

Building a Better Food Future

By Local Food Alliance

Featured in The Weekly Sun

11.23.2018

While we may be surrounded by fertile farmland, the vast majority of the food we eat in Blaine County is trucked in from massive monoculture farms many miles away. Our globalized, commodified food system can spell doom for family farmers, who struggle to compete and remain financially viable. Getting their products into local markets is a challenge. This results in limited access to high-quality, locally grown food and threats to our rural economy and farmland.

Local Food Alliance (LFA), Sun Valley Institute's food program, is working hard to remedy this. As we work to increase local access to local products, we envision a place where all children and families are nourished by good food produced by our hard-working food and farm community. If every household spent just \$5 per week on locally grown food, it would generate more than \$56 million annually for our farmers - a huge financial boost!

But change takes courage and innovation. Lack of infrastructure, end-of-the-road distribution, and fluctuating consumption levels in our tourism-based economy are giant barriers – but not insurmountable. Where to begin? For answers, LFA, in partnership with University of Idaho and Blaine County Food Council, has engaged renowned food system analyst and economist Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center to conduct an in-depth study of our regional foodshed.

Using current economic data and insights from dozens of local interviews, Ken is helping us develop a Community Food System Strategic Plan. This plan will prioritize feasible solutions to improve production, processing, storage and distribution of local and regional foods to grocery stores, restaurants, institutions, and households.

Once complete, LFA will work collaboratively with the Institute, community partners, and individuals to implement these solutions, reclaiming and leveraging our local and regional bounty.