

W

hether they grow it, catch it, hunt it, gather it or buy it, food is the thread that ties every Alaskan together. **The Alaska Food Policy Council is a non-profit dedicated to improving the security of Alaska's food system for the benefit of all.**



Food security impacts Alaska's:

Health: Obesity and food-related diseases like diabetes cost Alaska hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Strong local food systems increase the availability of healthy and affordable foods.

Self-reliance: An estimated 95% of the food Alaskans eat is imported. Reducing our reliance on imported food and increasing our ability to provide for ourselves can protect us in times of natural disasters.

Prosperity: Alaskans spend over \$2 billion each year on food. Keeping more of our food dollars in Alaska by purchasing locally grown, harvested, and made food products will strengthen local economies by increasing jobs and incomes.

The time for a food security agenda is now.

With improved food policies:

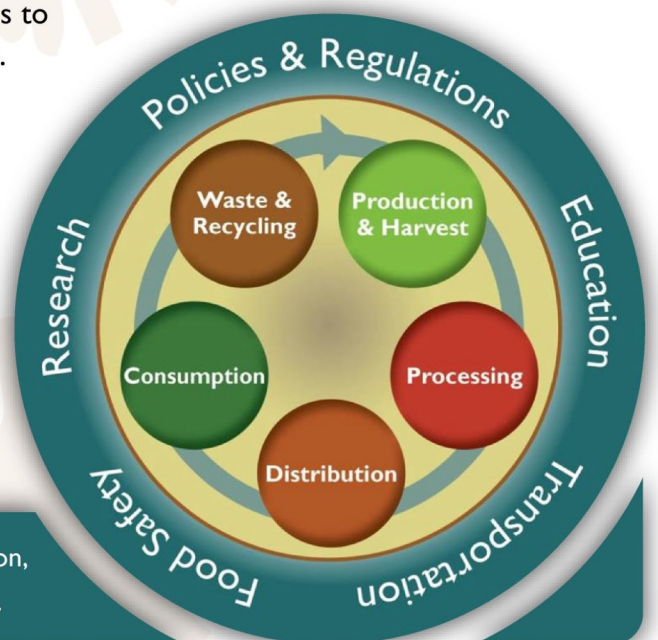
 All Alaskans will have access to affordable, healthy and local foods.

Alaska's food-related industries will have a strong workforce and operate in a supportive business environment.

Food will be safe and protected, and supplies will be secure throughout Alaska.



Alaska's food system will be more sustainable and resilient.



All the activities related to food - production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management - make up our **food system**.

Listening to Alaskans

In 2014, the AFPC held 4 town-hall style meetings in Juneau, Nome, Bethel and Fairbanks. The goals of the Town Hall meetings were to increase awareness about Alaska food issues, increase community involvement in local food issues, and gain additional insights into local food issues to inform the AFPC and policy makers. Here's what we heard around the state at the meetings*:

Nome

"The growing season in Nome is really short- we need more greenhouses and hoop houses, as well as storage facilities!"

Fairbanks

"To make the most of our food resources, we need storage solutions and processing facilities. Lack of commercial kitchens and processing facilities keeps local food businesses from really thriving and serving lots of people."

Bethel

"We want support for subsistence activities and good sources of organic or locally grown food. We are proud of Meyers Farm and know it's possible to have more locally grown food in Bethel."

Juneau

"There's not enough people producing local food to sell in Juneau, and there's not enough available land to produce it on."

Information about the Alaska food system received through the Town Hall meetings will help the AFPC evaluate the impact of their current priorities and develop key issues to address in the future. There are upcoming Town Hall meetings scheduled for 2015 in Anchorage, Palmer and Homer. Detailed information about the meetings can be provided on request.

*quotes are composites of statements made by residents at community meetings.



Alaska's Food Security Is Headed In The Right

DIRECTION

We've made some strong progress recently, and here are a few things we'd like you to continue to support.

EMPOWER

the **Alaska Food Resource Working Group** convened to recommend policies that promote the use of locally grown food, health and local economies, educational programs, and the protection of the State's agricultural land.

SOURCE more local foods in state **procurement processes** and improve enforcement of the 7% bidders preference.

FOSTER interagency conversations to clarify regulations and clear the way for more donations of **traditional foods** into schools, hospitals and senior care facilities.

NOURISH

more Alaska students with healthy local food by supporting two existing programs that help **educate students** about healthy food choices and promote local economic development: the Farm to School Program and the Nutritional Alaskan Foods in Schools grant program.

ENCOURAGE food related **small businesses and entrepreneurs** by supporting existing programs to help Alaskans do more value-added and food-related business. State loan programs and the Division of Agriculture Restaurant Rewards program are examples of existing programs that could be included in a food security agenda.



Looking Ahead To A Brighter Food Future

The Alaska Food Policy Council will continue listening to Alaskans and learning about their food systems. We'll be recommending affordable and effective policies and programs in the future to stabilize Alaska's food security and boost the health and wellness of Alaskans and the economy.

Here are a few suggestions to come:

- **EDUCATE** with a consumer marketing campaign, such as "Eat Five, Buy Five", a program currently running in other states that encourages residents to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, and buy \$5 of locally grown or produced food each week (which would generate \$188 million a year in sales to local businesses).
- **IMPLEMENT** community food storage management systems and community foods templates that have been developed with AFPC partners to address supply chain vulnerabilities and encourage food entrepreneurial opportunities.

- **STRUCTURE** state and local land sales or leases to prioritize food production for Alaska and attract beginning farmers. For example, innovative planning for agricultural development in the Nenana-Totcha-ket area will lead to greater food capacity for the whole state. Inexpensive long-term leases for food producers on public or farmland trust lands will make growing more affordable.

- **PREPARE** Alaska for greater food security by supporting efforts to teach Northern growing methods, from school gardens to hands-on training at farms.

Keep In Touch!

We thank you for your support, and hope to hear from you about your ideas to improve Alaska's food security. It's an issue that unites all Alaskans, and the time for a statewide food security agenda is now!

If you are interested in being part of one of our work-groups, joining our e-mail listserve or learning more about the Alaska Food Policy Council:

— Visit akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com

— E-mail us at akfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com

— Like us on facebook at facebook.com/akfoodpolicy