



Community food security: Salience and participation at community level

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Abstract. Community food security (CFS) is an incipient movement based on the re-localization of many food system activities in response to values concerning the social, health, economic, and environmental consequences of the globalizing food system. This study examines the salience of these values based on the action agendas and accomplishments emerging from community planning events in six rural counties of New York, and the nature and type of participation and local support. The study finds a high level of agreement between CFS values as articulated by national leaders in this incipient movement and the action agendas. Further evidence of the salience of these themes is seen in the levels and types of activities and accomplishments taking place 8–12 months after the planning events. However, these follow-through activities appear to have been impeded by a variety of government regulations, uneven levels of support from community organizations and agencies, and a policy environment of fiscal austerity, narrow outcome-oriented accountability, and allocation of agency staff toward special-purpose grants and contracts. Many of these constraints are likely to exist in other communities and are beyond the scope of what community volunteers and practitioners can be expected to address on their own.

Key words: Community food security, Community planning, Food system, Participation, Salience, Values

Abbreviation: CFS – community food security

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Community food security (CFS) is a term that has been in currency in the US since about 1994 (Fisher, 1997). Although multiple definitions and interpretations exist, the range of concepts includes social justice, sustainability and social acceptability of the food system, economic viability of local food system activities, and healthfulness of the local food supply. The working definition in this paper is the ability of a community to ensure that all its members have adequate access

to healthful and acceptable food through environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially desirable production, processing, and distribution systems. A closely related goal is to re-localize food system activities to the greatest extent possible, based on an appreciation of potential economic, environmental, and social benefits associated with re-localization (Campbell, 1997; Gale, 1996; Green et al., 1992; Feenstra, 1997) and based on a reaction

against the increasing concentration, vertical integration, and corporate ownership of the dominant food system (Welsh, 1997; Korten, 1998; Beus and Dunlap, 1990).

In addition to being a recent concept, CFS also has emerged as a fledgling social movement that converges with several other movements. Thus, the concern for re-localizing and re-gaining control over agricultural production and marketing may be part of the broader producer collective movements described by Welsh (1997); the community-controlled economic development described by Campbell (1997) and Shuman (1998); and the alternative agriculture, sustainable agriculture, and environmental movement more broadly (Gottlieb and Fisher, 1996; Beus and Dunlap, 1990). In addition, the social justice concern builds upon a long-standing coalition of anti-hunger interests with a broadened agenda that emphasizes the prevention of hunger, empowerment approaches, and community locus of action (Fisher, 1997).

This convergence of interests, values, and concerns has been noted by academics and practitioners and it has led to the suggestion that a more purposeful integration of agendas, discourse, and strategies be sought, in order to enhance advocacy efforts and planning approaches at the community or policy levels (Gottlieb and Fisher, 1996; Campbell, 1997). The ability to frame CFS in these broader terms was at least partly responsible for the success in influencing the 1996 Farm Bill, which authorized USDA to allocate \$16 million to community food projects over a seven year period (Fisher, 1997). There is a sense that additional benefits could accrue by fostering this integration.

Although the basis for a common agenda among these convergent movements might be readily discernible among academics and practitioners already immersed in the CFS movement, the viability of such a broad coalition of interests is still open to question. For instance, the early years of the California Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture revealed multiple sources of tension among its members, but these tensions have gradually faded over a three year period once some early accomplishments and a degree of trust was established (Campbell, 1997). Food policy councils in other settings have experienced similar tensions, in some cases leading to the dissolution of the group (Dahlberg, 1994), but at least two such councils have been sustained (MacRae, 1994; Hartford Food System, 1993). Similar experiences have been encountered in national food and nutrition planning councils in numerous developing and developed countries (Levinson, 1995; Milio, 1990). In an effort to find common ground that transcends the areas of divergence, Campbell (1997) has proposed a more radical agenda to bind these movements together, based on an

effort to assert democratic control over the food system, grassroots organizing, and mobilization of social capital.

Given the claimed movement status of CFS, and the recognized strengths that such a status might confer, the nature and extent of grassroots involvement looms as a pivotal and defining issue. Such involvement could provide public legitimacy to the values embraced by CFS proponents, distinguish it as a genuine social movement rather than a coalition of interest groups and alternative social planners, and provide the social energy required to sustain action in specific communities. These considerations highlight some important questions related to the "salience" of CFS, a term used in the policy sciences literature to refer to the meaning and intensity of concern associated with an issue (Rocheffort and Cobb, 1994; Rogers, 1988; Kingdon, 1995). Specifically, to what extent does a broad concept of CFS have salience for food system stakeholders at community level? And related to this, to what extent can issue salience be translated into grassroots participation and changes in the local food system? The present paper examines these questions based on experiences in the North Country of New York State. In addition, this paper explores some of the institutional factors at local and state levels that impinge upon efforts to foster a grassroots approach to CFS.

This case is of particular interest because it is based on a common approach to broad public engagement in each of six counties and is situated in a largely rural region, in contrast to most other CFS initiatives that have a significant urban or rural-urban focus. Although this region has its own unique features, including a strong agricultural legacy (notably dairy farming), isolation from major urban areas, and proximity to a major government-protected preserve (Adirondack Park), it was chosen because of shared interests with some community organizations (described below) rather than because of these features per se.

Project background and setting

The North Country of New York refers to the six counties that surround or are part of the Adirondack Park on the western, northern and eastern sides: Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex. As shown in Table 1, the region contains 419,000 people, of which 34% are located in urban areas and 2.4% are in farm households. The region was characterized by a March, 1996 unemployment rate of 10-12% (compared to 6.3% for the state and 4.9% for the nation) and a 1989 per capita income of \$15,800

Table 1. Socioeconomic profile of North Country counties.

	Jefferson	Lewis	St. Lawrence	Franklin	Clinton	Essex	North Country
Population (1990) '000	111	27	112	47	86	37	419
% urban	39%	13%	41%	32%	36%	11%	34%
% farm	2%	7%	2.6%	2.5%	1.5%	0.9%	2.4%
Unemployment (March, 1996)	11.2%	10.4%	10.1%	10.4%	8.2%	12.2	—
Per Capita Income (1994) '000	\$16.1	\$14.5	\$14.8	\$15.0	\$16.7	\$17.8	\$15.8
Active Farms							
1984	1410	860	2060	690	785	270	6035
1994	1050	715	1610	565	585	220	4745
1994 dairy	413	428	615	277	218	29	1980
Ag. Sales, 1992							
All commodities	\$76M	\$62M	\$94M	\$48M	\$57M	\$8M	\$346M
Dairy products	\$61M	\$55M	\$78M	\$34M	\$37M	\$4M	\$270M

Source: *Socioeconomic Profile of the North Country*, 1996 edition. William C. Merwin Rural Services Institute, SUNY, Potsdam, Potsdam, NY.

(compared to \$25,700 for the state and \$21,700 for the nation). The major sources of employment as a percent of total employment are services (23.5%), wholesale and retail trade (21.5%), and government (21%) (data not shown). Manufacturing contributes only 10% of total jobs and farming contributes only 4%. From 1973 to 1993 the region experienced an inflation-adjusted decrease of 12% in earnings per worker, compared to a 2% increase for the state as a whole and a 5% decrease for the US. The region has experienced a 21% loss in the number of active farms between 1984 and 1994, with dairy farms representing 41% of the total in 1994. In 1992, dairy products accounted for \$270 million in sales, representing 78% of all agricultural commodity sales (SUNY Potsdam, 1996).

The North Country Community Food and Economic Security Project began in early 1997 as a collaboration between the Cooperative Extension and Community Action agencies in each of the six counties of northern New York, the Division of Community Services at the New York Department of State, and Cornell University. The collaboration grew out of a series of informal discussions among county food and nutrition staff from the Cooperative Extension and Community Action agencies in late 1996, concerning the possibilities for regional collaboration on food and nutrition issues. A representative of the Department of State was involved in those discussions because that agency is one of the key funding sources for the Community Action agencies. A representative from Cornell became involved because a grant had been secured from the Centers for Disease Control and USDA making it possible to work intensively with 5–

8 counties in addressing food and nutrition security and to simultaneously study the community decision-making processes. A brainstorming and multi-voting process among all the collaborators identified public issues or public policy education as an important component of the regional approach, which had a large influence on the subsequent choice of strategy and methods. The substantive (problem) focus of the regional work was not well-defined in these early meetings, but the interests and concerns included nutrition education for low-income groups, the anticipated effects of welfare reform, the viability of farming in the region, and potential effects of NAFTA, among others.

In light of the size and diversity of the region, the broad but ill-defined nature of the food system concerns, a strong sense of localism in the region, and the desire to pursue a public issues education approach, the group decided to work as a network to help organize county-specific assessments of food system concerns prior to further discussion of potential region-wide action or collaboration.¹ On the advice of the Cornell team, the Network agreed to use the Search Conference model for the county level assessments.

Search conferences

The Search Conference is one version of a strategic visioning and planning approach for use in organizations and communities (Emery and Purser, 1996). The choice of this approach was guided by theoretical considerations grounded in the policy sciences and community development literature.² As shown in

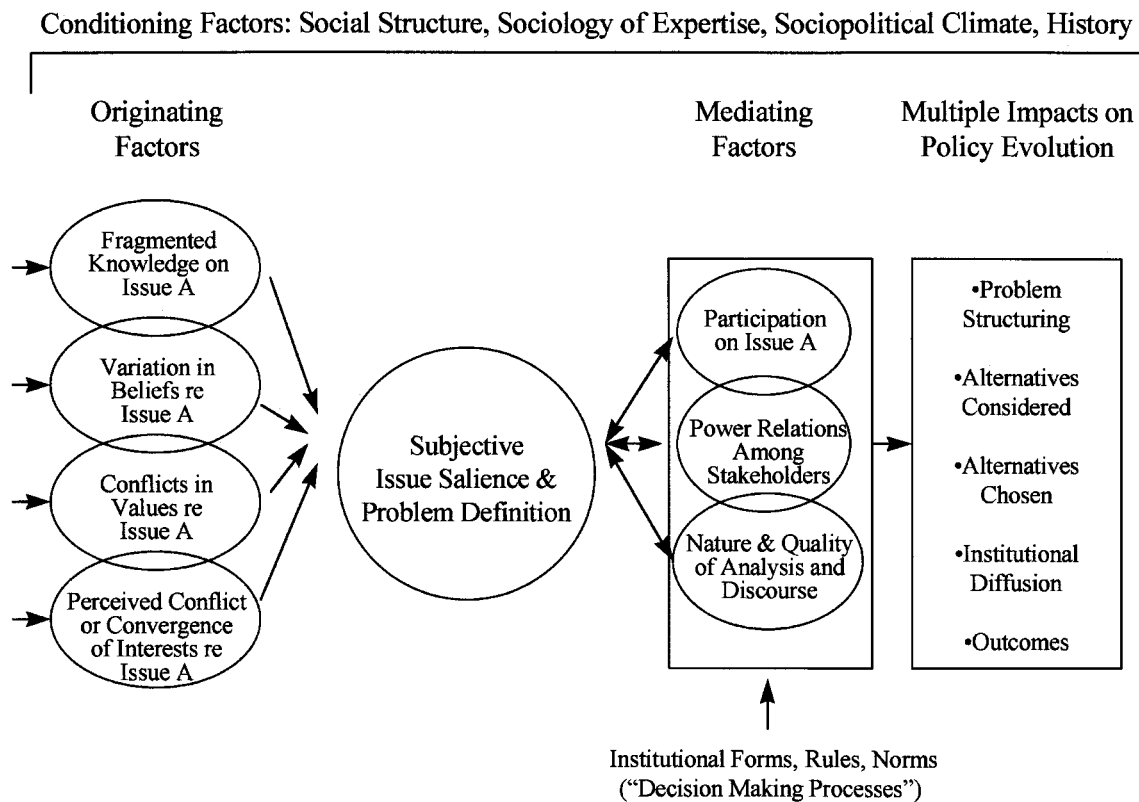


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the evolution of issues within policy communities.

Figure 1, issue salience is a central feature of this theoretical model. The model maintains that the evolution of an issue in a policy or community setting is, in a proximate sense, a function of the participation, power relations, and nature and quality of discourse, all of which are governed by institutional forms, rules, and norms. These factors, in turn, influence and are influenced by issue salience, which is also a function of the variation and distribution in values, beliefs, and perceived interests associated with the issue. Another potentially significant factor is the fragmented nature of knowledge and understandings concerning the issue, with the fragmentation being created by diversity in organizational and professional affiliation, bureaucratic and academic structures, and life experiences. All of these factors operate within and are affected by some broader sociological factors such as social structure, the sociology of expertise, the social climate, and community or organizational history.

It is important to note that this is a conceptual rather than a prescriptive model, such that the relative importance of a given factor or set of factors may vary as a function of settings, chronological time, competition with or reinforcement by concurrent events and issues, and a host of other contingencies. This conceptual model was operationalized in several ways in this

study: (a) it guided the choice of the Search Conference as a planning model; (b) it clarifies how the values associated with CFS might be translated into action and, equally important, the types of factors that might obstruct that translation (thereby facilitating interpretation of findings); and (c) it guided the choice of a methodology for assessing the salience of CFS themes among individuals and groups of stakeholders before and after the Search Conferences, as discussed in a companion paper (Pelletier et al., n.d.(a)).

In the context of this framework, the Search Conference method was used in the North Country project as an alternative set of "institutional forms, rules and norms" for agenda-setting. The organization of a Search Conference is described more fully elsewhere (Emery and Purser, 1996), but briefly, it is a two-and-a-half day event typically involving 30–50 participants who work in small groups (4–6 members) and in plenary sessions at various points in the process. As used in this project, it included the following components: (a) introductions and statement of individual expectations; (b) constructing a shared history of the local food system and the forces/events shaping it; (c) development of an ideal or desirable future for the local food system (typically giving rise to 4–6 broad goals); (d) projection of the probable future if no deliberate changes are made; (e) identifying which activities or forces should

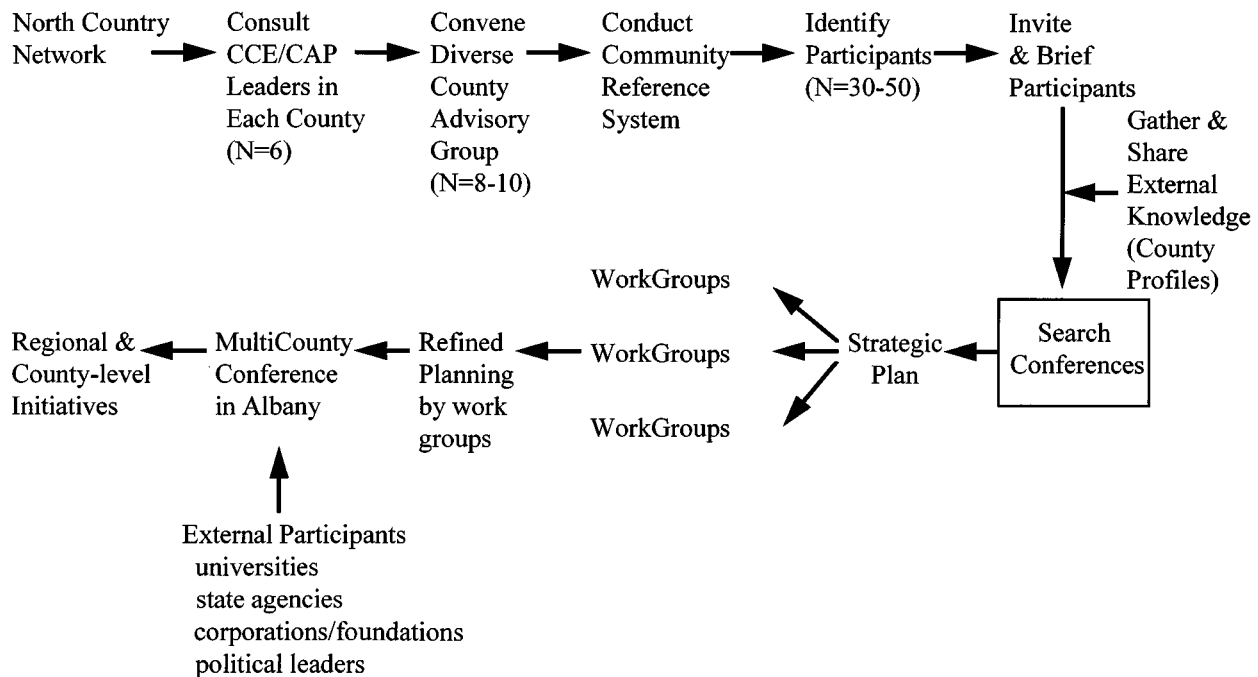


Figure 2. Overview of project implementation.

be stopped, maintained, or created to move toward the ideal future; (f) self-selection into working groups, definition of more specific goals and objectives, identification of the first action steps, and setting the next meeting date for the working groups.

The Search Conference design has several desirable features: (a) an emphasis on legitimizing and integrating knowledge of the issue domain from diverse local stakeholders; (b) an ability to foster the creation of a vision, goals, and action agendas based heavily on stakeholder values and interests, as opposed to more cognitively-oriented approaches to strategic planning; (c) a focus on helping participants to identify common ground among their respective interests and values; and (d) the emphasis it places on participatory methods, group ownership of results, and democratic participation. These characteristics are particularly useful when addressing ill-structured problems and broad problem domains that impinge upon life experiences (Dunn, 1994; Hammond, 1996; Chambers, 1997) and when the goal is to foster activation and involvement of the participants in further action planning and implementation after the initial visioning and planning event (Walzer, 1996; Hamilton, 1992; Staples, 1997).³ All of these features are evident in the conceptual model shown in Figure 1.

The Search Conference was used in this project because its design has the above-mentioned attractive features, but no claim is being made in this paper that this is the only model with these features. This is in keeping with the evaluation of experiences from

community strategic visioning programs that tend to emphasize the elements of successful approaches and pre-conditions for success, rather than the promotion of specific models per se (Walzer, 1996).

Figure 2 provides an overview of the project implementation. After the Network agreed upon the basic goals and methods for the project, the county Cooperative Extension directors and the Community Action agency directors were approached by the Cornell faculty member and the Department of State representative, respectively. These consultations assessed the willingness of these executives to have their agencies play the lead roles in convening the Search Conferences and their staff to contribute time to this effort. In all cases the directors agreed to have their agencies play this role.⁴

A county advisory group was subsequently convened, consisting of 6–12 stakeholders from across the food system. This advisory group was asked to decide whether these two agencies should proceed in convening a Search Conference on the topics of CFS and the local food system in the county and, subsequently, whether they would serve as an advisory committee during the organizational phase. In all cases, these groups agreed to proceed, sometimes after several meetings, although it proved challenging to convey the meaning of CFS and give a sense of the uniqueness of a Search Conference as a learning and planning method. The campus staff attended all these initial meetings to help explain CFS, Search Conferences, and the expectations concerning the follow-through after the Search

Table 2. Selected characteristics of search conference participants.¹

	Jefferson	Lewis	St. Lawrence	Franklin	Clinton	Essex	North Country ²
<i>Occupation</i>							
Educators	7	8	10	11	7	8	52
Nutrition	(3)	(3)	(2)	(6)	(3)	(4)	(21)
Agriculture	(1)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(9)
Environment	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(0)	(0)	(5)
Other	(2)	(3)	(5)	(1)	(3)	(3)	(17)
Adm/Mgt	9	2	7	3	1	1	23
Soc. welfare staff	5	4	2	1	2	2	16
Planners	4	2	1	1	1	0	9
All professionals	25	17	20	16	11	11	100
Dairy	7	2	1	0	2	1	13
Crop	0	1	2	3	1	0	7
Other	0	0	3	2	0	1	6
Retailers	4	2	1	3	0	1	11
Processors	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Sub-total	11	6	7	8	3	4	39
Consumers	6	2	2	6	5	6	27
Clergy	1	2	0	0	0	1	4
Legislators	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	44	27	29	30	19	22	171
<i>Age</i>							
<30	1	1	3	5	2	0	12 (7%)
30–39	6	7	5	4	5	4	31 (18%)
40–49	14	8	10	11	2	11	56 (33%)
50–59	13	5	7	7	5	3	40 (23%)
60+	10	6	4	3	5	4	32 (19%)
<i>Gender</i>							
Female	25	19	20	25	6	6	118 (69%)
Male	19	8	9	5	13	16	53 (31%)
<i>Education</i>							
≤ H.S.	9	7	4	6	0	3	29 (17%)
Some Coll.	20	2	5	6	6	9	46 (27%)
Bachelor's Degree	7	6	7	9	3	3	35 (21%)
Post-Bach.	8	12	13	9	10	7	59 (35%)

¹This table refers to those participants that participated in the research component of the project. There were an additional 35 individuals that participated in the Search Conferences but not the research component.

²This column includes retired individuals as follows: educators (4), admin/managers (2), social welfare staff (1), producers (2), retailers (1) and consumers (6).

Conferences. Among other responsibilities, the advisory committees helped to identify 30–50 participants for the Search Conference and develop the search question that guided each conference.⁵

All of the Search Conferences took place between October, 1997 and March, 1998 and, together, led to the formation of 34 working groups across the region, with most of these working groups meeting for one or several times after the Search Conference to refine their planning and implement specific actions. In May, 1998, a two-day multi-county event was held in Albany that served several purposes: to allow working group members to learn about the plans from other counties; to identify potential partnerships across counties; and to identify potential sources of technical, financial, or policy support by meeting with representatives from state agencies, North Country legislators, statewide food and farm organizations, and Cornell specialists.

Project experiences

A. Participation

Table 2 shows the age, gender, education, and occupational distributions of the Search Conference participants across the six counties. With respect to occupations, 100 of the participants (representing 58% of the total) are professionals, including 52 community or school system educators, 23 administrators or managers, and 16 social welfare staff. The second largest category consists of producers, retailers, and processors, representing 39 participants, or 23% of the total, with 26 of these being producers. The third largest category, which includes 27 participants, consists of consumers (representing those with no other identifiable connection to the food system). Thus, 89% of participants belong to one of three broad occupational categories (professionals, producers, and consumers). In addition to these categories, there were four clergy and one legislator. As shown, certain participant occupations are unevenly distributed across the six counties, such as administrator/managers (being more common in Jefferson and St. Lawrence), social welfare staff, planners, and dairy farmers (all common in Jefferson), retailers (common in Jefferson and Franklin) and consumers (relatively under-represented in Lewis and St. Lawrence). These data further reveal that the participants tend to be predominantly female (69%), older than 40 years (75%) and often well-educated (with 56% having at least a bachelor's degree).

From the perspective of community decision-making and food system stakeholders, some of the

groups that appear particularly under-represented are legislators, retailers, processors and regional brokers or distributors. The composition of the participating groups reflect the net effects of several constraints facing the Search Conference planning groups in each county: the time-consuming nature of the Peer Reference System when applied in a community (as opposed to an organizational setting); the high refusal rate among certain stakeholders due to the scheduling requirements of their work and/or the low perceived relevance of the Search Conference to their enterprise (particularly relevant for the retailers and processors); and some gaps in the master list as compiled by the organizers. Given the initial interest in public policy education as expressed by members of the regional network during the early planning phases, the virtual absence of local elected officials is of particular interest.

B. Action agendas

Table 3 summarizes the main themes contained in the goals and objectives formed in each of the six Search Conferences. Consumer education, strengthening local markets (for local products), and strengthening the economic viability of agriculture were themes that emerged in all six counties. Strengthening regional markets (for local or regional products), improving access to healthy local foods, and anti-hunger efforts were identified in five counties. Strengthening external markets (for local or regional products), diversifying production (beyond dairy), developing local/ regional food processing, supporting family and community gardens, and legislative/government liaison were each identified in four counties. Providing food system education, ensuring clean, safe water, and strengthening family and community values were each identified in 2–3 counties.

The major conclusions to be derived from these results are (1) the Search Conference participants identified some substantial areas for change in their local food systems; and (2) there is a great deal of agreement across counties with respect to many of the desired changes, despite considerable variation in county circumstances and occupational composition of participants (Table 2).

What this figure fails to reveal is the depth of feeling that underlies many of these themes, at least for some participants. Many of the small and large group sessions during the Search Conferences included passionate and at times emotional descriptions of experiences from former welfare recipients, struggling dairy farmers, and consumers, as well as spirited debates over the roles of government versus communities and citizens in causing or addressing the food system

issues under discussion. A frequently voiced remark at the Search Conferences was to the effect “*I never knew that others felt the way I do about these issues.*” Some direct quotes follow:

Define the small farmer . . . I really meant that to be even more poignant than the obvious because I feel that there have been actual suicides as a result of the fact that the small farmer was driven out. Maybe it didn't look that way and maybe it wasn't interpreted that way at the time, but there were people who could just not go on and live a life unless they could live it from the land.

The poor have an extra stress on them, as I see it in the last couple of years, especially to balance their financial resources with need . . . poor people are more stressed to balance that and it is not going to get any better.

It is important to note that the themes in Table 3 are the product of two linked stages in the Search Conference. First, during the “ideal future” session the participants divided into 4–7 small groups to generate the attributes of an ideal future (guided by the search question shown at the bottom of Table 3), which were merged into a common set of “ideal future” attributes in a subsequent plenary session. The use of 4–7 small groups, all of whom are working on the same ideal future visioning process, involves purposeful redundancy to ensure that all important attributes are identified. Since there is no explicit censoring or rejecting of attributes during those sessions, the themes in Table 3 are intended to represent the universe of local food system attributes considered “ideal” by participants in each Search Conference.⁶ In a second phase, participants self-select to work on those themes or theme-clusters of greatest interest to them. It is at this stage that more concrete goals and objectives are formed and are likely to be shaped to suit the values and interests of particular sub-groups of stakeholders who have chosen to work in each small group. The results shown in Table 3 are taken from the written output from these latter groups and, thus, should reflect individual and organizational interests more closely than the relatively abstract ideal future attributes. This narrowing and re-directing of the focus from abstract ideals to more concrete goals and objectives by those participants with a self-identified stake in the issues is a purposeful feature of the Search Conference that is intended to increase the likelihood of continued engagement in the change process after the Search Conference. However, the extent to which this actually occurs depends upon a variety of factors as discussed below.

C. Satisfaction

According to the conceptual model shown in Figure 1, one of the factors affecting continued engagement after the Search Conference is likely to be the extent of satisfaction with the participatory process and whether/how the issues with greatest salience to various participants have been addressed. Mid-way through the Search Conferences, participants were asked to identify the issues they were personally most interested in and to provide open-ended feedback on how well they felt those issues were addressed during the large group and small group discussions. In addition, they were asked if they felt any of the large group or small group sessions were dominated by one or a few individuals.

Table 4 shows that 28–30% of participants felt their issues were very well-addressed in small and large group sessions and another 26–30% felt their issues were well-addressed. An additional 20% felt their issues were somewhat addressed or rated them as only “fair.” Only 6–8% felt that their issues were not addressed at all or not adequately addressed. In response to the question concerning domination of discussion by a few individuals, 50% of participants felt that this had occurred in the large group sessions and 26% felt it had occurred in the small group sessions. Many (but by no means all) of these participants included additional comments, however, indicating that they were not particularly bothered by this, because they learned from these individuals, expected some degree of this and/or considered it an annoyance rather than a major impediment to discussion.

In addition to these mid-conference evaluations, participants provided feedback at the end of the conference, including two items indicative of their global satisfaction with the conference. Table 4 shows that 90% of participants stated they would advise a friend to participate in a Search Conference and 96% stated they would be willing to meet again with the rest of the participants to discuss what had been accomplished with the action plans. Taken together, these results reveal strikingly high levels of global satisfaction with the Search Conferences by the end of the final day, as illustrated by two answers to the question, “What did you like about the Search Conference?”

The feeling that this is a problem we can fix. We didn't need the government to tell us how.

People and their dreams! Watching and listening to ideas and ideologies that confront real people and real problems.

Use of small groups, including everyone's input. Sorting out of interests, and then working together with a like-minded group on practical actions.

Table 3. North Country community food and economic security: Goals and objectives identified at search conferences.

Issue area	Jefferson	Lewis	St. Lawrence	Franklin	Clinton	Essex
1. Education						
– Consumer Ed.	X	X	X	X	X	X
– Food System Ed.	—	—	X	X	X	—
2. Strengthen Markets						
– Local	X	X	X	X	X	X
– Regional	X	—	X	X	X	X
– External	X	—	X	—	X	X
3. Diversify Production	X	X	X	—	—	X
4. Develop Food Processing	X	—	—	X	X	X
* Strengthen Economic Viability of Agriculture	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Improve Access to	X	X	X	X	X	—
6. Support Family and Community Gardens	X	X	X	—	X	—
7. Strengthen Anti-Hunger Efforts	X	X	X	—	X	X
8. Strengthen Family & Community Values, Employment & Welfare Transition	X	X	X	—	—	—
* Ensure Clean, Safe Water Supply	—	X	—	—	X	—
* Legislative/ Government Liaison	X	(X)	(X)	X	X	X

Search Questions:

Jefferson: What should our local community food system be like in the year 2005?

Lewis: What should our local community food system be like in the year 2002?

St. Lawrence: How should our local food system work in the year 2020?

Franklin: Who's feeding you and what are you eating?

Clinton: How can we build a stronger community through better management of local food resources?

Essex: How should our local food system look and work in the next five years?

Notwithstanding this overall positive tenor in the open-ended evaluation results, there also is some evidence from the mid-conference evaluation (Table 3) that participation in group discussions were sometimes dominated by certain individuals, and dissatisfaction by one-quarter to one-third of participants concerning the extent to which their issues had been addressed up to that point. These quotes are illustrative:

A couple of people tried to monopolize the agenda – thanks for moving them along.

The small group I was in contained some competitive persons who weakened the group process but I can't think of a cure for that.

Table 4. Summary of search conference evaluations by participants.

Item	Jefferson	Lewis	St. Lawrence	Franklin	Clinton	Essex	All
Would advise a friend to participate in a SC? ¹	N/A N/A	25/27 93%	23/28 82%	26/29 90%	18/20 90%	24/25 96%	116/129 90%
Willing to meet again to discuss accomplishment? ¹	35/35 100%	N/A N/A	26/29 90%	18/20 90%	20/20 100%	25/25 100%	124/129 96%
How well were my issues addressed? ²							
In large group:							
Blank	3	5	3	4	3	9	27 (15%)
Not well	2	1	2	7	1	2	15 (8%)
Somewhat/fair/insufficient time	7	2	12	7	4	4	36 (20%)
OK/good/well	11	4	8	6	12	5	46 (26%)
Very well	19	6	11	5	4	8	53 (30%)
Totals	42	18	36	29	24	28	177 (100%)
In small groups:							
Blank	4	4	6	4	3	30	30 (17%)
Not well	3	1	2	3	1	10	10 (6%)
Somewhat/fair/insufficient time	8	3	6	10	4	33	33 (19%)
OK/good/well	9	4	11	7	13	54	54 (30%)
Very well	18	6	11	5	3	50	50 (28%)
Totals	42	18	36	29	28	177	177 (100%)
Was discussion dominated by some individuals? ²							
In large group:							
No	17	5	3	4	4	2	35 (27%)
Yes	17	7	22	5	8	6	65 (50%)
Blank	8	3	4	5	6	3	29 (22%)
Totals	42	15	29	14	18	11	129 (100%)
In small groups:							
No	17	5	4	3	5	1	35 (27%)
Yes	6	4	7	5	9	2	33 (26%)
Blank	19	6	18	6	4	8	61 (47%)
Totals	42	15	29	14	18	11	129 (100%)

¹From end of conference evaluation.²From mid-conference evaluation.

D. Follow-through

Whereas the above results are suggestive that a variety of local food system issues are considered salient in each county and that most participants have a high degree of satisfaction with the process and the emerging agenda, these factors do not ensure translation of Search Conference goals and objectives into action. Some of the indicators related to the follow-through after the Search Conferences are the continued engagement in working group meetings after the Search Conference; actions taken after the Search Conference; attendance at the multi-county conference in Albany; and the degree of support for pursuing these goals and objectives as expressed by local agencies and organizations. These are summarized below.

Table 5 summarizes the available information on the continued engagement of each of the 34 working groups after the Search Conference. As shown, a total of 194 people joined one of the 34 work groups at the end of the Search Conference. During the subsequent months, 27 of these groups met at least once and 13 of these were still active 8–12 months after their Search Conference (with an additional 4 groups having merged with more active groups). Twenty-two of these groups sent at least one member to the multi-county conference in Albany in May, 1998, representing 42 people in total.⁷

Table 6 illustrates some of the accomplishments in each county following the Search Conferences. As shown, the Search Conferences stimulated a variety of activities in the counties, including some with immediate results (most commonly an expansion in donated foods from local sources, often in very creative ways), some with the potential for longer-term benefits (e.g., increased media coverage, school/community education, and enhanced coordination and networking) and others best viewed as exploratory (e.g., related to expansion of local food processing and marketing). In some cases, the local initiatives have captured the attention of state or regional officials who have expressed a desire to expand them to more communities (e.g., the Department of Environmental Conservation has expressed interest in the St. Lawrence deer project and the Office of Children and Family Services has expressed interest in identifying community food-related projects for engaging youth in community service). In many other cases, however, work groups have discovered a wide range of local, state, and federal regulations that hinder implementation of the desired changes (e.g., regulations related to food safety in local food processing and expanding the marketing and access to local food in schools, prisons, and other local institutions).

Discussion

This paper has presented the key findings from a two-year project in several rural counties whose purpose was to provide an opportunity for community members to collectively reflect upon their local food system, identify any issues that may concern them, and mobilize themselves to undertake those actions that they deem feasible and desirable. It is important to note that no attempt is being made in this study to generalize the findings pertaining to salience to other parts of New York or the country.

The guiding philosophy in this project was that the role of the external institutions (campus-based Cornell staff and Department of State) was to help communities convene the Search Conferences, but that all other decisions should be left to the county advisory groups (notably, deciding who should attend and the development of the Search Question) and the Search Conference participants (i.e., identifying the priority concerns, the action agendas, and the degree and nature of any follow-up actions). The resources for follow-up actions have come from the time, talents, and connections of the participants, their organizations, and any external resources or support they could mobilize. There was a clear understanding from the beginning that the current grant was only intended to support the Search Conference and the multi-county conference in Albany.

The theoretical interest in this paper is to gain insights into the interpretation and salience of "Community Food Security" from the perspective of diverse community members in this region and to identify factors that may foster or impede local efforts to bring the local food system into closer alignment with the ideals expressed at the Search Conference. Far from being an academic concern, a focus on local salience provides a lens for examining the local legitimacy and social acceptability of externally-derived goals (e.g., "CFS" as defined here), and the responsiveness of local agencies and organizations to locally-salient issues. In addition, there is considerable practical interest in documenting the action agendas and accomplishments from this community-driven approach, as contrasted with a more vertically-directed approach such as a categorical grants program (e.g., disease-specific public health grants and promotion of commodity-specific agricultural goals). The latter often define problems considered salient to external institutions and/or only a narrow portion of the community, typically uses time-limited resources to stimulate attention to those problems, may not foster local ownership, and may not be sustainable beyond the time frame of the external grant (Wallerstein and Bernstein 1994; Dixon and Sindall 1994; Green and Frankish 1996).

Table 5. Summary of post-conference activity.

County	Work group	Number of members	Met at least once?	No. members at 5/98 Albany Conference	Still active? (As of 11/98)
Jefferson (10/97)	Education	9	Y	1	Y
	Processing & Marketing	6	Y	1	Y
	Legis. Initiative	8	Y	1	N
	Surplus Distrib.	6	Y	1	N
	New Agric.	5	Y	2	N
	Family and Community Values	7	Y	1	Merged
Lewis (10/97)	Education	7	Y	0	Y
	Agriculture	7	Y	0	N
	Food Access	8	Y	1	?
	Community Anti-hunger Commitment	5	Y	0	?
	Water Quality	2	N	0	N
St. Lawrence (2/98)	Education	6	Y	3	Y
	Community and Family Gardens	5	Y	2	Y
	Local Markets	6	Y	0	Y
	Viable Farming	4	Y	1	Y
	Healthy, Accessible Food	6	Merged	0	Merged
	Community Building	3	Y	2	Y
	Anti-Hunger	6	Y	1	N
	Transportation	4	N	0	N
Franklin (2/98)	Farming & Marketing	14	Y	5	Y
	Education	12	Y	6	N
	Legis. Initiative	3	Y	0	N
	Processing & Marketing	2	Y	0	Merged
Clinton (3/98)	Education	4	Y	2	Y
	Processing & Marketing	5	Y	2	Y
	Food Access & Safety	8	Y	4	Y
	Viability and Appreciation of Farming	6	Y	2	Merged
Essex (3/98)	Education	9	Y	1	N
	Distribution Center	3	N	1	N
	Resource Guide	4	N	0	N
	Marketing	3	Y	0	N
	Preservation	3	N	0	N
	Funding	3	N	1	N
	Food Access	5	Y	1	Y
Total counts	34 groups	194 people	27 yes	22 groups 42 people	13 groups still active

Table 6. Illustration of some post-search conference accomplishments.

County and work group	Accomplishments
Jefferson	
Education	Coordinated the 1998 World Food Day Conference at Jefferson Community College.
Surplus Food Distribution	Ongoing coordination with the Community Action Planning Council to assess problems people perceive in receiving surplus food; searching for community garden sites on a bus route; increasing the recovery of food in the county by coordinating new resources (e.g., trucks, volunteers).
Processing and Marketing	Explored establishing a local food processing business for local dairy/beef/poultry farmers.
New Agriculture (Research and Development)	Developed small acre plots around the county to research specific new products that can be grown.
Lewis	
Education	Publishes a monthly nutrition article, Tasty Topics, in a regular column of the local newspapers (<i>Journal</i> and the <i>Republican</i>).
Food Access	Coordination with the FoodSense Project: purchases food in bulk (\$30.00 value of groceries) for low-income families. Hunters for the hungry: hunters donate local meat to food pantries but must go through licensed food processors (fee is tax deductible).
St. Lawrence	
Community Connections	Two heifers were donated by a local farmer to two food pantries: St. James Food Pantry and Gouverneur Neighborhood Center resulting in 225# of hamburger meat for needy families. This local farmer is raising a beef/year for future donations. Deer project: sportsmen, farmers, food processors, DEC, food pantry representatives brought together to reduce the deer population “nuisance wildlife” and donate the meat (along with freezers and refrigerators) to local food pantries. Community gardens and schools: seed donations requested by Agway and other stores. Volunteer tillers sought for the gardens.
Education	SeedCorn is trying to set up a small-scale food processor’s group.
Community Gardens	Canton Central School established a garden and hired a student to coordinate its efforts.
Other	In collaboration with the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), CCE St. Lawrence County submitted a proposal to the 1998 USDA Community Food Projects Grant to fund a pilot program in this county, consisting of a variety of food system projects based on the six-county SC goals. The program was to be expanded to the other North Country counties in the second year.
Franklin	
Farm Viability	Distribution of Thanksgiving baskets to needy members within the farm community.
Farming and Marketing	Locally produced products team visited the Adirondack Kitchen in Plattsburgh to learn about it in order to see the feasibility of establishing a satellite community kitchen in Malone. Explored creating new farmers’ market sites in partnership with Stewart’s convenience stores.
Education	Grant-writing to implement specific projects
Processing and Marketing	Consulted with local sheep growers and USDA Cooperative Specialist as to the feasibility of serving the Kosher markets in NYC.
Clinton	
Education	Celebration of Earth Day. The New Land Trust has helped to get a community garden linked up with a high school in Plattsburgh.

Table 6. Continued.

County and work group	Accomplishments
	Agriculture in the classroom and after-school projects.
Processing and Marketing	Letter was sent out to approximately 500 producers and processors in NYS with a brief questionnaire to link up and promote more value-added activities.
	Working on a regional seal for marketing in the Adirondack region.
Food Access and Safety	Investigate the needs for enhancing gleaning efforts in the county and for establishing new soup kitchens in different areas of the county.
Essex	
Food Access	Created a community "fellowship" kitchen in Westport that provides meals twice a month to the young, elderly, single parent families with children, and disabled persons who meet the financial requirements of 185% of the federal poverty level.
Education	Distributed a questionnaire to health care/nutrition service providers to explore what types of education programs are currently provided.

In considering the question of salience, the experiences in this project, as in others (Green and Deller 1996), suggest a need to distinguish two aspects: (1) the specific aspects of local food systems that are salient to community stakeholders; and (2) the intensity of concern or salience that exists, as manifested by the degree of follow-up action to address various issues.⁸

1. Salient issues

Although the Search Conference (notably the shared history, ideal future, and probably future phases) identified a wide variety of local food system issues and concerns that are more fully documented elsewhere,⁹ in the later phases of the process these are converted into a more specific set of goals and objectives as summarized in Table 3. During this conversion process, some issues become grouped under larger objectives and others are deleted through a process analogous to natural selection when participants decide which, if any, work group to join at the end of the Search Conference. This has the net effect of identifying priorities based on a criterion of salience (reflecting participants' knowledge, values, beliefs, and interests) as opposed to an instrumentally rational prioritization characteristic of other strategic planning processes (Ayres, 1996). Thus, the issues identified in Table 3 are taken to represent a set of locally salient issues as expressed in the absence of any strong influence from external institutions and interests, and conditional upon the assumption that any differential power and participation taking place within the Search Conferences did not preclude the emergence of action agendas salient to less powerful participants. In this regard it is relevant to note that the Search Conference

evaluations (Table 4) reveal moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the process and with the attention given to personally important issues, among most participants, suggesting that the formal agenda-setting processes at the SC were satisfactory to the majority.¹⁰

As reflected in Table 3, many of the themes associated with "CFS" emerged as goals and objectives in the action agendas from these Search Conferences and there was a high degree of similarity across counties even though they did not know of each others' results beforehand. Specifically, the action agendas reflect a strong interest in re-localizing many food system activities, strengthening the economic viability of local agriculture, improving access to healthful local foods, strengthening anti-hunger efforts, and strengthening education about larger food system issues in addition to consumer/nutrition education.¹¹ There also was a clear recognition of the need to liaise more effectively with local, state, and federal governments to pursue some of these goals. Thus, at this most general level, this study suggests that the themes associated with the CFS movement do have salience among the participants at these Search Conferences.

It is important to note that the participants at these Search Conferences were not selected to be representative of the general community. Rather, most were selected because of their role or interest in the local food system and/or in the community in general. However, analysis of Q methodology results provided by these participants several weeks before and after the Search Conferences reveals significant variation in the levels of concern for social justice and the environmental and social dimensions of the food system across categories of food system stakeholders, and the level of concern for these dimensions *diminished*

after the Search Conferences (Pelletier et al., forthcoming). However, none of these concerns are unique to one particular stakeholder category. Thus, while the participants cannot be considered numerically representative of the larger community, it appears that the diversity among participants in this study was sufficient to reveal the nature of their concerns and these are taken to be indicative of what might be found in the community at large.

2. *Accomplishments*

The translation of concerns and action objectives into accomplishments is a more stringent test of salience for individuals, organizations, and communities, and depends upon several factors:

- the intensity of concern;
- the degree to which organizational decision-makers have been involved in identifying the concerns and/or acquired the concerns through discussions with their staff or other participants;
- competing issues and priorities in the lives of people, organizations, and communities; access to resources to pursue the desired changes; and
- community and organizational politics that influence the support for or resistance to proposed changes.

As shown in Tables 5 and 6, 13 of the 34 work groups (plus four groups that merged with others) were still active eight to twelve months after the Search Conferences and 19 of the work groups had taken steps to pursue their objectives. Some groups investigated (or still are investigating) the feasibility of taking certain actions while other groups have already implemented some of their actions. While a more detailed documentation of their experiences has not yet been conducted, the available information reveals: (a) a variety of local, state, and federal regulations have impeded many local actions that otherwise could be implemented within locally available resources; (b) support from local agencies and organizations has been uneven; (c) despite these obstacles, many of the groups have persisted in pursuing their goals and have made impressive achievements; and (d) the experiences of these groups conforms precisely to that described in the community development literature (Dixon and Sindall, 1994; Hawe, 1994), by employing local concepts of "success," using non-linear planning and action processes, and adopting a pace of work that often frustrates external institutions.

The following quotes illustrate some of these points, taken from written comments from participants in two counties after reviewing an earlier version of this paper:

There is another dimension of the project that, unfortunately, does not lend itself to study at this time, yet it may be the cornerstone of future outcomes from the conference. I am referring to the community building and personal self-esteem building effect of the experience for most participants. The project spawned a type of integration among participants that bypassed institutions and suggested to individuals that they were capable of solving community problems by calling on each others abilities and good will. In many cases the organizations that initially supported the project seemed later to discourage members from pursuing it after the Albany conference.

I think several key people from the conference, and most are not agency people but individuals, have stepped forward to carry ideas back to their communities, organizations, churches, and friends. These ideas have not fallen on fallow ground rather they have grown, changed, adapted, and are coming to fruition. I also think that they encompass a greater whole need beyond Community Food Security and look at Home, Health, and general Well-Being issues as well. Each time I participate in something I always come away in awe of what is being done and by whom. The more connections that are made between groups the more accomplishments are seen.

The thoughts contained in these quotes are remarkably suggestive of concepts discussed in the recent community development literature, including social capital (Putnam, 1993) and assets-based planning (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). The implicit recognition of social capital-building processes reflected in these quotes is similar to the findings from an evaluation of several mid-western community strategic visioning programs, in which the most frequently cited definition of success (62% of participants) involved process-oriented and qualitative outcomes rather than tangible accomplishments (Gruidl, 1996). In that study, the social capital factor mentioned most often is the constructive involvement of many people in the community.

In addition to acknowledging social capital dimensions, the above quotes confirm other observations during project implementation in suggesting that ongoing support from local and external institutions is one of the important factors that fosters or impedes the translation of local food system concerns into action. In the present case, more than half of the SC participants were professionals working in local institutions and with varying degrees of discretion in their job responsibilities. Despite this heavy involvement of professionals, 21 of the 34 work groups were no

longer active 8–12 months after the Search Conferences. While some professionals were undoubtedly instrumental in fostering some of the positive accomplishments, there also were known instances in which the active involvement of professionals on certain groups acted as a deterrent to citizen participation because of attempts to align the activities of the working group with the goals or interests of one particular agency or program. These experiences suggest that continued participation by professionals may serve to support or impede the change processes envisioned at the Search Conferences, depending upon the nature of that participation.

These tensions between citizens and professionals/agencies in the definition and pursuit of community development are similar to those discussed in other contexts (McKnight, 1995; Hoffman, 1989; Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1994; Chambers, 1994; Walzer, 1996; Minkler, 1997). Although much of this literature tends to emphasize characteristics of professionals themselves and their agencies (e.g., presumed superiority of expert knowledge, lack of background, skill, and experience in community development approaches, narrow focus on the agency's mission and goals), in the present case such factors appear to provide only a partial explanation. Based on observations and informal discussions with some agency staff during project implementation, a more satisfactory framework in this case is that described by Heaver (1982), who analyzed the reasons for an apparent "coalition of indifference" toward the needs of the poor in rural areas of developing countries. Heaver's framework extends the analysis to the pressures and incentives originating from higher levels within the organization, the administrative state and from community clients and stakeholders outside the organization. In the present case, which might be interpreted as a "coalition of indifference" to community-generated food system goals, such an analysis would focus attention on: real and/or threatened cuts in funding of local agencies from local, state, and federal sources; an increasing tendency to direct staff resources toward special purpose grants and contracts (i.e., reduced discretion); and an often narrow and short-sighted definition of program objectives in order to comply with GPRA¹² and/or justify budget requests at local and state levels. These factors, combined with the fact that many of the goals and objectives emanating from the Search Conferences did not conform to the customary objectives and client groups of these agencies and were not linked to the agencies' normal planning cycles, are likely to have exacerbated the more general tendencies of professionals and their agencies described in the above-cited literature. It is not possible to provide a specific accounting of the

nature and extent of these systemic constraints at this time, although a more systematic follow-up study is planned.

Pending confirmation by future study, this North Country experience suggests a number of conclusions. First, what may be most remarkable is *not* that 21 of the 34 working groups had become inactive within 8–12 months post-Search Conference but that 13 of them were still active and an impressive level of accomplishments had already been amassed. Thus, even using the more stringent "accomplishments criterion" for assessing salience, these experiences would suggest that the structure and functioning of the local food system (or portions thereof) is a highly salient issue to at least some members of these rural communities. Second, although the Search Conferences appear effective in bringing to the surface broadly-held values and concerns regarding a rather diffuse domain (in this case the local food system) and translating these into goals and objectives, this project confirms the conclusions from other strategic visioning programs that staff support for follow-through planning and implementation is a critical requirement for success (Walzer, 1996). Whereas this staff support was provided by community agencies in other settings, this did not emerge in any of the counties in the present case due to some of the systemic factors noted above. Thus, based on the information available at present, this project appears to highlight the important role that systemic factors play in constraining the ability of community members, including citizens, professionals, and their agencies, from bringing about the desired changes in their local food system. Many of these systemic factors are of a generic nature (e.g., regulations, GPRA, fiscal pressures, fragmented agency agendas) and constrain community action in many domains other than the food system. Addressing these factors would require a much larger effort on the part of government and non-governmental institutions if CFS, accessible health care, welfare transitions, and other community-based goals are to be fulfilled.

Conclusions

In this study, the salience of CFS themes is conceived as a function of the knowledge, values, beliefs, and interests of a diverse set of food system stakeholders. This study has assessed salience by analyzing the action agendas emerging from intensive community planning events and the experiences and accomplishments in the months following those events. This is considered a stronger and more realistic assessment of salience than more traditional surveys or needs assessments and is consistent with the notion from

democratic theory that a sense of the collective will can only be gained through a process of democratic deliberation (Pelletier et al., n.d.(b)). The study finds a high level of agreement between the CFS themes as articulated by national leaders in this incipient movement and the action agendas emerging from deliberative planning events in each of six rural counties, although a parallel study using different methods reveals significant variation among stakeholder groups in their level of concern for social justice, economic and environmental or social dimensions of the food system (Pelletier et al., forthcoming). Further evidence of the salience of these themes is seen in the levels and types of activities and accomplishments taking place 8–12 months after the planning events. However, these follow-through activities appear to have been impeded by a variety of government regulations, uneven levels of support from community organizations and agencies, and a policy environment of fiscal austerity, narrow outcome-oriented accountability, and allocation of agency staff toward special-purpose grants and contracts. Many of these constraints are likely to exist in other communities and are beyond the scope of what community volunteers and practitioners can be expected to address on their own.

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Notes

1. The food and nutrition staff from Cooperative Extension and Community Action Agencies decided to refer to themselves as the North Country Community Food and Economic Security Network, hereafter referred to as "The Network." This decision was reached after extensive consideration of numerous alternative names including CFS.
2. The themes shown in Figure 1 are most heavily influenced by works on the politics of problem definition (Rochefort and Cobb, 1994; Dery, 1984), the utilization of knowledge in policy making (Rogers, 1988; Majone, 1989) and the roles of values, beliefs, and judgment in the structuring and analysis of social problems (Fisher and Forester, 1987; Dunn, 1994). In broader terms, all of these subjects relate to theories of agenda setting (Kingdon, 1995), the overall policy process (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995), and the social construction of knowledge, problems and responses to them (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Bovens and 't Hart, 1998). Comparable themes are evident in the community development literature (e.g., Hamilton, 1992; Clinton, 1979; Leviton et al., 1998; Walzer, 1996; Minkler, 1997).
3. By the same token, this conceptual framework can be used to identify and anticipate potential weaknesses in the Search Conference and other models. Of particular concern is: (a) the results from a Search Conference may or may not relate well to the prevailing goals and decision-making processes at community or organizational level, creating a possible threat to implementation of actions; and (b) differential power relations among participants may affect the agenda developed within the Search Conference, despite efforts to minimize this, and may certainly affect the implementation of that agenda after the Search Conference. These issues will be taken up in greater detail in subsequent papers emanating from this project.
4. The degree of enthusiasm with which this project was embraced varied across the counties and two lead agencies, with some agreeing immediately and others expressing reservations and taking 2–4 months before agreeing to participate. The reasons for their reservations are discussed below.
5. One of the key roles played by the advisory committees was to assist in identifying potential participants through the Peer Reference System, which is a snowball method of sampling to identify formal and informal leaders across the food system who might be interested in participating in such an event. The key to the method is to enlist the assistance of diverse stakeholders in identifying others in their peer group and, hopefully, to assist by extending personal invitations. In actual practice, the advisory committee members assisted in identifying the first round of contacts in various domains of the food system but most of the subsequent snowball sampling was done by a temporary staff member hired with project funds by Cooperative Extension, with the advisory group agreeing on the final selection process. Based on the complete records available from four of the counties, a total of 625 candidates were identified by the advisory groups, most of these were invited, and 244 attended.
6. For a more detailed analysis of how disenfranchised consumers' concerns were reflected in these sessions, see McCullum (Ph.D. thesis, forthcoming).
7. The organizers in each county were informed that each work group could send up to four members to this conference with all expenses except transportation paid by the project grant, to minimize the out-of-pocket cost of participating in this event.
8. It is worth noting that the term "Community Food Security" did not have particular salience with these participants. In all six counties, the county advisory groups substituted the term "local or community food system" in the Search Question (see Table 6) after many attempts to gain an understanding of the CFS concept through discussions with the Cornell advisors. This may reflect the novelty and complexity of this concept, especially when it is applied to all aspects of the food system rather than issues related to

food access by low-income groups. This has implications for future efforts to foster greater grassroots involvement in local food system changes.

9. Details are contained in individual reports from each of the six counties, available upon request from the first author.
10. An important exception to this generalization, as documented through an intensive sub-study in one county, is that low-income and/or disenfranchised participants had concerns about food safety and other issues that were not well-represented in the Search Conference discussions or action agendas (McCullum, Ph.D. thesis, forthcoming).
11. The only CFS theme that seems under-represented in Table 3 is the environmental dimensions of the food system. However, this was explicitly identified in two counties (Lewis and Clinton) in connection with safe water and was explicitly mentioned as part of the education goal in Franklin County, the "healthy and accessible food supply" goal in St. Lawrence and Lewis Counties. Other environmental concerns, such as those related to long-distance transportation of food, packaging, and concentration of production, were not identified in the goals and objectives but might be positive externalities from re-localization.
12. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) is part of the federal government's "reinventing government" initiative that seeks to re-direct management and accountability systems away from a focus on inputs and processes to a focus on achieving outcomes and results. Although this goal need not be antithetical to improved planning approaches, community capacity-building, and community-driven goal-setting (all of which are heavily process-oriented), there is a tendency for these to be regarded as less tangible or more risky goals and outcomes under GPRA as commonly understood.

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