

From University to Community: Providing  
Fresh Produce to Food Insecure Urban  
Communities in Greensboro, North Carolina

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# Greensboro, North Carolina



- Greensboro: about 290k people
  - The Piedmont Triad (Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point): 1.6M people
- Demographics
  - 48.4% White, 40.6% African American, 7.5% Latino heritage, 4% Asian
  - Median household income: \$40,361



# Greensboro, a Beautiful Place



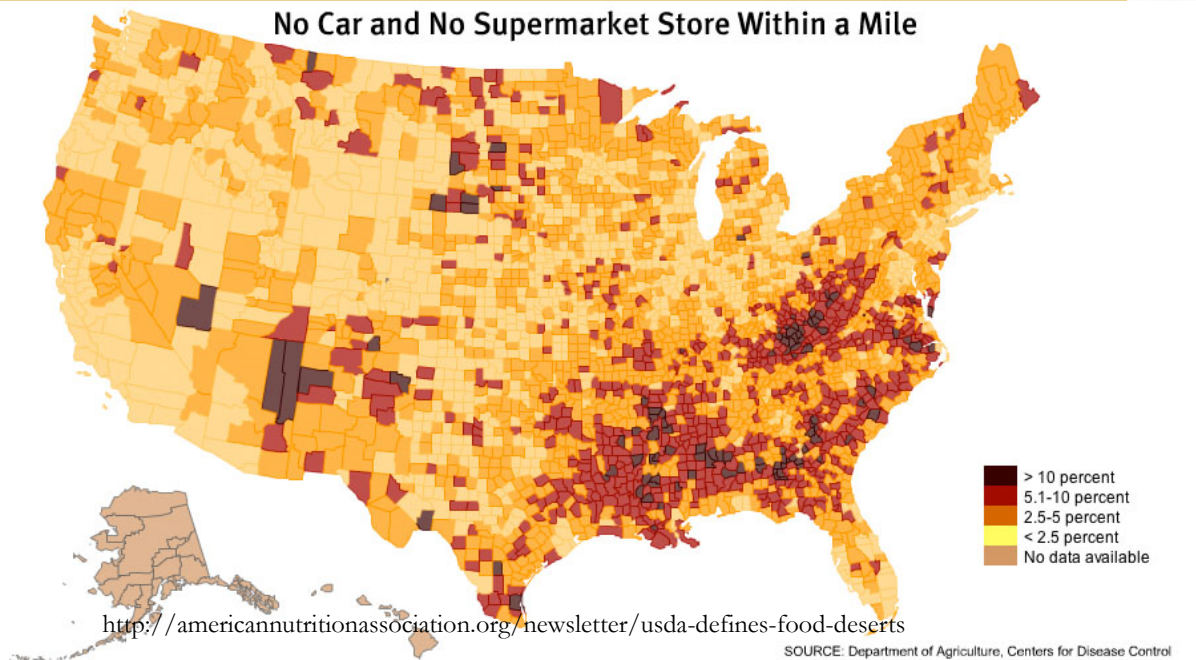
Mountains  
**Piedmont**  
Costal plain



<http://northcarolinahistory.weebly.com/geographical-regions.html>

# Greensboro/High Point, *however*

- USDA designated 24 census tracts in Guilford County as “food deserts” — 17 in Greensboro and 7 in High Point
  - No. 2 in 2013
  - No. 1 in 2014!
- The **most food insecure** municipality in the country in 2015 — by the Food Research and Action Center.



# Food Desert

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- The Healthy Food Financing Initiative Working Group considers a food desert as a low-income census tract where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store.
  - Low income
  - Low access
- By USDA, food deserts are defined as parts of the country void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers.
- **NC A&T is located adjacent to food deserts**



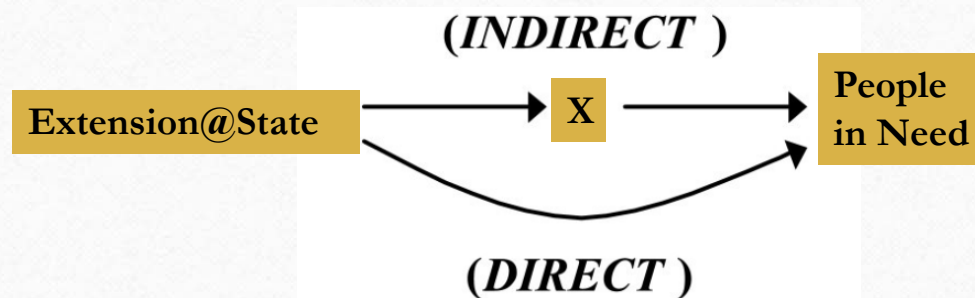
## North Carolina A&T State University --an 1890 Land Grant University in Greensboro

- The School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences started a ***Local Food Initiative*** fighting food insecurity and promoting local food production
- The Horticulture Unit at Cooperative Extension
  - Commercial vegetable and small fruit: rural and urban
    - ✓ Organic/conventional
    - ✓ Season extension with low/high tunnels
    - ✓ Farm School Program (w/ county offices)
  - Community Garden/Home Garden Projects



# Extension at County vs State Level

- Extension at the state level works with ultimate audience through agents, not **DIRECTLY**.



# Hort Unit Grant Funded Projects, produce related

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- **Developing a high tunnel vegetable calendar:** organic cucumber, tomato, pepper, lettuce, bac choy, spinach, salad mix
- **Strawberry cultivar evaluation in organic high tunnels:** organic strawberry
- **Organic Production of off-Season Day-Neutral Strawberries using Low and High Tunnels in North Carolina:** organic strawberry
- **Sustainable Organic Strawberries (SOS) with Appropriate Cultivars, Holistic Pest Management and an Understanding of Consumer Preferences:** organic strawberry
- **Practical approach to foliage pathogen control in organic tomato production through participatory breeding and integrated pest management:** organic tomato
- **Cultivar evaluations:** sweet corn, bell pepper, sweet potato, heirloom tomato...



# 3 Organic High Tunnels at A&T Research Farm hardiness zone 7





## Off-season Fruit Vegetables



Winter  
Greens





Strawberries  
available from  
November to  
April, with high  
tunnels in Zone  
7&8

# A Dilemma

- Needs for fresh produce in food desert are real, especially for off-season produce
- Restriction on fresh produce from state-owned property
  - Cannot sell
  - Food Safety
  - Liability



**Per university a/o state 'policy', produce/fruit from research projects should be **destroyed!****

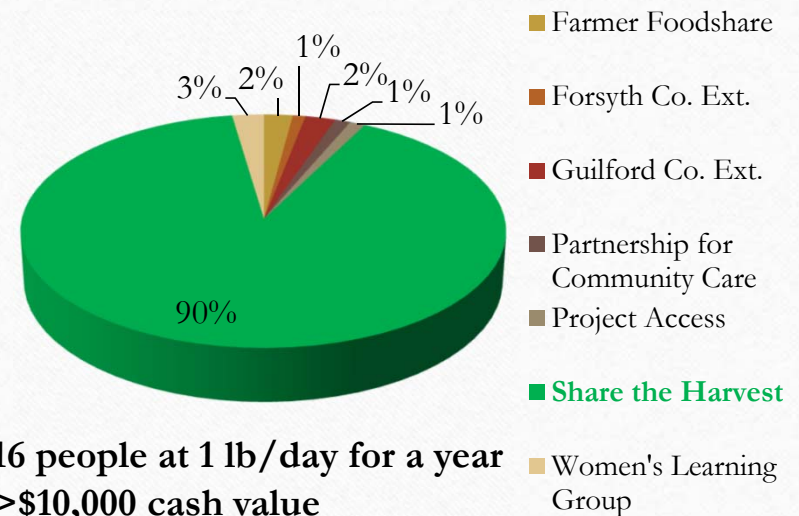
# *Share the Harvest* of Guilford County

- *Share the Harvest* began in 2011 with modest beginnings, but has grown each year to serve more and more. STH is an all volunteer organization that exists to distribute donated produce equitably to those who are hungry in our community. Through our collection sites, donors and recipient agencies, *we are reaching a portion of the food insecure population in Guilford County and helping them to receive healthy and nutritious produce.*
- In 2015, twenty local growers donated **7,733** pounds of fresh produce to 15 agencies serving those suffering from food insecurity.



## (Off-season) donations--2015

Cucumber	1162
Pepper	1714
Tomato	1373
Lettuce	342
Pac Choi	421
Spinach	110
Strawberry	217
Others	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>5739 pounds</b>



- 16 people at 1 lb/day for a year
- >\$10,000 cash value
- Provide 67% of produce for Share the Harvest

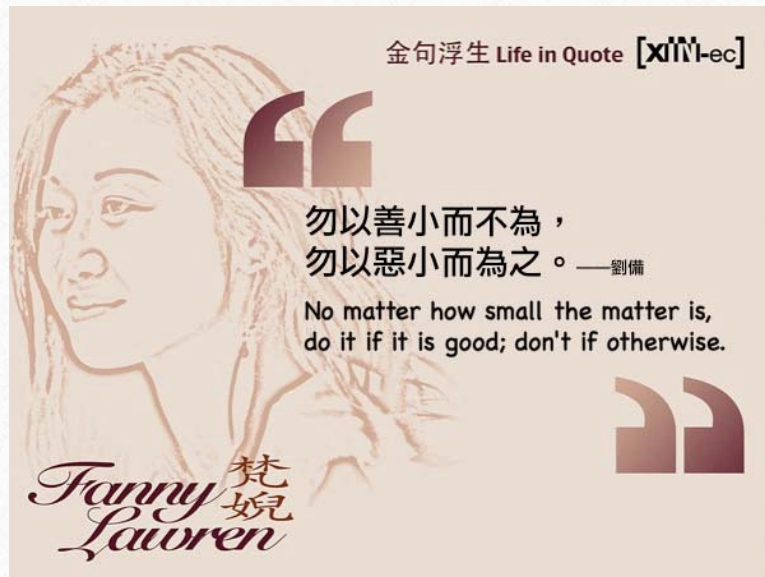
# Reaching out to the Most Needed

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- Triad Health Project - food pantry for people with AIDs
- Guilford Child Development Food Pantry - food pantry for families with children in Headstart
- Family Promise - provides housing and food for homeless families
- Mary's House - provides housing and meals for women with substance abuse issues and their children
- Servant House - provides housing and meals for homeless veterans
- New Arrivals Institute - a school for refugees who have just come to GSO
- Food Not Bombs - prepares a meal on Monday nights at the IRC
- One Step Further/Servant Center - food pantry to Greensboro and High Point
- Partnership for Community Care – donates food to people with chronic diseases and nutrition education
- Celia Phelps UMC Food Pantry
- Delancey Street – substance abuse recovery agency
- Center for New North Carolinians/Project Access & Ashton Woods Community Center (refugees: from Sudan, Iraq, Bhutan, Congo, Rwanda, Burma, Ethiopia and Eritrea)
- Remedy of Community Needs - prepares meals and distributes to low income neighborhoods
- African Services Coalition – refugee resettlement agency
- Clarette Sutton - prepares meals for about 50 kids (She serves breakfast on Mondays at City Center Park to the homeless and is involved in other feeding programs)



# Discussion



<http://fannylawren.com/start-with-small/>

- Shall we DO it? Why NOT!
  - Sounds like tiny but it means a lot to people in need!
- Food Safety
  - Organic vs conventional
  - Follow GAP protocol

# Questions/Comments?

