

# Annual Report 2010

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development



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# NERCRD Annual Report 2010

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# Foreword: Connecting Jobs, Food and Nature

*In an increasingly resource-constrained environment, The Northeast Center's mission is to enhance the capacity of Land Grant Universities to foster regional prosperity and rural development, drawing on science-based programs. This report describes the work carried out by and through the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development over the course of 2010. We profoundly thank all of our collaborators and supporters, without whom the work described here would not have been possible.*

*Last year we continued to concentrate our work in three key priority areas facing the region:*

- 1. JOBS:** *Enhancing regional economic development and entrepreneurship*
- 2. FOOD:** *Developing regional and local food systems*
- 3. NATURE:** *Finding balanced ways of using natural resources*

*Each of these priority areas is described in this report, along with new resources that have been brought into the region to conduct work in the area of rural development. Increasing such resources is a key mandate of the Center, and in this context we are especially pleased with our new partnerships and collaborations across the social, biological, physical and environmental sciences. These partnerships in turn provide the thematic emphasis on connecting jobs, food, and nature. During the last year we secured or helped to secure external grants approaching \$6 million (extending over various time periods), for the benefit of the region. Details of these funds leveraged on an annualized basis by the Center's core and NERA funds are shown on page [18].*

*Our collective efforts to strengthen Northeast communities are enhanced through collaborations, and networking is central to The Center's mission. As part of outreach and education activities, seminars and webinars are offered along with presentations at conferences and workshops hosted by other groups. Staff activities in this area, including those engaging over 500 new stakeholders, are reported below. In 2010 we initiated an ongoing process to increase our understanding of, and ability to document, The Center's impact on the region. While the outcomes of investments are not always immediately obvious, we found a longitudinal view to yield a rather striking picture. Cumulative impacts of select Center investments are shown on page [17].*

*Finally, an important and distinctive foundation of our work is the application of emerging tools of network science and eLearning to research, outreach and education. Interest in understanding how individuals function within and draw upon their networks has exploded in the last few years and many exciting opportunities exist for new applications. We will continue to apply these tools in our efforts to enhance the capacity of land grant university educators and their collaborators in carrying out community development work.*

**Dr. Stephan J. Goetz**, Director

**Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman**, Associate Director

**Mary Peabody**, Associate Director

**Walter E. Whitmer**, Associate Director (through Sept. 2010)

University Park, PA

Ithaca, NY

Burlington, VT

University Park, PA





Members for 2010-13 are (from left to right): Dr. Stephan Tubene, University of MD Eastern Shore; Dr. Chyi-Lyi (Kathleen) Liang (Chair 2010-11), University of Vermont; Dr. Jurgen Schwarz, University of MD Eastern Shore; Ms. A. Jenny Fertig, West Virginia State University; Dr. Cheryl Brown, West Virginia University; Dr. Charlie French, University of New Hampshire; Ms. Ginger Myers (chair-elect), University of Maryland; Dr. Todd Gabe, University of Maine (not pictured)

## New Technical Advisory Committee Enhances The Center's Regional Engagement

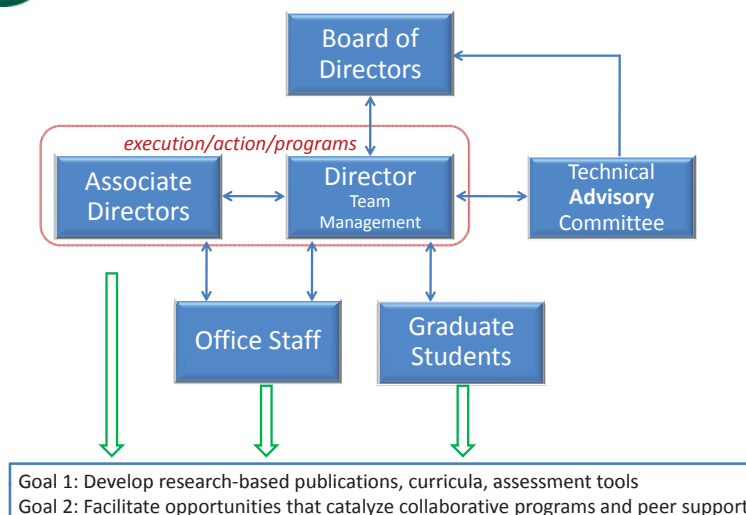
The Northeastern Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) and the Northeast Extension Directors (NEED) appointed eight individuals to the Center's newly formed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC advises the Director on current trends and emerging issues in the field of rural development. The committee's input will shape the programmatic goals, strategies, and activities for current and future efforts of the NERCRD.

## Staff Responsibilities

Director Stephan Goetz (0.75 FTE) is responsible for overall management of the Center and leads the research programs; his primary areas of academic interest include economic development, entrepreneurship and applications of network science, with a particular focus on local and regional food systems development.

Associate Directors Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman and Mary Peabody (both 0.5 FTE) are responsible for Extension activities and outreach programming at the Center, with a strong emphasis on community development training and facilitating regional connections as described in this Report. They also contribute to The Center's organizational development.

In addition, Mary focuses on small business development and educational technologies and Heidi serves as a key liaison to the SET and FEMA activities described in this report.



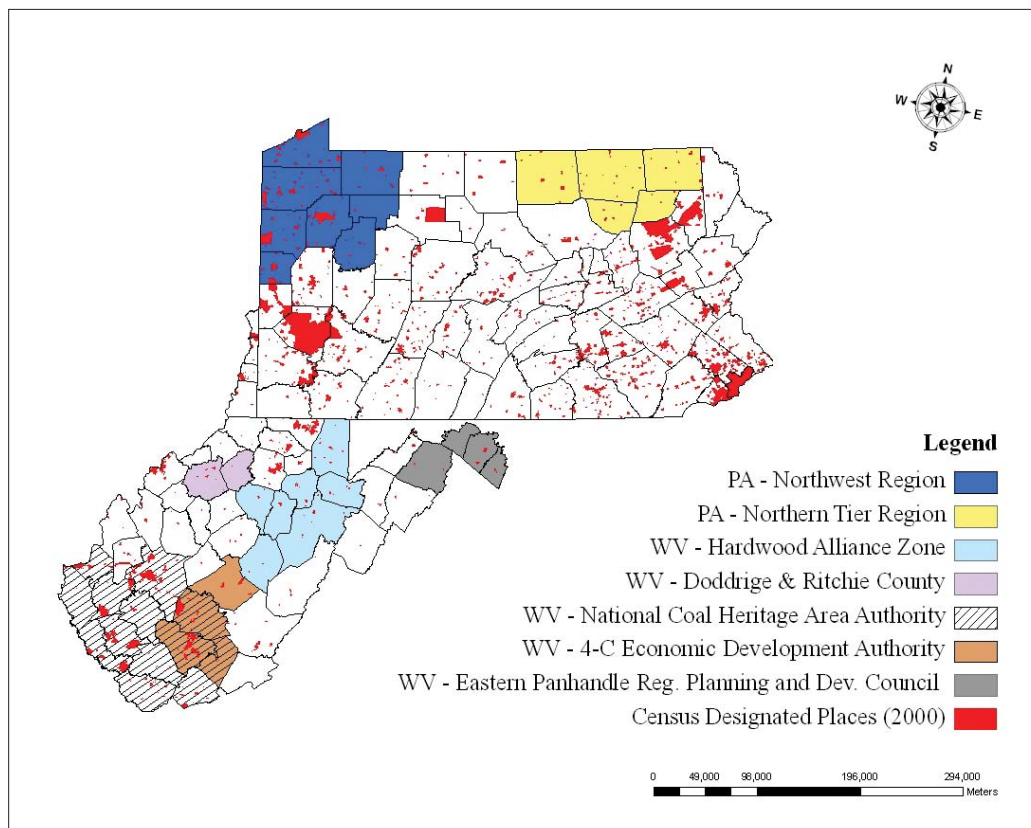
# JOBES: *Enhancing regional economic development and entrepreneurship*

## *Stronger Economies Together* Program Launches in Two States

The Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program currently provides economic development assistance for multi-county regions in rural West Virginia and Pennsylvania. This is a joint project of the four Regional Rural Development Centers and the federal USDA-Rural Development office. Key partners include State USDA-RD offices in Charleston, WV and Harrisburg, PA, the Governor's Advisory Council on Rural Affairs, West Virginia State University Extension Service, West Virginia University Extension, Penn State University Extension and other key state and local partners. The SET pilot program is a new initiative to provide regional strategic planning assistance to multi-county areas. The adjacent map shows five sites in West Virginia and two in Pennsylvania that were selected for the program using a competitive process. The SET program has received

funding to expand into New Hampshire, New York and Vermont in 2011.

The regional teams receive intensive strategic planning training based on the newly developed "Stronger Economies Together" curriculum, which is designed to help local teams develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities. These include database tools specifically designed to help the regional teams examine the critical drivers of their region and identify emerging growth sectors and regional competitive advantages; technical assistance and educational support from Rural Development staff and faculty and Extension educators from West Virginia State University, West Virginia University and Penn State University; and educational and information-sharing opportunities with other SET program participants around the country. For more information about SET visit <http://nercrd.psu.edu/SET/2PageOverview2-2011.pdf>



## IMPLAN Analytical Capacity Added in WV and PA

We are very pleased to announce that, as part of the SET initiative, updated versions of IMPLAN were acquired in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for Planning) is an industry-standard tool used to assess the economic impacts of local expansions or contractions, and it can be used to identify gaps (goods and services that a community is importing which could be produced locally, thereby reducing transportation costs). The science base underlying this tool is provided in the *Targeting Regional Economic Development* book published for the Northeast Center by Routledge (UK). For further information contact [sgoetz@psu.edu](mailto:sgoetz@psu.edu).

## National Webinar Introduces TRED Concepts

In collaboration with The Northeast Center, the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development webinar series introduced the TRED Targeting Regional Economic Development program on November 30, 2010. More than 130 individuals from across the nation participated in the webinar, which received numerous favorable comments. One partner indicated that “the webinar allowed me to see how communities function in an altogether new light.”

## New AFRI Foundational Grant Examines Impacts of Multifunctional Farm Operations

The number of U.S. farms remained remarkably stable at around 2 million between 1978, when the current farm definition was adopted, and 2002. However, this relative stability masks a profound structural change. The 2007 Agricultural Census showed an increase in the number of farms in the U.S., albeit only at the very lowest and highest ends of the size distribution. The last Census also showed the continuing concentration of farm production on the largest farms. However, there is a stunning lack of systematic research about the linkages and interactions in the “new global economic order” between People (farmers, local residents in farming communities, and consumers), Place (farming communities, other communities directly or indirectly connect with farming communities), and Prosperity (farm



income and profits, health of local farming communities, quality of life for farmers/farm families and consumers or local residents).

Lead by project director (and TAC chair) Dr. Chiyi-Lyi (Kathleen) Liang of the University of Vermont, the project studies small and medium-sized farms involved in multifunctional operations in the U.S., with an emphasis on the New England region. Multifunctional farm operations include agritourism and other activities such as specialty foods production, direct sales to local markets, and off-farm employment. These activities are hypothesized to enhance the long term sustainability and prosperity both of farmers and the rural communities in which they are located. Along with Northeast Center staff, Drs. Mary Ahearn and Jason Brown are key partners at USDA-Economic Research Service. The project is scheduled for three years and is funded in the amount of \$472,669.

## Center Research Shows Impact of Small, Locally-Owned Firms

Private businesses and entrepreneurs are widely regarded as essential to regional economic well-being, and small firms often are viewed as important generators of new jobs. Owners of businesses who also reside in the community may have the best interests of the community in mind. Even so, the question of whether the place of residence of a firm's owner matters for economic growth has not been investigated systematically. A new study examines the effect of firm ownership on county-level economic well-being and finds strong evidence that local ownership matters for economic growth, but only in the small size category (10-99 employees). Thus, smaller firms owned by residents are optimal if the policy objective is to maximize income growth rates. These results are relevant for policymakers, especially in light of on-going discussions surrounding stimulus spending and the continued sluggish economic recovery. The results are robust across rural and urban counties. While larger, non-resident owned firms may offer opportunities for jobs, as well as job growth over time, they apparently do so at the cost of reduced local economic growth, as measured by income. <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp48.pdf>

## Study Compares Race-to-the-Top vs. Bottom Economic Policies

In attempting to promote economic development, states often pursue either a race to the bottom approach focused on lowering business costs or a more investment-based, race to the top approach that aims to increase productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Whether either approach promotes growth and produces broad-based economic gains across the population is the subject of this paper. An extensive array of variables representing examples of the two economic development approaches are examined for their effects on various indicators of state economic performance, including income distribution, over the 2000-2007 period. We find that lower taxes are statistically insignificant in explaining state economic performance, and that targeted tax incentives and financial assistance – as currently practiced – are more likely to harm growth and income inequality. Some support exists for state and local governments to encourage entrepreneurship and to enhance internet connectivity. The study was co-authored by faculty at The Ohio State University and Oklahoma State University.

<http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp49.pdf>

Study  
Examines  
Effects of  
Locally-  
Owned  
Firms  
on the  
Economy





## Study Evaluates Rural Entrepreneurship Policy in the U.S.

Interest in entrepreneurship and policy to influence entrepreneurial behavior has increased dramatically in recent years among academics and some practitioners. Major foundations, including Kauffman, Kellogg and Lowe, have invested heavily in this area, with the President of the Kauffman Foundation suggesting that entrepreneurship may be the *only* avenue through which the U.S. will retain its global economic lead. Despite this growing interest and the perceived need for greater reliance on self-employment, data on entrepreneurship trends in the U.S. are equivocal and systematic reviews of entrepreneurship policy do not exist. This void is especially critical in the current economic climate of sustained high unemployed and discouraged workers. This study examines the role of entrepreneurship in economic development, identifies alternative data sources and discusses challenges arising in evaluating the impact of entrepreneurship development programs, such as the Kellogg Foundations entrepreneurial development system. <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp46.pdf>



“Your presentation was both informative and insightful, giving the audience an introduction to and appreciation of the value of networking and connections in food systems that they may have been (very likely were) undervaluing. ... thank you for adding so much.”

Stu Rosenfeld, co-Principal, Regional Technology Strategies May 5, 2010

## Presentations Apply Network Science to Food Systems Entrepreneurship

The emerging tools of social network analysis offer enormous potential for enhancing the operation of local and regional food systems, and creating remunerative opportunities for entrepreneurs. A presentation (and a paper in progress) outlines these ideas in greater detail. It was presented at numerous venues, including a Northeast Partners for Rural America meeting in Burlington, Vermont; a transatlantic workshop hosted by Regional Technology Strategies on preparing the next generation of entrepreneurs and their employees in this arena; and a Chicago Federal Reserve Bank conference entitled “The Intersection between Agriculture and Rural Development,” among others.

“I am so appreciative of all you’ve brought to these conversations. ... Thanks a million.”

Paul Costello, Executive Director Vermont Council on Rural Development, 17 September 2010

# FOOD: *Developing regional and local food systems*

## \$5 mn. AFRI Global Food Security Grant to Enhance Food Security of Underserved Populations

A new project involving 12 institutions in the region (see map) and over 25 collaborators was funded late year. This large-scale, interdisciplinary, multi-state and integrated project is being led by The Northeast Center and it addresses concerns over growing food insecurity in the region. Regional Food Systems (RFS) offer significant potential for improving food access for vulnerable communities while strengthening local economies. However, comprehensive evaluations of these food systems and education about lessons learned are needed to realize this potential. To address these inherently complex systems, our interdisciplinary team of scientists and expert practitioners will evaluate multiple consumption, distribution and production components of RFS in the Northeast along with their associated feedbacks and interdependencies, across multiple scales and nested supply chains for a “healthy food basket”. We will examine structural, institutional, community and individual dimensions of regionally produced, healthy food consumption in disadvantaged communities. Site specific, seasonal “best practice”

### Stakeholder comments (NIFA-AFRI GFS non land grant collaborators only)

*Thank you for all you’ve done. I couldn’t have imagined a better leader for this important project and remarkable collaboration. ... We’re looking forward to the opportunity to begin this work and continue to develop this critical and timely foundation for rethinking of our food system. Michael Conard (Columbia University, 19 June 2010)*

*This is the most organized proposal I have been a part of and I credit it to your leadership. Thanks for inviting us to be part of the esteemed group! Anne Palmer (Program Director, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Bloomberg School of Public Health, 18 June 2010)*

*Echoing [Palmer’s] appreciation of [The Center’s] efforts and graceful leadership, and the support of the NERCRD shop. I am proud to have been a part of this collaborative effort. K. Ruhf (Executive Director, NESAWG, June 18, 2010)*

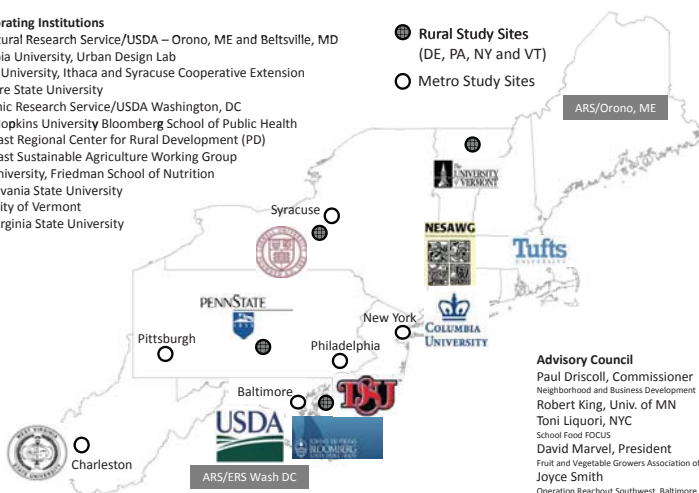
*Great work on all of this - I am very glad that you led this effort! Tim Griffin (Director - Agriculture, Food and Environment Program - Tufts Univ., June 18, 2010)*

### Northeast AFRI-GIS Project Sites and Collaborating Institutions

#### Collaborating Institutions

Agricultural Research Service/USDA – Orono, ME and Beltsville, MD  
 Columbia University, Urban Design Lab  
 Cornell University, Ithaca and Syracuse Cooperative Extension  
 Delaware State University  
 Economic Research Service/USDA Washington, DC  
 Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health  
 Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (PD)  
 Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
 Tufts University, Friedman School of Nutrition  
 Pennsylvania State University  
 University of Vermont  
 West Virginia State University

- Rural Study Sites (DE, PA, NY and VT)
- Metro Study Sites



#### Advisory Council

Paul Driscoll, Commissioner  
 Neighborhood and Business Development  
 Robert King, Univ. of MN  
 Toni Liguori, NYC  
 School Food FOCUS  
 David Marvel, President  
 Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association of MD  
 Joyce Smith  
 Operation Reschout Southwest, Baltimore

Professional Evaluator  
 tbd.



**Budget: Funds Leveraged (annualized) -- on the \$5mn AFRI Grant Alone**

Funds to Northeast Land Grant Universities:	<b>\$716,000</b> (per year for five years)
Funds to Other Partners in the Northeast:	<b>\$284,000</b> (per year for five years)
Leverage of NERA Off-The-Top Funds	<b>\$ 17.5: 1</b>
Leverage of Center's core budget	<b>\$ 3.2: 1</b>

supply chains serving nine case study populations will be evaluated to understand the viability of scaling up and scaling out specific value chains to alleviate food insecurity among the underserved.

Geographic Information Systems and process models will be integrated to quantify current and potential food production capacity and geographic distribution to meet these consumption and distribution goals. Through this work, students will gain research and community experience, and new classroom learning modules will be developed. Extension efforts will include sector- and site-specific learning networks, a new eXtension Community of Practice, and annual project team and informational events. Food system leaders and community partner organizations will develop new online and other outreach materials. Collectively, these integrated research, education and extension efforts promise to enhance the food security of underserved populations in the Northeast.

## Center Supports Research Network on Local and Regional Food Systems for NESAWG

Building on the success of the 2009 conference as well as the 2009 Local Foods Conference sponsored by the Northeast Center, "It Takes a Region 2010: A Conference to Build Our Northeast Food System," was held November 12-13, 2010 in Albany, NY. Organized by the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, the conference examined path-breaking efforts underway in the region in the areas of alternative supply chain networks, research and food system assessments, regional planning, infrastructure initiatives, and policy analysis. 300 individuals attended in 2010, up from 200 individuals in the previous year.

By taking a regional approach, a truly sustainable and resilient food system can be developed. Building upon "thousand points of local," optimal scale, location, variety and supply for all communities and all supply chain participants are within reach. The conference drew upon the local and regional efforts underway and emerging in our region and

nationally, including alternative supply chain networks, research projects, infrastructure initiatives and policy advocacy.

## Cooperative Agreement Signed With ERS to Estimate Local Food Supply and Demand

The American diet and food system have been described as unsustainable. Per capita energy use to facilitate the American food budget has increased substantially over the past decade and increases in per capita food energy (caloric) intake of Americans has led to an unprecedented incidence of obesity in the U.S. Meanwhile, the U.S. food system has become a declining source of farm and manufacturing employment and this trend has disproportionately impacted rural America. These salient facts are often cited when making the case that our food system is unsustainable.





To examine this issue, the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development and the Economic Research Service (USDA) will conduct collaborative research that examines the impacts from a widespread adoption of healthier U.S. diets on rural employment and energy flows. The analysis will be conducted at the regional level to facilitate the study of several issues that a national study cannot. For example, measurement of energy use by fuel source, particularly those used in electric power generation, is best carried out in a regional framework, due to the spatial attributes of the industry - e.g., nuclear and hydro power require a large and reliable water source. Other issues, such as transportation (the most fossil fuel intensive supply chain process), and carbon discharge analysis are best examined in a multiregional framework. Dr. Patrick Canning, senior economist at the USDA/ERS, is our principal cooperator. Grant amount: \$94,000.

## Capacity Building Grant Explores Role of Networks in Linking Farmers with Urban Markets

A grant proposal is being developed applying insights from network science to strengthen access by underserved farmers in Maryland, Delaware and Tennessee to underserved inner-city markets for fresh fruits and vegetables. This collaborative effort includes the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Delaware State University in addition to the Northeast Center, and is being led by Tennessee State University.

## NE-SARE Grants Funded by The Northeast Center

In close collaboration with NE-SARE, The Northeast Center has been funding a number of grants in the Community area. The two grants funded in 2010 are described here.

### **New Hampshire Capital Area Farm and Community Connection Infrastructure Inventory**

The Capital Area Community Food and Farm Connection has identified the availability of local foods in the winter as one of the biggest barriers to eating local. Local citizens and businesses would like to incorporate local foods into their winter menus, but they are not available on a large scale in the Capital Area of New Hampshire.

In 2010, MCCD worked towards getting a baseline of what agricultural infrastructure already exists and what Merrimack County farmers need to grow more, store more, and add value to. These accomplishments were made through mailing surveys to schools, churches, and farms. Email surveys were sent to farmers. In-person interviews were conducted at each farmers market in Merrimack County. A roundtable discussion was conducted with approximately 30 farmers. This project has helped bring some farmers interested in forming a cooperative to maximize on underutilized infrastructure. It has also given the District and other agricultural organizations feedback on their programs and what type of infrastructure they may fundraise/ grant write to lease to local farmers.

An unexpected positive outcome has been the outreach to new farmers and increased awareness about the Merrimack County Conservation District and other partner programs. Also, the MCCD has

experienced positive feedback from farmers. One farmer told an interviewer that for once someone was listening to the farmers and getting their opinions. Having a sounding board and possibly having their needs realized has been incredibly important to these farmers.

### **Lehigh Valley Food Composting Initiative**

The Lehigh County Conservation District is carrying out a one-year long food compost waste pilot project involving three local restaurants, a farm, an organic food delivery service, and a municipality. This project draws upon the results of other, similar projects that have been carried out elsewhere in the country that have led to the development of successful food waste composting programs. The key to success has been a high degree of public education and outreach, and the enthusiastic support of the participating restaurants and farmers. Also critical is ease and efficiency of food waste collection and transportation.

Composting food waste for use by farmers is of clear environmental and economic benefit. There are several hurdles to surmount before food composting becomes “mainstream” in the way that recycling

now is. Chief among these problems is finding a simple way to transport food waste from homes and restaurants to facilities that can compost the waste. Another significant barrier is to raise public awareness and acceptance of food composting. Lastly, an effective economic model needs to be built so that composting becomes self-sustaining for both food waste providers, and farm end users.

There are many different ways to carry out workable composting programs; what methods work for a given area depends upon a number of factors. The Lehigh Valley is a unique region, due to its mixed rural/agricultural and urban areas, which means that farms and restaurants are in close proximity to each other. This project is modeling several methods of restaurant-farm-municipal composting to determine the most effective composting methods for the Lehigh Valley.

For other SARE projects in the Sustainable Community Innovation area, please visit the website at: <http://sare.org/MySare/ProjectReport.aspx>



## Social Network Analysis of the Local Foods Conference Completed

A central objective of workshops or conferences such as the Local Foods Conference (May 2009, in Kerhonksen, NY) is to enhance networking among individuals working in the same subject area, for their mutual benefit and the benefit of their stakeholder communities. Yet measuring and documenting such networks and relationships can be a challenge, and it has generally not been carried out formally. This report demonstrates how the tools of social network analysis (SNA) can be applied in a conference setting both to improve understanding of networks within a certain subject area – local and regional foods – and to document changes in the networks that occurred at the Local Foods Conference. Individual-level network measures, such as centrality and “connectedness,” are linked to workshop evaluations and to individuals’ intentions to pursue relationships and activities as a result of the workshop.

By applying network analysis to conference settings, it is possible to not only understand and document the ways conferences enhance connections between conference participants, but also how the nature of these relationships (e.g., strong or weak) and individuals at the center of these networks facilitate additional and even more specific networking

opportunities following the conference. These could strengthen weak ties and strengthen the capacity of those at the center of networks to enhance their networking roles. In theory, the stronger and more extensive the networks between northeast researchers, educators, and practitioners in the local and regional food systems arena, the greater the system’s capacity to address needs and opportunities.

<http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp47.pdf>

## Local and Regional Foods Webinar Series

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development hosted a three-part webinar series on “Local and Regional Food Systems: Research and Extension Opportunities in the Northeast.” The series was designed to follow-up on the May 2009 conference “Enhancing Local and Regional Food Systems: Exploring the Research, What Works, and What We Need to Learn” with the goals of providing participants with an overview of the research base on local and regional food systems and addressing, in greater depth, issues and opportunities of particular interest to the Northeast. Topics included: An Overview of Research Initiatives and Opportunities; What’s the Difference and Why is it Important?; Strategies for Food Systems Development. Slide shows and videos are available at: <http://nercrd.psu.edu/LocalFoods/LocalRegional.Foods.Webinars.pdf>



Focus on  
Local and  
Regional  
Food  
Systems

# NATURE: *Finding balanced ways of using natural resources*

## Edited Book Published on Emerging Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on Agri-Environmental Policies

Significant advances have occurred in recent years in Europe and in North America in addressing agri-environmental policies. Land use issues tend to be more pressing in Europe than in the U.S. as a whole because of different spatial exigencies. Because these advances have taken place within individual academic disciplines, there has been something of a loss of synergy and often efforts are duplicated.

While important institutional and legal differences still exist between the two continents, the sharing of recent scientific advances will benefit scientists on both sides of the Atlantic and this is the main purpose of this book. The primary features of the book are threefold. First, the authors aim to identify options for policy to overcome the challenges ahead related to future agri-environmental policies. Second, they synthesize existing knowledge and identify gaps in current knowledge along with future research needs. Finally, they explicitly compare agri-environmental interactions and approaches to their resolution in Europe and in the U.S.

This is the only major book of its kind that focuses specifically on the intersection between agricultural and environmental policies and issues. Furthermore, the multi-disciplinary approach taken in the volume, as well as the inclusion of authors from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, makes the book unique. This book will be of most value to university faculty and students interested in agriculture and the environment on both sides of the Atlantic, the text should also be of interest to informed laypersons as well as policymakers.

<http://www.taylorandfrancis.com/books/details/9780415777025/>



## Study Compares Residents' Perceptions of Impacts from Natural Gas Development in the Marcellus Shale

Communities experiencing rapid growth due to energy development ("boomtowns") have reported positive and negative impacts on community and individual well-being. The perceptions of impacts vary according to stage of energy development as well as prior experience with extractive industries. Development of the Marcellus Shale provides an opportunity to examine these impacts over time and across geographic and historical differences. This paper describes case study research in Pennsylvania and New York to document preliminary impacts. Cases vary by level of development and previous extractive history. The study finds that, in areas with low population density, higher levels of development lead to a broader awareness of natural gas impacts, both positive and negative. Participants draw from the regional history of extraction to express environmental concern regardless of direct, local experience. Our findings suggest the need to track these perceptions over the course of development, and as individuals and communities react and adapt to the



impacts. Dr. Kathryn Brasier is the lead author and investigator of this study. Other co-authors included (all at Penn State) Matthew R. Filteau, Graduate Research Assistant; Diane K. McLaughlin, Professor of Rural Sociology and Demography; Timothy W. Kelsey, Professor of Agricultural Economics and Stephan Goetz, as well as Jeffrey Jacquet, Graduate Research Assistant and Richard C. Stedman, Associate Professor of Natural Resources (both at Cornell University).

## Interdisciplinary Workshop Merges Landscape Design Principles and Network Science to Improve Local Community Planning

*Your Town: The Citizen's Institute on Rural Design* is a national program funded by the National Endowment of the Arts. Your Town: Lower Luzerne County introduced rural decision makers to the important role that community planning and design plays in farmland preservation. Through several hands-on exercises, workshop participants developed place-based recommendations to help protect the important agricultural and rural resources of Luzerne County, as well as promote its agri-tourism potential.

### *Trans-Disciplinary Collaboration*

I just wanted to say thanks again for participating in and helping to plan our Your Town workshop. I truly appreciate the perspective that you brought to the event. *I know that we approach rural development from two different directions, but that is what makes the convergence so interesting.* Several people were really interested in the example co-op models that you showed ... and I am thinking that we may actually try to look into this further and see what opportunities may exist for the CLDS to help promote this idea. *[Emphasis Added]*

K.L. Schneider, RLA, LEED AP; Center for Landscape Design & Stewardship, 6 Oct 2010



# Regional Capacity Building Activities

Altogether, the Center was represented at over 30 major meetings during the year, with major presentations made at 10 of these meetings. Center staff also hosted or co-hosted a total of 12 on-line seminars, which were attended by over 500 individuals. Staff contributed to peer-reviews on numerous publications and grants (including SARE and the SET curriculum) and prepared 16 publications, including the NETWORK newsletter. Highlights of the webinars presented and related efforts are reported below.

Center Staff served on three conference planning committees, including Paul Costello's Vermont Rural Development and NE Partners for Rural America regional convening around topics of economic development, broadband, local foods and energy, supported by USDA-RD in each of the four U.S. regions and held in Burlington, VT. Staff made two presentations at this event. The Center is currently working with Mr. Costello and other individuals on conference follow-up, helping to aggregate and disseminate conference information as well as to conduct a network analysis of PRA.

Center staff was also involved to different degrees in the preparation of 14 competitive grant proposals. In addition, many new partnerships were formed, and existing partnerships were strengthened within the Northeast region.

## *Overview of Activities by the Number:*

16 New publications

14 New grant applications

12 New webinars

10 Major presentations

8 Peer reviews

3 Regional or national conference planning committees... and

**over 500 new stakeholders reached.**

## Center staff awarded competitive grant funding from eXtension

Center Associate Directors Mouillesseaux-Kunzman and Peabody were awarded \$60,000 from eXtension to launch an **“Enhancing Rural Capacity” Community of Practice**. The Center is providing leadership for the CoP, which will work in partnership with all RRDCs and a national team of Extension



professionals in planning, developing, and delivering top-quality education in leadership and capacity-building for the benefit of our Communities of Interest. These outputs, coupled with the knowledge and experiences offered by the CoP leadership team, will serve as the foundation for the development of a blueprint on how best to move forward in the development of a comprehensive virtual community capacity education system that addresses the diversity of education, information and technical assistance needs of rural communities across America. That blueprint serves as the foundation for guiding the development of a comprehensive educational curricula and related resources that will be accessible via the eXtension web portal. The CoP leadership team will identify, examine and evaluate the Extension educational products currently in existence to determine best fit and transferability into an online environment. New materials will be developed and delivered and outcomes will be measured and reported.



## Webinar Series Highlights Extension and Research Efforts Underway in the Regional Highlights Webinar Series 2010

The webinar series highlighted regional research and extension programming designed to support rural development and strengthen Northeast communities. Webinar recordings, presentations, and resources for further information are available at: <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Community%20Development/HighlightsWebinar.html>

*Webinar topics presented included:*

- Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development Highlights of Programs and Activities, NERCRD staff;
- Community Profiles and Community Capacity Assessments, Charlie French, University of New Hampshire;
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore's Small Farm Institute, Stephan Tubene, University of Maryland Eastern Shore;
- Mapping Community Characteristics for Enhancement of Recent Immigration Population Front End Support Systems, Kathleen Liang, University of Vermont

## Foundations of Practice Level 1 Launched

Led by The NERCRD, "Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics," a unique online course was presented jointly by the Regional Rural Development Centers and a team of nationally recognized Community Development professionals. The course serves as the introduction to the Foundations of

"The seven week series covered a lot of topics, giving us concrete information as well as a lot of food for thought...I have a new understanding of community dynamics, leadership structures, and best practices for collaboration." *Recent course graduate.*

"I've thoroughly enjoyed the FOP [course] over the last few weeks. You've had excellent speakers and topics. I've gained valuable information that I will certainly save...for future reference. Thank you. I will certainly be looking for your upper level trainings to enroll in."

Practice Program. The course integrated a weekly webinar presentation with a virtual course website to encourage interaction and sharing of resources.

The Foundations of Practice Level 1 training, Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics, concluded in November 2010 with 32 individuals successfully completing the course. The course was open to the public for the first time and was comprised of Cooperative Extension colleagues, local economic development and planning officials, and NGO staff. Participants represented all four RRDC regions with 25% from the Northeast. This class provides an introduction to the subject of community development and we plan to continue offering it annually.

Initial evaluation feedback indicates that participants found the course both useful and practical. Tricia Follert (Wolcott, VT) stated, *“...I wanted you both to know that this class has been excellent. I have gotten information from each and every [session] that is very helpful now that I am working with many of the town departments and outside people.”* Asked in what ways the information provided the Level 1 classes would “change your practice of working with communities”, the two most common responses from participants were, *“it will provide new tools and resources that I have not had access to before”* and *“it will provide new process skills to the way I approach my work.”* A follow-up survey will be conducted in April 2011 as part of the ongoing evaluation of the series to better understand how participants have, in fact, used what they have learned in the six months since participating in the class.



## Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program Launched by FEMA

### FEMA Grant

Catastrophic natural and technical disasters – such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and pandemic influenza – can have devastating impacts on the well-being of individuals, families, communities and regions. In light of the increasing geographic concentration of the nation’s population, metropolitan areas are most vulnerable to major loss of life and to disruptions in the social, economic, physical, and political infrastructures. Major interruptions in these metro areas would also significantly impact the surrounding nonmetropolitan counties given the interdependence between metro and nonmetro counties in various regional pockets of the U.S. In recognition of these important linkages between metro and nonmetro counties, the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/FEMA) launched the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) in FY2008. Grants were awarded to 10 regional sites across the nation. Successful grantees were charged with developing regional plans that effectively address major threats such as the need for Mass Evacuation, Mass Care and Sheltering, Economic Recovery Planning, Citizen Preparedness, Disaster Housing, Regional Coordination and Logistics, and Debris Management. Grantees were responsible for developing not only regional blueprints, but also specific plans of action for implementing these regional efforts. Included in such plans are activities that strengthen the capacity of the region (i.e., its people, households, agencies, institutions) to effectively plan for and respond to catastrophic events. Working with the SRDC, the NERCRD and Cornell Cooperative Extension of New York City are part of a national team, including emergency management personnel, that is developing and piloting curriculum designed to advance disaster management through community capacity building, with an emphasis on disadvantaged populations.

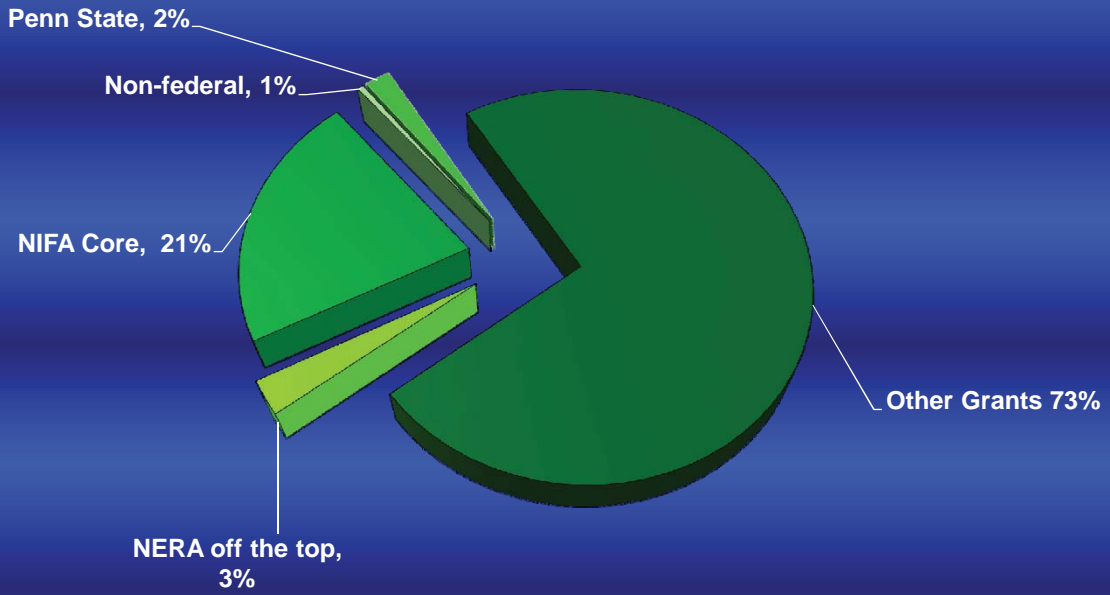
It is often difficult for us to report the impact of our work, because the impacts occur two, three and more years down the road. This table shows how the Center's early investment in the NE-Land Use Network eventually paid off with the first-ever regional conference on local and regional food systems, and a \$5 million USDA-NIFA funded grant.

## Cumulative Impacts of Selected Investments Over Time

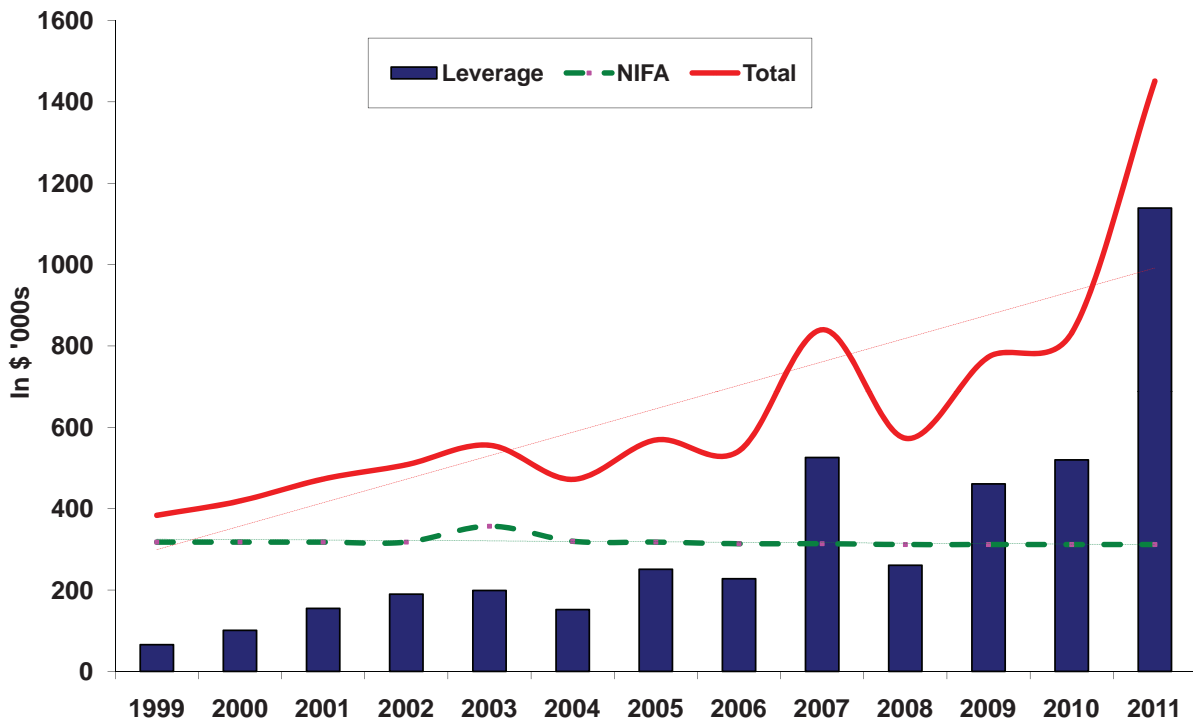


Stage I	→	Stage II	→	Stage III
First economic clusters conference (Orlando, FL, 2004)	→	<i>Targeting Regional Economic Development</i> TRED Book, 2009 (Routledge)	→	Foundations of Practice Stronger Economies Together EDA Regional Innovation Clusters grant application NEWBIO proposal (2010)
Small Farms Industry Cluster Grant (NRI 2005)	→	Investment in Tools of Social Network Analysis	→	Vermont PRA (P. Costello) Wyoming RDC (M. Randolph) Five educational presentations about network science applications Local Foods Conf. evaluation Migration and commuting Research on Entrepreneurship and Migration (2011)
Northeast Extension Land Use Network (2005/6)	→	Transatlantic Land Use Conference (2007) Local Foods Conf. (2009) Support of NESAWG grant application to NE-SARE and TA for project report	→	New Routledge Book 2010 2010 AFRI GFS application (funded 2011/16) Local Foods Hypothesis chart ERS Cooperative Agreement funded (2010/12)
Research on Social Capital (2002)	→	NERCRD county-level database on indicators	→	NSF/NIFA grant application re: FEMA (forthcoming)
NRI grant on Poverty (2003)	→	Research on Wal-Mart, other determinants of poverty; Poverty Conference (2005)	→	Research on economic restructuring of American retail, spatial reorganization; Food Deserts Analysis (2011)
Research on Entrepreneurship (ca. 2002)	→	Regional Entrepreneurship Listening Sessions (Kellogg) Kauffman Fdn grant (2006) What Works I Conf. (2006) Youth Entrepren. Conf. 2005	→	Foundations of Practice (2010) What Works II Conf. (2011) Youth Entrepreneurship Group Presentation on entrepreneur-friendly communities

**Total Projected FY 2011 Funds: \$1,889,759**  
**The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development**

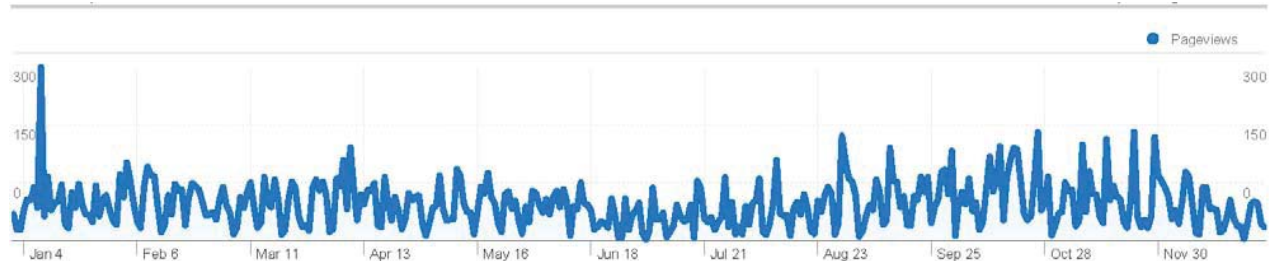


**Evolution of Northeast Center Funding, 1999-2011 (projected)**



# NERCRD Web Statistics

## The Northeast Regional Center's Website Performance January 1-December 31, 2010



178 Pages were viewed a total of 23,303 times

Content Performance	Pageviews 23,303 % of Site Total: 0.23%	Unique Pageviews 16,970 % of Site Total: 0.24%	Avg. Time on Page 00:01:27 Site Avg: 00:01:08 (27.64%)
Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
index.html (NERCRD Homepage)	4811	3565	00:03:11
about	2565	2037	00:01:17
links	2475	1878	00:01:51
publications	2061	1364	00:01:11
localfoods	1392	1011	00:01:01
social_capital	1279	726	00:03:07
land_use	1275	726	00:01:02
community development	1212	873	00:00:33
entrepreneurship	1163	838	00:00:53
diversity	394	294	00:01:16
fopconferenceregistration.html	359	296	00:02:38
sfic	319	221	00:00:55
ten_things	301	233	00:01:13
taluc	278	217	00:01:49
tred	243	137	00:22:27
marcellus shale	175	133	00:01:29
other	148	104	00:00:33
conferences2010.html	130	96	00:00:53
taluc	109	79	00:00:45
newsletter	93	79	00:01:00
poverty	93	55	00:00:42
diversity	90	80	00:02:48
issuebriefs	80	49	00:01:04
bigboxes	69	51	00:01:17
northeast_contacts	68	57	00:01:03



Wordle “word cloud” was generated from the NERCRD website, with greater prominence given to words that appear more frequently on the site.

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