RHODE ISLAND FOOD SYSTEM: KEY INDICATORS OF THE RI FOOD STRATEGY

Dashboard Methodology Report
The Rhode Island Food Strategy, published in May 2017, is an actionable vision for the future of the state’s food system. The strategy sets forth high priority activities designed to build a sustainable, equitable food system that builds on our traditions, strengths, and history while encouraging innovation and supporting the regional goal of 50 percent of the food eaten in New England be produced in the region by 2060. Read the full report here. Each goal set forth by the Food Strategy has 3-4 key indicators which were collected to show Rhode Island’s past and present food system. From these key indicators, we can determine trends, identify gaps, and envision potential growth for the future. As the data is updated, we will eventually be able to measure the impact that implementation of the Food Strategy has had on the system as a whole.

DEFINITIONS AND DATA SOURCES

PREERVE AND GROW AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

A1. Acres of land in food production
Source: USDA Census of Ag, multiple years

A2. Number of farms
Source: USDA Census of Ag, multiple years

A3. Dollar value at farmgate of food producing farms
Source: Rhode Island Plant-Based Industries and Agriculture, Spoul & Esner, 2013

A4. Dollar value of seafood + aquaculture
Sources: RI Coastal Resources Management Council, 2018; RI DEM, September 2018

SUSTAIN AND CREATE MARKETS

B1. Total agricultural sales in RI
Source: Census of Ag, multiple years

B2. Local food sold to RI institutions

B3. Number of food businesses
Sources: RIDOH licensee list, accessed November 2018; Farm Fresh RI, November 2018; Aquidneck Community Table Website, accesses November 2018; RIDOH WIC Program, November 2018

ENHANCED CLIMATE FOR FOOD BUSINESS
C1. Number of jobs in the food industry

C2. Average earnings/hour in food industry jobs

C3. Dollar amount in loans to agriculture and food businesses
Sources: A list of 11 lenders for Food Businesses and Agriculture was collected and approved by RIFPC director and RIFPC chair; RIFPC research & Evaluation Fellow contacted each lender by email and then via phone on the list asking them to provide number of loans given, average amount of loan, and total amount of loans for the years 2018, 2017, and 2016. Four of the eleven lenders responded with data for all three years, two responded with data from just 2018, and there are open conversations with three lenders; two did not respond at all.

FOOD ACCESS

D1. % people food insecure
Source: USDA ERS State Facts Sheets, multiple years

D2. census tracts without a healthy food retailer (low access communities)

D3. # people using federal nutrition programs (SNAP, WIC, school meals)
Sources: USDA FNS State Activity Reports, multiple years; RI KIDS COUNT Factbook, multiple years, RIDE

FOOD WASTE/WASTED FOOD

E1. tons of compostable waste going to the landfill
Source: RI Resource Recovery Center, 2017

E2. tons of food donated to RI Community Food Bank
Source: Data received from executive director of RI Community Food Bank on Wednesday, October 31, 2018

E3. tons of food composted
Sources: Data aggregated from The Compost Plant, Aquidneck Community Table, and Earth Care Farm, 2018