First Nations Development Institute

Reviving Economies, Restoring Food Systems:

Models of Food Enterprises in Indian Country

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NAFSI

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Executive Summary

As Native American and Native Hawaiian communities regain control of their lands, economies, and food systems, they are forging ahead in business opportunities in a manner that integrates culture, increases access to fresh foods for community members, provides supplemental household income, and revives community economies.

This report highlights five food enterprises in Native American and Hawaiian Native communities that are leading the way to increasing positive health factors and building wealth for their community members. On their journey of food reclamation, they have encountered and have overcome many challenges often experienced in generating economic development in Native American and Native Hawaiian communities. While their approaches vary, they share commonalities that may be helpful to others seeking to develop similar projects.

While each food enterprise focused on different characteristics of their projects, there were several common attributes that emerged among all models. Those attributes are:

1. Build, cultivate, and maintain partnerships
2. Develop a business plan and revisit the plan periodically to insure that you remain on track
3. Understand community needs, wants, and expectations around food and the business
4. Integrate culture and traditional knowledge throughout the business and implementation strategies
5. Continuously seek to improve and innovate to remain as efficient and effective in your efforts
6. Maintain financial and organizational transparency and accountability

The food enterprise models highlighted in this report have been supported by First Nations Development Institute through the Nourishing Native Foods and Health program with generous support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Introduction

In 2002, utilizing a community asset-based approach, First Nations initiated the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (NAFSI) to increase food access and improve the health and nutrition of Native children and families while generating economic opportunities.

Since that time, First Nations has recognized and observed the important role that local food systems play in economic and social development of Native American and Native Hawaiian communities. Through the development of farmers markets, businesses, value-added products and more, Native American and Native Hawaiian communities are reviving their economies and addressing health disparities by regaining control of their lands, and local foods system.

In a 2015 report to Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported 7.8 percent of U.S. farms were marketing local foods direct to consumers, an increase of 5.5 percent from 2007 to 2012[1]. The study also indicated that farms selling local food direct to consumers were more likely to remain in business over 2007-12 than all farms not utilizing direct to consumer markets. While consumers are becoming increasingly aware of where their food comes from and its impact on the local economy and the environment, studies show that they are willing to buy direct from farmers to obtain fresh foods and support their local economy.

This growing trend is also being observed in Native American communities across the country, evident by the increasing number of grant requests to First Nations for food-related projects in Indian Country since 2011. As noted in the 2014 Grantmaking in Indian Country: Trends from the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative, food-system control in Indian Country has the potential to generate critically needed economic development on the reservations, which brings jobs, income, opportunity and a positive economic-multiplier effect. Food projects and business ventures can help bridge the emergency issues of hunger and food security while providing some jobs themselves, but they can also engender or inspire commercial operations that can offer employment or wages (e.g. commercial kitchens, canneries and farmers' markets). This can provide an economic boost and, when paired with improved health and nutrition, it may be a "win-win" situation for Native communities. Also evident in this trend is the desire for more education and training in good agricultural practices, business management and marketing[2].

This reports highlights models of Native American and Native Hawaiian community efforts and emerging strategies that have led their way to responsive business endeavors through food systems.

[1] Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems: A Report to Congress, January 2015
[2] First Nations Development Institute. (2014). Food-Systems Grantmaking in Indian Country: Trends from the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative. Longmont, Colorado: First Nations Development Institute

Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association
Kamuela, HI

The Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association (WHHA) was founded in 1952, pre-existing Hawaii statehood. WHHA was created as a recognition of the rights of Native Hawaiians to their lands and to improve their lives through their lands. In collaboration with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), WHHA protects their status as homesteaders on trust lands.

Since that time the WHHA has been working to restore farming in the community in keeping with historical and traditional values, an inherited vision being implemented by the current board president, Mike Hodson.

Today, the Waimea Hawaiian Homestead Region consists of more than 27,000 acres of Homestead Lands on which 536 leases have been awarded local farmers. The Homestead is part of the Waimea Community which has a population of about 14,000 people of which roughly 40% are of Hawaiian decent. Waimea is a diverse traditional agriculture region, with strong opportunities from both its human and natural resources. The Waimea Hawaiian Homestead community is composed of land used for residential, agricultural, and pastoral purposes, as designated by the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA).

In 2012-2013, the WHHA launched the ***Farming for the Working Class*** project, using proven farming techniques and business practices adapted from the WOW Farm, a successful family business operated by Mike and Tricia Hodson and their families. The Wow Farm was started in 1989. Today, the farm produces approximately 5,000 – 10,000 lbs. of tomatoes a week on their five-acre lot in Pu'ukapu. Wow tomatoes are sought out by chefs at the Four Seasons Hualalai, Mauna Lani Bay Resort, and the Hilton Waikoloa, in addition, to loyal farmers' market customers on both Hawai'i and O'ahu. Their desire to provide for their family, tempered with their keen business sense has resulted in a thriving family farm that manages 48 greenhouses.

With a proven farming approach, secured funding and vision to restore the farming community, the WOW family farm and the WHHA piloted the ***Farming for the Working Class*** project. The goal of the project was to provide fourteen new farmers in the Pu'ukapu Agricultural District hands-on farm training and to build a 2,000 square foot greenhouse on each of farmers' properties.

Mike Hodson, Board President, Waimea Homesteaders' Association. Photo Courtesy of the Wow Farm

Today, the WHHA helps families build a greenhouse on their properties, install irrigation systems and provides them the education and tools to help build their businesses. The greenhouse model is an imperative part of the program as it decreases the labor involved in typical outdoor farming ventures by as much of 85%. This makes it possible for families to run a sustainable farm in just a few hours a day and not have to quit their "day jobs" to do it. Through the project, families grow food to feed their families. They generate extra income, and they trade food with other families, thus reducing their own food expenses. In addition, the state of Hawaii benefits from a source of locally grown food, which has become rare in the state, as approximately 90% of food is shipped in from the mainland or Japan. The ***Farming for the Working Class*** project brings families together to work, and adds as much as $20,000 a year to the family budget, reducing the strain of making ends meet.

Vision for the Future

Where once there were only two, now there are 45 out of 115 lots being farmed since 1989. The project has increased the amount of farmed land by 50% with hopes to increase it 75% in the next 10 years. Families are generating additional revenue. Household income levels are rising, and Hawaii is able to reap locally grown food. Kids growing up in Hawaii have options for staying on the island and building a life. People are returning to their culture of self-sufficiency and self-determination. Families are seeing the therapeutic effect of farming, reconnecting with the earth and working with the soil. And the concept of community – extended beyond the family environment – is being embraced.

In 2015, the WHHA initiated the Waimea Nui Agricultural Business Center project. The Center will act as a community farming space, and as a physical and informational hub for prospective farmers. The Community Agriculture Park will consist of two hundred forty six 5,000 square foot farm lots, 50 of which will have two greenhouses erected on them, providing 2112 square foot indoor growing area in each greenhouse. The 30 acres of Hawaiian homestead community lands will be completely open to the public for use. Plots will be made available to homesteaders and Waimea Community members, with 20% being set aside specifically for Veterans. The front of the property will have several buildings serving a range of community needs. These facilities will include a Farmers market for local produce grown on and off property, as well as a shared storage facility. The storage will allow local farmers to purchase goods and supplies, like inputs and packaging, in bulk, reducing overhead costs and improving margins.

In addition to these resources, the facilities will provide other basic services for farmers in the region. A produce market for farmers to sell products into the local market will be available seven days a week. This market will have a permanent staff, and stalls or bins for each farmer to be accessed if a farmer is not physically available to sell. Common use equipment will also be available, reducing the upfront capitalization for each farmer.

The Waimea Community Agricultural Business Center represents rehabilitation in each sense. As an agricultural park, the Agricultural Business Center is community infrastructure, a physical support that assists community members in flexing muscles that, until now, sat atrophied. As an economic driver, it squarely places choice and destiny in the calloused hands of the individual, rekindling a promise that hard work and determination will lead to a brighter future.

Accomplishment Factors

1. Development of community partnerships
2. Development and Implementation of a well-thought out business strategy and community planning
3. Refined understanding of the demands and reach of the local market
4. Application of strong financial management practices
5. Creating an inclusive community planning process
6. Strategizing on preparing the next generation
7. Integration of cultural and traditional values into business planning and implementation
8. Focusing on asset building like understanding the capacity of the land and re-telling its importance in community life
9. Strengthening family ties and involvement

Nahata Dziil (New Lands) 14R Ranch
Navajo Beef Program
Navajo Nation, Sanders, AZ

On April 4, 1991, Nahata Dziil (New Lands) became the 110th chapter of the Navajo Nation. This new community was developed by the Navajo-Hopi Relocation Commission for Navajo families relocated as a result of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute Settlement Act of 1996[3]. Located approximately 40 miles southwest of Gallup, New Mexico in Sanders, Arizona, New Lands is 365,000 acres of ranch land acquired by the federal government in early 1980s.

As a part of relocation agreements, 14 range management units were allocated for families to begin raising cattle as a means to generate new economic opportunities for newly relocated families. In 2009, the Padres Mesa Demonstration Ranch was established as a cow-calf operation to provide educational opportunities and to generate income for the Navajo ranchers relocated to the New Lands Chapter.

In 2012, Nahata Dziil 14R Ranch, Inc. was incorporated to assist producers in the management of the 14 range units and to facilitate rancher support during cattle sales. Currently, there are thirty two 14R producers that are producing source verified beef under the Navajo Beef Program, which supplies beef to stores and restaurants throughout the Southwest.

In partnership with Labatt Food Service, Padres Mesa Demonstration Ranch, BK Cattle Company and the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, what began with the 14R producers has expanded to Navajo producers across the Navajo Nation.

In 2016, Nahata Dziil 14R Ranch Inc, was incorporated as a nonprofit under the Navajo Nation andobtained their 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status. In this capacity they have positioned themselves to better assist and support producers in their community and throughout the Navajo Nation. With Padres Mesa Demonstration Ranch, Nahata Dziil 14R Ranch works to support producers of source-verified, high quality Navajo Beef; educate and advocate for land and water stewardship and conservation; and to integrate modern ranching practices while preserving traditional sustainable ways. The producers of the 14R Ranch and Padres Mesa Demonstration Ranch have defied the traditional approach to ranching and follow the demands of the market. They have developed a niche market and made their ranching enterprise a community and family venture.

In their approach, participating producers follow a regimented vaccination plan, supplemental plan, and practice gentle handling techniques to insure high quality beef standards and premium sale prices. As shown below 14R producers have benefited and continue to benefit from this community approach to the production of source-verified beef. Since 2012, roughly $737,500 from cattle sales has been infused into the 14R community, translating to about $23,000 per family.

Year	14R Corporation Annual Sales
2012	$80,500
2013	$102,500
2014	$209,000
2015	$135,000
2016	$94,500
2017	$116,000
Total	**$737,500**

Combined Annual Sales of 14R Producers. Courtesy of LaBatt Foods

In this Navajo model, proprietary business practices have given way to community-wide information sharing. Rather than investing in a "secret recipe," they shared information on genetics and husbandry which develops quality and consistency among all producers, enhancing the brand and increasing cattle value.

[3]Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute Settlement Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-301, 110 Stat. 3649, (1996)

Vision for the Future

With the increasing demand for Navajo beef, 14R Ranch and the Padres Mesa Demonstration Ranch work to engage more Navajo producers to the program. With their commitment to continuous improvement and production of high quality beef they look to new technologies to increase calving rates and improve genetics.

Combined, the 14 range units average 18,000 acres per range and has the capacity to support 79 family producers. As of 2017, thirty two 14R producers are participating in the program. Future outreach and engagement goals is to utilize all 14 range units and to provide all 79 families the opportunity to participate.

Native American Beef Program Overview

According to Labatt Food Service, in its first year, ranchers participating in the Native American Beef Program produced 266 head of cattle and generated more than $250,000 of revenue for the Native American communities in the southwest. From 2012 to 2013, the herd increased to 550 head and generated approximately $700,000 for ranchers. In total, the Native American Beef Program has generated revenue for the Native American ranchers of over $5.4 million through 2017, in Arizona and New Mexico.

Accomplishment Factors

1. Development of community and business partnerships
2. Creating a continuous improvement process
3. Creating an inclusive community engagement process
4. Engaging conversations around land capacity thereby re-enforcing respect for the land
5. Training and engaging the next generation
6. Integration of culture and traditional values in business decisions
7. Identifying a niche
8. Focusing on family engagement
9. Maintaining organizational transparency and openness
10. Cultivating a strong team approach through group planning to maintain high quality beef standards

Red Paint Creek Trading Post and Pantry
Fort Belknap Indian Community
Lodge Pole, Montana

Located twenty miles north of the Missouri river in Montana and just south of the Canadian border, the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation is home to the Gros Ventre (Aaniiih) and the Assiniboine (Nakoda) Tribes. The reservation encompasses 675,147 acres, that includes a portion of the Little Rocky Mountains and the communities of Hays located in the southwest portion of the reservation and Lodge Pole located in the southeast part of the reservation.

Historically, bison served as the primary source of food for the tribes but, as communities became displaced from their lands and bison herds dwindled, tribal members lost access to their traditional diets and way of life. Today, the main industry is agriculture, consisting of small cattle ranches and raising alfalfa hay for feed and larger dry land farms.

Like many other Native communities, the Fort Belknap Indian Community is situated in a food desert. As defined by the Center for Disease Control, food deserts are areas that lack retail access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, and other foods that make up a full and healthy diet, these areas are usually found in rural and impoverished parts of the United States[4]. Food deserts are defined as the lack of retail grocery stores, but the community of Fort Belknap is altering the landscape of their food desert with the development of a local grocery store, pantry, commercial kitchen, community garden and orchard.

Spearheading this important Tribal initiative is the Fort Belknap Community Economic Development Corporation (FBCEDC) located in Harlem, Montana. The FBCEDC was incorporated under the Fort Belknap Indian Community in 2015 to promote a culturally, sustainable, healthy, economic development system on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. As a nonprofit organization, they have been able to secure funding crucial to the construction, training, and preparation of the store and community members.

In 2015, they initiated the development and construction of a 5,300-square foot building that will house a grocery store to carry locally grown produce, locally sourced meats, dry goods and a commercial kitchen and food pantry.

In that same year, with support and assistance from the FBCEDC, a community garden and orchard located adjacent to the store location was started by Lodge Pole residents. In 2016, their efforts resulted in the harvest of approximately 4,000 pounds of vegetables and approximately 60 pounds of fruit from the newly planted orchard. In addition, they installed a greenhouse to extend the growing season and provide ample growing time to meet the community needs of fresh vegetables.

Construction of the Red Paint Creek Trading Post. Photo Courtesy of Fort Belknap Community Economic Development Corporation

To insure a sustainable and successful food enterprise, in 2017 a community food assessment was conducted to assess the Lodge Pole community's access to healthy foods and the growing local food economy. The assessment was developed to: 1.) Identify how much food dollars were leaving the community of Lodge Pole; 2.) Calculate how many miles residents must travel to buy food; and 3.) Evaluate the impact that the Red Paint Creek Trading Post & Pantry and greenhouse will have on the community of Lodge Pole.

[4]Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. (2011). "CDC Features: Food Deserts."

The results of the food assessment confirmed the impact that the new store will have on local household incomes. Currently many community members must travel upwards of 90 miles roundtrip to gain access to grocery stores that carry fresh vegetables and dry goods. On an annual basis the surveyed group alone spend approximately $450,000 at large grocery stores requiring a roundtrip drive varying from 25-175 miles depending on the store. Community responses also indicated that 66 percent of surveyed participants from Lodge Pole where the new store will be located, visit a grocery store 2-3 times per week in which approximately 50 percent of their purchase includes fresh fruits and vegetables.

Additionally, fuel costs alone increased the overall cost of the shopping trip by approximately 25-30 percent. While survey participants noted they average 2-3 grocery trips per week, in one year alone, the total fuel cost spent by the combined surveyed participants to their primary shopping venue of choice was approximately $90,000 for one roundtrip on a weekly basis, an average of $524 spent annually to purchase groceries at their primary store of choice on a weekly basis.

While the results of the assessment provided insight to food costs and food preferences for a small group of community members, it provided a snapshot of the negligible amount of monies leaving the reservation.

The FBCEDC has strategically orchestrated the development and role of the Red Paint Creek Trading Post & Pantry in their community. They have taken and continue to take a community approach into the impact that the store will make in generating health and wealth in their community.

At time of the report, Red Paint Creek Trading Post & Pantry is scheduled to open in May 2018. The store will provide fresh vegetables and fruits from the garden, dry goods and fresh meats.

Accomplishment Factors

1. Development strong partnerships with businesses, community members, and Tribal leadership
2. Implementing community engagement strategies that lead to free flow of information about efforts and strategies
3. Inclusion of training opportunities for younger generations
4. Integration of culture and traditional values
5. Understanding of the market and what customers want in that market
6. Conducting a community food assessment to understand food system flow
7. Persistence
8. Exploration of innovative ways to get your product(s) to the customer
9. Job development for Native professionals in the home community so they can contribute their knowledge and skills

Choctaw Fresh Produce
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
Choctaw, Mississippi

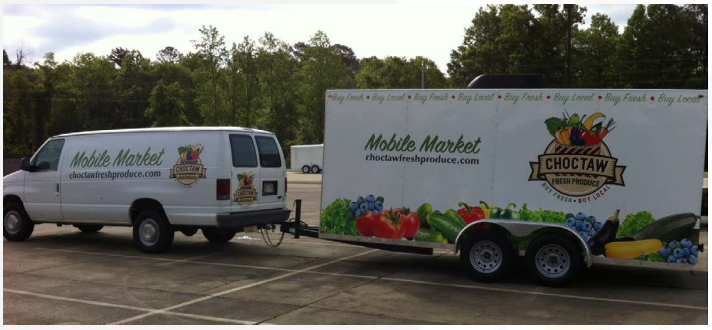
In 2011, what started as a way to offset costs from the purchase of produce for the casino has evolved into a successful Tribal business enterprise for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. In 2012, the Tribe incorporated Choctaw Fresh as means to supply as much healthy, fresh produce to the Mississippi Choctaw community as possible in a financially self-sustainable manner. The Certified Organic produce grown on their five mini farms is sold in local grocery stores, farmers markets, and through their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Since starting in 2012, the aim of the farming operation was to improve the health of the Choctaw community while generating economic activity. Community Food Project funds allowed the tribe to improve their growing operation, which has increased production capacity and opened up new opportunities for sales, outreach, and education.

In a few short years, Choctaw Fresh has harvested and supplied more than 50,000 pounds of fresh produce in five tribal communities. It has also expanded markets beyond the reservation and is supplying to Whole Foods Market and the Rainbow Natural Foods Co-op in Jackson, Mississippi.

Despite its successes, Choctaw Fresh did not go from seedling to harvest overnight. John Hendrix, Director of Tribal Economic Development, and his team first dreamed up Choctaw Fresh as a series of "mini-farms," spread out among the community to reach people in isolated areas. However, that system had inefficiencies, so Hendrix and his team created a mobile market, bringing food to customers. It was a learning moment – to reach their market, they needed to be flexible and willing to change their strategy.

In 2015, Choctaw Fresh obtained their USDA Organic certification and passed the GAP Food Safety audit in December 2017. Since 2012, they expanded operations to include a year-round production of fresh produce for the regional market. They currently utilize 19 high tunnels, a greenhouse, and a packing facility with significant cold storage capacity to sustain a year-round production.

Their expansion continues with more co-operative and grocery outlets off-reservation. The off-reservation sales provides revenue to keep the operation going so that they can sell quality produce at more affordable prices on-reservation, where many customers are low-income. In March 2018, Choctaw Fresh signed on with their first regional distributor, Sunrise Fresh Produce. In addition, Choctaw Fresh is also transitioning three of its farms to serve solely tribal members, as well as provide additional on-farm educational opportunities for tribal students.



Choctaw Fresh Produce Mobile Market.
Photo Courtesy of Choctaw Fresh Produce

While the creation of economic development opportunities is important in the Choctaw Fresh's approach, they find it critical to educate their youth on healthy eating habits. To that end, they are actively engaged with their youth and the Tribe's various nutrition education programs. In this capacity they provide regular farm tours to promote improved health and nutrition, particularly among elementary-aged students in hopes that they can create healthy eating habits. They also partner with the nutrition educators in the Diabetes Prevention Program to supply clients with a subscription to the Choctaw community supported agriculture (CSA) subscription so that they can receive organic, fresh produce on a regular basis.

In 2017, they hosted eight student tours attended by over 200 Choctaw students. During the tours the students learned about their local food system and were able to eat a meal using fresh produce grown right on the farm. Providing students the opportunity to eat Certified Organic food right from the source is helping to increase healthy eating patterns throughout the community.

In Jackson, Mississippi, restaurants and consumers also benefit from Choctaw Fresh Produce. Soul City Hospitality, a local food-hub venture founded in 2016 by a handful of activist restaurateurs, have connected Choctaw Fresh Produce with Broad Street Baking Co. for the first of what will be a series of food access promotions and partnerships which will increase the availability of high quality, fresh produce for the people who live and work in the Jackson community. Customers can now buy fixed-price 'shares' of the Tribe's weekly harvest and receive a box of freshly picked fruits and vegetables each week during growing season.

Today, combined with local employment opportunities and revenue from produce sales, Choctaw Fresh is infusing approximately $500K into the community.

Accomplishment Factors

1. Understanding community needs
2. Developing strong business strategies and plans assist with effectiveness
3. Being realistic about what it will take to achieve your business goals
4. Understanding of the market and what customers want in that market
5. Community Engagement and free flow of information about efforts and strategies to ensure community buy-in
6. Integration of strategies to educate and inform community members and the next generation about healthy eating

Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems
Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Oneida, Wisconsin

In 1994, the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin initiated the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems in efforts to restore their local food system and began building their food enterprise. Through a grant in the 70's they opened the Oneida Cannery. The Cannery was developed to provide a center for food production, processing, preservation and education that would benefit Tribal members and the surrounding communities. By making appointments to use the cannery, families had access to equipment, knowledge and assistance from cannery staff.

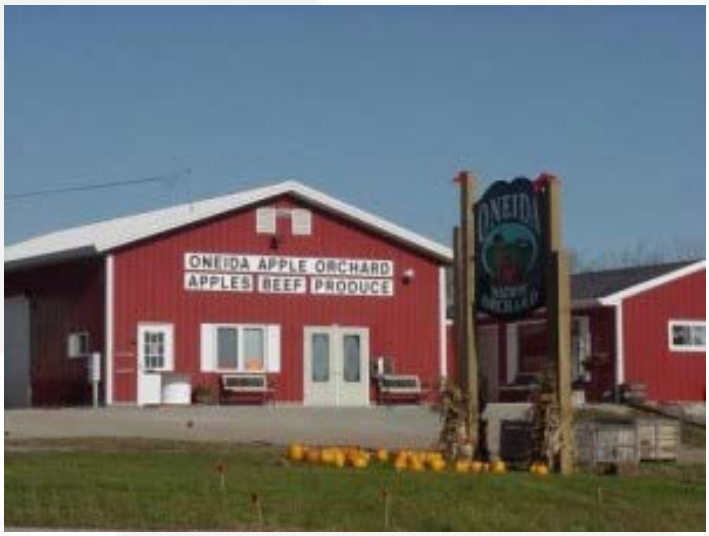
Over time, the growth of the Cannery's services and products led to the establishment of Tsyunhéhkwa (joon-hey-qwa), a certified organic agricultural community and culturally-based program. The goal of Tsyunhéhkwa was to reintroduce high-quality, organically grown foods that would ensure a healthier and more fulfilling life for the Oneida people.

Today, the Tsyunhéhkwa program is a culturally and community-based agricultural entity of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. The program is combined of the agricultural component and the cannery. The agricultural component is located on a certified organic 80-acre site, which provides grass-fed beef, free-range poultry, farm fresh eggs and organic produce. The cannery processes not only products produced on the farm and orchard, but also items produced by other areas of the Nation and the community.

Since its opening in 1978, the goal of the cannery has not changed, but its role within Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS) has expanded. The cannery is used to process the traditional white corn into soups, mush and other products that are sold at the nearby retail store. Tribal members still visit the cannery to use its commercial equipment and staff also conduct canning demonstrations throughout the Oneida Nation and in surrounding communities. The success of the Cannery resulted in their own retail outlets of their products and additional services that include but is not limited to on-site tours and presentations throughout the Oneida Nation, surrounding communities and outside the state.

In 1994, the Oneida Tribe purchased a 2,400-tree apple orchard as part of their continuing strategy of reacquiring lands within the original boundaries of the reservation. Today, the Apple Orchard has 30 acres of original orchard and an additional 10 acres of new orchard, which now totals approximately 4,500 trees. The major variety of apples harvested annually are McIntosh, Cortlands, and Honey Golds with twenty other varieties also available. In addition, they provide a wide variety of fresh produce products such as: strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, sweetcorn, squash and pumpkins which are available depending on the weather.

In addition to providing fresh locally grown produce, the Orchard also serves as an educational platform to generate interest in agriculture as well as encourage our children to learn at a young age, the importance of growing healthy food, and finding natural ways to eliminate pests, this achieved by hosting field trips from local area schools.



Oneida Nation Orchard.
Photo Courtesy of Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

Although Tsynhéhkwa was expanding efforts, with a goal of developing a Community Integrated Food System, they needed to increase production to provide enough food for the community. They wanted their products integrated throughout the community, in the schools, in senior centers and

throughout other Tribal organizations and programs. This led to the Community Food Assessment that conducted in 2009. The food assessment provided them insight into how the food was perceived, used, prepared and needed by community members and Tribal programs. Results from the assessment led to the creation of an advisory team whose mission was to focus on changing tribal purchasing policies that would integrate locally produced foods from the farm and orchard back into the community. In this effort, their goal was to integrate 10 percent of food purchases from OCIFS back into the tribal organizations and programs.

Today, the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems which was established in 1994, encompasses the farm, orchard, cannery, retail outlets, Tsyunhéhkwa, and the Food Distribution and Oneida School System. As a team, they work in unison to help families by housing a community food system that will include traditional food products and help create a local economy that will provide jobs to promote and encourage long range solutions to farm and nutrition issues on the Oneida Reservation. The OCIFS group works tirelessly to revive their local food and resources, improve the community's quality of food, educate the people of diet related health risks, increase employment and youth opportunities, and assist in bringing all people closer together.

Under the umbrella of the OCIFS, the Oneida Nation Farm takes a farm to table approach with its cattle and bison operation. No steroids, hormones, antibiotics or animal byproducts are used. The Oneida Nation Farm features a "point-of-origin" cow-calf pasture, a beef feedlot and pastured bison herd.

Collectively the OCIFS group has been instrumental in: the startup of the Oneida Farmers Market. Located in the Oneida Business Park in Oneida. The Farmers Market operates weekly from June through October. At the market, customers can enjoy an Oneida Black Angus beef hamburger, a brat, or hot dog at a booth run by the Oneida 4-H youth and pantry volunteers. The Oneida Farmers Market is designed as an outlet for fruits, vegetables, pre-packages honey and maple syrup and related items, flowers, plants, sweetgrass and other items that are raised or grown and picked by community members, as well as crafts that are made by the community members.

The Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems has developed an intergrated model for restoring their local food systems in manner that has generated wealth and health in the community.

On annual basis, the OCIFS generates over $500,000 into the community through sales of produce and the provision of jobs.

Accomplishment Factors

1. Understanding community needs
2. Conducting a community food assessment
3. Establishing a plan and a vision that is accessible by all
4. Community and Tribal leadership engagement, particularly at the farmer's market
5. Identifying a niche market
6. Integration of an educational program so community members are encouraged to eat healthy
7. Implementation of opportunities for community members to benefit financially. At the Farmers Market, they can sell their crafts and products

Conclusions

Food and farming system is critical to economic vitality and community health; however, it is often undervalued.

Each year millions of dollars are spent on groceries annually and almost all this money is leaving tribal communities, not including monies spent on fuel to get consumers to the off-reservation stores.

The five models highlighted in this report are proving that in the process of restoring local foods systems in Native American and Native Hawaiian communities, they are reviving economies and increasing household incomes with revenue generated from farming and ranching. They have engaged their communities, developed business opportunities, identified their niche market, and have integrated their culture and traditional values. They have approached their food businesses from different perspectives to address varying need, but also defer inhow they conduct business, but each has conducted similar processes that have contributed to their reclamation of health and food enterprises.

1. Many tribes can learn from the five models highlighted. Some of the lessons are:
    - Create an advisory committee of diverse community members to guide the planning and implementation process,
    - Develop and conduct a community food assessment,
    - Serve as a voice for community members and
    - Serve as a liaison between community members and Tribal leadership.
2. Learn what is important to community members by conducting a community food assessment. Explore current community food trends, shopping preferences, current grocery outlets, cost of food expenses per household, current producers.
3. Assess potential savings (or costs) that could be recieved if families purchase locally, assess how much monies are leaving the reservation and how much could be contained in the community with a locally accessible food outlet (whether that be a grocery store, farmer's market, CSA, or co-op, etc.).
4. Develop a strategic plan that outlines community milestones and goals. Present and inform community members and tribal leadership of milestones and goals regularly.
5. Identify potential partners. Engage economic development departments, health divisions, local nonprofits, schools, producers, etc. at the appropriate time. Partnerships are meant to support efforts NOT to supplant them.
6. Establish a communications campaign to inform the community of the health benefits and economic development opportunities for community members.
7. Create health and income indicators to monitor throughout the project in order to convey importance to partners, community members, and tribal leadership.

Conclusions (cont.)

At the intersection of community food and economy is increased health and wealth of a community, but this can only be achieved over a long term commitment both to the project and to the community. Again, while the communities highlighted are vastly different, they all responded to a community need and have continued to revisit that need and their response often. In a world where many communities are disconnected from their food sources, these communities have found ways to re-claim their food systems one small plant and dollar at a time. For some their food enterprise began as a conversation or others it began with a community food assessment, yet for others, it began as one planted seed, but all have endured and provided food and reclaimed dollars for their community members and households. These programs offer insights and lessons for those who are either beginning their journey on developing a food enterprise or for those who are already well on their way. More importantly, these programs highlight the power of community on food systems and our economy by doing what we must already do anyways- eat.

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