



Cultivating Local Food Entrepreneurship



ARC
Conference
Nov. 7th 2013



ACEnet's Mission

The Appalachian Center for Economic Networks is a regional entrepreneurship and economic development organization located in Athens, Ohio.

ACEnet builds the capacity of communities to network, work together and innovate to create a dynamic, sustainable regional economy with opportunities for all.

ACEnet Overview

Appalachian Center for Economic Networks ---- community-based, economic development organization --- (ACEnet , Inc.)

Started in 1985 as the Worker-owned Network became regionally focused in 1990. Utilize microenterprise and small business strategies, incubation, access to markets programs and regional brands.

ACEnet Ventures – started micro-lending in 1994 at ACEnet, then evolved into a separate CDFI --- track record of micro and small business lending.

New: Formation of ACEnet Consulting --- provide contract services regionally and nationally to other food communities, champions and practitioners. Focus on value chains, Wealth Creation, local food infrastructure & regional brands.

Where We Work



Rolling foothills of Appalachia

Where We Work



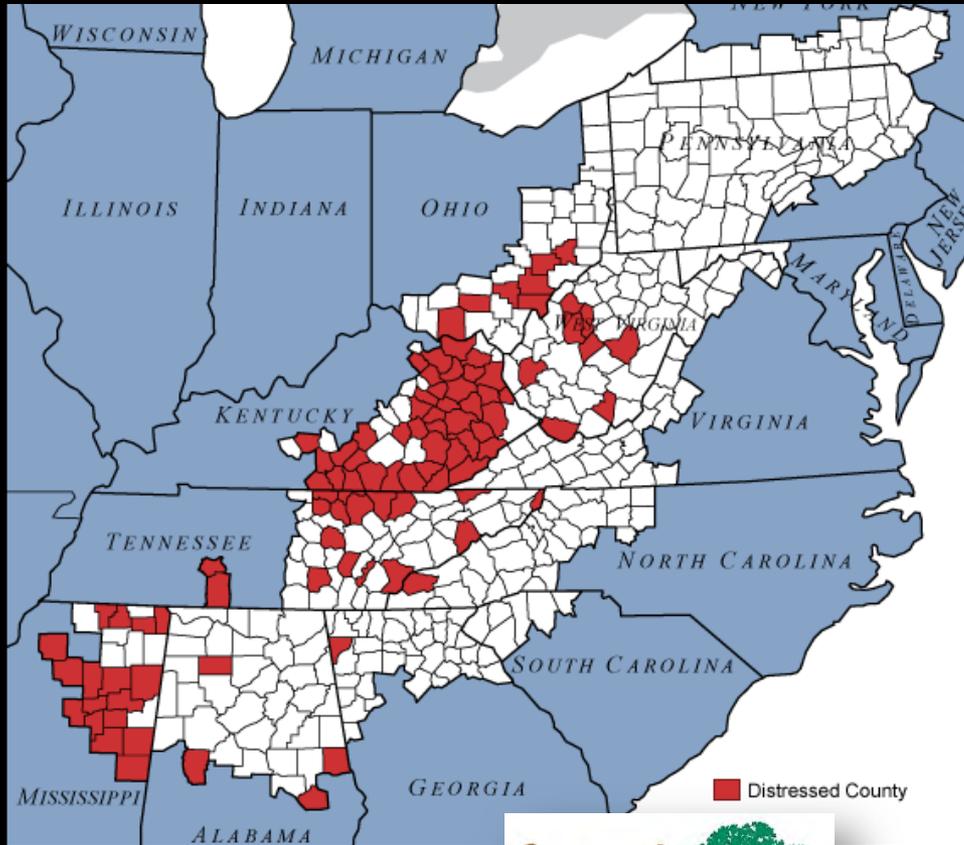
Small towns

Where We Work



Farmland

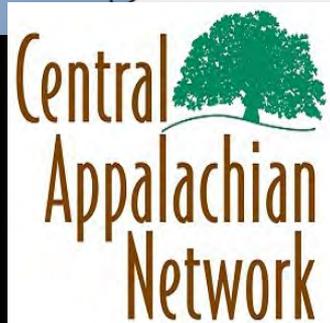
Our Regional Focus



Service Area



Partners



ACEnet's Local Food Approach

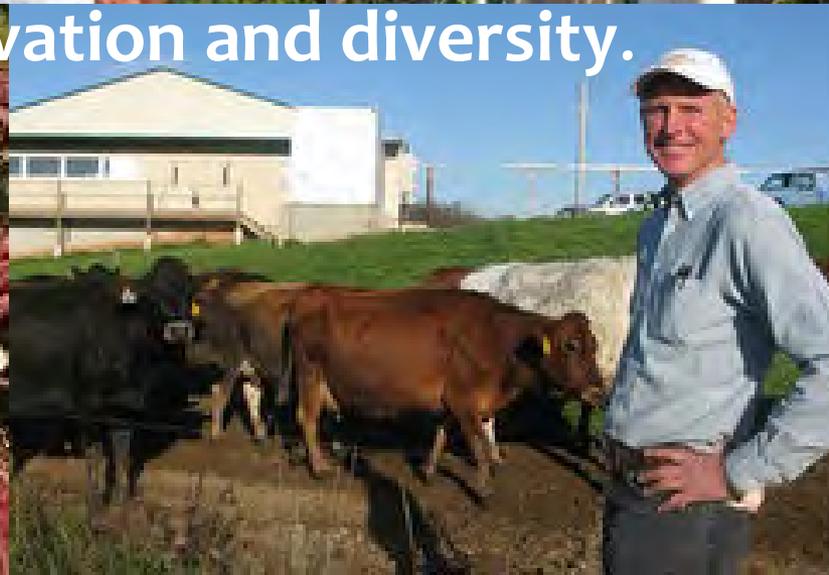
- Programs for access to markets, training & technical assistance, capital and shared infrastructure
- Our current focus as a network is on the development of **local food value chains**
- We use the **wealth creation framework** as an assessment, planning, and measurement tool for our interventions in the economy



Production Innovators



The food value chain starts with producers, a mature value chain embraces innovation and diversity.





SATURDAYS

AND WEDNESDAYS

YEAR-ROUND

AND

APR - DEC

1000 E STATE ST - ATHENS OH
10AM - 1PM

**IN THE PARKING LOT
OF THE MARKET ON STATE**



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40TH
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1972 - 2012



TATSOI
\$2.50/lb

MEI GING
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\$2.50/lb

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Creating environments for peer learning



Private Investment





Wonderful Local Food Event Center



Infrastructure Leveraged





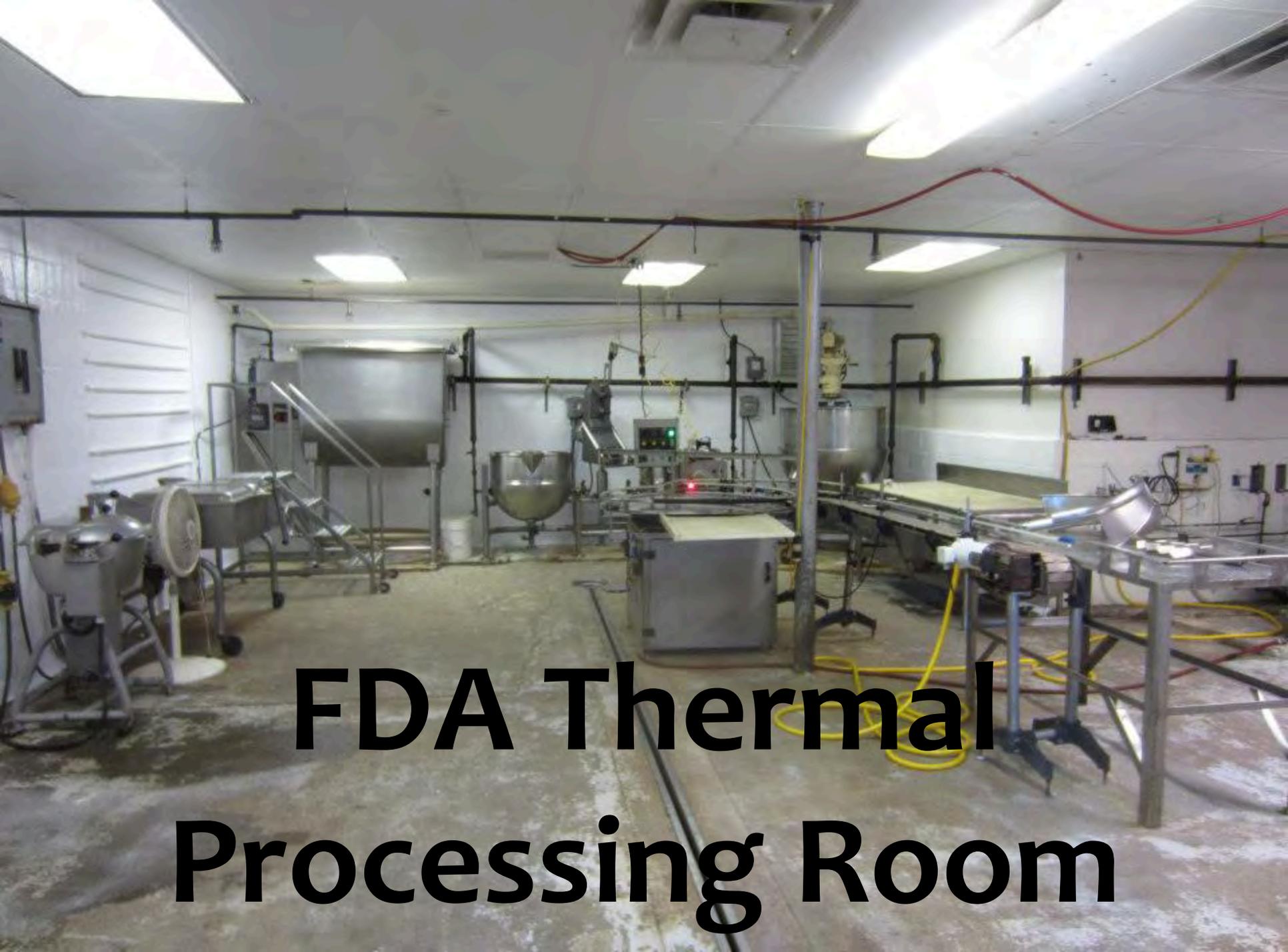
Shared Processing Facility





Central Preparation Kitchen





FDA Thermal Processing Room



KICKIN' KAT



HOT PEPPER SAUCE 8 FL OZ (237ml)

KICKIN' K

A PEPPER SAUCE SO HOT, IT'S COOL!



HOT PEPPER SAUCE

KICKIN'

A PEPPER SAUCE SO HOT, IT'S COOL!



HOT PEPPER SAUCE



Support Your Local Food Economy





1,000,000TH
JAR OF 2021

Big E Market



Refrigerated & Frozen Storage

Healthy Food Distribution



Distribution Infrastructure





Distribution Infrastructure

Regional Brands



It's Ohio's newest way to experience local foods! Sign up for the newsletter, read the blog, use the interactive map and start planning your next food adventure!

30MileMeal.com

REAL FOOD · REAL LOCAL · REAL GOOD



Country
FRESH  STOPS



**Buy local
food first**

from the Ohio Hills

Emphasizing investment for long-term gain

- Much of traditional development focuses on short-term consumption: how much money people have to buy things today
- A focus exclusively on consumption cannot build a sustainable system
- Continual reinvestment in assets is necessary to produce tomorrow's income

Wealth Creation & Measuring the Impact of Networks

What is Wealth Creation?

The wealth creation approach links together the whole system of assets, producers, and consumers in ways that benefit everyone – and that build rural wealth.

This systems approach involves:

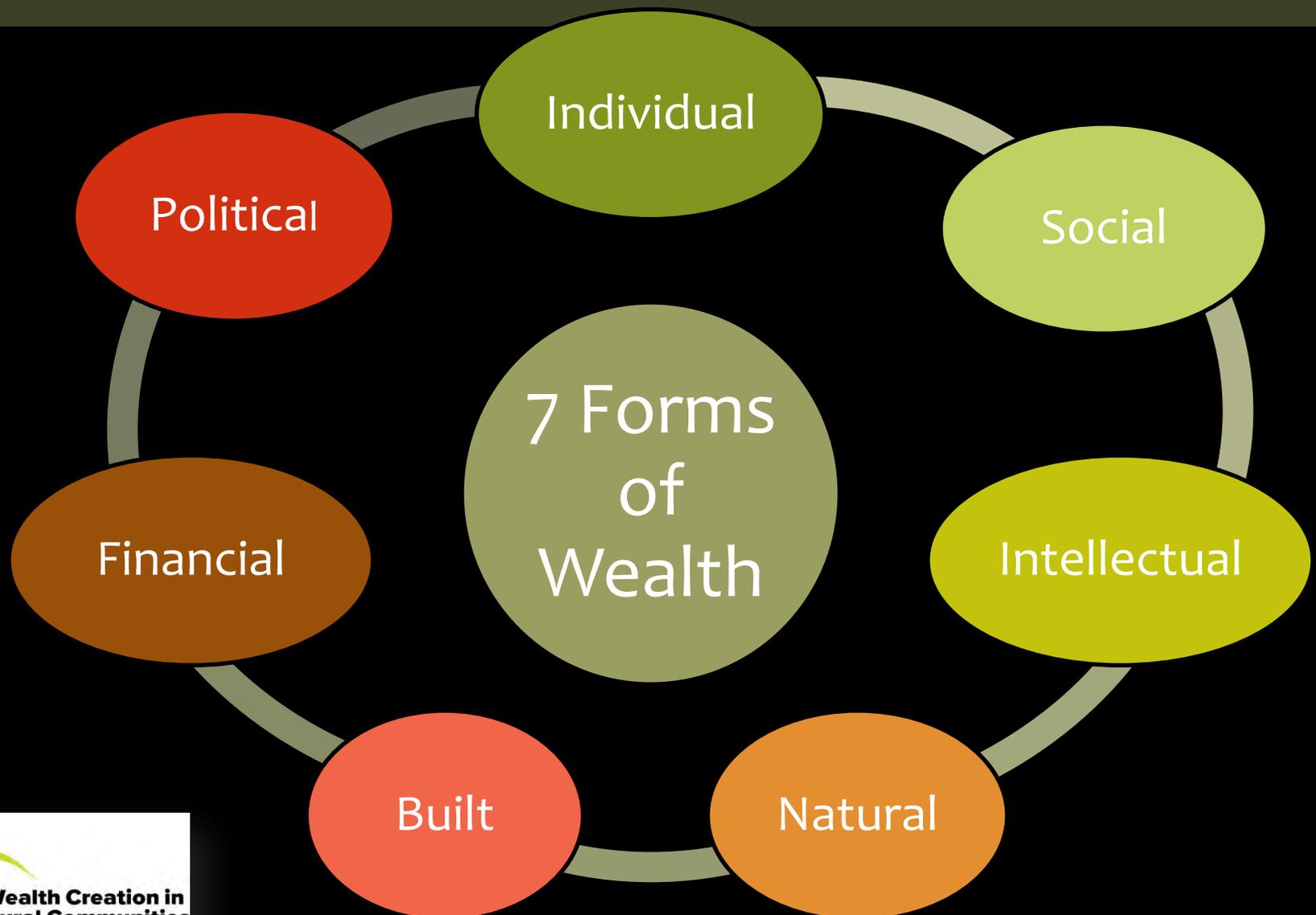
- Moving from the parts to the whole
- Emphasizing investment for long-term gain
- Understanding the difference between wealth and income
- Collaborating for mutual benefit



What is the wealth creation framework?

- A systems approach to creating wealth that sticks in rural areas
- Emphasizes local ownership and control of resources
- Facilitates the development of multiple forms of wealth simultaneously

Understanding Wealth Creation



Four Principles of Wealth Creation

1. Focus on place
2. Incentivize collaboration
3. Create multiple forms of wealth
4. Emphasize local ownership





as a tool for reinventing

healthy local food systems

- Learning how measurement informs interventions along the food value chain
- Understanding gaps and disconnects
- Building collaborations and leveraging shared assets

Let's look at ACEnet as a short case study...

Natural Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Increase in acreage for sustainable agriculture & organic certification
- ✓ Increase in pastured meat production
- ✓ Increase in GAP training
- ✓ Increase in beginning farmers
- ✓ Increase in farmland preservation





Shade Winery: Significant expansion of production acreage, retail operation & production equipment

Green Edge Gardens

2012 High Tunnel Expansion





**Season Extension makes
happy market partners**

Individual Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Value chain assessment practices acknowledges individual's & families entrepreneurial assets & place based opportunities
- ✓ Training and technical assistance partners design collaborative support systems: small biz & health partnerships
- ✓ Increase number of food and farm entrepreneurs participate in training
- ✓ Personal financial planning, micro-lending & CreditAbility workshops & services



Meet the Producers





**Passing the local food
economy wisdom to
the next generation**

A photograph of two women sitting at a table. The woman on the left is younger, with dark hair and bangs, wearing a black jacket over a teal top and a colorful patterned scarf. She is gesturing with her right hand as if speaking. The woman on the right is older, with long brown hair, wearing a red jacket. She has her hands clasped and is listening intently. In the foreground, there is a white coffee cup and a glass. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Finding Voice for New Solutions

Intellectual Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Increase in number of entrepreneurs participating in training, workshops, conferences & technical assistance
- ✓ Formation of peer leaning networks & entrepreneurs acting as co-trainers
- ✓ Customized curriculum and distance learning portals (MarketReady, ohiofoodshed, Ohio Market Maker, Real Food, Real Local Institute, etc)





*We train, conference, network,
coach & support one another*



Social Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Food retail locations become hubs for networking & peer learning
- ✓ Increase in entrepreneurship marketing partnerships
- ✓ Increase communications between buyers & sellers along the local food value chain
- ✓ Regular celebratory gathering, food festivals, brand programs & focus on culinary & agritourism





**Farmers, producers,
restaurants, retailers,
institutional buyers, partners**



Angie Pyle, co-owner Donkey Coffee & Espresso



Do you know your farmers?
We do!



CHESTERHILL
PRODUCE AUCTION

**FRESH
LOCAL
PRODUCE**



Financial Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Increase partnerships and products for micro and small business loans
- ✓ Strategies for “Slow Money” to create equity & community capital
- ✓ Increase private investment by farm & food entrepreneurs
- ✓ Collaborative (non-profit) facilities strengthen entry & profitability (ie --- Food Ventures Center – over 130 tenants/clients = \$28 million in 2011)



Mainstreet beautification & commitment



Jackie's







Built Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Expansion of season extension, packing, retail & storage by farm operators
- ✓ Accelerated number of start-up & expansion: restaurants, retail, processing, distribution
- ✓ Collaborative facilities raise capital for expansion: CPA, ACEnet FVC and Nelsonville Food Hub
- ✓ Entrepreneurs incorporate sustainable & renewable energy into expansion design & implementation



Emphasizes local ownership & collaborative investment



Value chains strengthening infrastructure & capital



Starting with the farmer to maximize
production opportunity

Snowville Creamery

Milking Parlor & Processing Facility





Snowville Creamery Value Chain

Market demand drives new processing partnerships



Emphasize local ownership



Investing in renewable energy

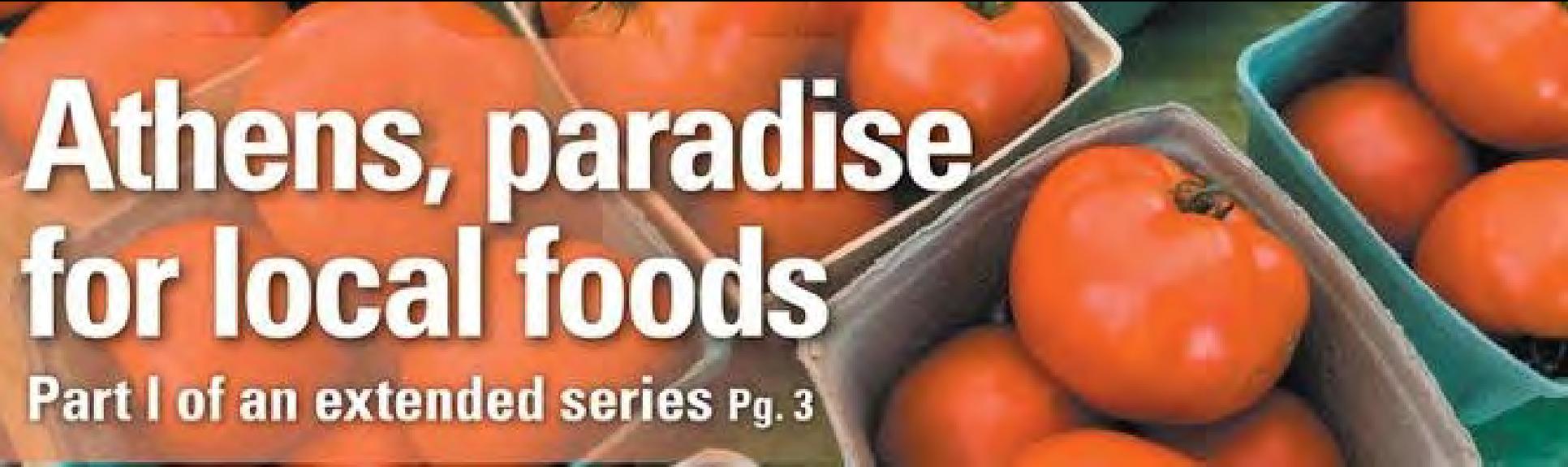
Partnerships in Urban Markets over 60 clients selling in Columbus



Political Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Evolving role of Athens Food Policy Council, Farm to Table Buyers & Seller group, Food Partners collaborative
- ✓ Increased elected officials and agency staff support for public investment & favorable food economy policies
- ✓ Entrepreneurs run and some elected to public office
- ✓ Traditional media channels & social media explosion tells the local food story
- ✓ Coming soon ---- full feature documentary on Athens Food Economy
- ✓ Increase recognition through publications & journals



**Athens, paradise
for local foods**

Part I of an extended series Pg. 3



State & local elected officials support local food & farm entrepreneurs



Food Entrepreneurs run for elected office



Why ACEnet utilizes the Wealth Creation Framework?

The wealth creation approach links together the whole system of assets, producers, and consumers in ways that benefit everyone – and that build rural wealth.

This systems approach involves:

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Win-win combination



Area farmers, restaurants and consumers collaborate in vital local foods economy Pg. 10

Visitors come from all over to learn about our local food economy





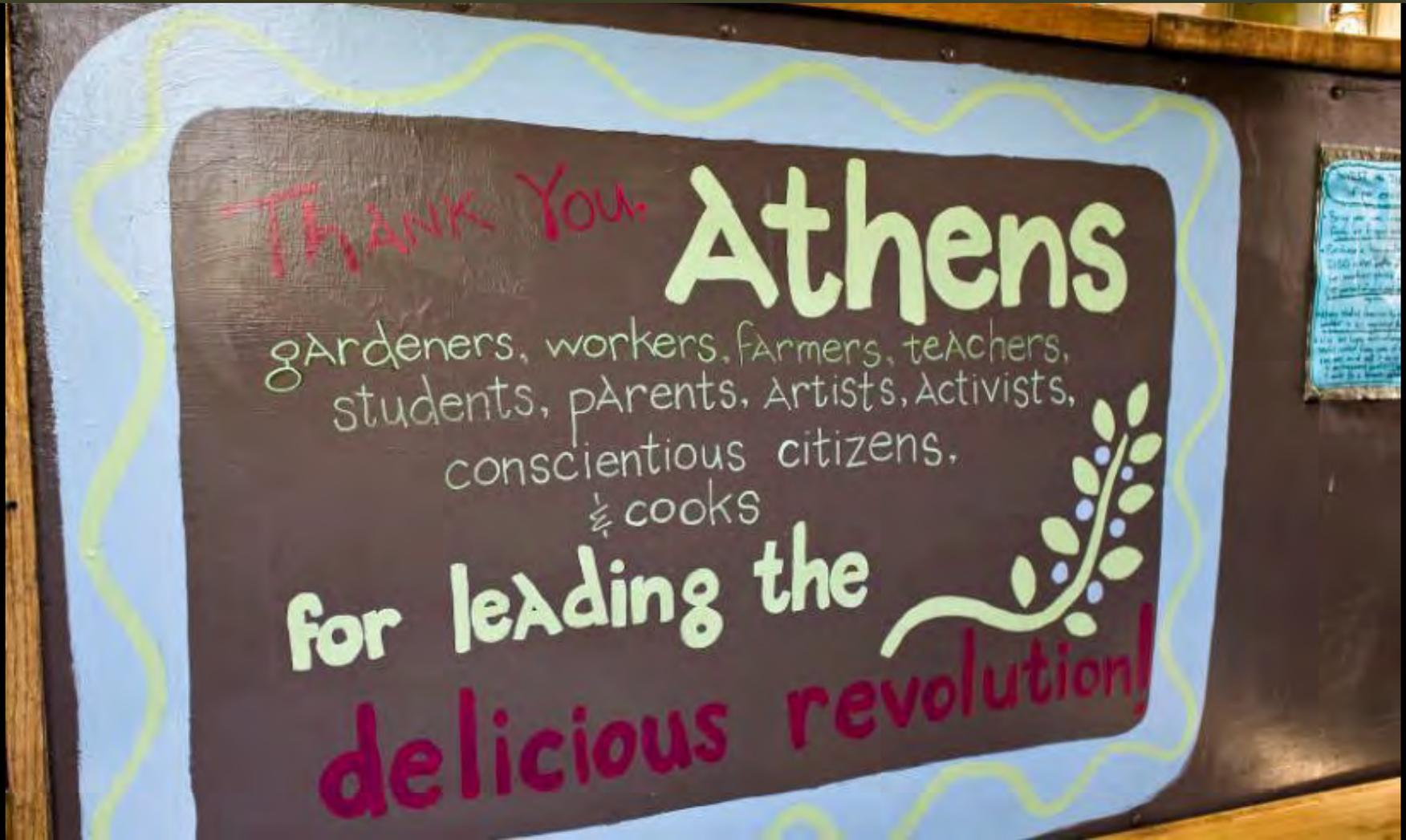
Creating sustainable livelihoods



Harness Economic Collaborations

- Focus on public policy to customize financing options
- Focus on corporate policy to invest & support food entrepreneurs and food system practitioners
- Support cooperative development & sustainable development
- Educate and engage elected officials on support for public investment and policy change favoring a 25% shift
- Turn *locavores* into *locavestors*

Collaboration + Support = Expanding Food Economy





Passion for Local Food Economies

You can support with funding for: Capital, infrastructure, brand programs, training, technical assistance, curriculum design, mini-grant programs, collaborative design, evaluation, sub-regional assessments, food access programs, farmers markets & many more ideas I would love to share!

We hope to leave you with a sense of possibility and excitement for this work as part of the Appalachian Transition!



Want to hear more? Or come visit?

Call me at ACEnet 740-592-3854 ext. 115

or email me: leslies@acenetworks.org

Many thanks to all my cohorts in local food for the photos:

Sarah Warda, Bob Fedyski, Natalie Woodrooffe, John Gutekanst, Michelle Wasserman, Chris Bruno and all my fabulous facebook friends