

What Is a Farmshed?

A farmshed is the network of people, businesses, organizations, and productive lands that create a local food economy.

Similar in concept to a “foodshed” (www.cias.wisc.edu/foodshed), the farmshed idea helps us envision and strengthen our community's relationship with the regional landscape.



What Is Central Rivers Farmshed?

Central Rivers Farmshed is an organization representing all aspects of the food system whose members are committed to making Central Wisconsin a renowned, local food community. Farmshed works to expand the connection between local residents and their food. We strive to provide opportunities for participation, education, cooperation, and action to support a local food economy in Central Wisconsin.

We Believe:

- Food should be grown in a sustainable manner
- People should know how to buy, grow, harvest, preserve, and prepare local foods
- The public should know local farmers
- Farmers should know who eats their food

Initiatives

Through two participatory planning events (Local Food Forum, 2/28/07 and Strategic Planning for Local Foods 4/2/07) and numerous planning meetings, Central Rivers Farmshed has identified the following priority areas as fundamental to strengthening the local food economy in Central Wisconsin:

- **Food System Education:** To make wise consumer choices that support local food economies and sustain the rural landscape, the general public needs to understand the food system and perceive related issues as important to their lives. *For more information, contact Eric Olson at eric@farmshed.org.*
- **Local Eating:** To support a local food economy, we need the skills, resources, and motivation to grow, preserve, prepare, and appreciate local foods. *For more information, contact Sue Anderson at sue@farmshed.org.*
- **Farmer Capacity Building:** In exchange for locally-produced, sustainable, and nutritious food, farmers deserve a living wage and a supportive community. This, along with education and training, will attract the skilled, motivated workforce that healthy rural communities and landscapes require. *For more information, contact John Sheffy at john@farmshed.org.*
- **Local Food Networks:** Traditional local food networks have been replaced by a highly consolidated international system of food processing and distribution. By rebuilding the networks between local producers and consumers, consumers can gain access to local food and producers can gain a fair price for their products. *For more information, contact Nick Hylla at nick@farmshed.org.*
- **Public Markets:** Public places that facilitate interaction with local farmers, discussion of local foods, learning about food preparation and preservation, meeting other community members, and sharing in community events are fundamental assets that inspire local food economies and build food cultures. *For more information, contact Jeremy Solin at jeremy@farmshed.org.*
- **Nutrition for Learning and Health:** To learn and grow healthy, schoolchildren need access to nutritious food. Good food is at the center of good health. Facilitating healthy nutrition should be a primary goal of our health care providers. Schools and health care facilities could catalyze and sustain a local food economy and receive great benefit in doing so. *For more information, contact Jasia Steinmetz at jasia@farmshed.org.*

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Every river has a watershed. Every city has a farmshed.

Recommended County-Level Actions:

*As taken from "Counties and Food Systems" National Association of Counties, July 2007
Available at www.farmshed.org/resources.htm*

1. **Food Policy Councils** (Case Study: Dane County, WI)
 - Bring stakeholders together
 - Make recommendations
 - Coordinate and deliver existing programs
 - Create new programs
 - Address policy barriers
 - Community outreach

2. **Farm to School** (Case Study: Missoula County, MT)
 - Bring fresh food to school meals
 - Educate children about food
 - Instill lifelong healthy preferences
 - Support the local farm economy
 - Use less gas to transport food to schools

3. **Infrastructure Development** (Case Study: Woodbury County, IA)
 - Enable farmers to offer new products to local purchasers
 - Aid farm entrepreneurs
 - Provide incentives for a new generation of small and mid scale farmers
 - Retain existing agriculture infrastructure
 - Respond to market changes

4. **Agriculture Conservation Easements** (Case Study: Lancaster County, PA)
 - Set aside land for farming now and in the future
 - Ensure long term ability to grow local fresh foods
 - Preserve community character
 - Provide income for farmers
 - Conserve green space