10. Fort Lewis Mesa: greenhouse (garden planned)
11. SUCAP Early Head Start and Montessori: garden
12. Florida Mesa Head Start: garden
13. Fort Lewis College: garden and greenhouse
14. Southern Ute Academy: garden and greenhouse
15. Fort Lewis College, Campbell Center: butterfly and sensory garden
16. Sunnyside Outdoor Learning Project: garden

“Environmental education should illuminate the essential idea that all cultures have a relationship with the natural world which they and all others can draw upon for understanding and inspiration.”

www.cityfarmer.org

RIVERHOUSE CHILDREN’S CENTER

School: A non-profit daycare facility for children aged zero to five serving 60 youth in the Durango area.
Location: 495 Animas View Drive, Durango
Garden: (2004 to current) Vegetables, Herbs, and Flowers
Contact: Lindsay Sherman, Director

Garden programs at the Riverhouse are designed to encourage experiential learning, environmental awareness, and provide healthy locally grown food for school lunches. In the spring of 2004, the Riverhouse Children’s Center with the help of The Garden Project of SW Colorado and Youth Build La Plata built three raised beds, a salad garden, a bean tepee, three birdhouses and a compost bin. Garden beds are located inside and outside the playground area.

Releasing 1000 Lady Bugs at Riverhouse Garden.
Youth as young as one and as old as twenty-one were responsible for the design of the gardens, but the help of older youth was vital to the maintenance and success of the gardens. High-school youth and volunteers from Youth Build and La Plata Youth Services were able to complete projects such as tilling, preparing beds and building raised beds and compost bins that younger children could not complete alone. Older youth could also reap additional educational and therapeutic benefits of the garden project suitable to their own age level. Garden programs have included: Bug Day, Scarecrow Building, transplanting, making seed balls, building and painting birdhouses, and making smoothies from their garden with the bicycle blender. The preschoolers made their own stepping stones and planted over 100 varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Salad greens, herbs, tomatoes, potatoes, and other plants were harvested by the preschoolers and used for their school lunches and snacks. The kids were much more likely to try and enjoy vegetables when they were responsible for growing them. A new meaning appreciation was found for once protested “garden burgers.”

Experienced youth become our lead botanists; they lead the garden tours, and identify plants to new or younger youth along the way. When swings and imaginary games were more exciting than weeding, we built a bean teepee in their playground to fit five to six children inside to incorporate play into the garden design. We incorporate their own artwork into the garden design and bring indoor programs out and outdoor programs in. When rollie pollies steal the attention, we will hold a “Bug Day,” where we show off our red wiggler worm compost, and release 500 to 1000 ladybugs in the kids’ garden. (The Garden Project, 2005)

The garden is expanding to include a sensory garden where kids can learn which plants are for touching, tasting, seeing and smelling. “The children we serve prepared the soil, planted their vegetables, watered, weeded, pruned and then harvested the vegetables for their lunches and snacks. As the weather has recently started to warm, the kids are observing signs of spring, asking what we will be planting this year, and inquiring as to when the “garden teachers” are going to come and work with us,” said Lindsay Sherman. The garden’s prime focus is on education rather than production. “Our children contribute to the gardens weekly and much of their summer curriculum is based on the gardens.”

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**CHILDREN’S HOUSE MONTESSORI**

**School:** In 1986, Children’s House began their Montessori program serving just six children; today the school offers programs for three to six year olds, including a half-day kindergarten program, extended childcare program and summer day camp.

**Location:** 1689 West 3rd Avenue Durango, CO 81301

**Garden:** Vegetables, flowers

**Contact:** Alicia Zepeda, Director

The garden at the Children’s House may be small at only 100 square feet, but they are able to grow enough to incorporate the garden into their daily routine, the school curriculum, and even an occasional snack. The garden program is in synch with many of the other academic principles of the Montessori school. “Daily eating habits are a core part for us. Teaching about good eating habits is incorporated into the daily routine. We learn about fruits and vegetables at lunch, when teaching Spanish, and in science class we study the plant...”
structure,” said Alicia Zepeda. “(At lunch time) there tends to be more excitement towards veggies that are in the grown in the garden.”

The garden is an “immediate part of the kids’ environment,” Zepeda said. The children are responsible for each part of the garden including starting the seeds, watering, weeding and, of course, harvesting the garden. Plants are chosen for practical reasons as well as for indoor classroom activities. They plant squash and gourds that can later be harvested, dried, and used for sponges. They choose different varieties and sizes for the different uses. And the lettuce is used in the school lunches.

Maintaining the garden is a joint effort by the school, parents and children. There is a parent work day when the parents help prepare the bed. The cultural teacher is responsible for starting the seeds. The science teacher incorporates the garden into the curriculum, the cook incorporates greens in the school lunches and teachers often weed on the weekend. The kids meanwhile are responsible for the daily watering. Even with all the school support effort, additional maintenance and support is always needed. The Children’s House uses strictly organic practices, and buys organic seeds, and transplants.24

**RIVER MIST LEARNING CENTER**

School: Preschool and Childcare Center  
Location: 2441 County Road 225 Durango CO 81303  
Garden Contact: Jennifer Tuo, Director

This school has a farmer on site who maintains the garden.

**DURANGO EARLY LEARNING CENTER (DELC)**

School: Toddler to Pre-Kindergarten childcare center  
Location: 890 East Third Ave Durango CO 81301  
Garden: Vegetable and sensory garden  
Garden Contact: Lesley Lach

The DELC garden is coordinated by the director and a local grower, who is also a DELC parent. Teachers and students utilize the garden daily. The garden is part of the entire school curriculum including math, science, arts, health and reading. They grow peas, lettuce, spinach, carrots, basil, parsley, beets, tomatoes, zucchini, onion, garlic, Aztec beans, and they have a sensory garden filled with plants to enhance the children’s touch, smell, taste, sight and even sound. “Children deserve

to have sensory experiences and deserve to be exposed to sustainable learning and develop skills to promote these themselves,” said Lesley Lach. Children help plant and care for the vegetable garden. It teaches them about healthy eating and how plants grow.

The greatest benefit has been the interest in the life cycles of the plants. And the biggest challenges have been the time commitment and maintenance on the weekends. DELC’s garden is visible to all passersby on historic Third Avenue in Durango.

**EXCEL CHARTER SCHOOL**

**School:** Durango 9R Charter School for grades 9-12  
**Location:** 215 E 12th Street Durango CO 81301  
**Garden Contact:** Meredith Mallet

Excel began a perennial herb and flower garden in 2004 as part of their science curriculum. Garden upkeep is currently managed by Meredith Mallet, an Excel parent.

**NEEDHAM ELEMENTARY**

**School:** Durango 9R Elementary School Pre K-5  
**Location:** 2425 W 3rd Avenue Durango, CO 81301  
**Garden Contact:** Pete Harter, Principal and Carla Mulkey, School Counselor

Referred to as their “outdoor classroom,” Needham has a 300 square foot xeric garden available to the entire school and community. The garden is incorporated into social studies and science curriculums and is available to all teachers to use in their classroom activities and curriculum. Started in 1996, the garden is a demonstration to students and the community of landscaping with Southwest Colorado native plants. The gazebo section is dedicated to retired teacher Gary Mason. Rotary Club and numerous others helped donate money to the “outdoor classroom” garden area. Many people have planted and maintained plants outside. Cottonwood trees outline the area. Numerous projects and lessons have taken place in this area.

There is also an indoor passive solar plant room. According to Carla Mulkey, school counselor at Needham, students and staff “have tremendously enjoyed the plant room.” Most of the plants have been donated. When they proposed the project during Needham’s construction phase, some said “it could not be done.” Years later, Science experiments have taken place in the plant area, sometimes by an entire classroom. It is a treat for a student to help with watering,” said Mulkey.
In 2004, Park expanded the Learning Preserve to include the addition of raised garden beds. The raised beds are used to grow corn, beans and squash. In the spring, the upcoming third graders meet their new teachers and discuss the purpose of the gardens, the history of the Anasazi people and their connection to agriculture. The third grade class has a curriculum on Cultures of the Past, where they discuss Mesa Verde and their farming practices. The kids will take a field trip to Mesa Verde which reiterates the Anasazi’s agricultural practices. They plant corn, squash, and beans in six packs in the classroom and the teachers then put the plants into the garden once sprouted and ready for transplanting. The students are out of school at the appropriate planting time, so planting the seeds in pots and having the teachers plant them later is essential. The plants are on an automated water system, but may suffer from times without regular water. Not all the plants survive this natural inconsistency in precipitation, but that gives the teachers an opportunity to teach about water use and how different plants will do better with different watering conditions.

Other uses for the raised beds and learning preserve include incorporating lessons on plant adaptation, bird adaptation, teaching about different biomes in our area and artistic expression. They can bring paint chips into the garden and compare them to the natural colors found in nature. The first and second grades have incorporated the bio-regional outdoor education into the program as well. “Every grade level uses the gardens… in the form of observation, writing, drawing, teaching about birds and insects,” said Linda Wilkinson.

Teachers and parents have scheduled after-school work times to share in the weeding and raking of the gardens. Harvest from the gardens is shared among the school. When there were pumpkins, harvest was shared with each class and names were pulled to decide which student would take a pumpkin home. Students are also sent home with corn and beans when available. Ideally, the beans could be later replanted in a child’s own family garden. “The learning preserve is part of our school philosophy. It is strongly supported by the school principal, and by the parents and surrounding community. We even have community volunteers in the neighborhood who no longer have kids at the school who help with the garden,” Wilkinson said.
IGNACIO HIGH SCHOOL GREENHOUSE

School: Ignacio 11JT Public High School, Grades 9-12  
Contact: Tessa Gamble, Agriculture Teacher, Ignacio High School

“Right now agriculture and use of the greenhouse are implemented if a student has interest.” (Karla Peskuski, 5/15/2006)

DURANGO HIGH SCHOOL GREENHOUSE

School: Durango 9R Public High School for grades 9-12  
Location: 2390 Main Avenue, Durango CO 81301  
Contact: Mr. Ortiz

Greenhouse: available, moderate use. Math and Science are incorporated into the greenhouse.

FORT LEWIS MESA ELEMENTARY

School: Durango 9R School Pre-K through 5th grade  
Location: 11274 Hwy 140 Hesperus, Colorado 81326  
Garden: Greenhouse and upcoming garden  
Garden Contact: Mary Jo Gage and Mrs. Harrison and Kristi Wiebel (garden contact)  
Greenhouse Plant List 2006: dill, parsley, basil, chives, chamomile, garlic, thyme, cilantro, oregano, squash, pumpkins, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, peppers, cucumber, tomatoes, strawberries, watermelon, cantaloupe, snap dragons, echinacea, phlox, & pansies.  

For the past 30 years, Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary School has had a school greenhouse. Each year starting in February they plant vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs. Amy Rayburn, who now has her own children at Fort Lewis Mesa, remembers planting in the greenhouse when she was a student there. The students, staff and community volunteers share the responsibility of starting the transplants from seed to later be sold at the annual plant sale in May. The community relies on the plant sale for their own home gardens and the sales from last spring generated around $800.00 in funds. The staff and parent volunteers buy the plants and take responsibility for general maintenance of the greenhouse.

Teachers are encouraged and welcome to use the greenhouse for curriculum integration; greenhouse use usually occurs on an “individual basis.” Math and Science classes are the ones that most often use the greenhouse. Previous activities have included mother’s day plant gifts. “Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary also has a teacher appointed Green Thumb club.
Kids who may not be as active in school academics and or school sports will often excel there.” (Cindy Smart) This year they will build their new greenhouse that was received from the National Recreation grant. The school is looking forward to being able to extend the growing season even further with this new, efficient and energy wise greenhouse.

Fort Lewis Mesa formed a committee to begin a learning garden set to break ground in 2007. Plans for the learning garden include a garden work center, bird and butterfly garden, seasonal pond, and tiered garden plots to identify various plants for distinct elevations. Plants grown in the greenhouse will be used for the bird and butterfly plot. Special consideration is given to the dry conditions and water issues of the Fort Lewis Mesa district. The garden committee is comprised of parents, teachers, and a 13 year-old life scout, Mason Rayburn. Mason will be dedicating nearly 100 hours of service to the garden in order to receive his Eagle Scout certification. The garden will also be a memorial to Quinisa Rayburn, Mason’s sister and a former Fort Lewis Mesa student. The learning garden will be incorporated into the entire school’s curriculum.

**SUCAP EARLY HEAD START, HEAD START AND MONTESSORI**

**School:** Early Preschool, Preschool and Montessori Influenced for 0-5 year olds.

**Location:** 279 Capote Avenue Ignacio, Colorado 81137

**Garden Contact:** Joe Pointer, Early Head Start Coordinator

For over five years SUCAP Early Head Start and Head Start have had a vegetable garden and several flower gardens available for academic integration, community involvement and school snacks. There is one large vegetable garden approximately 30 x 50 feet where they grow most of their vegetables and several additional flower gardens located outside the Head Start classrooms. Although they have tried many different vegetables, they have had the most success with the tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and pumpkins. The kids share in seed starting, planting, watering and harvesting. Most of the vegetables are harvested on site and shared on a nearby picnic table, but some years the kids have enough produce to take home and share with their families. Carrots and cucumbers are among the favorites for the preschoolers.

According to Joe Pointer, Early Head Start Coordinator, the garden teaches the kids about science and how to care for the environment. It also helps them develop an appreciation for healthy foods, and enriches their sensory experiences of working with the plants and the ground. The garden fits well with the Montessori practice at the school.

**FLORIDA MESA HEAD START**

**School:** Preschool program located at the Florida Mesa Elementary School.

**Location:** 216 Hwy 172, Durango CO 81303

**Contact:** Janelle Crabtree, Preschool teacher

**Garden:** The garden began in the spring of 2006, spearheaded by teachers, parents and grandparents. For the first year, they grew strawberries, sunflowers and pumpkins in a 4 by 6-foot plot. Everything planted was grown from seed. They watered by hand each day as part of their daily activities with the kids. One of the moms donated seeds and the strawberry plants. The kids helped hoe, pull weeds and were very considerate of their plants.
The teachers read stories about gardens and specifically the sunflowers, which grew into 7 feet tall “giants to preschoolers” They used the pumpkins for indoor activities, exploring the inside of the pumpkins with three and four year olds. They saw the whole life cycle: how the plant changed from seed to sprout, to the eventual pumpkin with its changing colors. They used the pumpkin for pies. This is a very rural community. All the kids [from Florida Mesa Elementary] would comment on their garden. Although their gardening season was cut short by an early frost, they are eagerly awaiting next year and hope to expand in size and in variety.

FORT LEWIS COLLEGE GARDEN AND UPCOMING GREENHOUSE

School: Fort Lewis College
Location: 1000 Rim Drive, next to Justice Hall
Garden and Greenhouse Contact: Marcus Renner, Fort Lewis College Environmental Center

Fort Lewis College garden incorporates the use of native plants, drip irrigation, permaculture practices and a space for hands on academic and community integrations. Started in June 2001, Fort Lewis College maintains an on-site garden open to all students and professors. Tom Riesing of Oakhaven Permaculture created a design for the garden that utilizes plant guilds. “Guilds are communities of plants that interact beneficially to complement each other on multiple ecological levels.” (http://envcenter.fortlewis.edu/ce/index.html)

Currently the garden is 600 square feet and coordinated by five FLC students who are Environmental Center volunteers and work study students. The garden has been used by the agriculture and anthropology classes, Environmental Center staff and for occasional tours. The garden is open to all students and professors.

Students are responsible for choosing the annual plants each year (which in general includes garlic, strawberries, rosehips, chokecherry, tomatillos, tomatoes, gooseberries, currants, prickly pear and raspberries). We would like the garden to be a “demonstrational garden that can deal with good growing practices in this particular region, [addressing] season extension, native techniques, showing distinct areas of the garden where we can grow different things,” Said Renner. Harvest is communal and quite informal. “As the garden produces more, and as we get more organized, we will have more of a protocol for harvest, perhaps, growing for the cafeteria or farmers market.” (Renner, 2006)

“There is room to expand and we may do that; there is already much more room to be utilized. We want to slowly build up our knowledge and techniques and have documented tried and true practices.” (Renner, 2006) FLC is looking for volunteers to serve on a garden advisory group to advise student on what techniques to use. We want to do “what is the best use of the space to advance community food security with an emphasis on sustainably grown practices.”

Fort Lewis College has begun the construction of a new greenhouse in hopes of having it available for spring seed starting. The greenhouse will be used for season extension, plant
starters, and growing and selling native plants. These plants could later be used for restoration purposes on campus.

SOUTHERN UTE ACADEMY

Location: Ignacio
Garden and Greenhouse Contact: Linda Daniels, school nurse

In 2006, the Southern Ute Academy with the help of the Ignacio community is building a growing spaces greenhouse to use to for curriculum integration and an annual school meal.

FORT LEWIS COLLEGE CAMPBELL CENTER

School: Daycare and Preschool Facility for zero to five year olds
Location: 1000 Rim Drive, Durango CO 81301
Garden Contact: Susie Wanatka

In the spring of 2005, school teacher, Susie Wanatka started an on site Bird and Butterfly Garden in the playground. The kids toured the local nursery, where they choose plants that not only attractive to birds and butterflies, but were also hardy and kid friendly. The Garden Project assisted with design ideas of the garden. Kids at FLC Campbell Center have daily interaction with their new garden space.

SUNNYSIDE ELEMENTARY

School: Durango 9R K-5
Location: 75 County Road 218, Durango CO 81303
Garden Contact: Victor Figueroa

An outdoor learning project is in progress for Sunnyside Elementary. Great strides in landscaping and funding the learning project have been made. When Principal Victor Figueroa came to Sunnyside a year ago, he made the landscaping and outdoor learning project a priority for the school. Since Figueroa began they have held two fundraisers for the learning project and expect two additional fundraisers to happen later this school year. Other funding for the project has included the Tool Box for Education Grant, Wal-Mart Outdoors, a Ballantine Grant, district funds and a private anonymous donor. Plans for the outdoor learning project include planting several native trees identified with plaques handmade by students, and a weather station to be utilized in science classes. The goal of the landscaping project is to “beautify and utilize” the outdoor environment, according to Figueroa. Teachers at the school can utilize the area to enhance their curriculum. They are still working on the eventual design of the project, using thematic gardens for academic integration.
5. Youth Surveys

The youth surveys for the community food assessment are currently being compiled and reviewed. An addendum to the food assessment will soon be available online at www.sustainableSWcolorado.org.

Assessment Methodology: Approximately 100-150 Youth Surveys were completed by area youth. Different variations of the survey were used, depending on time available and age group. From initial review of the surveys, the youth were highly influenced by the lesson, talks, or programs preceding the survey or interview. For example, a student who was asked about their favorite fruit or vegetables during a day they were making “cherry cobbler” would often choose cherries as their favorite fruit or vegetables. When reviewing the surveys, it is important to know which program the students participated in, to better understand the influences. The goal of the youth survey was to have a clearer understanding of youth’s perception of the food system and their food choices and to introduce basic ideas about agriculture, health and nutrition, and our local food system.

TRENDS

Overall there were a large range of likes and dislikes in the school menu, which was also heard in 9-R’s Elementary Surveys. There also seem to be common themes about the school dining hall atmosphere, which is also something that is very important to the youth surveyed. Youth also demonstrated a clear understanding of what it means to have good nutrition, yet that knowledge did not necessarily lead them to better food choices.

CONCLUSIONS

The SW Colorado Farm-to-School Working Group contributed to the development of the school surveys in hopes of drawing valuable information that would not only inform the community on general information regarding the school food programs but would offer the group insight on how to incorporate farm to school programs into existing efforts.

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

Understanding the ins and outs of the school meal programs can offer the community and its schools insight into ways to enrich and enhance the current programs. Storage capacity, facility capabilities, cafeteria atmosphere, the time allotted for school meals, nutritional guidelines, distribution and budget all contribute to the overall program. In examining these factors, better ways to implement new programs and enrich the current programs can be found.

The food assessment described these contributing factors for each of the public school districts in La Plata County (Bayfield, Ignacio and Durango). In each of the interviews with the food service directors, it was evident the amount of time and care each director put into their program. Menus were created by weighing the budget, nutritional guidelines, staff time, and the diversity of the population they serve as with their desire to offer enjoyable meals to the students. Examples of private local schools showed ways that smaller schools were

\[25\] Youth Surveys are tailored to different age groups in two versions, long and short were available. Surveys were conducted orally and written and presented by classroom teachers, youth volunteers, and Growing Partners staff.
incorporating local, organic, and other quality food into their food programs with reasonable expense.

As seen in the Durango school district, the salad bar can be a great first step in introducing local produce into the schools’ lunch menu. It is easier to incorporate local produce into the salad bar because it does not affect the entire school lunch menu and changes can easily be made. There is more flexibility with quantity and availability, which also allows for smaller farms to participate even if they cannot supply the entire district with food for school lunch meals.

Sprouts from Turtle Lake Refuge can now be found in nine of the local school salad bars. The Farm to School Working Group hopes to eventually highlight a new local product each month in the salad bar. Meetings are being held with local farmers to identify interested buyers and possible produce for the salad bar and bring both buyers and farmers to the table.

As indicated by other states’ programs, farm to school has proven to be a program that carries benefits to the entire community. The farmer, the school district, the economy, the environment, and the health and education of the students can all be positively impacted when farm to school is integrated into the food system.

**FOOD RELATED PROGRAMS**
Aside from bringing the farm to the cafeteria, farm to school programs can include farmer and rancher presentations, farm tours, community and parent education, curriculum integration and school gardens.

The assessment provides a brief profile of the ways in which local schools are currently participating in various food related programs. Responses from school administrators demonstrated some of the advantages as well as the obstacles to incorporating agriculture, nutrition and other food related issues into the program. The surveys indicated that nutritional education not only can be incorporated into a variety of programming, but can be taught by a variety of staff and outside resources. Some of the agricultural education activities listed on the survey included: greenhouse activities, classroom lessons on plants, student participation in the county 4-H Program and farm tours.

A farm tour booklet, presented in the chapter, showed five area farms, nurseries and programs that are open to offering their land to area schools. This booklet can be used as a tool for schools, youth groups, and other agencies to identify farms and other programs that could enhance their program or curriculum objectives. An in-depth profile and county map showed 16 schools which already have gardens and/or greenhouses at their schools. Their descriptions were compiled as guidelines and incentives for other schools in hopes that there will one day be a garden in every school in La Plata County.
CHAPTER VI
HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN LA PLATA COUNTY

1. THE HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL TRAITS OF LA PLATA COUNTY
   • THE AGENCIES SERVING LOW-INCOME CLIENTELE
2. WHAT IT MEANS TO EAT WELL IN LA PLATA COUNTY
3. DIABETES & OBESITY
4. WHAT SOME EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION
5. IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN AYURVEDIC MEDICINE, NUTRITION AND LOCAL FOOD?
6. FOOD PROJECTS OF INTEREST

Assessment Methodology: The information collected for this portion of the La Plata County Community Food Assessment includes information from interviews conducted with a pediatrician, health care agencies, an ayurvedic practitioner serving the Southern Ute Community, and a nutritional expert.

Growing Partners attended monthly meetings with the Healthy Lifestyle Coalition in an effort to strengthen food networks, to gather data from the coalition regarding their efforts towards creating a healthier community and to collaborate on the COPAN (Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program), health assessment of La Plata County. Responses on what it means to “eat well” in La Plata County were collected from over 125 adults and 100 youth who responded to consumer and youth surveys. And the COPAN Comprehensive Planning Grant provided data and input on national, state and local health statistics on obesity and related illnesses.

The following is a list of the individuals interviewed and the agencies or organizations they serve or affiliate with:

Zane Baranowski, C.N.
Zane Baranowski is a certified nutritionist and has worked in the health food industry for over 25 years including 11 years in Southwest Colorado. His work includes raw food material production, research and product development, packaging and marketing.

Pakhi Chaudhuri, M.D.
Pakhi Chaudhuri is a local pediatrician for The Pediatric Associates of Durango. Pakhi received her MD from Brown University School of Medicine in Rhode Island. She is a member of the Physicians for Social Responsibility and the American Academy of Pediatrics and serves on the board for the Four Corners Holistic Health Association.

Karen Forest, R.N.
Karen Forest is a Registered Nurse and Coordinator of Promoviendo La Salud, a program of San Juan Basin Health Department. Promoviendo works with the Latino
population in both La Plata and Archuleta counties, established families and new immigrants, to reduce health disparities.

**Betzi Murphy, R.N.**
Betzi Murphy is the director of The Women Infant Children (WIC) Program in La Plata County, a program that provides general nutrition and breastfeeding education, health referrals, and special supplemental foods (in the form of check vouchers) for women, infants, and children who qualify.

**Amita Nathwani, M.A.**
Amita Nathwani is Founder and President of Four Corners Holistic Health Association, Inc. Amita currently practices Ayurvedic Medicine at the Rivergate Medical Building in Durango, Colorado. Amita specializes in women’s disorders and detoxification, studying the psychological aspects, cravings, addictions, behavior and education around food and diet. She currently serves forty Southern Ute Indian Women through a grant focused on a healthy weight program.

**Elise Redd**
Elise Redd is the Director of Southern Ute Tribal Health Services. Tribal Health provides some home care for elders, in-home exercise programs, diabetes prevention and care programs and Community Health Representatives, whose primary job is to provide in-home health care and transportation to medical appointments for Tribal members.

1. THE HEALTH AND NUTRIONAL TRAITS OF LA PLATA COUNTY

*Assessment methodology:* Each interviewee was asked how the populations and health concerns of the area are unique. The responses not only told a story, but painted a picture of a very split community.

Several of the people interviewed talked about the overall health of the county, and of desires to be active, fit, and eat healthy. According to Zane Baranowski, a certified nutritionist, the county as a whole is very health conscious. “La Plata County has an overall interest in being active and being thin. When you look at the number of stores that sell health bars, and active green products, Durango is on par or better with any region. The demand is absolutely there.”

Pakhi Chaudhuri, a local pediatrician for The Pediatric Associates of Durango, also feels she serves a very healthy clientele, but wishes she served more Hispanic and Native clients so she had a better understanding of their needs. Currently, her clientele is very nutritionally educated and already eating healthy, organic, and pesticide-free foods. Similarly, Amita Nathwani, Founder and President of Four Corners Holistic Health Association, Inc., believes in general that people in the community have much more acceptance for holistic medicine than in the Eastern U.S.

Pakhi is positive about La Plata County’s current food system, but feels there needs to be more community education for widespread support and understanding about its basic needs
and resources. “(Local food) is still more expensive and there needs to be a balance to bridge the expenses with the benefits,” she said. She is glad to see more hormone-free beef available locally, but says there still needs to be more awareness around some other factors, such as why can’t we eat the fish in the river, or in Lake McPhee. “There needs to be awareness around the environmental impacts on our food supply.”

THE AGENCIES SERVING LOW-INCOME CLIENTELE TELL A DIFFERENT STORY ABOUT HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN THE COUNTY

People working with the low-income sector of the population spoke about various issues affecting the specific populations they serve and about food access. This perspective drew attention to the fact that La Plata County is a very divided community, with food needs that are population-specific.

According to Karen Forest, who directs Promoviendo la Salud, a Program of the San Juan Basin Health Department (SJBHD) which serves the Hispanic population, health and nutrition are two things the population her agency serves has many issues with. “The Pre-Natal Program (also a Program of SJBHD) sees recent immigrants staying in hotels and having real food security issues,” she said. “They are using the microwave in their hotel rooms to cook food. That is all they have access to.” Karen feels many of their diets are really poor, especially when it comes to how much fast food they eat. She hopes cooking classes will help teach people to go to the store and purchase affordable healthy foods that they can prepare throughout the week. “Many people say they don’t buy healthy food because they can’t afford it, but possibly it takes a little more effort and planning to be possible.”

According to Elise Redd, Director of Southern Ute Tribal (SUIT) Health Services, many Tribal members she serves are not interested in nutritional education and programs. “We can have an event, like a wellness event that is open to ours and sister tribes, and we will have more people come from other communities than from our own community.”

Amita Nathwani spoke about the SUIT women she works with at Health Services. “The hardest thing I found is that when women are overweight, it becomes exhausting for them to talk over and over again about nutrition. The women I work with face many stresses in life; they deal with alcoholic husbands. We remind women to empower themselves and that food, in a healthy way, can help them revive themselves.”

Amita also feels SUIT women’s access to quality foods is an issue. “Culturally, food access is harder because SUIT women are living in a culture surrounded by a very different culture, and (what I have found is) they tend to embrace things not part of their (traditional) culture. (For example), when I walked into Shur Value,¹ what I found was that there was not a single food without hydrogenated oils and corn syrup. Everything was processed.”

According to Amita, Shur Value, the grocery store in Ignacio, is full, but doesn’t offer a large variety of food options. People in Ignacio must travel to Durango to purchase healthier foods. “The community needs affordable fruits and vegetables and healthy, affordable food. If you are going to cook healthy, many of those foods are more expensive.”

¹ Shur Value is the only grocery store in Ignacio, home of the Southern Ute Tribe. See Chapter III on Food Resources- Grocery Stores for more information on Shur Value and other grocers.
Elise thinks a lot of people in Ignacio, given the choice, still would not purchase fresh, perishable foods, but more likely would continue to purchase canned food. The most common complaint she hears is, “It takes too long to cook healthy. It takes a lot of preparation.” And canned foods, or meals already made, require less effort to prepare.

Family advocates at SUCAOp Head Start in Ignacio feel family meals may be less balanced due to fast-food diets. They feel their families are very busy and have limited time for food. But, according to the owner of Durango restaurant, P is for Peanut, there is a disparity between what people want and would do if given the means, and what they have access to. To her, food issues are more connected to monetary constraints than to time or preference. “I think people want to believe they are willing to pay for local and organic food, but in most average families in La Plata County, they can’t afford it.”

2. WHAT IT MEANS TO “EAT WELL” IN LA PLATA COUNTY
The following are comments from surveys regarding what it means to residents in La Plata County to “eat well.” To some having a full belly was important, but to others eating well takes on a more philosophical approach connected to the local food system and social responsibility. The diversity is amazing.

- “Eating nutritiously, feed the body, feed the soul.” Consumer Survey, Durango Natural Foods Farmers’ Appreciation Day Event
- “Eating food without hormones.” Youth Survey, grade 11
- “Apples, vegetables, fruit - all the healthy food.” Youth Survey, grade 5, 10 years old
- “Eat a bit of everything. Everything on the Food Pyramid.” WIC participant
- “Healthy food that gives you energy and keeps your body in good shape.” Youth survey, grade 11
- “Whole grains, organics, fruits and veggies, free range meat, local.” Consumer Survey, Taste of Durango
- “To eat food in appropriate portions that is grown organically and hopefully locally.” Consumer Survey, Taste of Durango
- “To eat a balanced meal.” WIC and Food Stamp participant

3. DIABETES AND OBESITY
Up until 130 years ago when the Ute and Navajo homelands covered modern day Colorado, eastern Utah, and northern New Mexico, life patterns followed the seasons. Later, this healthy, active lifestyle of hiking in the mountains to harvest fresh food and visiting neighbors was replaced by a more modern Western way of living. And with this transition, Native health problems began to rise.
Currently the incidence of diabetes among Native Americans is more than double that of Caucasian populations. According to Indian Health Services 2003 data, Southern Ute Tribal members have a diabetes rate of 15% with a 75% chance that those affected will advance to cardiovascular disease and renal complications (a high incidence compared with other Native nations). Advanced diabetes carries with it a high level of morbidity and mortality.

The Southern Ute (SUIT) Health Services focuses on teaching tribal members healthy food preparation and healthy eating in order to prevent diabetes and to encourage weight loss. To get people more active, the Diabetes Program at Southern Ute (SUIT) Health Services has been encouraging people to exercise at home. “We have a recreation center here, but a lot of people won’t use it,” said Elise Redd “They go there and they feel like everyone is thin, so they won’t go. Health Services has purchased equipment that people can take home and work on personal fitness. Then they can transition to the recreational center once they are comfortable.”

According to Elise, there is a level of acceptance for overweight people in the community, and people eat out a lot. The Family Advocates at SUCAP Head Start, a Montessori school located in Ignacio, feel some of the local doctors disregard the prevalence of diabetes and obesity among children. For example, they claim parents with overweight children have been told by their doctors that their child’s weight is “Normal since the rest of the family is large. And, so not to worry, they will grow out of it.”

According to Amita Nathwani, “Diabetes and high blood pressure are not all about sugar. There are things like salt-sensitive and non salt-sensitive people that need a combination medication.” This makes paying attention to diet and personal needs so important when combating or preventing diabetes.

Practitioners mentioned some of the common approaches found in food marketing designed to fight diabetes and obesity may not be solving the problem. For example, products labeled sugar-free, fat-free, or cholesterol-free used alone will not change the factors behind diabetes or obesity.

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2 SUIT Health Services uses the Polar Body Age Exercise System. For more information see: [www.polarusa.com/medical/wellness](http://www.polarusa.com/medical/wellness)
4. WHAT SOME EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION

OUR CURRENT NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IS NOT WORKING

Zane Baranowski noted that our current nutritional education is not working. “If our primary focus has been that it is best to get all the nutrients from food, then we all need to come to a very good understanding of what food actually is. The knowledge the general public has been given by governmental agencies about what is food is inadequate. They have allowed white breads, cereals, sugar and corn syrup products to count as food. They allow nutritionally-compromised over-processed foods to be part of their recommended daily food choices.”

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEGIN TEACHING NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION WITH MOMS VERY EARLY

Pakhi Chaudhuri begins teaching nutritional education with new moms very early. One of the first handouts she gives to her patients’ parents cites the importance of serving organic baby foods. Pakhi recommends agencies and physicians “especially offer services to new moms. They are in a unique place and are often very willing to make changes and are motivated to learn. It is a good time to introduce new education. With parents of older children, it is easy to fall back into old patterns that have already been established.”

Everyone needs nutritional education. Healthy choices and education need to not only be focused on lower income, but wealthier families as well. Everyone needs to see the worth of eating well. Families with more money don’t necessarily make healthier eating choices; they need to see that nutritional programs are not just charitable programs for low-income populations. (Pakhi Chaudhuri)

When asked about the role schools play in regard to nutritional education, Pakhi recommended there be modeling in the cafeteria. However, she said, “Nutritional education is hard to teach in the schools if it is not emulated at homes. Children don’t want to hear that they are not doing healthy things at home. And the education won’t stick without reinforcement at home too. What I tell parents, is to bring in the healthy snacks and then back off.”

THERE ARE VARIOUS QUALITY AND QUANTITY ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FOOD WE EAT

According to Zane Baranowski, there are certain quality and quantity issues of food to deal with. He claims the USDA’s five food groups in the Food Pyramid, are all quantity related and are not monitored for the qualities they possess. “They never mention the nutritional aspects of food that are missing or being altered by processing and/or chemical-based agriculture. For example, we talk about eating more vegetables, yet we don’t talk much about the actual quality of the vegetables we eat, only the quantity. Mineral content alone has been tested to be much higher in organic foods than in conventional foods. Until the true qualities of foods enter into the equation, all of our nutritional education is not only ineffective, but untrue.”
** BETTER EDUCATION DOESN’T ALWAYS TRANSLATE INTO BETTER FOOD CHOICES **

According to the assessment’s Consumer and Youth Surveys, many respondents, although able to recite a clear educated message about nutrition and what it means to eat well, did not connect these principals with their everyday actions. For example, when asked about their food choices and which restaurants they frequent, some chose fast food as their top restaurant choice.

Zane Baranowski agrees. “Better education doesn’t always translate into better food choices. We are too busy, have too much work, are lazy, and deal with constant emotional blackmail by our children (when it comes to making food choices). Convenience has become more important than quality.”

** 5. IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN AYURVEDIC MEDICINE, NUTRITION, AND LOCAL FOOD? **

Interestingly, a common theme of expert interviews centered on the importance of ayurvedic principles with regard to food and nutrition as preventative medicine.

Ayurvedic medicine is an alternative medical practice that claims to be the traditional medicine of India. *Ayurveda* is based on two Sanskrit terms: *ayu* meaning life and *veda* meaning knowledge or science. Ayurvedic treatments are primarily dietary and herbal. Patients are classified by body types, or *prakriti*, which are determined by proportions of the three *doshas*. The *doshas* allegedly regulate mind-body harmony. Illness and disease are considered to be a matter of imbalance in the *doshas*. Treatment is aimed at restoring harmony or balance to the mind-body system.³

Because ayurvedic medicine is focused on prevention and takes an individualized approach, it is seen as being very different than most Western medicine attitudes towards health and nutrition. According to Pakhi Chaudhuri, a Durango pediatrician, there is a strong disconnect between health and nutrition in Western medicine. “Some Western medical schools don’t even offer classes on nutrition. Medical students have had to petition their school to offer even one class on nutritional education.” Pakhi believes Western medicine has a “rudimentary understanding of nutrition. Ayurvedic medicine addresses the issue much better and the study of genetics is finally catching up with it.”

Elise Redd, Tribal Health Services Director, stated in her interview that the Southern Ute Tribe was in the process of hiring an ayurvedic nutritionist based on the fact that an ayurvedic approach better deals with their health and nutritional issues. We are choosing “to go with an ayurvedic nutrition program. The principles are friendlier to tribal traditions. They constitute a very individualized approach.”

Pakhi Chaudhuri believes nutrition should be less about dieting and more about an individualized nutritional diet. Obesity often results from emotional eating, so, when working with young adults, she checks on their moods and behaviors associated with eating. She

³ http://skepdic.com/ayurvedic.html
encourages things like no eating in front of the TV, no kids on diets, no soda, and limiting juice. Pakhi does not teach nutrition from the USDA food pyramid; she emphasizes more fruit, veggies, and protein. Pakhi stresses the need for whole foods and family time.

Amita Nathwani, an ayurvedic practitioner, is currently working with women from the Southern Ute Tribe on issues of diabetes, obesity and other digestive issues. She is incorporating local wild and cultivated foods as part of her nutritional program. As part of her research, she looks into what grows in the area to help determine what she and her patients should be eating.

According to Amita, the food we eat is directly connected to how healthy we feel. “We believe in the qualities of nature [and] what better way to go through nature than with food? If we eat the right foods, then the rest is minor. We will never make real strides if we continue to eat processed foods and things that are not meant for the body to digest. For women SUIT Health Services works with, their bodies are not used to breaking down processed foods.”

Amita sees many patients with digestive disorders. She focuses on using herbals remedies and always seeks out local plants and foods as medicine. If Amita finds a recipe for treatment, she will first look for local products that carry the same properties as the medicine recommended, and prescribe those instead.

Amita believes that historically, people had better diets and took better care of themselves, and she uses this belief as part of her medical treatment. “When I work with women from the tribe, I ask them to look back at their childhood. For the most part, they were very healthy in their youth. Because it is the generation of forty-and-over that I work with, I try to get them to remember (how they lived and ate) and explain the simple concepts to me, remembering that there is a more natural way of living.”

Zane Baranowski, a certified nutritionist, echoed the same theme regarding ayurvedic medicine and how taking a more individualized approach to diet is beneficial. “The difficulty is that there is no single message for everyone. Different ages, groups, genetic strengths and weaknesses generally call for different diets and medicines,” he said.

6. FOOD PROJECTS OF INTEREST
In each survey or interview, participants were asked to describe three community food projects that would best address the food needs of the populations they serve. They were also asked to share information on how best to work with diverse populations. Here are some of the responses and suggestions they shared.

- **More Local Food Direct Sales Opportunities in Ignacio:** The Agricultural Extension Program currently sells bulk beans and potatoes at reduced cost. More farm stands, and people selling on the side of the road, and a farmers’ market would be good. (Elise Redd, Director of SUIT Health Services)
• **An On-Site Community Garden:** At SUIT Health Services, where people could garden as a community. A lot of times the Tribal Elders want gardens, but they can’t do it on their own. (Elise Redd, Director of SUIT Health Services)

• **Nutritional and Affordable Cooking Classes:** This was mentioned by the San Juan Basin Health Department, Promoviendo la Salud, Family Center of Durango and WIC.

• **A Traditional Foods Cooking Class:** Use buffalo meat to teach the benefits to using a local, low-fat, lean meat. A lot of people are shocked to eat it. They are not used to that kind of meat. (Elise Redd, Director of SUIT Health Services)

• **Grocery Store Tours:** Have someone go to Wal-Mart and take people around the store to tell them more about certain products. Teach people how to read labels for serving size, salt and sugar content. Break down the language barrier for those folks who can barely read English. (Karen Forest, Promoviendo la Salud)

• **Community Events with Native Foods** (Amita Nathwani)

• **Better Availability of Higher Quality Foods at the Local Grocery Store** (Amita Nathwani)

• **Education:** On what they are eating, and what simple changes such as cutting portion size and overeating can do. (Amita Nathwani)

• **Outreach to New Moms and Dads** (Pakhi Chaudhuri)

• **Help WIC get a grant for Farmers Market Nutrition Program:** (Betzi Murphy, Director, WIC)

• **Teach Fast, Cheap and Easy Snacks:** And offer education about the importance of family meals and not over-scheduling activities. (Pakhi Chaudhuri)
CHAPTER VII
FOOD SECURITY IN LA PLATA COUNTY

1. WHAT DOES FOOD SECURITY MEAN TO LA PLATA COUNTY?
   - A LOOK AT ISOLATION AND AT THE LACK OF FOOD PRODUCTION

2. FOOD SECURITY ISSUES WITHIN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS: How Food Insecurity Plays Out in Underserved Populations
   - LATINO/IMMIGRANT
   - NATIVE AMERICAN
   - OLDER ADULTS & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – A Contribution from Sue Bruckner
   - LOW-INCOME
   - RURAL RESIDENTS

1. WHAT DOES FOOD SECURITY MEAN TO LA PLATA COUNTY?

**Assessment Methodology:** Producers and agricultural experts, agencies, and forum participants were asked to define *community food security*. Producers and agricultural experts were asked, “Is La Plata County Food Secure?” Agencies were asked how food security plays out in the populations they serve, and to what degree food issues rank versus other issues within those groups. Forum participants were also asked, “How can we address food insecurity in La Plata County?” All responses were recorded in their various forms, and included in this chapter. These groups, along with the surveys they received, are listed below.

**A Food System Profile and Respondents from Each Sector:**

- Producers – *Farm and Ranch Survey, Agricultural Expert Interview*
  - Farmers
  - Ranchers
  - Agricultural Experts

- Distributors, Packers, Processors – *Agricultural Expert Interview*
  - Meat packer
  - Raw Food Bar Manufacturer

1. Issues like domestic violence, shelter, substance abuse, etc…
INTRODUCTION
While community food security is extremely important to understand and define, it can be a nebulous concept to discuss. For the assessment team, defining the concept proved difficult, but was a critical definition to develop in order to converse with the public about its importance. The overarching goal of the project has been to measure community food security in La Plata County. Food security was addressed directly with many participants, but also indirectly, as people spoke of food security when discussing other food related issues.

It is important to note that many different sectors of the population discussed food security as it relates specifically to them, their work or the populations they serve. Thus a myriad of responses were recorded, providing a detailed picture of the current state of food security in the county and how it plays out in various populations and within various socio-economic groups. For example, when asked about food security in La Plata County, many farmers spoke of a lack of food production and how the community would currently have trouble feeding itself if trucks stopped bringing food to the area. Agencies serving low-income populations talked about their lack of access to fresh foods. What emerged were themes about food security that were population dependent.
Each of these groups plays a somewhat different role in the food system, and has specific relationships to food security and its definition. Ultimately, all of these elements are directly connected to, and affected by, one another.

DEFINING THE CONCEPT AS A COMMUNITY
Defining the concepts of a food system and food security played an important role in the food assessment. Developing an understanding of the food system as a combination of all the elements that go into getting food from where it’s grown to the table was key to talking about community food resources and needs. Also, setting a baseline for what food security means, as defined by the Community Food Security Coalition, created a basis for discussion about food security in La Plata County and how it affects area residents. As participants became more familiar with these concepts, they began to understand and unveil the intricate layers of food security within the local food system and identify key elements of each.

Sustainability
Building off of the Community Food Security Coalition’s (CFSC) definition, La Plata County has defined food security as a situation “in which all people at all times have access to enough nutritious, safe, affordable, culturally-appropriate food produced in ways that are sustainable.” The most notable concern of La Plata County residents to an already well-established and well-defined concept of community food security was in regard to agricultural production. In addition to making healthy, socially just food affordable for consumers, it was proposed that healthy, socially just food production is needed. As noted by Greg Vlaming, former horticulture agent and organic farmer, “Farmers must be able to afford to produce (our) food.” Peg Redford, Director of the Durango Farmers’ Market, also talked about some of the economic challenges food producers face. “Farmers are able to continue to farm as a primary source of income when they can afford to farm. Some of the younger farmers are leasing land – they can’t even afford to buy a farm. Land costs need to be at a price where the land can be farmed. Farmers need a venue to sell more months out of the year to help the young growers pay their mortgages.”

IGNACIO FOOD FORUM, February 28, 2006
The Food Forum in Ignacio, hosted by Growing Partners, provided a venue to ask a well-represented cross section of the population to define food security as it pertains to La Plata County and to food needs and resources. Since the forum took place during the early phase of the project, it allowed the research team to develop a baseline for the community’s understanding of food security.

Producers, processors and consumers took part in answering questions about the local food system and assisted with the planning phase of the community food assessment. These responses are a good example of the creativity and enthusiasm generated by the community to create grass-roots food system change.

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The Ignacio Food Forum hosted over 60 participants from the surrounding county.

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SUSTAINABILITY IS
- Socially responsible,
- Economically viable, &
- Environmentally sound.
WHAT DOES FOOD SECURITY MEAN TO YOU?
Responses to this question included the following:

- Safety;
- Health;
- Access;
- Adequate supply;
- Fuel-free food;
- Conserving soil & land;
- Having choices;
- Encouraging more people to sell/grow food;
- Political support from city and county;
- Having the capacity to produce food;
- Food security system of survival;
- Knowledge of what we are eating;
- Organic micro-nutrients/freshness;
- That food be available & affordable to all;
- If conventional distribution stops, we can supply ourselves;
- Kids are safe;
- Self-sufficiency;
- Land is available;
- Safety comes from knowing your grower;
- Education through example;
- Educating youth via hands-on-education;
- Freight; water;
- Demonstrated markets;
- Dependable;
- Community gardens like Shared Harvest;
- Knowledge of preservation of food;
- Eat seasonally;
- Encourage more production & a variety of production;
- Local foods to schools;
- Lots of land & greenhouses;
- Organizations supporting each other;
- Start with regional sources; wild food education.

HOW COULD LA PLATA COUNTY BECOME MORE FOOD SECURE?
Responses to this question included the following:

- Implementing CSAs;
- Community gardens;
- Seed exchanges;
- Demonstrational gardens;
- Backyard gardens;
• Farm-to-School;
• Implementing a distribution system;
• Working with policy makers;
• Educating on the food resources including wild foods, storage, season extension, preservation, how to eat seasonally, and how to grow;
• Providing subsidies to small farmers;
• Working on land use codes and protecting agricultural land;
• Better food access for low income families;
• Create a list of places and restaurants to get local food;
• Latino and native community open to farmers’ markets;
• Make it easier to sell excess produce from small gardens;
• More markets; food education in schools;
• Improving quality of soil;
• Have the farmers’ market accept WIC and Senior and Food Stamp coupons;
• Have education for people who want to farm;
• More dairies and mills;
• Create models for water security and water preservation and conservation.

POPULATION SPECIFIC SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS
The Ignacio Food Forum provided a venue for a non-biased cross section of the community to look at these issues. Surveys and interviews, however, were population specific, and allowed for more concrete definitions of food security as they pertain to each sector of the food system.

A good example of this took place in an interview with Zane Baranowski, a natural food marketer and long-term community member. He approached the question of community food security from two perspectives, as a consumer and as someone involved in the food manufacturing industry. “My first response (to food security) is that (as a consumer) I have the option to get to the store and it has what I want but, as (I look deeper), as a consultant to the (food) industry, food security is a scary thought. If we didn’t see any trucks for a week we would be done for.”

The following are some of the quotes from interviews and surveys regarding food security in La Plata County. Each comes from a different sector of the population and suggests ways in which various factors, when supported by the community, can contribute to greater community food security.

• PROMOTE CROP & FOOD SOURCE DIVERSITY. “Having enough diversity (in crops) to supply the needs of the community is important. You look at what is grown in this area – you just have some grain, a lot of livestock, and alfalfa. Food security (means you) have a broad diversity of food sources.” Doug Ramsey, San Juan RC&D

“A key component of a healthy food system is an abundance of locally grown, and produced, organic goods, accessible to everyone in the community.”

Greg Vlaming

• PROTECT SOIL & WATER RESOURCES. “As long as we keep soil and water resources intact, then we can preserve the land and produce what we want through the ages.” Sterling Moss, NRCS
• PROTECT PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND. “To me it means land; having the land to grow food on. And this is under threat.” Peg Redford, Director, Durango Farmers’ Market

• INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION. “The only option is to grow a lot more food.” Greg Vlaming, former Horticultural Agent in La Plata County & Organic farmer

• ENSURE FOOD SAFETY. “Poisoned food is a threat. Secure food needs to be traceable.” Paul Evans, Manager, Ute Mountain Ute Farm

• CREATE GREATER SELF SUFFICIENCY. “If the highways are open and the trucks are running we have food security. If there is a truckers strike we will feel it in a day.” Dave Sanford, Tribal Extension Services

• INCREASE LOCAL SUPPLY. “An area needs to be able to provide for its needs; it makes no sense for us to import things from Vermont that grow right here.” Trent Taylor, Wheat farmer

• SUPPORT PROFITABILITY IN AGRICULTURE. “Farmers have to be able to afford to produce food.” Greg Vlaming

• SUSTAINABLE MUST BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE. “Sustainable has to be profitable!” Kevin Mallow, Tribal Water Resources, talking about sustainable agriculture

• KNOW HOW OUR FOOD IS RAISED/PRODUCED. “Consumers in Durango have had the opportunity to look the farmer in the eye and learn how their food is produced.” Jerry Zink, owner, SunnySide Meat Processing

• CREATE DISTRIBUTION & PROCESSING FACILITIES. “There is a lack of regional distribution and a lack of regional processing facilities for what is grown.” Ron Englander, former Grocery Manager, Durango Natural Foods

• FOSTER SOURCES FOR LOCAL INGREDIENTS. “I have not used local providers for material for processing, but it is a goal. I am looking for the possibility of having a local sprouting facility, processor, or other production piece.” Zane Baranowski, Natural Foods Marketer

  “(Currently) local processors cannot depend on local supply of inputs.” Ron Englander, speaking about Waves of Grain, a local granola

• AFFORDABLE LOCAL FOOD. “PRICE is a factor that affects local food choices and purchases.” Ron Englander

• CONSISTENCY IN THE LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY. “Consistency of a locally produced product.” Ron Englander

• AVAILABILITY & CHOICE. “As a consumer I have the opportunity to get to the store, and it has what I want.” Zane Baranowski

• CHOICE. “Here, in La Plata County, if I want to buy lobster for dinner tonight, and I have the money in my pocket, I can.” Kevin Mallow

• AVAILABILITY AND PRICE. “I feel food secure just by going to the grocery store; when I go there the shelves are always stocked and full. All of the food is relatively inexpensive. What we have to spend on food is a small portion of our income.” Sterling Moss, NRCS

Constructive criticism
There were also some critical responses to the premise that food security is an issue that needs attention in La Plata County, and although these responses were rare, they are worth mentioning. These responses indicate the perception that global and local food systems are in good condition. Dave Sanford with Tribal Extension Services in Ignacio said, “If we look
at food security as a whole... how many people in this country die of malnutrition? Not many. The USDA is in place so that we have a consistent supply of food and fiber in this country. We've created a 'perfect' food system.”

In Ignacio, all members of the Ute Tribe now receive annual dividends from oil and gas earnings, and accordingly there is little concern among Tribal members about having enough money for food. Dave stated: “The Commodities Food Distribution comes to Ignacio. It’s almost all non-tribal members that receive it. Tribal members can go to the store. They have money for food.” He, along with others in the community, felt food security in La Plata is currently intact due to national, local, and regional support systems in place to ensure its presence. He did mention, however, that if there were an oil crisis, or for some reason trucks stopped coming to the area, we would feel the repercussions on our food system. “If there were a trucking shortage, then we would have problems. We would be okay for about a week with food storage. Then, after a couple of weeks, we would feel it more. If the highways are open and the trucks are running we have food security. If there is a truckers’ strike we will feel it in a day. There are some local food options, but not many.”

A LOOK AT ISOLATION & THE LACK OF FOOD PRODUCTION
La Plata County is an isolated community. The closest industrial centers, Denver and Albuquerque, are six and four hours away respectively. Trucks bringing food from these and other areas such as Texas, California, and Arizona, are heavily relied upon to supply the region with food. Without them the area would have severe food shortages.

Why doesn’t a truckers’ strike or inconvenient weather, such the paralyzing snowstorm of 2006, spark concern with everyone? For many, the likelihood of the entire distribution and trucking system in the country collapsing is inconceivable. Dave Sanford, however, explained that it’s not an unlikely scenario. “In 1973 there was a truckers’ strike and a gas strike. First the government announced, ‘if you want gas, or if you want food you had better go get it.’ I went to the store to get supplies and they were mostly out of food (at the store). It was all gone the first day… people panicked and they bought it all out.” Although this information seems to be common knowledge, it appears overall dependence on trucks to provide the area's food supply is only a concern for some.

People who share this concern are typically those who are concerned about peak oil, or who consider how far food travels when making food purchases. For many in the county, however, just going to a grocery store that has stocked shelves is all the reassurance they need to feel food secure.

Throughout the course of the assessment, when pressed to confront the issues of isolation and lack of food production, many people began to realize the potential significance of these issues. For example, Doug Ramsey, who raises sheep in Montezuma County and is the USDA Resource Conservation and Development Director, began to think about what his food resources would look like if the trucks stopped running. “If, for whatever reason, we went into a world petroleum crisis, we (in the region) would be hard pressed for available food. We wouldn’t starve. You can always eat wheat and beef. You would get some food here, but you wouldn’t have the variety.”
Doug touches on two points that are in fact the most pressing issues affecting food security in the county: isolation and lack of local food production. Sterling Moss, who works with Natural Resource Conservation Service, agrees. “The food we currently have access to is certainly not being grown in this county. It is being brought in from elsewhere. We supply some cattle, some lamb, but that’s about it.”

These factors, along with information throughout the assessment, show La Plata County is particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. However, the information provides the basis for discussion on the benefits of improving the food system in a language most community members can understand and relate to. As more community members become informed and understand the fragility of their local food system, they may feel empowered to change it.

2. FOOD SECURITY ISSUES WITHIN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS: How Food Insecurity Plays Out in Underserved Populations

As mentioned in Chapter II, A Profile of La Plata County, the region is culturally and economically diverse. Many populations in the area have been defined as “underserved,” meaning that because of poverty or discrimination, or lack of transportation, these people do not have access to the same services as others in a given community. This section addresses the way food security plays out in a variety of cultural and economic groups.

LATINO/IMMIGRANT

Assessment Methodology: Information regarding the Latino population in La Plata County came from four sources: English as a Second Language classes, Latina women working with the San Juan Basin Health Department, consumer surveys, and Latino program directors. The primary purpose of conducting these surveys and interviews was to better understand the needs and resources of the Latino population regarding food access and security, nutrition and interest in various community food projects.

LATINO SURVEY SOURCES:
1. SAN JUAN BASIN HEALTH DEPARTMENT – PROMOVIENDO LA SALUD
2. PARK ELEMENTARY, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS (ESL)
3. CONSUMER SURVEYS
4. INTERVIEWS WITH LATINO PROGRAM COORDINATORS

INTRODUCTION

According to the Durango Herald’s article Crossing Over – Cruzando Fronteras in August of 2001:3 The Latino population in Durango was the second largest after Anglos. In 2000, the Hispanic and Latino community of 1,436 people was 10.3 percent of Durango’s population.

Ignacio, home of the Southern Ute Indian tribe (SUIT) is also home to many Latino and Anglo families, and the representative culture is tri-cultural, evident in the music, language and food. There are many Latino restaurants in the Ignacio area that serve foods of Mexican origin to SUIT and Anglo residents. Many Latinos in the area, passing on language and traditions to future generations, also speak Spanish in the home.

With more and more Latinos moving into the area and contributing to the economic vitality and culture of the county, it seemed important to review the food needs and resources of this specific population in order to more systematically address their needs. Regionally, there are agencies that cater to the health, education, economic and food needs of Latinos. It was in having conversations with the people involved in these agencies, and with the people they serve, that some of their distinct cultural food needs and resources were identified.

The overall sample size of the Latino population was small, about 25 participants, some of which were agency directors who represent the larger Latino community. It is the hope, however, that this information can contribute to the community food system profile by including specific Latino input. It is also important to note that the Latino community in Durango is multifaceted, made up of long-term Latino residents who have been in the area for many generations, and those who have recently immigrated from Mexico, Central America, South America and Spain. Each group of residents has its own strong cultural differences.

1. 5/04/2006, SAN JUAN BASIN HEALTH DEPARTMENT – PROMOVENDO LA SALUD

The three women who filled out surveys are bi-cultural women working within the Latino community to educate and promote health care to reduce chronic disease within the Latino population. These women are each long-term residents in the county. In addition to their current jobs, they have worked elsewhere in the Latino community in Durango. All three have been to college, and two have college degrees. In all three cases, they are the primary household food buyer and cook for their families. Two have children in the home. Only one was using Food Stamps and WIC; the other two did not indicate using charitable food programs.

Nutrition: The women were asked several questions relating to nutrition. These questions, with their responses are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“The food in the U.S. has many more calories. It’s fast food and is much more expensive.”</th>
<th>What does it mean to you to ‘eat well’?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four colors, low salt, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What influences or shapes the way you eat?
- I have learned more about having good/balanced nutrition.
- Education.
- Reading and personal experience.

How is your current diet different from your country of origin?
- It’s more healthy here.
- I have learned more about nutrition since I moved to the US.

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4 This information is included to illustrate food-related concerns of the Latino community that may indicate and provide us with some of the strict cultural (not just economic) and cost-of-living issues that are impervious to income level, education, and gender.
5 Note: Responses to nutritional questions seems to be influenced by the profession of the participants. While not found in other Latino interviews, these women mentioned eating organic, low salt, USDA recommended foods.
Two of the women alluded to being healthier since they moved to the States, however, one talked about a fast food diet being much more prevalent in the US, and how the price of food is much higher here as well.

Food Access:
Participants were asked where they shop for food and why. These three women noted Walmart, City Market, and Albertsons, and said they shop there based on cheaper prices, location, and a good variety of foods available. Food access issues that arose had to do with adequate choices and transportation. All three reported they did not have access to a selection that is representative of their culture’s foods. Two women reported not having the choice to purchase healthy foods for their family, and all three reported not being able to purchase organic foods for their family.

Food Security:
When asked, “Did you ever run out of food or worry about running out of food this past year?” only one woman responded yes. She said this was triggered by a lack of money and that she used food stamps to offset her food shortages and had asked her friends for a loan.

When asked, “Do you ever feel that food is unaffordable?” all three women said yes. One interesting observation is that although all three women are professionals, they still feel that food is unaffordable. And one respondent said she knows of the benefits of organic food, and wants to incorporate more of it into her diet, but feels it is not possible due to cost.

2. 5/17/2006, PARK ELEMENTARY, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS (ESL)
Nuvia Chadborn, Olivia Lopez, and Katy Pepinsky compiled the information for these interviews. All three women completed interviews with the participants in Spanish, going over each of the questions and describing them in detail. Therefore, all responses have been translated from Spanish into English for the purpose of the study.

Participants:
There were a total of eleven participants, a diverse sample of both men and women, all with varying levels of education. No one reported an annual household income of over $30,000 per year. Most participants listed two children in the home. Many of the men interviewed responded that they were the primary food buyers for the household and that they do all or some of the cooking.

Food Assistance:
Only two people reported using food stamps in the past year. Four people responded as using WIC in the past year.
**Nutrition:**
Participants were asked various questions about nutrition. Since most participating in the ESL class are recent immigrants to the United States, they were also asked how and if their current diet differed from what they ate in their country of origin. They were also asked about raising food and whether they maintained a connection to the land in the U.S. Some of these questions with their responses are listed below:

What does it mean to you to eat well?
- To have balanced food.
- To eat what I have access to and what I like.
- Different foods.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Eat on time.
- To have food.
- To eat fruits and vegetables and white meats.

What influences or shapes the way you eat?
- The cheapest prices.
- The most affordable.
- In order to be healthy.
- (For good) health (I avoid) fats, sugar, and everything like this.
- Health reasons.
- Health reasons.

How is your current diet different from that in your country of origin?
- No, because I cook.
- It’s basically the same.
- Yes, it’s different because there isn’t a punctual hour in which everyone eats in the USA.
- Yes, it’s different here. I eat a lot of flour, potatoes, and meat.
- Yes, it’s different. We eat pizza and hamburgers.
- It’s different because it’s a different country and because in Mexico the food is not as processed/refrigerated and the fruits are more fresh/natural.
- Some things yes, and others no. In America there is a lot more hamburgers and soda.
- Mostly the flavor.

Did you/do you have experience growing your own food?
- In Mexico I have my garden.
- In my house we grew various fruits.

**Food Access:**
Seven of the eleven participants indicated they shop at Wal-Mart for food. Most people said they shop there because of cheaper prices. Everyone who indicated they shop there gets to the store in a personal vehicle. Four responded that they shopped at City Market, mostly due to location. It is interesting to note that all responses indicated one or the other of these two stores, despite

“I travel to Farmington, New Mexico to the Carneceria Sonora and to Dona Maria’s to make my food purchases.”
the fact that Durango has seven grocery stores including two “health” food stores.

Food access issues were identified when participants were asked about specific food access scenarios. Two participants reported having transportation issues to food outlets. Four responded not having access to culturally appropriate foods. In fact, one man’s response was: “I travel to Farmington, New Mexico to the Carneceria Sonora and to Dona Maria’s to make my food purchases.” After having conversation with several of the people at this table, the research team learned that many of the Mexican families and immigrants travel 45 miles to Farmington once a week to make their cultural food purchases and for cheaper prices despite the high cost of gasoline.

When asked whether they had the choice to purchase healthy foods for their family, all but one participant answered yes. However, when asked if they have access to purchase organic foods for themselves or their family, eight responded yes they feel as if they have the choice to buy organic, but five added the comment that it is “very expensive.”

Table 1. OPERATION HEALTHY COMMUNITY’S LIVABLE WAGE ESTIMATES FOR 2005 IN LA PLATA COUNTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Single Person, renting a one bdrm at $675/month</th>
<th>$10.21/hr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>Single Parent, one child, renting 2 bdrm at $900/month</td>
<td>$18.91/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family of 4, renting 3 bdrm at $1150/month</td>
<td>$26.02/hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While livable wages are a good estimate for what an individual must earn to cover the costs of basic living tools such as shelter, healthcare, childcare and nutrition in the area, most immigrants earn much less. Many businesses pay minimum wage, which in La Plata County is still below $7 per hour. As indicated by the surveys, many respondents struggle with being able to cover expenses, including food.

**Food Security:**

Seven of the eleven participants interviewed felt that food in La Plata County was unaffordable, generating some of the most powerful information in this survey. One person responded they felt food was unaffordable sometimes. If people responded yes, they were asked to explain their response to this question. Most responses noted the high price of food in the county. One person stated, “Sometimes our money doesn’t cover the food expenses,” alluding to the fact that annual household income is not enough to cover the cost of food for her family. Other responses included:

- With what we earn we can only pay for our necessities.
- Certain things like fruit are cheap, but meats are expensive.

It seems most of the participants shared the concern of the high price of food, only two, however, talked about running out of food or worrying about running out of food in the past year. The two who had this concern said that they simply ran out of money, and asked to borrow some to overcome this issue.

“Our biggest worry is about money and whether it will cover our expenses.”
Food-related concerns were heavily tied to money issues. Participants consistently mentioned the need to have more money so that they could buy things. Other food related concerns regarded food being high in fat in addition to being pricey. One person talked about food safety, “Many foods contain preservatives and are refrigerated for long periods of time.” When asked to talk about solutions to these concerns, two people suggested working more to earn more money. Another suggested lowering the cost of food, and at the same time paying people better salaries.

3. CONSUMER SURVEYS

This information comes from a series of consumer surveys from people who identified themselves as Latinos.

These surveys were administered in various settings throughout the county over the course of several months. Most surveys were administered by volunteers from Youth Services of La Plata County. Since all participants indicated being Latino, these surveys were analyzed for various correlations between ethnic background and specific food issues or concerns.

The distribution of income for Latinos surveyed was slightly less than that of the general population surveyed. Other factors such as education, food preferences, shopping locations, reliance on food assistance and affordability did not vary much from the larger survey group. The relationship between food security and ethnicity appears to be less important than the relationship between education/income and food security.

4. INTERVIEWS WITH LATINO PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Two interviews with Latino program directors provided valuable insight into cultural food issues. They also identified potential partnerships for future food related programming. Via the assessment, both Promoviendo la Salud and Los Companeros are interested in forming stronger connections with Growing Partners to increase the amount of food and nutrition education they currently offer.

**Promoviendo la Salud**

The San Juan Basin Health Department works in La Plata and Archuleta counties. It is home to the WIC, Promoviendo la Salud, and Prenatal and Family Planning offices, which are all personal health programs with a nutrition component. Karen Forest is the director of Promoviendo la Salud. Her program works directly with the Latino population to reduce health disparities among Latinos in La Plata and Archuleta counties. In an interview, she talked about some of the other departments in the health office, their connection with the Latino and recent immigrant populations, and some of the food issues they have identified. “The Pre-natal Program sees recent immigrants staying in hotels and having real food security issues. They are using the microwave in their hotel rooms to cook food. That is all they have access to.”

Karen feels that many of the Latinos she sees could benefit from education about good nutrition. “A lot of their diets are really poor, especially when it comes to fast food,” she said. In an effort to combat some of the issues surrounding healthy eating, Promoviendo is

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7 There were only 3 responses to this question.
8 For more information about Consumer Survey results, see Appendix 3.
offering a series of cooking classes sponsored by Operation Frontline out of Denver called “Share our Strengths.” According to Karen, “These (classes) are offered in 6-week sessions to teach people to buy and prepare healthy foods on a limited budget. Many of our clients say they don’t buy healthy food because they can’t afford it, but maybe we can show them it just takes a little more effort and planning to be possible.”

Karen listed several agencies she considers to be food resources in the community, but mentioned that for Latinos there is sometimes a language barrier that prevents them from using those services, with the Food Bank singled out as an example. “For people with immediate needs there is no one there who speaks Spanish, and they (referral agencies) have to send someone who does speak the language to go with them,” She said. Also, she mentioned the Manna Soup Kitchen as a food resource, but doesn’t feel Latinos really use it.

For someone who is not Latino, or who has not spent much time working with that sector of the population, it may be necessary to build a level of trust before developing projects. “This just takes time,” Karen mentioned. “And it takes showing your face at Latino gathering places so people get to know you.”

Los Companeros
Building trust seems to be a good way to initiate food system change; not only within organizations, but also with the populations they serve. Eddie Soto, who directs Los Companeros,9 agrees. He would like to see Latinos have increased access to fresh, locally grown foods by getting more involved in farmers’ markets and receiving horticulture and garden training in Spanish. He is interested in partnering with the Growing Partners to provide training sessions on community gardens in Spanish and in encouraging better-established transportation routes between the Latino neighborhoods and the area farmers’ markets. He also feels there needs to be more advertising in Spanish targeting the Latino population so it will make people more comfortable attending new events.

CONCLUSIONS
The information gleaned from the Latino population in the county draws interesting parallels, proving specific cultural food issues exist apart from the issues affected by income level, education and gender. According to surveys and interviews, Latinos in La Plata County are concerned about a lack of access to culturally appropriate foods. As mentioned in the Grocery Store Survey10 there are plans to open a Mexican foods grocery store in Durango which may begin to address some of these issues.

In addition, there is information about cultural differences in diet – some Latinos feel that foods are more processed in the U.S. compared to foods they had access to in their countries’ of origin – and there is little access to healthy, fresh foods compared to countries where open-air farmers’ markets are commonplace. As Eddie mentioned, creating greater

9 Los Companeros, an arm of the San Juan Citizens’ Alliance, works to improve the living conditions of immigrants in the San Juan Basin, and to work with other organizations to eliminate the causes of their displacement from Mexico or Central America. They also have concerns for labor and civil rights of Latino immigrants.

10 See Chapter 4, Food Resources: Grocery Store Survey, for a complete section on culturally appropriate food choices in La Plata County.
access for Latinos to already existing farmers’ markets could help to address this issue.

Food related concerns among the Latino population surveyed were heavily tied to their income. As most survey participants reported having income levels below $30,000, they shared the feeling that typical household earnings are not enough to cover family necessities like food. Some suggestions to overcome this issue were offering higher wages, creating more job opportunities, and reducing the overall cost of food.

**NATIVE AMERICAN**

**Assessment Methodology:** In February 2006 the assessment team gave a presentation to the Southern Ute Tribal Council to inform them of the project and identify possible areas of interest for the Tribe. The information on the Native American population comes from Program Surveys with agencies serving the Southern Ute (Indian) Tribe (SUIT) including SUIT Tribal Health Services, Southern Ute Community Action Program (SUCAP), the Sun Ute Recreation Center, the Ute Mountain Ute Farm and the SUIT Custom Farm. Other information was gleaned from the Ignacio School District.

**INTRODUCTION**

Ignacio is located on Tribal land inhabited by the SUIT. Tribal government, traditions and language continue to be widely recognized and celebrated in the area. The following is information about the food resources currently available to the SUIT and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes, along with a list of suggested food projects to address some basic Tribal food needs.

**SUIT DEMOGRAPHICS**

According to Dave Sanford, the SUIT is a small tribe. In 2006 there were around 1,400 members. Only 25 percent are under eighteen. Fifty percent of the tribe is less than 25 years of age, and only about 150 people are over fifty-five. Although it is a young tribe, it is not growing. As tribal members marry outside of the tribe, tribal blood continues to become diluted. A tribal member over 55 years old is considered an Elder and may be appointed to be on the Elders’ Committee, which serves as an advisory board to the Tribal Council.

For the purposes of this section, the tribal food needs and resources are the focus. Through interviews, food projects were identified that could begin to address the needs of the SUIT.

**The Utes no longer fulfill their dietary needs by living off the land. They used to have to live off the land because they had to, but now they have a choice about where they get their food.”**

**Steve Whiteman, Tribal Division of Wildlife**

**FOOD NEEDS**

Two concerns of the Tribal Elders were in regard to a specific agricultural extension agent designated to the Tribe, and a cucumber farm. Both of these previously valued resources were enjoyed by the Tribe, but are now things of the past. Both of these concerns, expressed by the Elders to the assessment team, required both research and discovery.

According to Dave Sanford, Director of the Custom Farm and Tribal Extension in Ignacio, years ago there was a Colorado State University (CSU) Extension Agent assigned to the Tribe, Dr. Haney. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Southern Ute Tribe, and CSU funded

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11 Information on SUIT Tribal Demographics came from an interview with Dave Sanford, Director of Tribal Custom Farm, and Tribal Extension Services.
the position on a federal program contract. However, the position was cut due to a lack of funding.

The Tribe has employed a number of extension agents over the years. Dave remembers that before Dr. Haney, in the 1950s, there was an extension agent in Ignacio who tried to get people to grow things. This agent initiated the cucumber farm mentioned by the Elders. The cucumber farm was located south of Ignacio. At this time there was also a dairy farm on the reservation.

During the 1930s to the 1950s, because of U.S. Government pressure to turn the Southern Utes into farmers, the area was home to more subsistence agriculture than it has ever known. Currently, however, Dave Sanford could only think of two full-time farmer/ranchers on the reservation, and they are both Anglos. The rest are a few people with gardens and minimal livestock. Dave feels these families continue to ranch out of habit and tradition, but don’t have to out of necessity for food, as they did in the past.

In an interview with Elise Redd, Director of SUIT Health Services, access to affordable fruits and vegetables, and healthy affordable food, was noted as some Tribal members’ most pressing food needs. “If you are going to cook healthy many of those foods are more expensive. I think (for this reason) a lot of people will not purchase fresh, perishable foods; they will purchase cans.” Kip Koso, Director of the Sun Ute Recreation Center agrees. When asked about Tribal members’ most pressing food needs, he too stated access to quality foods as a serious issue.

FOOD RESOURCES
A FOOD BUYING PROGRAM
During the early 1900’s the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) established a Food Buying Program for the Tribe. Due to the Tribe’s isolation and reliance on subsistence living and agriculture, the BIA provided food staples, such as corn, grains and beans, as the U.S. government tried to encourage members of the SUIT to become farmers. Today, mostly due to tradition and habit, not necessity, the Elders still purchase beans and potatoes in bulk, which are available at a discount to all Tribal members.

HUNTING AND FISHING AS A FOOD RESOURCE
According to Steve Whiteman, head of the Tribal Division of Wildlife, wild game is an important source of meat for tribal members. Not only is it a tradition to hunt for meat, but Whiteman adds that there are also management issues that can be addressed by people hunting certain animals. “Traditionally, the Utes were hunters and gatherers and roamed all over the state. Mule deer were the primary food source in this area. It wasn’t until they had access to horses that they could access the Eastern Plains for bison.”

Two hundred to 250 Tribal members receive elk and deer hunting permits. Steve feels there is more meat available to the Tribe than they could possibly consume in a given year. “It is a tremendous amount of meat.”
Fishing is another resource the SUIT Division of Wildlife (DOW) manages. Every year the division stocks rivers on tribal land with various trout species raised in their hatchery. Compared to hunting permits, the number of fishing permits issued to Tribal members is small, approximately 125. Steve mentioned that Tribal members tend to keep and eat the fish they catch. SUIT Tribal DOW issues 1,000 non-Tribal fishing permits per year, mostly for catch-and-release fishing.

THE BISON PROGRAM
The Southern Ute Division of Wildlife, Bison Program Overview

“As with many other Native American tribes, bison represent an extremely important symbol of spiritual strength and endurance to the Utes. Historically, bison were also important for the day-to-day survival of the people, providing essential food and hides for clothing and shelter. The Utes first started pursuing bison when the Spanish brought horses to the West in the early 1800s. Horses allowed the Utes to leave their homes in the Rocky Mountains and venture into the eastern plains to successfully harvest bison. Today, the bison remains an important spiritual symbol to the Utes, and it plays a significant role in the annual Ute Sun Dance and other religious ceremonies.

Since the early 1980s, the Southern Ute Tribe has managed a small herd of bison, primarily for cultural preservation and educational purposes. The Division of Wildlife Resource Management maintains the herd at approximately 15 head within a 350-acre fenced pasture near Ignacio. A small number of bison are culled from the herd every year in order to provide meat for the Ute Bear Dance and other tribal functions. Also, the non-edible portions of the culled bison, such as hides and skulls, are utilized and distributed by the Sun Dance Chief in accordance with Ute traditional values and beliefs. In addition to herd management, the Division works closely with the Southern Ute Academy and other local schools in the Ignacio area to provide educational presentations on the importance of bison to Ute culture. School groups are often given tours of the tribal bison herd, providing a valuable opportunity to observe and learn about bison behavior.

On an annual basis, bison calf production and herd management objectives require that some animals be removed from the herd. These bison are made available through auction to enrolled Southern Ute Tribal members and to the general public. Announcements of the auction, including bid procedure, are provided in the Southern Ute tribal newspaper, The Drum.”

THE CUSTOM FARM
The Custom Farm in Ignacio provides access to farm equipment and services for tribal members. Many tribal members used to have their own equipment, but once this service was established, they could borrow equipment that was maintained by the tribe without having to pay for their own. Tribal Extension Services are currently run out of this facility. The Extension office is home to a consumer science agent and a 4-H agent.

WATER

“There is very consistent irrigation delivery on this side of the county.”
Kevin Mallow, Tribal Water Resources Specialist

TRIBAL FOOD PROJECTS OF INTEREST

1. TRANSPORTATION
2. GREATER LOCAL FOOD ACCESS-Farm stands or A farmers’ market
3. COMMUNITY GARDENS
4. A YOUTH COMMUNITY GARDEN
5. COOKING CLASSES

12 http://www.southern-ute.nsn.us/WRMWeb/bison.html
POTENTIAL AND KNOWLEDGE TO GROW TRADITIONAL CROPS
“Things such as forages, dry beans, and potatoes were once readily grown in the area. The Animas Valley used to grow a lot of potatoes; in the 1940’s there were 40-acre potato farms in the Valley and in La Plata Canyon.” Kevin Mallow, Tribal Water Resources Specialist

BACKYARD GARDENS
“Most everyone has a backyard garden. There is a fair in August where people bring a lot of the food that they have grown.” Dave Sanford

THE SUIT TRIBAL HEALTH DIABETES PROGRAM
The SUIT Diabetes program, funded by the Center for Disease Control, focuses on prevention of the disease by promoting healthy levels of exercise and encouraging a healthy diet. According to Elise Redd, Director of Tribal Health Services, this program has been very successful in getting people to exercise at home. The program recently purchased exercise equipment people can take home to work on their personal fitness instead of having to do so in public. “There is a recreational center here, but a lot of people won’t use it. Using the Polar Age Body System at home, people can later transition to the recreational center once they are more comfortable.”

In addition to the Diabetes Program, they offer a Healthy Weight for Women cooking class and a traditional foods cooking class. Because buffalo meat is a low fat, lean meat, and is available locally, they promote its use in the traditional foods class.

SUN UTE KITCHEN SPACE: A Teaching Environment
According to Kip Koso, Director of the Sun Ute Recreation Center in Ignacio, the kitchen in the recreational center is available to teach cooking classes.

THE ACADEMY: Nutritional Counseling
The school nurse at the (Southern Ute) Academy in Ignacio, a school open only to tribal members, hosts monthly meetings with families where she meets with interested parents to address nutrition and weight loss.

THE TRIBAL COMMODITIES PROGRAM
This charitable food program is available to people who live on the reservation. They also offer cooking classes.

THE NUTRITION FAIR
This event allows community members to promote healthy eating. It is held at Rolling Thunder in the Casino in Ignacio.

THE WOMEN, INFANT, CHILDREN PROGRAM (WIC)
WIC goes to the Head Start school building to meet with mothers of students to enroll them in the program.

THE UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBE: The Farm
In the late 1800s, because many of the land and cattle operations used the Ute Reservation for grazing, conflicts arose between the Utes and local cowboys. Violence ultimately forced some of the Utes farther southwest to the town now known as Towaoc, the current home of
the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Towaoc is located in Montezuma County, near the town of Cortez.

For fourteen years, Paul Evans has been running the Ute Mountain Ute Farm and Ranch Enterprise, a 7,700-acre commercial farm just west of Towaoc. In addition to Paul, the farm employs 22 people, 70 percent of whom are Ute Tribal members. The farm provides training for its employees in tractor operation, agronomy and livestock. Currently, the Tribe is sending one of the farm’s tribal employees to college to study agronomy.

For the purposes of the food assessment, contact with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe was made only with Paul Evans, Manager of the Ute Mountain Ute Farm. Although he is an Anglo, he was hired by the tribe to manage their corporate farm’s operations and could provide information regarding farm operations. Because the Utes are traditionally hunter-gatherers and have little experience farming on a large scale, Paul mentioned his job is to train the Utes to be farmers. Eventually he would like to pass on the job of farm manager to a Ute Tribal member.

The farm raises alfalfa hay, sweet corn, wheat, triticale, feed corn, dry beans (garbanzos) and natural beef for wholesale markets. Paul mentioned that the Ute Farm is Whole Foods Grocery Store’s exclusive regional source for conventional sweet corn, which they take to their warehouses in Denver and in Austin, Texas. The sweet corn is also available to Tribal members in Towaoc and in Ignacio.

The farm already hosts farm tours for students from Cortez, and they have hosted experts from Colorado State University, the Cooperative Extension and the agricultural industry to teach technical workshops. They would, however, be interested in hosting more area specific workshops for Tribal members.

OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES –
A Contribution from Sue Bruckner

Assessment Methodology: The information gathered by Growing Partners regarding the older adult and physically and/or mentally limited populations in La Plata County and extending into Montezuma County came from agency surveys and interviews with key informants. Key informants were individuals in the community who worked or volunteered directly with these populations. The primary purpose of conducting the surveys and interviews was to better understand the needs and resources of the older adult and physically and/or mentally limited populations regarding food access and security, nutrition, and interest in various community food projects.

A packet of information was sent out to 23 agencies including 14 nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and retirement centers, three hospice organizations, one home health agency, one senior center; two senior services agencies, one Area Agency on Aging and one agency for developmentally disabled individuals. Each packet included an agency survey, a magazine article from OT (an occupational therapy magazine) discussing the therapeutic value of gardening programs for older adults,13 an information sheet outlining examples of community food projects geared towards senior and/or physically and/or mentally limited

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populations and a write-up describing horticultural therapy and the positive impacts it can have on older adults.

The majority of the agencies received phone calls alerting staff to the arrival of the survey. Of the agencies contacted, a total of four completed surveys (it was hard to get responses from most agencies). Surveys from Hospice of Montezuma, SUCAP Senior Center, Madison House Assisted Living Facility, Community Connections, Inc. and one letter (Sunshine Gardens Assisted Living Facility) were returned. Four agencies were interviewed in person (Montezuma County Senior Services, La Plata County Senior Services, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and Hospice of Mercy). A representative of AARP was also interviewed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
As of the 2000 Census, the senior population totaled 15 percent of the population in Southwest Colorado. Between the years of 2000 and 2012, this percentage is expected to grow by over 60 percent. It is not surprising that this segment of the population is gaining much-needed attention. Prior to Growing Partner’s Community Food Assessment, research had been conducted to identify the needs of older adults (also referred to in this report as “seniors” and identified as 60 years of age or older) living in La Plata County. Researchers reached out to 8,903 older adults through phone contact, completing 161 phone interviews. Findings specific to nutrition and food security are included in this report as they supplement the information gained through research completed by Growing Partners.

In September of 2004, the Colorado Department of Human Services released the Strengths and Needs Assessment of Older Adults in the State of Colorado. An executive summary of the survey results specifically for La Plata County was also published at this time. The research is stated to be a “high-quality, rigorous, statistically valid survey of seniors in the state.” Results were weighted to appropriately reflect the demographic characteristics of this county. Pertinent results are listed below:

- 16% of respondents reported not eating at least two complete meals a day
- 10% of the county’s older adults have a level of difficulty getting enough food to eat
- 18% of the county’s older adults need some level of help getting enough and/or the right kinds of food to eat
- Food affordability concerns are depicted by the following statistics:
  - 15% of respondents stated they were not always able to afford to eat healthier meals
  - 14% were not always able to afford the kinds of food they wanted to eat
  - 3% were frequently not able to afford enough food to eat
- 14% of respondents had a level of difficulty arranging transportation to go shopping

14 http://www.operationhealthycommunities.org/path.html
• 71% of respondents reported participating in a hobby such as gardening one or more hours per week; 85% engage in moderate activity such as gardening for at least 30 minutes a day 1 to 7 days per week. (Note: this is included because it may be indicative of the numbers of older adults who are, or may be interested in gardening activities.)

Recognizing that the senior population is growing and that “this growth is expected to dramatically affect the population and demographic trends in La Plata County,” the Senior Program Advisory Committee (SPAC) of Operation Healthy Communities furthered the research conducted through the Strength and Needs Assessment. Findings were reported to the La Plata County commissioners in September, 2005. SPAC contributed the following observations, which are pertinent to Growing Partner’s community food assessment:

• Seniors do not know how to access services, rather than those services not being available
• Seniors expressed concern about the lack and availability of public transportation in rural areas
• 7% of seniors who responded to the local questionnaire could not afford food (as compared to the 3% reported in the Strengths and Needs Assessment);
• 19% of seniors currently have food delivered to them;
• A full 20% of seniors were unable to afford their basic needs; when basic needs were not affordable, allocations for food were among those cut.

Upon completion of their research, SPAC recommended that the county continue to provide and increase funding for home health and meal services in order to meet the increasing demand from seniors. Additionally, SPAC cautioned that the growth of the senior population in La Plata County will drastically affect this region’s ability to provide services. Given this information, there will be an increased need in appropriate community food projects (such as education on accessing available services, basic nutrition needs of older adults, meal planning and shopping on a budget). There is also a need for improved transportation services, especially in rural areas, senior community gardens, farmers’ market outreach programs and horticultural therapy activities.

What is Horticultural Therapy?
According to the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA), horticultural therapy creates “barrier-free, therapeutic gardens that enable everyone to work, learn, and relax in the garden.” Gardens are designed to accommodate a wide range of needs, interests and abilities and are especially beneficial for people with physical or mental limitations. New skills, adaptations and gardening methods are offered through horticultural therapy, allowing for individuals to actively participate in home, community and/or institutional (ex. assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and hospitals) gardens. Enabling gardens characterized by raised beds, wide rows, table gardens, container gardens, and pulley systems, as well as specially adapted tools, enable the physically and/or mentally limited gardener. With the

16 Operation Healthy Communities (2005). Senior Program Advisory Committee Report to La Plata County Commissioners.
17 www.ahta.org
assistance of a more able gardener, or a Horticultural Therapist, even the most physically
and/or mentally limited individuals can participate in growing a garden.

What does horticultural therapy have to do with community food security?
There is a great, yet often missed, connection between horticultural therapy and community
food security. As mentioned, horticultural therapy enables individuals with physical and/or
mental limitations to actively participate in gardening and/or small-scale farming. In other
words, it gives these populations the ability to grow, and have access to fresh, nutritious and
culturally appropriate foods. Thus horticultural therapy can, and does, strengthen food
security.

What does horticultural therapy have to do with older adult and physically and/or
mentally limited populations?
The older adult population represents the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population
and for hundreds of thousands of older adults, horticulture has been, and remains, a
preferred leisure pursuit. However, limitations in physical mobility often render it difficult
for this population to participate in these activities. Many agencies serving older adults and
physically and/or mentally limited individuals are simply unaware that these limitations, to a
certain extent, can be surpassed. For many, this equates to a loss of the numerous benefits
offered through horticultural activities. Fortunately, horticultural therapy addresses this
problem and enables individuals to take an active role in the production of fruits, herbs, and
vegetables.

FINDINGS
As there were a limited number of surveys returned, all agency responses are listed below.
Again, responses were obtained through phone conversations, in person interviews, and the
returned agency surveys. When it seemed to clarify understanding, the type of agency
making a particular statement is listed in parentheses.

Four agencies serve food at their sites. Where is this food obtained?
- 4 from distributors
- 1 from food bank
- 3 from grocery stores

Do residents/participants have any choice in what they are served?
- "Menus are set for the month with one entrée daily. Input from seniors is always welcome." Senior Center
- "We have a monthly food committee meeting made up of residents. They certainly let us know of
  their likes/dislikes!" Assisted Living Facility
- "Yes. Clients play a large role in the choice of meals, depending on dietary needs." Agency for
  individuals with developmental disabilities
- Balanced menus are made on a state level. Senior Center

Locations other than the agency where meals are eaten?
- Homes, restaurants

Straus (Eds.), Horticulture as therapy: Principles and practice (pp. 231 - 255). Binghamton, NY: The Food Products Press.
- Families’ homes, restaurants, senior center
- Soup kitchen, senior center, day program sites, homes and restaurants
- “Generally have meals in their own homes.” Hospice
- Other senior centers

What programs does your agency offer relating to food, nutrition, farming, gardening and/or cooking?
- “Deliver USDA commodities to homebound seniors 4 times a year.”
- “Residents occasionally help with preparation such as shucking corn, snapping beans, etc.”
- Grocery services - lists compiled by support staff; nutrition classes; cooking classes
- Grocery services - lists compiled by “the client with the assistance of family or our caregiver.”
- Classes on eating healthy, field trip to store to educate on reading labels, cooking classes
- A hydroponic system in our greenhouse, raised gardens. Assisted Living
- Raised gardens and gardening activities. Assisted Living

Primary barriers the agency faces in trying to offer food related programs:
- “Money to provide services is always in short supply.”
- “We probably wouldn’t do much more than we do as our residents have difficulty doing more.” Assisted Living
- “Food cost for healthy foods; clients not understanding the need for healthy foods; staff not wanting to cook.” Agency for individuals with developmental disabilities
- “It is not a primary part of our mission.” Hospice
- “No barriers aside from lack of money.”
- “We are however limited because of costs as far as what distance we can go in providing unlimited resources.”

Considering the population served, of what importance is food access and food security?
- Important, but ranks behind more pressing issues (Agency for individuals with developmental disabilities)
- Not really an issue that needs much consideration or action (Assisted Living)
- Important, but ranks behind more pressing issues (Senior Center)
- Moderately important that should be addressed soon (Hospice)
- Not really an issue that needs much consideration or action (Senior Services)
- Important, but ranks behind more pressing issues (Hospice)
- An extremely important issue that deserves to be addressed immediately (Food Bank)

Considering the population/s served, what are their food resources?
- Grocery stores, gardens, and restaurants
- “Us! Part of service is providing all meals and snacks.”
- Medicaid and food stamps; “Their allotment is often insufficient.” Hospice
- Senior centers, commodity programs, free lunches at churches
- “Money from social security which is often not enough to make ends meet” Durango Food Bank
Considering the population/s served, what are their food needs?

- Balanced meals
- Balanced, appropriate diets
- “Some require specific diets, with diabetic diets being the most common.”
- Healthy wholesome foods that will enhance rehabilitation process

How can we better outreach the population your agency serves (preferred communication style, advertising, ideal locations for outreach, etc.)?

- “We have a monthly newsletter.”
- “Flyers at low income housing and on grocery store bulletin boards would be very helpful.”
- Flyers at stores, senior centers, churches and doctors’ offices; PSAs on radio and in newspapers

What community food projects would best aid the community you serve?

- Farmers Market, Food Bank, Nutrition Education
- “Help getting our greenhouse and gardens going,” farm tours, cooking classes
- Food banks, horticultural therapy programs, “farmers market ‘field trips’ with transportation and help selecting produce until they feel comfortable in that setting.”
- Senior community garden; farmers market programs for seniors (activities at market), transportation to doctors (to monitor health and nutrition concerns)
- Raised gardens, greenhouse on site, donated/discounted food from local farmers market
- There is a need for healthier tastier foods at nursing homes
- Farmers market outreach programs for seniors
- A program providing publicity and outreach to seniors about their possible eligibility for commodity deliveries
- Emergency food kits for isolated, homebound, and low-income seniors
- Garden programs for our seniors
- An indoor gardening program at our facility
- Horticultural therapy programs at our client’s homes for both the client and the caregivers – gardens providing nutritious fruits and vegetables as well as psychosocial and other physical benefits
- Transportation – particularly for seniors living in rural areas – to grocery stores, farmers markets and other food resources

What space or resources do you have to offer these community food projects?

- Community dining room
- Space for a grow cart
- Meeting rooms, kitchen space, potential garden space, space for container gardens, courtyard
- “We have meeting space and a small plot, but our location is not convenient – but we’re willing!”
- Space is limited; would share resources when possible
- “If we had some raised gardens that volunteers or others could implement and install at our facility we could provide the irrigation system for such…We would also include and invite some of the 55 plus communities in our area to be involved in this endeavor.”
• Space for raised garden beds

Would anyone from your staff be interested in receiving training or educational materials on food, nutrition, gardening, cooking, and/or horticultural therapy?

• “Maybe our kitchen staff”
• “This is a possibility”

How could Growing Partners assist and collaborate with your organization to better serve the food needs of the people your agency serves?

• Collaborate on grants to provide services
• “Help getting our greenhouse and gardens going,” offer farm tours and cooking classes
• “We need resources for when their food stamps run out. Pamphlets to distribute to clients, whose illness may be adversely affecting appetite and sense of taste.”

CONCLUSIONS
The data collected through the Strengths and Needs Assessment (2004) and the SPAC report (2005) demonstrates that food security concerns are a reality for a significant portion of La Plata County’s older adult population. Pressing issues were affordability, access to desired foods, transportation difficulties and lack of knowledge of available services. Additionally, the research shows that a high percentage of older adults remains physically active and participates in hobbies. This is pointed out because it may be indicative of their future interest in community food projects, which would incorporate both hobby gardening and physical activity. While this research did not specifically target populations with physical and/or mental limitations, their nutrition and food security issues may be similar to those of the older adult population. Therefore, the research findings are extrapolated in this report to include all the mentioned populations.

The majority of the food served comes from distributors or grocery stores. None of the specific grocery stores were natural food stores. In the case of senior centers, the menus are dictated at a state level. As listed under the section “Findings,” some programs are offered by the agencies surveyed that relate to food, nutrition, and farming, gardening and/or cooking. These could, however, be enhanced with further education for staff on the importance of nutrition and the role of local, fresh fruits, herbs and vegetables, senior nutrition programs, the numerous possibilities offered through horticultural therapy, and the variety of other community food projects that can be geared towards the older adult and physically and/or mentally limited populations. There is also a need for more education and publicity on the food related services that are currently available, specifically emergency food assistance programs.

Fortunately, agencies are beginning to realize that community food projects would allow them to better serve their intended populations in regards to issues of health and nutrition. Interest and enthusiasm was expressed from a number of the surveyed agencies for the development of local community food projects such as senior community gardens, farmers’ market outreach programs, improved and new transportation services and horticultural therapy activities. These projects could easily be geared towards the older adult and physically and/or mentally limited populations, thus enabling local agencies to not only offer better service but also contribute to efforts to strengthen local food security.
In conclusion, prior research and the research completed through Growing Partner’s Community Food Assessment has painted an optimistic picture for a future of community food projects for older adults in La Plata County.

LOW-INCOME

Assessment Methodology: This information comes from responses to a series of Consumer Surveys from those families/individuals with an annual household income of $30,000 or less per year\(^{19}\). It also comes from a series of interviews with program directors from charitable food programs such as the Food Bank, Manna Soup Kitchen, SHARE, and from other agencies offering food programming to low-income recipients.

Consumer Surveys: These surveys were administered in various settings throughout the county over the course of several months. Most, however, were collected at a Commodities Food Distribution site and through La Plata Youth Services’ volunteers. All participants indicated making less than $30,000 per year, and thus these surveys were analyzed for various correlations between income and food issues or concerns.

Agency Interviews: Charitable food program directors as well as other agencies interested in food projects or those already offering food related programming were interviewed between January and September 2006. Many of the program directors were interviewed in-person and on-site.

INTRODUCTION

This section compiles information from the Consumer Surveys and agency interviews to paint a picture of La Plata County low-income residents’ food needs and resources. The first section discusses food access for low-income residents, focusing on abundance versus quality and nutritional values of food. The second part of this section looks at the issue of food security within the working poor. As was brought up in agency interviews, there may be greater food access issues for those people who make just enough money so as not to qualify for certain charitable food programs. Food needs and resources are then listed as well as interest in various food projects that could begin to address some of the most pressing food needs of the low-income population.

 FOOD ACCESS: Abundance versus Quality and Nutritive Value

In La Plata County there are many programs in place to ensure people do not go hungry. What seems to ring true with many agencies in La Plata County is that there is abundant regional access to food from a variety of sources. As Dave Sanford pointed out in his interview, even restaurant and retail dumpsters increase our community’s access to food. “Wal-Mart

\(^{19}\) The Operation Healthy Community’s Livable Wage Estimates for 2005 and the national poverty level determined annual household income relating to a ‘low-income’ estimate in La Plata County.
throws away a lot of food. Just go look at their dumpsters. There are also many people who dumpster dive in the county. There is more food than we can eat as a community available.”

As noted in Chapter 4, Food Resources and Food Projects: Charitable Food Programs, La Plata County is blessed with a myriad of agencies that have been vital to the health of the community and have done a great job addressing hunger in the region. One example of this is the local soup kitchen, Manna, which is known to attract people from as far away as New Mexico, who travel north to Durango solely for a safe, free hot meal.

Many of these agencies rely directly on community support, thus it is critical the community continues to value their importance. Food comes to them as donations, which is both a blessing and a curse for some program directors. Renea Young, Director of the Food Bank, sometimes worries about having enough food for her clients. She has to keep her shelves stocked so that she will have enough food to meet regional demand. “If we could have a more consistent source of food donations, it would be helpful,” she said. “Sometimes my shelves are stocked, other times I really worry about running out of food.” The Food Bank and Manna Soup Kitchen both receive donations from area grocery stores, via food drives and from local food distributors.

The Manna Soup Kitchen also functions on community food donations. City Market, Albertsons, Mercy Medical Center, Nature’s Oasis, and at times the farmers’ market and local restaurants donate food to be served at the soup kitchen. Most of the food is already prepped and comes to them as “leftovers.” Kim Workman, former Director of Manna, commented that having a staff that knows what to do with a lot of leftovers is helpful. “It’s not gourmet food we are trying to make here. It’s practical, down home cooking, made from a lot of leftovers.”

It does not go unnoticed that these programs, donors and recipients have created a system that feeds a lot of people. However, it is also important to address whether or not the charitable food served is high quality, fresh and nutritious. And this is where there seems to be room for improvement.

This is not to say that agency directors aren’t trying to remedy the situation. There are, in fact, examples of various programs that have established gardens for low-income program recipients. There is also agency and participant interest in increasing access to fresh, local, healthy foods for the low-income population.

In order to begin to address the importance of fresh, nutritional foods, however, it is important to document this perspective. By interviewing health practitioners, agency directors, and nutritional experts, a pattern emerged suggesting a need to improve charitable food offerings to include certain foods. According to Zane Baranowksi, a certified nutritionist:

(The knowledge the) general public has been given by governmental agencies about what food is, is inadequate. They have allowed (products such as) white breads, cereals, sugar and corn syrup to count as food. They allow nutritionally compromised, over-processed foods to be part of their recommended daily food choices. (There is a lack of) true understanding about the overall nutritional profile of real food.
Several other nutritionists and health practitioners also brought up concerns about a diet laden with sugar, corn syrup, hydrogenated oils and processed foods. It was also noted that fast, convenience foods tend to contain these ingredients – they are used as product stabilizers and flavor enhancers – and, due to their easy-to-prepare and non-perishable nature, these products have greater appeal for the low-income population. According to Amita Nathwani, founder and president of Four Corners Holistic Health Association, “When I walked into a local grocery store what I found was that there were hardly any foods without hydrogenated oils and corn syrup, everything seemed to be processed.”

For some, eating processed foods may feel more like a necessity than a choice. As pointed out by Karen Forest, who works with the Latino population at The San Juan Basin Health Department, “Recent immigrants (are) staying in hotel rooms and have real food security issues. They are using the microwave in their hotel rooms to cook food – that is all they have access to.” What is true, however, is that over consumption of these foods can contribute to a higher risk for obesity and diabetes, two health concerns many of the agencies serving to the low-income population also have to address. According to Whitney Vaughn, advocate at the Family Center of Durango, “Most folks ordering from the food bank want quick foods that are easy to prepare or require no cooking. Very few cooking items ever make the list. If so, the Latino population is most often the ones ordering cooking or baking items.”

The following material is a description of some of the foods offered by two charitable food programs. This information is offered to display a typical charitable food menu, reflective of both participant demand and the nutritional components of the federal food system. It also demonstrates the strong presence of foods high in sugar and that are non-perishable (known to contain food preservatives and stabilizers like hydrogenated oils).

**A CLOSER LOOK AT TWO CHARITABLE FOOD PROGRAMS AND WHAT THEY OFFER**

1) **USDA COMMODITIES, THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)**

The mission of the USDA TEFAP Program, as listed in the Charitable Food Programs Section of this report, is to supplement the diets of low-income needy persons, including elderly people, by providing emergency food and nutrition assistance.

The following is a menu from the TEFAP distribution on June 22 at the La Plata County Fair Grounds. (“*” Denotes the presence of added sugar, & “**”, the presence of hydrogenated oils.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Menu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 8oz Jars of Peanut Butter *, **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 15 oz Can of Peaches, * (sugar &amp; corn syrup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 10.75 oz Cans of Vegetarian Soup, *, **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 15 oz Can of Cut Sweet Potatoes, * (sugar &amp; corn syrup)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 This is an example of foods offered by both the USDA TEFAP Program and WIC in La Plata County. This is by no means a complete list of all foods offered.

21 This is inclusive of the FDA Food Pyramid and USDA Dietary Guidelines. It should not be interpreted as a reflection of the particular local food programs’ choices.

22 The USDA provides a webpage with links to commodity fact sheets and recipes currently available to persons eligible to participate in TEFAP. Each fact sheet includes a description of the USDA product, packaging and storage information, nutrition facts such as serving size, fat and sodium (salt) levels, etc., and suggested recipes. [http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/facts/hhpfacts/hp-tefap.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/facts/hhpfacts/hp-tefap.htm).
The TEFTAP Program occasionally provides frozen meats and cheese as sources of protein to participants.

2) WOMEN, INFANT, CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM

The WIC Program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk. Unlike food stamps, WIC offers very specific food coupons that go so far as to specify certain brands and items of food. Based on a client’s needs, “checks” are printed with specific items that are then taken by the client to the grocery store to access those foods.

According to program director Betzi Murphy, WIC offers thirty choices of fortified cereals; frozen or big cans of juice – fortified with vitamin C; milk and cheese products which contain calcium; and eggs, peanut butter, or beans as a protein source. Women who are breastfeeding, which is encouraged, have access to carrots and tuna. Infant formula is also supplied.

As participants and the program director are well aware, WIC coupons do not provide for fresh fruits or vegetables as part of its current program. This is something Betzi would like to see change over time, because of the importance of fresh sources of vitamins and minerals that could benefit the participants in her program.

What a WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program could do

The WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for WIC. Congress established the FMNP in 1992 to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants, and to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers’ markets.

Currently, the state of Colorado does not participate in the WIC FMNP; however, there are counties in the state that fund their own programs. The Boulder Farmers’ Market and The Alamosa Farmers’ Market provide funds to their county’s WIC office for vouchers that can be redeemed at these markets.

The USDA, realizing the demand for fresh foods as part of the larger WIC Program, has proposed an amendment to the existing rules to add fruits, vegetables and whole grains to the current products available. If passed, the average WIC family would have about $45

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24 Including such vitamins and minerals as Iron and Folic Acid.
monthly to purchase fruits and vegetables at supermarkets and farmer's markets starting in 2007.

La Plata County currently does not offer a WIC FMNP, but Betzi is very interested in following through with agencies such as The Growing Partners, The Durango Farmers’ Market, and Fort Lewis College to get it started. Whether through federal support or via local efforts that would submit grant proposals for funding, it is clear having a WIC FMNP is be a regional priority.

FOOD SECURITY WITHIN THE WORKING POOR
In completing interviews with agencies serving the low-income population, the issue of food security within the working poor arose. The working poor are considered a subset of the population who is employed full time, but earns an annual household income below the average livable wage. This subset may not qualify for charitable food programs such as Food Stamps, Commodities, and The Food Bank. This population, the “working poor,” may feel the strongest repercussion of food insecurity in that they struggle to afford the cost of food for their families, yet do not qualify for charitable food programs. Whitney Vaughn of the Family Center of Durango expressed the local dynamic that contributes to certain populations being able to access certain food programs. “Food is very accessible here (in Durango) because of the food bank and other resources. Most of our referrals are to the food bank. Families tend to come here for assistance. Single and homeless individuals seem to seek support from the soup kitchen. It is a different population. Their food access is often better than the working poor.”

FOOD NEEDS of the LOW-INCOME POPULATION
Throughout the course of interviews, agency directors were asked to list the most pressing food needs of the low-income populations they serve. The following is a list of some of those needs.

Durango Food Bank:
- **Education in food preparation:** “It would be good to make people more self-reliant and able to take care of themselves by preparing their own food.” Renea Young, Director
- **Having charitable food programs cover peoples’ food needs:** “People come to me because they sometimes just need a week’s worth of food before they get hooked up with Food Stamps, but many times the stamps don’t cover all of their food needs.” Renea Young

Family Center of Durango:
- **Individual Cooking classes:** “Cooking programs are great, but few low-income families are comfortable in large groups; they would do much better ideally to have one on one service. If I could have my wish, we would have someone able to go to their homes and work with them individually on their food needs, cooking shopping, etc. Obviously this would take a lot staff time.” Whitney Vaughn
- **Transportation** for the food bank: “They may not seek this service if they can not find transportation.” Whitney Vaughn
- **Food Quality over Food Access:** “We are very interested in local food and nutritional food. There is a lot of missing education on nutrition and on (how to shop for) bulk foods. There is a

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26 To further encourage mothers to breastfeed, Betzi mentioned initiating the program by offering it to WIC recipients who are breastfeeding moms.
culture of food in low-income families, a junk food circuit. They have lost the taste for healthy food. The cooked foods they buy are microwaveable, pastas, hot pockets. They cook based on convenience not nutrition. Their greatest food need is in the health and quality of the food they eat.” Whitney Vaughn

The Family Center of Red Mesa:

- **Transportation:** “Seniors could be driven to grocery stores to do their shopping.”

Manna Soup Kitchen:

- **Cooking and nutritional education.** “Organizing a class that will teach people how to cook simple, nutritious meals; including the basics in meal planning, preparing food, and nutritional values.” Kim Workman, former Director
- **Access to foods high in protein and calcium.** “We get a lot of donations, but where food falls short is in the protein (meat) and dairy (eggs, yogurt, tuna) areas.” Perla Gething, Manna Kitchen Manager
- **Access to affordable local products.** “I want to source local products for the Soup Kitchen, but I cannot afford it. If someone wanted to donate the produce, I could write the donor a receipt for tax deduction purposes.” Kim Workman

Promoviendo la Salud, an arm of San Juan Basin Health Department:

- **Nutritional education:** “A lot of their diets are really poor, especially when it comes to fast food. I hope that a cooking class can help teach people to go to the store and purchase affordable healthy foods that they can prepare throughout the week. Many people say they don’t buy healthy food because they can’t afford it, but possibly it takes a little more effort and planning to be possible.” Karen Forest, Program Director

SHARE, Catholic Charities:

- **Greater availability of foods low in sugar, carbohydrates, etc:** “Someone recently requested we carry a food package for diabetics – one that would be low in sugar, carbohydrates, etc.” Lon Irwin, SHARE Coordinator

Volunteers of America Safehouse:

- **Transportation:** “For people leaving the program to live on their own, transportation to food sources remains a significant obstacle.” Lynn Asano
- **Access to baby food:** “For some young mothers, baby food is sometimes a problem to access.” Lynn Asano
- **Having a well-balanced diet:** “Many of our clients do not eat well-balanced meals with vegetables and fruits.” Lynn Asano

WIC:

- **Transportation, lack of money, &/or time to get to workshops:** all listed as challenges offering food-related programming to low-income recipients. Betzi Murphy, Director

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27 Manna is a 501(c) 3.
**FOOD RESOURCES of the LOW-INCOME POPULATION**

Program directors were also asked to name some of the food resources currently available to the low-income participants their agencies serve. The following is a list of those resources.

**Family Center of Durango:**
- The Durango Food Bank
- The Food SHARE Program

**Manna Soup Kitchen:**
- **An on-site vegetable garden:** Manna maintains an on-site vegetable garden, which appears to be a good idea in principle, but has mostly created a lot of work for staff. This is evident in the interview with Kim Workman, former Director of Manna. For the past two years Manna has used their garden space to grow ingredients for pickles, which are sold to raise money for the program. When asked whether they were interested in growing food to be used in soup kitchen meals, Kim replied: “The garden is very labor intensive. Our priority is to feed people, not grow food, so the garden becomes a second priority.”

Kim also mentioned that the garden has created a lot of work for her and her staff. “I spend a lot of time doing garden maintenance and harvesting. My kitchen staff is not prepared to work with the dirty (freshly harvested) food that needs to be washed and prepped. All of this adds three steps to my staff’s cooking process, which they are not accustomed to.”

**Promoviendo la Salud, an arm of San Juan Basin Health Department:**
- **Cooking classes:** Share our Strengths, a Denver company, is a 6-week program that teaches people to buy and prepare healthy foods on a limited budget.
- WIC: for pregnant women and kids
- The Food Bank
- Manna Soup Kitchen
- Wal-Mart

**Volunteers of America Safehouse:**
- Manna Soup Kitchen
- The Food Bank
- Local churches that make referrals to the soup kitchen and food bank.

**AGENCY INTEREST IN FOOD PROJECTS**

The following is a list of projects named by food agency directors that could benefit the people they serve. It is meant to link the needs and resources of the low-income population with creative solutions.

**Family Center of Durango:**
- Community Gardens
- Schools garden because this hits everyone
- Cooking classes with nutritional education incorporated
- Individualized cooking and shopping classes
- Transportation services
La Plata Youth Services:
- **Cooking classes** for youth.
- **More farmers’ markets** downtown, more than once per week.
- **Community gardens** to lower the cost of organic/fresh vegetables and make them more accessible to people with low-incomes.

Manna Soup Kitchen:
- A **greenhouse** for the garden area to allow for extended production of crops.
- A **compost pile** to utilize food waste.
- A **memorial fruit tree garden** in remembrance of deceased friends and patrons.

Promoviendo la Salud, an arm of San Juan Basin Health Department:
- **Cooking classes**
- **Grocery store tours** teaching people how to read labels and identify healthy, affordable foods.

Volunteers of America Safehouse:
- **Transportation services**
- **Community gardens**
- **Cooking and nutritional workshops**

San Juan Basin Health Department:
- **Food Banks with healthier choices**
- **Enabling gardens**
- **Cooking classes**

**CONCLUSIONS**
Information from agencies offering food related programming and services illustrates there are many food resources already available to the low-income sector of La Plata County. What it also shows is there are opportunities to improve charitable food offerings by including certain foods; increasing the amount of nutritional information and education provided; offering transportation services to improve food access; improving access to growing spaces; and offering cooking classes focused on healthy and affordable food purchasing.

**RURAL RESIDENTS**
*Assessment Methodology:* This information comes from several interviews with rural residents regarding rural food security.

**INTRODUCTION**
La Plata County is home to many rural communities. Most employment opportunities and services, however, exist in the urban areas. This is also where charitable food programs are housed. According to Beth LaShell, an agricultural educator at Fort Lewis College, food security in the county is very regionalized. “In Durango proper, yes, we are food secure, but in the entire county, no, we are not.”
Proximity to services affects whether or not people will utilize them, especially if public transportation to those services is not available. Road Runner Transit recently expanded its transportation routes to include a new service connecting Bayfield proper to Durango and maintains a connection between Ignacio and Durango. Current prices are $0.50 - $2 depending on the distance traveled. The busses, however, do not get to the most rural areas in the county; they basically hit the city centers and major buildings. For the elderly, physically impaired, or youth, getting to these bus stops without a personal vehicle is still an issue.

According to one resident from the Breen/Marvel area in the western part of the county, “Folks in Breen don’t go to the Soup Kitchen for lunch.” It’s just too far. And people in the Red Mesa District don’t feel there is a lot of food stamp use either.

Currently there are no charitable food services, other than school lunch, that people in rural areas can access. There are however many home gardens in rural areas. And, according to participants at the Food Forum in Hesperus, a lot of people in that area of the county preserve food when it’s producing in abundance.

Rural areas, such as Red Mesa, are known to be tight knit communities that take care of their own people. According to Beth Lashell, “there is a lot of kindness from neighbors.” Kevin Mallow, who grew up in the same part of the county believes there is very little hunger in the area.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Although it’s felt that rural communities look for internal solutions to handle food insecurity, Growing Partners sees rural food security as an issue that warrants widespread community attention. Lack of access, due to transportation constraints or distance to agencies and services, are needs the county must address to increase food security in rural areas. Whether services come to them, or access is better facilitated with transportation services, it is clear that rural residents do not have the same access to food programs and services, as do those in urban areas.
CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSIONS OF A YEARLONG COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT

1. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED
   • ABOUT AGRICULTURE IN LA PLATA COUNTY?
   • ABOUT FOOD RESOURCES AND FOOD PROJECTS?
   • ABOUT LOCAL SCHOOL MEAL AND FOOD RELATED PROGRAMS?
   • ABOUT HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN LA PLATA COUNTY?
   • ABOUT FOOD SECURITY IN LA PLATA COUNTY?

2. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER: Overall Themes Regarding Food Security in La Plata County and Recommendations for Future Food Projects
   • REGARDING THE LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY – Production
   • REGARDING LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION – Access

3. WHAT’S NEXT?
   • SHARING THE INFORMATION
   • MOBILIZING THE COMMUNITY
     • HOMEGROWN: A LOCAL FOODS CONFERENCE – The Unveiling of the Food Assessment

1. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?
A yearlong study of the local food system has provided opportunities to discuss not only challenges, but to identify many opportunities to improve the food system. By examining local food production, distribution and consumption, new possibilities were discovered for La Plata County residents to work together to create a food system that is more equitable and self-reliant.

The following is a summary of what was learned through the course of completing the La Plata County Food Assessment. It provides conclusions about the state of the current local food supply, community food projects and programs, the local school food system, health and nutrition and food security in La Plata County.

ABOUT AGRICULTURE IN LA PLATA COUNTY
To discuss the regional state of agriculture, agricultural experts and farmers were asked to discuss the present challenges and opportunities of the current agricultural system. Themes that emerged via the assessment indicate that people feel there are deeply entrenched cultural, climatic and economic challenges that make agricultural operations difficult in the region. There are, however, many suggestions for creating a system to work within the current parameters to make agricultural ventures more successful. And, there is great optimism for the future of agriculture in the region.
The decline of large-scale production agriculture and local food production, the rising cost of land from population and development pressures, a marginal growing season, water allocation policy and the growing oil and gas industry have been identified as the most pressing contemporary issues affecting agriculture in the region.

Despite the fact that large-scale farming and ranching appears to be declining in the region, some of the children of family farms have chosen to stay in the business, and are doing quite well. La Plata County, once an area known for land and cattle companies, has lost many of the large ranches it once supported, mostly due to development pressure and a lack of youth interested in taking over the family farm.

Creating an economically viable large-scale farm operation in the area is difficult. Large land payments, taxes and the inherent costs involved in getting a large-scale farm operation off the ground are some of the challenges a new farmer must overcome to make an operation profitable. Depending on its location and water availability, land in La Plata County costs anywhere from $2,000 to $5,000 per acre. With agricultural commodity prices that have changed very little over the past fifty years, all of this becomes more challenging.

It is widely recognized that variances in elevation and temperature make it hard to grow crops in the area. Having a three-month growing season also limits the types of crops that can be grown. The local climate is seen as being both a benefit and a hindrance. While the cold winter temperatures kill most plant and soil-borne pests, they also make growing year-round extremely challenging. There are, however, current examples of season extension using greenhouses and cold frames, which make food production a possibility in the cold winter months.

In addition to a short growing season, the region is also known for complicated water issues. The Fort Lewis Mesa Planning Group has spent vast amounts of time tackling this issue. Because the Fort Lewis Mesa District is located on the “dry-side” of the county and is predominantly zoned agricultural, they face many water allocation and need issues. And the oil and gas industry, which provides an off-farm income, affects agriculture due to the amount of time a farmer or rancher can devote to produce row crops for food production while still working full-time off the farm.

The demand for local food exists and is on the rise. Demand for local food has been expressed by schools, restaurants, consumers and by retail stores. Current supplies, however, cannot meet the demand. Census of Agriculture data documents 28,000 bushels of apples, 24,000 bushels of potatoes and 2.2 million gallons of milk produced in the county in former times, far more than is produced today. This information documents the potential for what can be grown in La Plata County by indicating that agricultural production in the Southwest was once more varied, and that there were simply more people raising food.

**ABOUT COMMUNITY FOOD RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS**

For the purposes of the assessment, profiles of local food resources were compiled including farmers’ markets, charitable food programs, grocery and retail outlets, community gardens, restaurants, CSAs and gleaning programs. In addition, gathered data was used to produce
educational materials for a harvest calendar, local foods menu, Farm-to-School product list and farm tours booklet.

**FARMERS’ MARKETS**

The San Juan Basin is home to several markets, and following national trends, many new markets keep appearing. In 2006, eight were identified in the region. Each of the markets profiled in the assessment is unique in its own right.

There is a demand for more local food. However, in order to expand markets of all types (farmers’ markets and others) there must be enough local supply to support the expansion. On the consumer end, there have been requests for one more market per week held in a variety of locations and venues. For this to occur there must be producer interest and willingness to participate in more markets and to simply grow more food.

Each market hosts a slightly different clientele. In Durango the patrons are mostly Anglo, which is something the DFM Director would like to change to increase access of fresh, local foods to the low-income, Latino/a and Native American sectors of the regional population.

**CHARITABLE FOOD PROGRAMS**

“There needs to be communication between agencies so resources are pooled, not abused.”

Angie Raulston, First United Methodist Church

The need for an accessible list of charitable food programs was expressed by two agencies serving low-income individuals and their families in La Plata and Archuleta counties. They wanted a guide to serve low-income program recipients and agencies, leading these people to further available food resources.

There are over 100 non-profit and public service agencies in La Plata County. Many of these agencies, while it is not their primary mission, offer food related programming and services. Included in the assessment report is a list of agencies and some of the food-related programs they offer. Through connecting agencies that offer food related programs a stronger, more diverse network is created to better meet the food needs of the entire community.

**GROCERY AND RETAIL FOOD OUTLETS**

A survey of grocery stores and other retail food outlets was completed to assess availability and affordability of various foods in rural and urban parts of the county. Thirteen supermarkets, local markets, convenience stores and one buying club were surveyed to compare the availability and price of certain products.

This data shows price differences in La Plata County versus a national average. Because affordability of local and organic foods is a common concern for support of a locally based food economy, this data also compares the cost of commercial foods, including locally produced and processed foods and organic options.
The data provides a good jumping off point to discuss local, organic, and culturally appropriate food options and availability by showing all of the options available to consumers in a retail setting. It also illustrates there is a commitment and interest from rural communities to increase local and organic food options, and from the Latino/a community to address the lack of culturally appropriate food options.

The data does not, however, make any correlation between the cost of food and its retail setting. Things such as fresh produce seem to be less expensive in rural stores, whereas other processed foods seem to cost less in urban stores. What is clear is that there is greater availability of food choices in urban stores, and this may be what causes rural community members to purchase more of their food in an urban setting.

**RESTAURANTS**

There are already a number of restaurants in La Plata County working directly with farmers and ranchers to serve local products. Some of these items are advertised on menus and recognized by customers. In fact, at times they directly contribute to customer patronage. For chefs who utilize locally grown ingredients, the benefits of freshness, quality of the product and social responsibility outweigh the challenges they encounter in obtaining and using the ingredients.

There are, however, issues that exist when making farmer-chef connections. Obstacles such as availability, delivery and price make the idea of working with local suppliers prohibitive to some restaurateurs. Projects such as an organized Farm-to-Chef Program, restaurant gardens, restaurant CSA, and a consumer educational campaign would help remove barriers between chefs and farmers and make this connection more of a reality.

**OFF-CAMPUS SCHOOL LUNCH**

A list of the top 20 lunch spots for Durango youth was provided in Chapter V: *The Local School Food System*. Included were the top three menu items ordered and the price per meal. Several of the high-volume restaurants fill their entire capacity during the school lunch hour and their proximity to the high school is a significant factor in how many students eat there. Freshman often can only go where they can walk, and older students often try to eat somewhere where there are no freshman, avoiding the restaurants closest to the school.

After reviewing the list of Durango restaurants visited by students, it was evident that students were not choosing to eat off-campus because of money or the quality of food. Off-campus eating is a social choice; it is about finding a place to gather with friends outside the school. The high school offers a salad bar, several menu choices (many the same items they are choosing outside the school) and a very low meal charge of $2.25, yet only 20% of Durango youth eat at the school cafeteria.

The amount of money local teens spend on school lunch daily was also noteworthy. Some of the most popular dining spots stated they charge anywhere from $5.00 to $7.00 for a meal. Choices range from double-cheeseburgers to pizza buffets, deep-fried sushi rolls and the popular Serious Texas Barbecue Texas Taco.
COMMUNITY GARDENS
Community gardens are known to increase food security and self-reliance by providing the opportunity for more people learn to and have space to grow their own food.

Assessment data collected indicates community gardens are a priority to La Plata County residents. In the consumer survey, 17% of all respondents (the second most common food project of interest) indicated the desire to have more garden space allocated with affordable growing plots for all community members. As a means to address their population’s food needs, respondents who filled out the agency survey also noted a strong interest for community gardens.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROGRAMS
The CSA model has many benefits for the farmer, for the consumer and for the community. Using this model, 100 percent of a consumers’ food dollar is in the hands of the person who produces the food, rather than in the hands of the truck drivers, packing and processing warehouses or the grocery stores that typically connect consumers to their food supply. In 2006 there were only three active CSAs in the Durango area.

GLEANING
Gleaning is the practice of harvesting and utilizing food within the community when it would otherwise go to waste. Local foods commonly gleaned in the region are from fruit trees such as apples, pears, apricots, plums, cherries, crabapples and walnuts. Currently Turtle Lake Refuge and a few other individual community members have established informal gleaning projects. There are however, a great number of fruit trees and other food sources that are not harvested.

ABOUT LOCAL SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS AND FOOD-RELATED PROGRAMS
As part of the assessment, the SW Colorado Farm-to-School Working Group contributed to the development of the school surveys in hopes of drawing valuable information that would not only inform the community on general information regarding the school food programs but would offer the group insight on how to incorporate farm to school programs into existing efforts.

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS
Understanding the ins and outs of the school meal programs can offer the community and its schools insight into ways to enrich and enhance the current programs. Storage capacity, facility capabilities, cafeteria atmosphere, the time allotted for school meals, nutritional guidelines, distribution and budget all contribute to the overall program, and an examination of these factors will reveal ways to implement new programs and enrich the current programs.

The food assessment described these contributing factors for each of the public school districts in La Plata County: Bayfield, Ignacio and Durango School District. In each of the interviews with the food service directors, it was evident that each director puts a great amount of time and care into each program. Food service directors create menus by
weighing budget restrictions, nutritional guidelines, staff time and the diversity of the population they serve with their desire to offer enjoyable meals to the students. According to Marion Kalb and Kristen Markley, “Critics charge that school meals are high in fat, saturated fat and sodium, are nutrient poor, and provide too few fruit and vegetable servings. In many cases, schools are simply trying to meet the USDA nutritional criteria within budget limits.” Some private local school food programs showed ways in which smaller schools were incorporating local, organic, and other quality food into their school meals with reasonable expense.

As indicated by other states’ programs, farm-to-school has proven to be a program that carries benefits to the entire community. The farmer, the school district, the economy, the environment, and the health and education of the students can all be positively impacted when farm-to-school is integrated into the food system.

As seen in the Durango school district, the salad bar can be a great first step in introducing local produce into a school’s lunch menu. It is easier to incorporate local produce into the salad bar, because it does not affect the entire school lunch menu and changes can easily be made. There is more flexibility with quantity and availability, which also allows for smaller farms to participate even if they cannot supply the entire district with food for school lunch meals.

Sprouts from Turtle Lake Refuge can now be found in nine of the local school salad bars. The Farm-to-School Working Group hopes to eventually highlight a new local product each month in the salad bar. Meetings are being held with local farmers to identify interested buyers and possible produce for the salad bar and bring both buyers and farmers to the table.

**FOOD RELATED PROGRAMS**

Aside from bringing the farm to the cafeteria, farm-to-school programs can include farmer and rancher presentations, farm tours, community and parent education, curriculum integration and school gardens.

The assessment provided a brief profile of the ways in which local schools are currently participating in various food related programs. Responses from school administrators demonstrated some of the advantages as well as the obstacles to incorporating agriculture, nutrition and other food-related issues into the program. The surveys indicated that nutritional education not only can be incorporated into a variety of programming, but can be taught by a variety of staff and outside resources. Public schools also identified the ways nutritional education is incorporated into the school day. In addition to the required school curriculum on health and nutrition, school administrators noted incorporating nutritional education through family nutrition nights, physical education units on health and wellness, cooking classes and snack programs.

Some of the agricultural education activities listed on the survey included: greenhouse activities, classroom lessons on plants, lessons on water properties and its connection to

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agriculture in the southwest, science fairs with agricultural elements and water conservation, farmers and producers in agricultural presentations in the classroom, student participation in the county 4-H Program and farm tours.

A farm tours booklet, presented in the chapter, showed five area farms, nurseries and programs that are open to offering their land to area schools. This booklet can be used as a tool for schools, youth groups and other agencies to identify farms and other programs that could enhance program or curriculum objectives. An in-depth profile and county map showed 16 schools which already have gardens and/or greenhouses at their schools. Their descriptions were compiled as guidelines and incentives for other schools in hopes that there will one day be a garden in every school in La Plata County.

It was clear from the beginning of the food assessment that the school meal program was of great interest to the community. School lunch is a hot topic for many school administrators, parents, youth and the general community. Equally, in the consumer survey, farm-to-school was listed as the number one community food program people would like to see available in La Plata County. The hope is that the food assessment, as well as the relationships built through this process, will pave the way for these programs to succeed.

ABOUT HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN LA PLATA COUNTY

EATING WELL IN LA PLATA COUNTY

In over 200 surveys of both adults and youths, participants were asked what it means to eat well. Responses included, “eating whole foods,” “foods without chemicals,” “local,” “organic,” “whole grains,” and “eating a little bit of everything from the food pyramid.” Responses were open-ended and implied that most of the community had a clear sense of what eating well could be. However, these same responses were not always met with healthy choices. According to assessment Consumer and Youth Surveys, many respondents, although able to recite a clear educated message about nutrition and what it means to eat well, did not connect these principals with their everyday actions. For example, when asked about their food choices and which restaurants they frequent, some people chose fast food as their top restaurant choice.

HEALTH DISPARITIES IN OUR REGION

When comparing providers who served the general population with people working specifically with the low-income populations, the different perspectives drew attention to the fact that La Plata County is a divided community, with food needs that are population specific. The view of health and the community’s nutritional knowledge varied between health providers serving diverse populations. Half of the experts interviewed described La Plata County as a very nutritionally-educated and food savvy community, describing their interest in local and organic foods and their desire to be active. The other half described the lack of interest and apathy about nutritional food programs and education. They spoke about their reliance on fast, convenient, and often junk-food diets. Lower income populations may have access to food through charitable food programs, but this access does not often include a lot of healthy, fresh foods that are typically more expensive. According to Whitney Vaughn, a family center advocate in Durango, “There is a lot of missing education on nutrition and on (how to shop for) bulk foods. There is a culture of food in low-income families, a junk food circuit. They have lost the taste for healthy food. The
cooked foods they buy are microwaveable pastas, (like) hot pockets. They cook based on convenience, not nutrition. Their (lower-income families) greatest food need is in the health and quality of the food they eat.”

**DIABETES AND OBESITY**

United States data on obesity says that 127 million American adults are overweight; 60 million (22.2%) are obese. 300,000 deaths in the US each year are associated with obesity. And, according to the data, “people living below the federal poverty level are twice as likely to be obese.” Due to the alarming increases in diabetes and obesity in this county, and particularly in low-income communities, questions were asked about some of the possible solutions to fight these concerns. Practitioners noted that some of the common approaches found in food marketing, which are designed to fight diabetes and obesity, may not be solving the problem. For example, products labeled sugar free, fat free, or cholesterol free used alone will not change the factors behind diabetes or obesity. Emphasis was instead placed on individual diets, whole foods and exercise.

**NUTRITION EDUCATION**

“Everyone needs nutritional education. Healthy choices and education need to not only be focused on lower income, but wealthier families as well. Everyone needs to see the worth of eating well. Families with more money don’t necessarily make healthier eating choices; they need to see that nutritional programs are not just charitable programs for low-income populations.” Pakhi Chaudhuri

The food assessment team sought advice from health providers for ways community food advocates could assist in nutritional education campaigns. Advice included reaching out to first-time parents and integrating all classes into education so that nutritional education would be viewed as a community issue, not just a class issue. Other recommendations included providing the community with affordable and nutritious cooking classes that were incorporated with shopping, cultural considerations, and individualized.

**THERE ARE VARIOUS QUALITY AND QUANTITY ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FOOD WE EAT**

As addressed in other chapters, the issue of quality and quantity was referred to by several of the health experts. Low-income families and charitable food program recipients often are lacking in fresh, nutritious whole foods. Not only is access to quality foods limited, the understanding of food may also be lacking. Zane Baranowski, a certified nutritionist, noted that current nutritional education is not working. “If our primary focus has been that it is best to get all the nutrients from food, then we all need to come to a very good understanding of what food actually is. The knowledge the general public has been given by governmental agencies about what is food is inadequate.”

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2 Statistics were presented by the COPAN (Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program), Comprehensive Community Project, and Planning Workshop in Durango in August 2006.
A CONNECTION BETWEEN AYURVEDIC MEDICINE, NUTRITION, AND THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

A common theme emerged regarding ayurvedic medicine. A pediatrician, a tribal health director, and an ayurvedic practitioner each spoke about the benefits of using ayurvedic knowledge in regards to food and nutrition.

Because ayurvedic medicine is focused on prevention and takes an individualized approach, it is seen as being very different than most Western medicine attitudes towards health and nutrition. According to Pakhi Chaudhuri, a Durango pediatrician, Western medicine has a “rudimentary understanding of nutrition. Ayurvedic medicine addresses the issue much better and the study of genetics is finally catching up with it.”

Elise Redd, Tribal Health Services Director, stated in her interview that the Southern Ute Tribe was in the process of hiring an ayurvedic nutritionist based on the fact that an ayurvedic approach better deals with their health and nutritional issues. We are choosing “to go with an ayurvedic nutrition program. The principles are friendlier to Tribal traditions. They constitute a very individualized approach.”

Amita Nathwani, an ayurvedic practitioner, is currently working with women from the Southern Ute Tribe on diabetes, obesity and other digestive issues. She is incorporating local wild and cultivated foods as part of her nutritional program. As part of her research, she looks into what grows in the area to help determine what she and her patients should be eating. Community food projects, such as the harvest calendar, can assist programs such as Amita’s by providing medical practitioners with a list of the available local and wild foods in our area.

ABOUT FOOD SECURITY IN LA PLATA COUNTY

La Plata County residents have defined community food security as a situation in which all people at all times have access to healthy, local, affordable, and culturally appropriate food, produced in ways that are sustainable.

ISOLATION AND A LACK OF LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

La Plata County is and has always been an isolated community, which historically is what made the region more self-sufficient. As shown in Chapter III: A Regional Profile of Agriculture, La Plata County once supported great food crop diversity. In fact, the 1945 U.S. Census of Agriculture reports 28,000 bushels of apples, 24,000 bushels of potatoes and 2.2 million gallons of milk were produced in the county. In 2002, however, the items under “selected crops harvested” for all Colorado counties are not milk, apples, and potatoes, as they were in 1945. Today they are recorded as corn for grain, corn for silage or green-chop and wheat for grain (including winter wheat and spring wheat, both for grain).

In 2002 the Census of Agriculture reports the top crop items 3 in La Plata County as forage 4 , oats, corn for silage and apples. Since the early 1900s the area has remained focused on

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3 Planted acreage
4 Land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and green-chop
livestock production. In fact, the total number of cattle and calves raised in La Plata County hasn’t changed much in over 60 years. What has changed, however, is the amount and diversity of food that is being produced.

Once an area that had to be more self-reliant for food and other goods, the region is now supplied by trucks from the closest industrial centers, Denver and Albuquerque, which are six and four hours away respectively, and from other areas such as Texas, California, and Arizona. Today, without these suppliers, the area would have severe food shortages.

Throughout the course of the assessment, when pressed to confront the issues of isolation and lack of food production, many people began to realize the potential significance of these issues. The information also provides the basis for discussion on the benefits of improving the food system in a language most community members can understand and relate to. And as more community members become informed and understand the fragility of their local food system, they may feel empowered to change it.

**FOOD SECURITY ISSUES WITHIN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS**

As mentioned in Chapter II: *A Profile of La Plata County*, the region is culturally and economically diverse. Many populations in the area have been defined as “underserved,” meaning that because of poverty or discrimination, or lack of transportation, these people do not have access to the same services as others in a given community. This section addresses the way food security plays out in a variety of cultural and economic groups.

**LATINO**

The information gleaned from the Latino population in the county draws interesting parallels, illustrating that specific cultural food issues exist apart from the issues affected by income level, education and gender. According to surveys and interviews, Latinos in La Plata County are concerned about a lack of access to culturally appropriate foods. As mentioned in the grocery store surveys, there are plans to open a Mexican foods grocery store in Durango, which may begin to address some of these food access issues.

In addition, there is information about cultural differences in diet – some Latinos feeling foods are more processed in the U.S. compared to foods they had access to in their countries of origin, and there is little access to healthy, fresh foods. People are used to coming from countries where open-air, farmers’ markets are commonplace. As Eddie Soto (Director of Los Compañeros) mentioned, creating greater access for Latinos at existing farmers’ markets could help to address this issue.

Food related concerns among the Latino population surveyed were heavily tied to their income. As most survey participants reported having income levels below $30,000, they shared the feeling that typical household earnings are not enough to cover family necessities, citing the high cost of food. Some suggestions to overcome this issue were offering higher wages, more job opportunities and reducing the overall cost of food.

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5 According to Jerry Zink, owner of SunnySide Meats Processing Facility in Durango, “In the early 1900’s there were vast numbers of sheep in the area. Since the 1960’s, however, many cow-calf and sheep operations were replaced by horse operations.”

6 See Chapter 4: *Food Resources* - Grocery Store Survey, for a complete section on culturally appropriate food choices in La Plata County.
NATIVE AMERICAN
During the 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s, because of U.S. Government pressure to turn the Southern Utes into farmers, the area at that time was home to more subsistence agriculture than it has ever known. Currently, however, Dave Sanford, who runs Custom Farm Services in Ignacio, could only think of two full-time farmer/ranchers on the reservation, and they are Anglos. The rest are a few people with gardens and minimal livestock. Dave feels these families continue to ranch out of habit and tradition, but not because of the necessity for food as they did in the past.

In an interview with Elise Redd, Director of SUIT Tribal Health Services, access to affordable fruits and vegetables and healthy affordable food were noted as some ‘Tribal members’ most pressing food needs. “If you are going to cook healthy, many of those foods are more expensive. I think (for this reason) a lot of people will not purchase fresh, perishable foods; they will purchase cans.”

OLDER ADULTS
Food security concerns are a reality for a significant portion of La Plata County’s older adult population. Pressing issues are affordability, access to the foods they want, transportation difficulties and lack of knowledge of available services. Additionally, a high percentage of older adults remain physically active and participate in hobbies. This may be indicative of their future interest in community food projects, which would incorporate both hobby gardening and physical activity.

The majority of the food served to seniors comes from distributors or grocery stores. None of the specific grocery stores were natural food stores. In the case of senior centers, the menus are dictated at a state level. Of the programs surveyed, some programs are offered that relate to food, nutrition, and farming, gardening and/or cooking. These could be enhanced with further education for staff on the importance of nutrition and the role of local and fresh foods, horticultural therapy and the variety of other community food projects. There is also a need for more education and publicity on the food related services that are currently available, specifically emergency food assistance programs.

Fortunately, agencies recognize that community food projects would allow them to better serve their intended populations in regards to issues of health and nutrition. Interest and enthusiasm was expressed from a number of the surveyed agencies for the development of local community food projects such as senior community gardens, farmers’ market outreach programs, improved and new transportation services, and horticultural therapy activities. These projects could easily be geared towards the older adult and physically and/or mentally limited populations thus enabling local agencies to not only offer better service but also contribute to efforts to strengthen local food security.

LOW-INCOME
Information from agencies offering food related programming and services illustrates there are many food resources already available to the low-income sector of La Plata County.
What it also shows is there are opportunities to improve charitable food offerings by including certain foods, by increasing the amount of nutritional information and education provided, by offering transportation services to improve food access, by improving access to growing spaces and offering cooking classes focused on healthy and affordable food purchasing.

**RURAL RESIDENTS**

Although rural communities often look for internal solutions to handle food insecurity, Growing Partners views rural food security as an issue that warrants widespread community attention. Lack of access, due to transportation constraints or distance to agencies and services, is something the county must address to increase food security in rural areas. Whether services come to them, or access is better facilitated with transportation services, it is clear that rural residents do not have the same access to food programs and services as do residents in urban areas.

### 2. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER:

**Key Themes Regarding Food Security in La Plata County & Recommendations for Future Food Projects**

The following are themes regarding the overall situation of food security in La Plata County. They are addressed with recommendations for future food projects, which have been identified from each of the populations, agencies and services surveyed during the food assessment. They are separated by recommendations regarding local food supply (production) and local food consumption (access).

**REGARDING THE LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY (PRODUCTION)**

To increase the amount of local food available greater support is needed for those interested in growing food. Such support should address the following obstacles and needs:

- **IMPROVE ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND AND GROWING SPACES**
- **SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE AND EXISTING PRODUCTION SYSTEMS**
- **SUPPORT FOR THE PROCESSING, MARKETING, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL FARM PRODUCTS**
- **PROVIDE CONSUMER EDUCATION TO SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**IMPROVE ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND AND GROWING SPACES**

To improve access to agricultural land and growing spaces, we need to address the high cost of land for large-scale agricultural operations, the difficulty in “splitting off” affordable small parcels of land that may be used for intensive food production and the lack of access to capital for those that are interested in growing food.

Programs that may improve access to agricultural land and growing spaces include:
PROJECT: education programs and greater access to resources for more backyard and small-scale agricultural production to promote gardening and the concept of “growing your own,” key strategies for strengthening the food system that will have wide-ranging effects. The effects include popular elements such as: community reliance, self-reliance, community education, research, public-private partnerships (especially with community gardens), school education and meals, policy improvements, healthy lifestyles (i.e. physical activity), culturally appropriate foods and affordability of high quality food.

PROJECT: a land-link opportunity network that is created between landowners and non-landowners (or small-landowner producers who want to grow more food) to make use of experience, land, production, and water that is needed to grow more food. Such a system could help connect those with agricultural resources to those without resources and are interested in growing food.

PROJECT: farmland preservation initiatives to utilize the myriad number of land conservation programs that give incentives to landowners who desire to keep their land as agricultural in perpetuity.

PROJECT: advocacy/policy for allocation of water rights/use to arable lands to create a more efficient system of allocating agricultural water towards production of agricultural products would help preserve a critical resource.

SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE AND EXISTING PRODUCTION SYSTEMS
More technical training for new and inexperienced farmers is needed to create a bridge between agricultural development and the need to foster new farmers. Such programs might include:

PROJECT: new producer & continued training/education, including direct-marketing opportunities for producers, ideas for creating a profitable agricultural enterprise, farming techniques for a high-desert climate, irrigation techniques, and season extension techniques.

PROJECT: field classes such as hands-on education experience for young/potential farmers (i.e. through the Fort Lewis Agricultural Experiment Station).

PROJECT: educational/paid internship program for interested/potential new farmers.

PROJECT: dairy project to reestablish local production and processing

PROJECT: bio-diesel fuel project, Dove Creek, Colorado, using the fuel bi-product, meal, as potential feed for area livestock.

PROJECT: providing farmers with volunteer or locally sourced labor for labor crunch times such as harvesting and planting.
SUPPORT FOR THE PROCESSING, MARKETING, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL FARM PRODUCTS
Many farmers and retailers expressed the need for an efficient, locally based distribution system. This project could address a lack of dependable delivery systems for receiving or delivering local products and could offer support to farmers who do not have the time to complete their own deliveries.

PROJECT: distribution, marketing, & storage facility/system for local agricultural products.

PROJECT: community/incubator kitchen for educating people on how to utilize local foods and for developing value-added products from locally produced food.

PROJECT: greater producer wholesale opportunities for retail outlets, schools, restaurants, farmers’ markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and worksite CSAs.

PROJECT: development of local small-scale specialty markets to improve local distribution.

PROJECT: more farmers’ markets to increase distribution and outlets for locally produced food.

PROJECT: a website to help link farmers and retailers.

CONSUMER EDUCATION TO SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
It is clear from farmers that there is the desire for an educational campaign that would increase community awareness on the benefits of buying local. Such education could build on existing momentum and help increase the support for local agriculture.

PROJECT: a buy-local marketing/education program that promotes the benefits of buying local food from health, economic and sustainable community perspectives.

PROJECT: farm tours that increase awareness of local food production and the food system in general.

PROJECT: consumer education at farmers’ markets that promotes the benefits of buying locally produced food.

PROJECT: youth education that increases awareness of the food system.

REGARDING LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION (ACCESS)
Fundamental differences exist in La Plata County. These differences must be considered to effectively and equitably improve our local food system:

- RURAL VERSUS URBAN FOOD NEEDS AND RESOURCES
- **INCOME AND FINANCIAL ASSET DISPARITIES**
- **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**
- **NEEDS AND RESOURCES OF SCHOOLS**

**RURAL VERSUS URBAN FOOD NEEDS AND RESOURCES**

A lack of access, especially to healthy and culturally appropriate foods, exist due to costs, transportation constraints or distance to agencies and services and is a need the county must address to increase food security, especially in rural areas. Programs such as:

**PROJECT:** *development of rural farmers’ markets* in the outlying, small farm towns.

**PROJECT:** *the creation of a rural food exchange program* between neighbors that produce food and those that do not.

**PROJECT:** *rural community garden plots* where people may go to gain knowledge and support from more experienced gardeners.

**PROJECT:** *a rural transportation system* for seniors and low-income persons that improves access to culturally appropriate and healthy foods.

**PROJECT:** *rural charitable food programs* that can distribute foods to those in rural areas in need.

**INCOME AND FINANCIAL ASSET DISPARITIES**

La Plata County is an economically disparate community. The health, food needs and resources of these varying socioeconomic groups are extremely different.

**PROJECT:** *affordable food purchasing and cooking program* for those that do not have the knowledge or skills necessary to purchase inexpensive, healthy foods.

**PROJECT:** *a WIC farmers’ market nutrition program* to improve access to local foods to WIC program participants.

**PROJECT:** *a central warehouse facility to house all of the charitable food programs* so participants have a wider selection of food items and easier access.

**PROJECT:** *a guide to charitable food programs* for people unaware of such programs but are in need of them.

**PROJECT:** *bulk buying program for charitable food programs* to purchase food (especially healthy foods) collectively at reduced prices.

**PROJECT:** *individual and/or family food buying clubs* to obtain more buying power, reduce costs and share information.
PROJECT: greenhouse and/or garden projects as alternative food sources for charitable food programs.

PROJECT: Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT food stamp) Farmers’ Market Program to accept Food Stamps at area farmers’ markets.

PROJECT: horticultural therapy to improve health and promote production of food.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
There is a need for greater culturally appropriate food choices for Latino/as and Native Americans in La Plata County.

For Latinos/as

PROJECT: more culturally appropriate food choices that increase access to preferred foods.

PROJECT: an affordable food purchasing and cooking program available in Spanish, for youth and adults.

PROJECT: bi-lingual advertising and on site support at farmers’ markets and health food stores.

For Native Americans

PROJECT: community events with native foods.

PROJECT: a tribal extension agent to help educate and promote local food choices.

PROJECT: linking programs to native agriculture and hunting.

PROJECT: more healthy/fresh/local food choices by development of more roadside farm stands and a farmers’ market in Ignacio.

PROJECT: a collective food buying club for Native Americans.

PROJECT: community garden plots that lend support and land to those that want to grow food.

PROJECT: transportation to healthy food outlets for those who need better access.

PROJECT: tribal cooking classes at the Sun Ute Recreational Center using commercial kitchen facilities to demonstrate ways to cook traditional foods.
NEEDS AND RESOURCES OF SCHOOLS
La Plata County encompasses three school districts and numerous private schools. Each of these has different economic resources and needs which affect their interest and capability to participate in various food programs.

PROJECT: a farm-to-school program in each school district because farm-to-school is a concept that resonates with the public and effectively “frames” many of the overall food system issues including access to healthy food choices, the importance of food quality over price, a need for system-wide policy changes and the importance of local foods.

PROJECT: youth community gardens to educate and promote agriculture and local foods.

PROJECT: farm tours that promotes agriculture as a lifestyle and career choice.

SUMMARY
The availability and affordability of safe, healthy, sustainable, local and culturally appropriate foods is an issue that must be addressed when redeveloping our local food system. Although efforts and interest to improve access to nutritious, safe food exist in La Plata County, there is much work to be done. The recommendations listed for future community food projects are designed to address gaps in already existing food programs and/or create new programs, make way for food and agricultural policy change and involve and empower the community to address food security in a more equitable and effective fashion.

By completing the La Plata County Food Assessment, information has been compiled regarding the resources and needs of the local food system, underserved populations, Farm-to-School programs and key stakeholders. The process has also strengthened links between existing food system groups, promoted community learning and participation around the local food system and food security and generated results to plan effective community food projects.

3. WHAT’S NEXT?

SHARING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION
The next steps in the process of building a stronger local food system are to publicly share the findings and recommendations of the La Plata County Food Assessment, to prioritize the assessment recommendations and to develop a series of action plans to implement future food projects.

Findings and recommendations were shared at the last of three public food forums and through various educational food projects such as the harvest calendar, regional maps of agriculture and food resources, farmers’ market and charitable food program directories, and a local food versus conventional food cost comparison menu.
MOBILIZING THE COMMUNITY

HOMEGROWN: A LOCAL FOODS CONFERENCE – The Unveiling of the Food Assessment
The third community food forum took place on February 9th and 10th 2007 in Durango. The event was sponsored by the Environmental Center at Fort Lewis College and Growing Partners. All of the participants who were contacted or interviewed throughout the course of the assessment were invited to hear the results and recommendations of the food assessment and to learn how to use the information in their own organization’s or agency’s work or as part of a greater community network. Through greater and more widespread awareness, the findings and recommendations of the La Plata County Food Assessment can now be used to lay the foundation for action and to create positive local food system change.

The forum included breakout sessions on community gardens; farm-to-school programs; production, marketing, and distribution; and the role of higher education in supporting the local food system. Specific workshops looked at ways to conserve land for local food production, facilitate networking between local suppliers and restaurants, schools and other community institutions.

Because this assessment has been the work of so many and is truly representative of the county’s food-related needs, this forum initiated the planning process for these recommended future food projects, and encouraged more people to join in the effort towards creating greater community food self-reliance and sustainability.
APPENDIX 1  Thank you for sharing your hopes for a stronger food system with us

Farmers, Producers and Agriculture Experts
- Paul Evans – Ute Mountain Ute Farm
- Greg Vlaming – Blue Heron Farm & Cooperative Extension
- Trent Taylor – Blue Horizon Farm
- Beth LaShelle – San Juan Basin Research Center
- Peg Redford – Durango Farmers’ Market
- Doug Ramsey – San Juan RC&D
- Jerry Zink – Sunnyside Beef
- Craig Larson – La Plata County Assessor
- Dave James – James Ranch
- Jeff Berman – San Juan Bio-diesel
- Rosie Carter – Stone Free Farms
- Dave Sanford – Custom farm
- Kevin Mallow – SUIT Division of Water Resources
- Steve Whitman – SUIT Division of Wildlife
- Sterling Moss – Natural Resources Conservation Services
- Dave Banga – La Britt Farms
- Tom Buscagali – RAS Farms
- Pam Dyer – Dyers Wool
- Clyde Johnson – Johnson Ranch
- Jim and Terry Fitzgerald
- Oakhaven Permaculture Center
- Turtle Lake Refuge
- FoxxFire
- Outrun Ranch
- Durango Nursery Supply

Agencies, Organizations and Churches
- Slow Food
- Durango Community Shelter
- San Juan Citizen’s Alliance
- Los Companeros
- Shared Harvest Community Garden
- First United Methodist Church of Durango
- Women, Infants, Children Program (WIC)
- San Juan Basin Health Department – Prenatal Program & Promoviendo la Salud
- Healthy Lifestyles Coalition
- Southwest Conservation Corps
- Har Shalom
- Manna Soup Kitchen
- Durango Food Bank
- Commodities Distribution
- Food Share – Catholic Charities
- Sustainability Alliance of SW Colorado
- Community Connections Inc.
- Montezuma Hospice
- Operation Healthy Communities Summit
- Nutrition Task Force
- Grassroots Visioning Project
- Durango Natural Foods
- Family Center of Durango
- San Juan RC&D
- San Juan Bio-Diesel
- Fort Lewis Mesa Planning Group
- Southern Ute Community Action Program
- Family Center of Fort Lewis Mesa
- La Plata Youth Services

Grocery Store Surveys
- Shur Value
- The Grocery Store, Bayfield
- Lake Vallecito Country Market
- Mac’s Hermosa Supermarket
- Wal-Mart
- Albertson’s
- City Market North & South
- Mountain Valley Market, Bayfield
- Nature’s Oasis
- Durango Natural Foods
- Tucson Cooperative/ShopNatural
- Mesa Market
- Mesa Mercantile

Restaurant Surveys
- Cyprus Café
- Gauchos
- Durango Bagel
- Durango Doughworks
- Mahogany Grille
- P is for Peanut Café
- Steamworks
- Kat’s Custard
- Scoot n’ Blues
- Durango Coffee Company
- Carver’s
- Zia Taqueria
- Pickles
- Aspen Café
- East by Southwest,
- Serious Texas B-Que
Skinny’s
Durango Natural Foods
Homeslice
Farquart’s
Patio Restaurant
Smokin’ Moe’s
Francisco’s
Pizza Hut
Subway

Kentucky Fried Chicken
Taco Bell
Dairy Queen
McDonalds
Burger King
Wendy’s
Exxon
Diorio’s
Raiders Ridge Café

Schools
Escalante Middle School
Park Elementary
Needham Elementary
Durango High School
Ignacio High School, Elementary
Intermediate, and Middle School
Bayfield Elementary and Bayfield Middle School
Riverhouse Children’s Center
Durango Early Learning Center
Kim Cotta – 9R Food Services
Bayfield Food Services
SUCAP Head Start and Montessori
Phoenix Program
Fort Lewis College
Animas Valley Elementary
Florida Mesa Elementary
Ignacio Food Services
Bayfield Food Services
Children’s House
Riverhouse Children’s Center
Sunnyside Elementary

Medical
Pahki Chaudari M.D., Pediatric Associates
San Juan Basin Health
Tribal Health Services
Amita Nathwani, M.D.
Zane Baranowski

Consumer Surveys from
Health Educators and Clients of – Promoviendo la Salud, San Juan Basin Health, ESL Class Students at Park Elementary, La Plata Youth Services, 4-H Youth, Low-Income Program Participants, Prenatal Clinic Patients at San Juan Basin Health, residents visiting the LPC Extension Office, Taste of Durango, Durango Farmers’ Market, Sun Ute Community Center, Pediatrics Associations, Sun Ute Community Center, Cinco de Mayo and Earth Day.

Additional thanks to others who supported the La Plata County Food Assessment through your donations, support and time:
Bread
Colorado Division of Wildlife
Colorado State University Extension, La Plata County Office
Desert Sun Coffee
Durango Natural Foods
Ecosphere Environmental Services
Fort Lewis College Environmental Center
Fort Lewis College
La Plata Youth Services
San Juan RC&D
Sun Ute Community Center
SUIT Division of Wildlife and Resource Management
Sunnyside Meats

Thank you!
APPENDIX 2  CONSUMER SURVEY RESULTS

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INTRODUCTION

The following information was compiled from surveys that were distributed by interns and staff of Growing Partners. Important questions were identified by Growing Partners’ Staff by researching other Food Security Assessments and by a number of draft surveys that were distributed to a number of organizations that have been dealing with food issues in La Plata County for a number of years. (See Chapter 1, Assessment Methodology)

The majority of surveys were distributed at a festival celebrating local food menus called ‘Taste of Durango’ as well as at the Durango Farmer’s Market, Farmer’s Appreciation Day at Durango Natural Foods, Durango households, commodities distributions and other venues (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. Locations where surveys were distributed and the number of surveys filled out at each venue/location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue/location</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commodities Distribution</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango Household</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Appreciation Day, DNF</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Valley Market, Bayfield</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Association of Durango Office</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Harvest Community Garden</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swadeshi Festival</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste of Durango</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Respondents</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey questions were divided into 4 sections: 1) Demographics, 2) the Food You Eat, 3) Food Related Problems or Concerns, and 4) Food Assets and Resources. The number of people that answered a particular question was recorded as the number of respondents. The number of times a particular answer was chosen, especially in questions where the person surveyed was asked to pick their top 3 choices was recorded as the number of responses. Often, respondents chose several answers and they were recorded as responses.
DEMOGRAPHICS

There were 94 respondents that completed a survey. Out of the 94 respondents, 32 were men and 62 were women, 76 Caucasians, 10 Hispanics, 5 Native Americans, 1 Asian and 2 mixed race. The majority of respondents were between 18 and 39 years old and 80 of the surveys were completed by the primary shopper of the household. Of the 94 respondents, 83 cooked and prepped food for the family. The majority of those surveyed had some college education including work towards a graduate degree (Table 2). Income distribution among respondents was bimodal with a peak for incomes between $10,000 and $20,000 (26%) and a peak for incomes greater than $50,000 (30%) (Figure 2). This bimodality was seen in the surveys completed at the Farmer’s Market where the majority were either unemployed, low income or had incomes greater than $50,000 (Table 6). The majority (67 of 91 responses) of respondents did not have children in the household. Half of the respondents were the only adult in the household. Most of the respondents had not utilized any food assistant programs and the majority stated that their health was good to very good.

Table 2. Summary of survey Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. Respondents: 94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62 (66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: 1 each 1, 2 &amp; 2,3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 29</td>
<td>32 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 49</td>
<td>37 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 64</td>
<td>13 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 – 74</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education level:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>9 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school Diploma</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>23 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>30 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate work</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>21 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are you the primary food shopper/buyer:</strong></td>
<td>No. Respondents: 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80 (85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you cook/prep food for the family?</strong></td>
<td>No. Respondents: 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83 (88%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, who does?</td>
<td>11 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household income?</strong></td>
<td>No. Respondents: 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>19 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$10,000 - $20,000  24 (26%)
$20,000 - $30,000  3 (3%)
$30,000 - $50,000  16 (17%)
More than $50,000  28 (30%)
Unemployed  0
Retired  4 (4%)

Children (under 18 years old) in the home? No. Respondents: 91
Yes, how many?  24 (26%)
No  67 (74%)

How many adults live in the household? No. Respondents: 92
1  46 (50%)
2  42 (46%)
3-5  4 (4%)
More than 5  0

In general, would you say your health is: No. Respondents: 93
Excellent  29 (31%)
Very good  50 (54%)
Fair  10 (11%)
Poor  4 (4%)

What Food Assistance Programs have you or your family used in the past year? 90 Respondents, 97 Responses
Food Stamp Program  9 (9%)
WIC  2 (2%)
Commodities Program  6 (6%)
Free or reduced School Lunch Program  3 (3%)
Soup Kitchen  0
Food Share: Catholic Charities  1 (1%)
Food Bank  1 (1%)
Other:  0
None  74 (76%)

Figure 2. Household income distribution for respondents
THE FOOD YOU EAT

When asked “what does it mean to you to ‘eat well’?” respondents listed factors such as fresh food, balanced meals, local foods, enough food, organic foods, fruits and vegetables. Nutrition (26%) was cited as the primary reason for food choices that the respondents made as well as reasons such as price (18%), taste (18%) and whether or not the food was locally grown (13%) (Table 3 and Figure 3). Family and culture influenced the way respondents ate as well as factors such as availability, education and special nutritional needs (Figure 4). This was true for each race category (Table 7). Nutrition, price, taste and locally grown were also important for each race category and income distribution (Table 8 and Figure 5). The majority of the respondents shopped at standard grocery stores and a number of respondents shopped at local natural food stores. They used personal vehicles to reach the store and most of the respondents shopped at their particular stores of choice for convenience in location and the quality of the food at the store. The majority of shoppers across all income distributions shopped at City Market except for the $10,000 - $20,000 income range who shopped at both City market and at Nature’s Oasis (Figure 5, Table 9). Instant foods were low on the list of what respondents would like to see more of in stores (3%) and locally grown foods were at the top of the list (28%). The frequency that respondents ate outside of the home varied from every day (9%) to less than once a month (16%). Taste was the primary reason that respondents frequented the places that they ate at outside of the home.

Table 3. Summary of The Food You Eat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please select the TOP THREE factors that are most important to you when making food choices:</th>
<th>94 Respondents, 282 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>16 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>50 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>49 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally-grown</td>
<td>36 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>10 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritious</td>
<td>72 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand name</td>
<td>5 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified organic</td>
<td>37 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>1 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you eat the way you do/What influences the way you eat? (TOP THREE)</th>
<th>92 Respondents, 232 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family/culture</td>
<td>51 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>37 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>41 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>48 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>9 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising/trends</td>
<td>1 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special nutritional needs</td>
<td>25 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>20 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do you purchase most of your food?</td>
<td>88 Respondents, 136 Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart</td>
<td>14 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Market</td>
<td>48 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNF (Durango Natural Foods)</td>
<td>24 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature's Oasis</td>
<td>33 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albertson's</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Valley</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms Directly</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer's Market</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you get there?</th>
<th>93 Respondents, 107 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal vehicle</td>
<td>75 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk/Bike</td>
<td>29 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation/bus</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you shop there?</th>
<th>90 Respondents, 137 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location/convenience</td>
<td>50 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>12 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>40 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please explain:</td>
<td>17 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you like to see more of in local grocery stores (TOP THREE)?</th>
<th>Respondents 91, Responses 260</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locally-grown foods</td>
<td>73 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>28 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy foods</td>
<td>40 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic foods</td>
<td>46 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk foods</td>
<td>30 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic foods</td>
<td>30 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant foods</td>
<td>8 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify:</td>
<td>5 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you eat outside of the home?</th>
<th>94 Respondents, 94 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About every day</td>
<td>9 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a week</td>
<td>32 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>16 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a month</td>
<td>22 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month</td>
<td>15 (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What about those places keeps you coming back?</th>
<th>88 Respondents, 168 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience/location</td>
<td>32 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>33 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>71 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally-grown ingredients</td>
<td>22 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified organic ingredients</td>
<td>13 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>7 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3. The top 3 factors that were most important to respondents when making food choices

- Family/culture
- Price
- Availability
- Education
- Friends
- Advertising/trends
- Special nutritional needs
- Other:

Figure 4. Factors that influence the way respondents ate

- Wal-Mart
- City Market
- DNF
- Nature's
- Albertson's
- Mountain Valley
- Farms Directly
- Restaurants
- Farmer's Market

Figure 5. Where respondents shopped in La Plata County
FOOD RELATED PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS

The majority of those surveyed (57%) stated that the cost of living affected their ability to ‘eat well.’ Of the 57% the majority (34%) listed personal income as the reason.

Table 4) Price, taste, nutrition and locally grown were factors that were important to respondents for all income categories.

Table 10). Out of the 93 respondents that answered the question of whether or not they felt food was generally unaffordable, 52% answered ‘yes.’ The primary solution that the respondents used to deal with expensive food was to shop for less expensive items. Pesticide residue (22%) was the primary concern regarding the food that they ate. Price, getting to the store (transportation) and whether or not the food was organic were factors also at the top of the list.

Table 4 and Figure 6).

Table 4. Summary of Food Related Problems or Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel the cost-of-living in La Plata County affects your ability to 'eat well'?</th>
<th>93 Respondents, 93 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (skip to Q24)</td>
<td>40 (43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What issues, relative to cost-of-living, affect your ability to 'eat well' in La Plata County? (TOP THREE)</th>
<th>54 Respondents, 124 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal income too low</td>
<td>42 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High fuel/heating costs</td>
<td>23 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High rent/lack of affordable housing</td>
<td>32 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High mortgage payment</td>
<td>11 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>10 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare costs/child related expenses</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you ever feel that food is (generally) unaffordable?</th>
<th>93 Respondents, 93 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (skip to Q26)</td>
<td>43 (46%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you have ever felt food is unaffordable, have you: (check all that apply)</th>
<th>50 Respondents, 82 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited the size of a meal due to the lack of money?</td>
<td>20 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipped a meal due to lack of money?</td>
<td>14 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried about having enough to eat for yourself or your family?</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gone to the Food Bank or Soup Kitchen to get/eat food?</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopped for the LEAST expensive food available?</td>
<td>32 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>9 (11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have any of the following concerns about the food you eat? (TOP THREE)</th>
<th>91 Respondents, 282 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pesticide residue</td>
<td>62 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety</td>
<td>33 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>49 (17%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variety/selection  20 (7%)
Transportation (getting there)  49 (17%)
How far the food you eat travels  37 (13%)
Whether the food you eat is organic or not  43 (15%)
The amount of time it takes to prepare/cook meals  17 (6%)
Finding culturally appropriate foods  8 (3%)
Other:  3 (1%)

Figure 6. The major food concerns to respondents

FOOD ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Local farms, gardens and food outlets such as the Farmer’s Market were considered by a number of respondents as “food resources” in the community. A large number of respondents (46%) stated that they grew/harvested some of their own food and chose ‘liking to garden as a hobby’ (24%), freshness/taste (23%) and control of growing practices (18%) as reasons for liking to grow and harvest some of their food (Table 5). Farm-to-School (21%) and Community Garden Plots (17%) were chosen as programs that they would like to see implemented in the community (Figure 7).

Table 5. Summary of Food Assets and Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you grow/harvest any of your own food?</th>
<th>93 Respondents, 93 Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, what do you grow/harvest?</td>
<td>43 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (skip to Q30)</td>
<td>50 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you grow your own food?</td>
<td>44 Respondents, 137 Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to garden/hobby</td>
<td>33 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshness/taste</td>
<td>32 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feed myself and my family</td>
<td>(19 14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For specific varieties I can’t find elsewhere</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of food from the grocery store</td>
<td>13 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control over growing practices/food safety</td>
<td>25 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Which of the following ‘food programs’ would you like to see in our community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm-to-School – local schools serving fresh, local produce</td>
<td>75 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community garden plots – affordable growing spaces for all community members</td>
<td>63 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community kitchens – affordable kitchen space for all community members</td>
<td>30 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticultural therapy</td>
<td>24 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food buying clubs</td>
<td>31 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program – issuing food coupons specifically for fresh, farmers’ market produce</td>
<td>38 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable food purchasing &amp; cooking classes</td>
<td>34 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm-to-chef – local restaurants receiving fresh, local produce through a grower-run distribution system</td>
<td>64 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>6 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

88 Respondents, 365 Responses

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses for each program.](chart.png)

**Figure 7.** Food programs that respondents would like to see in La Plata County
Table 6. Income distribution across venue (location survey was taken).

The majority of respondents who filled out surveys at the Durango Farmers’ market had incomes greater than $50,000. The majority of respondents with incomes between $10,000 and $20,000 were from surveys filled out at the Taste of Durango.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Less than $10,000</th>
<th>$10,000 - $20,000</th>
<th>$20,000 - $30,000</th>
<th>$30,000 - $50,000</th>
<th>More than $50,000</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Durango Household</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Association of Durango Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Valley Market, Bayfield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swadeshi Festival</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Harvest Community Garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodities Distribution</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste of Durango</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Appreciation Day, DNF</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total No. Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
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**Frequency**

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Table 7: Influence on food choice across race categories.

Across race categories, family/culture, price, availability and education were the factors that primarily influenced the way respondents ate.

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Table 8: Respondents food choices across respondents’ race category.

Price and taste were important factors across all incomes as well as locally grown food and the nutritional quality of the food.

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Table 9. Shopping locations across income distributions of respondents.

The majority of shoppers across income distributions shopped at City Market except for in the 10-20,000 dollar range who shopped at both City Market and at Nature’s Oasis.

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Table 10. Factors important to the respondents food choice across respondents income distributions.

Price and taste were important factors for all incomes as well as locally grown food and nutritious food.

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**Key**

- **Months available to be harvested under normal growing conditions**
- **Months available to be harvested using season extension**
- **Cool season, plant 2-6 weeks before last frost (can also be planted late July for the fall)**
- **Warm season, plant after the last frost (NOT frost tolerant)**
- **Fruit**

*Must be started inside, 6-8 weeks before the last frost, then transplanted outside 1-2 weeks after the last frost.*

**Help Local Farmers & the Environment**

The average American meal travels anywhere from 1,550-2,480 miles from where it was grown to the consumer’s plate. Buying local produce keeps 100% of your food dollar in your community’s economy and ensures quality and freshness to the consumer. Supporting regional agricultural projects protects and preserves open space and farm land while reducing our dependency on fossil fuel.