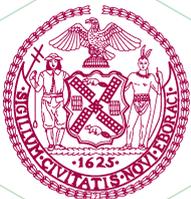




FoodWorks

A Vision to Improve NYC's Food System

One Year Later
DECEMBER 2011



The New York City Council
Christine C. Quinn, Speaker



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FOODWORKS: ONE YEAR UPDATE

ONE YEAR AGO, New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn released **FoodWorks: A Vision to Improve NYC's Food System**. The report examines food across a variety of phases: agricultural production, processing, distribution, consumption and post-consumption. It describes how our food system impacts New York City and its residents, while proposing 59 strategic actions to improve health outcomes, community and economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Looking back over the past year, we can see the ways that our food system has already changed for the better. Together with city agencies, advocates and communities across the five boroughs, the City Council has successfully strengthened the City's food system, taking legislative, policy and programmatic actions to ensure that we have a stronger system that benefits all New Yorkers. Not only have we made significant

progress on 31 of our proposals, but as we move into the new year, we are poised to take additional steps that will allow us to accomplish even more of our agenda.

This past July, we passed the Food Metrics Act, Local Law 52, sponsored by Council Member Dickens, which establishes reporting measurements in the key areas of our city's food system. This will enable us to better assess the progress we are making as we continue to pursue our FoodWorks initiatives. Whether providing data on supermarkets or food stamps, the annual report will allow policy makers, advocates and community members to track change and make more informed decisions about creating a food system that works for the City and its residents.

Listed here are additional highlights of the past year, tracking the progress of FoodWorks and the City's food system as a whole. ▶▶▶



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Whether our food is grown on a regional farm, in a community garden, or on a rooftop, we need to support those who grow the food that keeps us well-fed and healthy. From preserving and increasing our regional food production, to encouraging the City's own growing body of farmers, FoodWorks advocates for urban-rural linkages that will benefit both growers and consumers.

► Over the past year, there have been several efforts to increase the number of farmers right here in New York City. There are 30 students currently enrolled in GrowNYC's New Farmer Development Project, which trains immigrants seeking additional agricultural experience and has helped program participants start 20 new farm businesses to date. These students hail from all over the world, from Guyana to Jamaica to China, but they have made their home right here in New York, and are now committed to farming in the City and region. Just Food's Farm School NYC has started its first year, with over 70 participants taking advantage of course offerings held around the City. Since the program's kick off, two students have started a hydroponic farm on the Lower East Side, another has a farm in Wassaic, NY, and countless others are using their skills in youth and community development efforts.

► Leading by example, the City Council started its own Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative this year, allowing Council Members and staffers to support an upstate farm while enjoying fresh produce. And the trend is catching on: Just Food has helped start 105 CSAs in New York City – adding 10 more in 2011 alone – creating more points of access between farmers and residents.

► With support from the City Council, farmers' markets managed by different groups and agencies continue to flourish in all five boroughs, bringing local fresh produce to many of our communities. The latest tally from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets counts 123 markets across New York City, 14 of which were added in the past year. Both farmers and shoppers benefit at the 99 markets where food stamps and Women, Infant and Children (WIC) benefits are now accepted, and that number is increasing every year. The City Council has funded GrowNYC's portion of this EBT expansion, enabling more low-income shoppers to afford fresh, local food. Farmers markets are a vital part of the City's food system that we hope to see grow even more in the years to come.

► Since July, the City Council has passed a number of laws and resolutions that we believe will make it easier for urban farmers to set up within the city's borders – whether that's in a community garden or on a rooftop. Local Law 49, sponsored by Council Member Brewer, waives height restrictions for certain rooftop greenhouses; and Reso 507, sponsored by Council Member Koppell, calls on the State to extend the current green roof tax credit to those producing food on their green roof. Ad-

ditionally, Local Law 48, sponsored by Council Member Fidler, requires the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services to create an online, public database of city-owned property. The database will include information about the land's suitability for urban agriculture as well as information about city contacts for those interested in using the plot.

► Passed in July, Local Law 50, sponsored by Council Member Brewer, requires City agencies to set up guidelines for the purchase of locally grown or manufactured foods. Such guidelines will lead to an increase in local procurement, benefiting local farmers and manufacturers, as well as the end-consumers of the product, such as the 40,189 seniors served by the NYC Department of the Aging on a daily basis. We also passed Reso 627, sponsored by Council Member Sanders, which called on the State to allow the City to extend preferential treatment to regional farmers in nearby states as well as local farmers based in New York.



PROCESSING

FoodWorks included a strategic, city-wide focus on food manufacturing in New York City – an industry that contributes approximately \$1.3 billion to our Gross City Product and employs over 14,000 individuals. The City Council is working to generate growth and employment in the food manufacturing industry, while increasing the amount of regional products processed in and for the City.



- ▶ Since opening the doors to its kitchen incubator in 2010, Hot Bread Kitchen (HBK), with the assistance of the City Council, has supported the growth of food entrepreneurs at La Marqueta, a reactivated public market in East Harlem. In addition to operating a bread bakery staffed by immigrant women, HBK runs an incubator for 25 tenants. By providing affordable space and technical assistance to their tenants, the HBK Incubator helps low-income and minority entrepreneurs grow their businesses. In one major success story, a tenant opened a storefront bakery this past summer after graduating from the program.
- ▶ This October, the City Council and the New York City Economic Development Corporation held the City's first Food Manufacturing Expo. More than 170 attendees – producers, manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers and more – were able to network while trying products from our city's food manufacturers, tasting everything from pickles to vegan ice cream. Through facilitating networking and workshop events such as these, we will continue to support the growth of our food manufacturing industry, thereby creating a more robust food economy.
- ▶ The City Council has contributed \$10 million to the Small Manufacturing Industrial Fund, which will provide much-needed capital to reactivate old industrial space across the five boroughs. Two million dollars of that money will go toward the renovation of a food manufacturing space at La Marqueta. And while the additional funds are open to a broader array of industries, we will work with food manufacturers interested in applying for the funding. The Request for Proposals (RFP) is set to be released in early 2012.



DISTRIBUTION

To address the way that food makes its way into and around New York City – from farm to table, wholesale market to restaurant, manufacturer to retailer – FoodWorks proposes a number of changes to the City's distribution system. Making improvements to the current infrastructure, technology and transportation methods that comprise our current food distribution system will allow the City to increase efficiencies, reduce costs, limit environmental damage and improve health outcomes.

- ▶ The City Council is working with the Hunts Point Produce Market, the Bloomberg Administration, the Governor's office, the New York City Regional Economic Development Council, and state and federal elected officials to modernize the produce market and strengthen the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center. Construction of climate-controlled warehouse facilities, a common rail receiving facility, and loading area will alleviate the market's infrastructure challenges related to efficient food storage and transportation. With 60 percent of the City's and 20 percent of the region's fresh produce moving through the Hunts Point Produce Market, this redevelopment effort will retain jobs, lower costs, increase food safety, and reduce emissions. The project is in the design phase and construction is expected to begin in 2013.

- ▶ The City Council contributed funding for a city-wide food distribution study that will provide an accurate picture of our current distribution system; identify policy levers to improve bottle-necks; and determine optimal distribution routes and methods to improve the existing system. This study will serve as the City's guide in making investments and policy changes to help reduce the costs of distribution; increase access to fresh and healthy food; and diminish the harmful environmental impacts of the current system.



CONSUMPTION

The quality and quantity of food that we consume play a large role in determining our health. By identifying ways to alter a food environment that has left many without access to healthy, affordable options in their communities, FoodWorks is helping to address the twin public health challenges of obesity and food insecurity. Our report proposes a variety of strategies for creating a healthier food environment with more nutritious options, while simultaneously strengthening the safety net of hunger and nutrition programs.

- ▶ Through legislation and zoning changes, the City Council was critical in authorizing the City's signature food retail program, Food Retail Expansion for Health (FRESH), which provides financial and zoning incentives to new or expanding grocery stores in areas with reduced access to



fresh food. Since the program's inception in 2009, five businesses have used the FRESH incentives, leading to an expansion of six grocery stores and the creation of four new ones. Four additional projects are in the pipeline, and all told, this will result in 400,000 square feet of new or renovated food retail space in all five boroughs. In addition to providing New Yorkers with access to fresh food, these projects are expected to retain over 550 jobs, create 450 new jobs, and invest approximately \$50 million across the City. FRESH has had an incredible impact on the health and vitality of neighborhoods and residents, and we will continue to work with our partners and communities to expand the reach of the program.

- ▶ The City Council is working to encourage the creation of alternative retail options in communities that lack access to fresh and healthy foods. Thanks to the City Council's support, five fledgling food co-operatives are receiving technical assistance to help them navigate start-up challenges and provide food in neighborhoods across the city.
- ▶ A number of the City Council's partners are helping to make bodegas not just the most convenient retail option, but a healthy one as well. Working with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Healthy Bodegas Initiative has encouraged over 1,000 vendors across the City to begin stocking healthier options. GrowNYC's Fresh Bodegas program provides the refrigeration necessary for 11 bodegas – 6 in Harlem and 5 in Bedford-Stuyvesant – to stock farm-fresh produce from the wholesale market and Red Jacket Orchards. There are plans to expand the program to a dozen

additional bodegas in the next two years. Through creative projects like this, the City can expand the amount of healthy and fresh options available to all New Yorkers.

- ▶ The City Council worked with the HOPE Program to create GROCERYWorks, a food retail workforce development program that provides unemployed workers with training and job placements in a good, stable industry. Since last year, 67 people have graduated from the program, with 80 percent of them securing employment in the field. Two of the graduates have already been promoted, and we're looking forward to seeing future success stories from this unique program that combines the City Council's focus on food retail and workforce development.
- ▶ This past year, the City Council joined more than 85 organizations around the city to strengthen the federal Child Nutrition Act, which authorizes funding for federal school meal and childhood nutrition programs. Among other things, the resulting Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 provided an increase in federal reimbursement for school lunches; increased the number of students eligible for free and reduced school meals; and set nutritional standards for school meals that will improve the health of our students in the years to come.
- ▶ The City Council has also been busy on the local level, working to ensure that more students are able to access the meals that the federal government and the NYC Department of Education (DOE) make available to them. Working with the School Meals Coalition and the DOE, we have increased the amount of schools providing

Breakfast in the Classroom – a delivery method that ensures that students get a daily, healthy breakfast. The number of schools running Breakfast in the Classroom in at least some of their classes has grown from 175 to 333 in the last school year alone, and the Council will be continuing its efforts to increase that number even more. We are also involved in outreach efforts to let parents know about all the various breakfast options available in their child's school. This past summer, a successful partnership between the DOE, Share Our Strength, Food Bank for New York City, City Harvest and the New York City Coalition Against Hunger ensured that participation in the Summer Meals program increased by 3.4 percent, with an additional 234,615 meals served to young people in need.

- ▶ The City Council funds the New York City Coalition Against Hunger's *Free Food and Assistance Neighborhood Guides*, which provide New Yorkers – regardless of their location, language or income – with information about how to access nutritious and affordable food in their communities. We are pleased that this resource reaches over 200,000 New Yorkers every year.
- ▶ Due to recent policy changes in other states, New York City and Arizona are now the only jurisdictions that require food stamp applicants to get finger imaged, instead of using other fraud detection measures. The City Council is continuing its efforts to eliminate this requirement that reduces food stamp participation and deprives neighborhoods of \$54.4 million in economic activity each year, most recently by introducing Intro 696, sponsored by Council Member Palma, which would require the Administration



to report on the number of food stamp applicants who are subjected to finger imaging; the amount of city money spent on finger imaging; the number of fraud cases detected through this process; and the number of applicants referred for criminal prosecution based on information obtained by such finger imaging. Such reporting would increase transparency in a system that Speaker Quinn has called unnecessary, costly and punitive.

new pilot program has helped divert an additional 265,000 pounds from the waste stream. Additionally, Local Law 42 of 2010, sponsored by Council Member Rose, authorized a study exploring ways to expand the citywide composting system. The NYC Department of Sanitation and the Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability will release the results of the study in the summer of 2012.

be recognized by the City. Local Law 55 of 2010, sponsored by Council Member Eugene, will reduce bottled water consumption by requiring water fountains instead of bottled water, and requiring that the fountains have a separate faucet capable of filling up containers. This law will go into effect in city buildings on July 1, 2012.



POST CONSUMPTION

At the end of it all – after farming, manufacturing, distribution, and consumption – what happens to the waste? Our food system creates an enormous amount of waste, much of which could be composted or recycled. FoodWorks considers the environmental impact of our food system, seeking to create more sustainable methods by decreasing overall waste and increasing the amount of resource capture in the process.

► The City Council encourages composting as a critical way to reduce the waste associated with the City's food system. With our support, GrowNYC has launched a program that makes it easier for more households to compost. There are currently 12 composting pick-up sites across the City – every year, Lower East Side Ecology Center collects 416,000 pounds of scraps at Union Square alone – and GrowNYC's

- Thanks to Local Law 35 of 2010, sponsored by Council Member Fidler, New Yorkers will soon be able to recycle more of their food-related packaging. Starting in the summer of 2012, the recycling processing facility at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal will begin recycling rigid plastic containers, which will drastically expand the amount of waste that residents can recycle.
- By requiring that home heating use at least 2 percent biofuel, Local Law 43 of 2010, sponsored by Council Member Gennaro, has increased the market for grease recycling. A new bio-diesel processing facility will make use of this grease waste recaptured from restaurants and other sources when it opens in Brooklyn in 2012.
- The City Council has passed a number of bills aimed at decreasing waste. Local Law 51 of 2011, sponsored by Council Member Palma, requires city agencies to create guidelines for reducing the packaging on the food that they procure, and encourages city agencies and contractors to consider the environmental impact of such packaging. Those contractors who successfully follow these guidelines and reduce waste will

CONCLUSION

Over the past year, FoodWorks has become an implementation guide that has enabled the City Council and other New Yorkers to improve the food system across all of its phases. We have already made significant progress on half of our proposals, and we will continue moving ahead with our agenda, driving the change necessary to best support our farmers, manufacturers, communities and all New Yorkers. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners in government and the growing food community to build a better food system for our city.

