Good to Grow in the 4-state Driftless Region

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Original Goal of Good to Grow Initiative

To build a strategic framework that scales sustainable regional food systems from 2% to 10% of food produced and consumed within the region.
TIERS of a FOOD SYSTEM

SOURCE: Jim Bower, Blue Planet Partners; Ron Doetch, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute; Steve Stevenson, Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems—University of Wisconsin
Strategy Nesting by Scale

Super Region
States
Regional Economic Collaboratives
Production Regions
Local Community / Metro
Focus on market region or production region?
"Scaling Up" Strategy
Midwest Global City Food Initiative

Circle City 20 Million

Cities and Regions:
- Minneapolis/ St. Paul
- East Chicago
- Green Bay
- Appleton
- Chicago
- Fox River
- Davenport/ Rock Island/ Moline
- Janesville
- Des Moines
- Cedar Rapids
- Des Moines
- Cedar Rapids
- Dubuque/Iowa City
- Kokomo
- Fort Wayne
- Gary
Driftless Region / Upper Mississippi River Valley

- Four states
- 57 counties
- ~25,000 square miles
- ~15,000 acres
- Karst landscape similar to Appalachia
- Mishi Sippi = Big River in Ojibwe
- 15 major tributaries to the Big River
Constellation of regional and local initiatives

- Driftless Area Initiative – USDA/NRCS
- Riverlands Economic Development Partnership – Alliant Energy / UW Platteville leadership
- NE IA Food and Fitness Initiative – a Kellogg Foundation project
- Valley Stewardship Network’s Food and Farm Initiative – a multi-county economic development project
- SE MN – a host of self-organized efforts, with leadership from LSP
- Upper Mississippi River Valley appellation – spearheaded by the RC&Ds
- Crossroads Research Center economic reports
Community food enterprises

- Organic Valley
- Grown LOCALLY
- Coop Partners Warehouse
- Packing houses such as Alsum Produce, Wescott Agri-products
- Produce auctions
- Buy local restaurants
- Farm-to-cafeteria projects
Potential areas of region-wide work

- Region-wide initiatives such as farm-to-school projects, developing culinary identity, addressing food access and sovereignty issues
- Economic analysis- many pieces in place
- Refined asset analysis, especially to assist in infrastructure investments
- Systems thinking professional development for activists and entrepreneurs
- Policy work to harmonize the 4 states, counties – federal conservation programs, as an example
Potential areas of region-wide work, continued

- Participatory governance work, esp. on land use issues
- Land use analysis and recommendations to policy makers: what is the nature of regional multi-functionality and how can policy support that?
- Work with production sectors to align with a regional production strategy and marketing message that supports sustainability
- Explore new cropping systems best suited to region – agroforestry, permaculture, aronia, hazelnuts, others?
Next steps for aligning the region

- TODAY at 4:30 – Driftless Convention World Café. Tell us about your work, your vision for the region, help set the agenda.

- March 18 Prairie du Chien – all day meeting to hear from multi-county initiatives

- Specialty Crop Research Initiative proposal – submitted 1/14

- Other grant funding opportunities

- Self-organized with emerging leadership