



## NATIONAL GOOD FOOD NETWORK

### VISION

Wallace Center at Winrock International serves the growing community of civic, business, and philanthropic organizations involved in building a new good food system in the United States. In particular, the Center is focused on advancing regional, collaborative efforts to move good food – healthy, green, fair, affordable food – beyond the direct-marketing realm into larger scale markets so that more producers benefit, more communities have viable economies and greater access to good food, and a greater number of acres are managed through sustainable practices.

To accomplish this, the Wallace Center in partnership with an Advisory Council (see reverse) developed a National Good Food Network that:

- Serves as a networking, communications, and information hub, providing practical knowledge, learning models, and valuable connections for the broad range of groups, both for-profit and non-profit, involved in building a new good food systems, and
- Stimulates development of important, on-the-ground nodes of regional work by investing in groups and collaborative efforts engaged in scaling up aggregation and sales of good food to more substantial wholesale channels.

### OBJECTIVES

- Connection - Foster regional initiatives that will bring increased good food into conventional food systems in a way that will ultimately improve good food access for all communities.
- Knowledge - Assemble and connect value chain models and best practices, value chain experts, and opportunities for regional funding in the marketplace with regional network participants.
- Community - Enable network participants to think beyond the commercial transaction of good food and to become participants in initiatives that will improve good food access to all communities.

### ACTIVITIES

**Launch:** The National Good Food Network (NGFN) launched successfully in December 2007, in Grand Rapids, Michigan with a "Meet the Midwest Buyers" gathering and reception at the Great Lakes Fruit and Vegetable Expo. Nearly 100 food buyers, growers, and industry representatives attended the value chain gathering. This approach catalyzed new relationships and planted the seeds for new value chains.

The Wallace Center's regional team continues to work in the region through "grower readiness" training to prepare more farms for participation in value chains. A growing number of commercial food service and retail companies are engaged with the network to identify supply, establish buying programs, and create relationships and establish regional value chains.

**Regional Lead Teams and Advisory Council:** In August 2008, the NGFN announced the selection of its first round of Regional Lead Teams (RLTs), eight value chain leaders from around the country, chosen through a competitive RFP process (see complete list on reverse). Each multi-organization team is working with the Wallace Center to develop regional networks of nonprofits, businesses, government and philanthropy collaborating to share innovative models, offer a central focal point to good food participants in the region, and expand the field of those engaged in the good food system. An Advisory Council of value chain practitioners and experts from around the country was also selected at the onset of the NGFN to partner with and assist in guiding the development and growth of the Network (see complete list on reverse).

**NGFN/Sysco Partnership Regional Program:** In 2008, the Sysco Corporation entered a partnership agreement with the Wallace Center to advance regional work through the NGFN. The goal was to move more local food from small and medium size growers into Sysco operating companies in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Kansas City, Kansas. Regional teams were developed that included growers, Sysco employees, NGFN regional experts, the Wallace Center and Sysco Corporation. Both regions were successful in developing relationships with growers and creating a supply chain infrastructure to

source increased amounts of local fruits, vegetables, cheese and some specialty items from family farms through the Sysco operating warehouses and out to area restaurants and schools. A case study was developed to document this work and can be found on [ngfn.org](http://ngfn.org). The NGFN and Sysco Corporation partnership continues in 2009 and has marked increased successes. In addition to sourcing local food, the NGFN/Sysco team have initiated grower training in both regions on the topics of values based value chain practices and food safety practices. To date, three Amish growers have been food-safety certified in Kansas City, KS. Models for food safety work are being documented and a case study for 2009 will be developed and posted on [ngfn.org](http://ngfn.org).

Outreach and Technical Assistance: The Wallace Center will supports networking and value chain development through communications, outreach, and technical assistance to business, non-profits and funders. Current initiatives include:

- [ngfn.org](http://ngfn.org): The online home of the Network, [ngfn.org](http://ngfn.org) features a searchable database of knowledge, people/organizations, and funders focused on the work of scaling up good food. It provides those dedicated to the challenge of moving more good food to more people access to 1) cutting edge value chain research, innovative models of regional aggregation and distribution, 2) people—producers, brokers, retailers, NGOs, small businesses, distributors, among others—with experience and expertise to share, and 3) funders—public, private, and philanthropic—poised to support this work.
- Monthly e-newsletters: Posted on [ngfn.org](http://ngfn.org), with headlines e-mailed to our member list, the e-newsletters summarize Network activity, research and news relevant to scaling up good food.
- Monthly interactive webinars: Top practitioners present their work relevant to the Networks activities. This interactive format allows highly democratic access to the most innovative work, and most current knowledge. Webinars are archived on [ngfn.org](http://ngfn.org).
- NGFN food safety coordinator: Using a variety of communications tools, the food safety coordinator ensures that the Network is informed with the latest developments in the rapidly changing food safety arena. In addition to monthly updates to the Advisory Council, a public frequently asked questions (FAQ) document is kept continually up to date so that Network members are educated on the terms and issues.
- Convenings: Since the NGFN's launch, the Wallace Center has hosted its own national convening and is partnering and sponsoring several other national and regional convenings around the country. These convenings bring together a diverse national audience of growers, distributors, aggregators, retailers, funding partners and the public sector to network, learn and exchange ideas focused on advancing values based value chain work through regional approaches. Specific topics include connecting small and medium size growers to new markets, equipping growers with tool and knowledge to work with scaled up markets like retailers and food service distributors, training growers in food safety practices, exploring ways to build public and private partnerships to advance regional work, and exploring existing and new supply chain models that will move local food into the conventional food chain.
- Twitter: The Network posts periodic "real-time web" updates through Twitter.
- Knowledge and Research: The Wallace Center and several national partners from around the country have engaged in an NGFN Knowledge and Research initiative that will explore, accumulate and create and disseminate useful case studies and models from leading experts that will assist the NGFN regional teams in advancing values based value chain work in their regions and throughout the country. A host of value chain workshops and discussions have been initiated and will be held in the coming year.

## Regional Lead Teams

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association, Salinas, CA  
American Friends Service Committee, Albuquerque, NM  
Appalachian Sustainable Development, Abingdon, VA  
Center for Food and Justice at Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA  
Farm to Table / Southwest Marketing Network, Santa Fe, NM  
Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Ames, IA  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, Belchertown, MA  
Sustainable Food Lab at The Sustainability Institute, Hartland, VT  
Sysco Grand Rapids Regional Lead Team, Grand Rapids, MI  
Sysco Kansas City, Regional Lead Team, Kansas City, KS

## Advisory Council

JoAnne Berkenkamp, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Don Bustos, American Friends Service Committee  
Patty Cantrell, Michigan Land Use Institute  
Joe Colyn, Originz, Inc.  
Ron Doetch, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Diana Endicott, Good Natured Family Farms  
Scott Exo, Food Alliance  
Anthony Flaccavento, Appalachian Sustainable Development  
Hal Hamilton, Sustainable Food Lab at the Sustainability Institute  
Denis Jennisch, SYSCO-Grand Rapids  
Karen Karp, Karp Resources  
Warren King, WellSpring Management  
Brett Melone, Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association  
Rich Pirog, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture  
Pamela Roy, Farm to Table / Southwest Marketing Group  
Kathy Ruhf, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Vanessa Zajfen, Center for Food and Justice at Occidental College

The Wallace Center supports entrepreneurs and communities as they build a new, 21st century food system that is healthier for people, the environment, and the economy. The Center builds and strengthens links in the emerging chain of businesses and civic efforts focused on making good food—healthy, green, fair, affordable food—an everyday reality in every community. Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.

