

Kansas Local Foods Community Roundtable Findings

Executive Summary



In the fall and winter of 2023-2024, K-State Research and Extension Local Food Systems held a series of local food community roundtables across the state of Kansas as part of a USDA Regional Food System Partnership grant project and with support from the K-State Research and Extension Local Foods Transdisciplinary Team. Roundtables were held in 14 locations across Kansas. Four virtual roundtables were also held. 406 people attended the roundtables, representing a range of sectors and roles in the food system.

At each roundtable, participants answered three questions:

1. What do you want your local food system to look like in the future?
2. What are the unsolved challenges of your local food system?
3. What are the needs and resources required to make progress?

After the roundtables, all data was transcribed and reviewed for overall themes and concepts. Once the primary ideas and themes were determined, all the remaining data was grouped into those main themes.

What do Kansans want for their local food systems?

Local, fresh, nutritious foods are available and accessible to all community members through a **wide range of market outlets**, including grocery stores, local restaurants, schools and institutions, farmers markets, food hubs, and more.

Profitable, diversified farms using environmentally sustainable practices are functioning within a **healthy, equitable economic ecosystem** and **meeting the demand for a wide range of fresh, healthy foods** in their local and regional communities.

Effective, collaborative networks and systems ensure that farms, businesses, consumers, and those in need have access to the knowledge, funding, and resources to be successful, sustainable, and healthy.

What are the unsolved challenges facing the Kansas food system?

Food Access and Food Insecurity

In all parts of the state, Kansans struggle to access healthy food locally and many are unsure where their next meal will come from. Both rural and urban communities share unique challenges in accessing food.

Capacity for Food System Entrepreneurship

Insufficient capital, technical assistance, processing capacity, and support systems for farms and businesses impact the supply of local foods.

Broad Consumer Engagement

Consumers are important drivers of local food markets, but many lack the awareness, knowledge, and skills to get involved.

What do Kansans need to make progress on local food systems?

Connection, Collaboration, and Communication

People and organizations that facilitate additional connections—between businesses, farmers, consumers, government, and non-profits to make progress.

Financial Resources

Access to capital, grants, incentives, and insurance that have low barriers to participation to help farms, small businesses, and non-profits sustain and grow their capacity.



A Shared Vision and Broad Community Support

Awareness and engagement from local leaders, institutions, and consumers in understanding the value of local food system growth.

Human Capital

Paid positions that support food system development and reliable, trained labor for farms and businesses.

Technical Assistance and Resources

Resources to help producers and businesses navigate challenges and regulations, increase sustainability and capacity, and mitigate risk.

Policy, Regulations, and Government Support

Leaders engaged with local food system needs in meaningful ways, including city, county, school district, and state.

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