

Agenda: 30% Maine Food Subgroup Meeting 1
Thursday, December 14, 2023, 9:00-12:00
Via Zoom

9:00-9:20	<p>Welcome and Framing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome! • Intros in Chat • Group Agreements • Charge • Process and Outcomes 	Craig Lapine, Brittany Peats
9:20-10:10	<p>Breakout Group #1 (confirm assigned notetaker)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions within small group to prompt • The goal is 30% Maine food by 2030. Why aren't we there? What are the barriers? At the consumer end? At the producer end? In the middle of the supply chain? 	All with DACF facilitators
10:10-10:20	Break	
10:20-11:10	<p>Breakout Group #2 (confirm assigned notetaker)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions within small group to prompt • Where are the bright spots? What assets or solutions exist—within Maine's food system or elsewhere—that are being leveraged or could be leveraged to address the identified barriers? 	All with DACF facilitators
11:10-11:20	Public comment	Public
11:20-11:40	<p>Logistical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What questions would it be helpful to have answered before the next meeting? • Can anyone take responsibility for answering them? • Preferences: in-person, virtual, hybrid? 	Brittany
11:40-11:50	The State of the Data	Maine Food Strategy
11:50-11:52	<p>Next Meeting Reminders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 24, 9-12 • February 28, 9-12 • March 21, 9-12 	Brittany
11:52-12:00	Closing Thoughts and To-Dos	All, Brittany, Craig

Maine Climate Council Natural and Working Lands Work Group
Maine Foods Subgroup

[Maine Won't Wait](#) includes efforts to strengthen Maine's food economy under Strategy D, Grow Maine's Clean-Energy Economy and Protect Our Natural-Resource Industries. Goal: "Increase the amount of food consumed in Maine from state food producers from 10% to 20% by 2025 and 30% by 2030 through local food system development."

Maine's goal aligns with regional efforts proceeding under the banner of the [New England Food Vision](#) and [New England Feeding New England \(NEFNE\)](#). NEFNE is a project of the New England State Food System Planners Partnership, to which Maine belongs. NEFNE's goal is that 30% of the food consumed in New England will be produced in New England by 2030. Because Maine has the largest proportion among New England states of farmland and fisheries, it is generally recognized that, for New England to reach its 30% goal, Maine will have to **overachieve** on production for both the state and the region to reach its 30% consumption goals.

Recent Efforts Towards the Maine Won't Wait Maine Food Goal

2022 Updates:

- The availability of current data on the total amount of food consumed in Maine from state producers is limited and varies widely depending on the food commodity. The 10% starting point that was reported in Maine Won't Wait is a historic figure, which needs to be updated. NEFNE is currently working to update this baseline figure for all New England states.
- The DACF estimates that for the healthcare sector in Maine-grown food sourcing is hovering around 5-7%. Maine prisons are working towards an overall goal of 20% Maine-sourced food by 2025, and today typically procure between 10 and 30% of their food from Maine food producers. Though the University of Maine defines local food more expansively than DACF, they are currently purchasing around 25% local food. In Fiscal Year 2022, \$375,000 was spent toward buying local food for public schools, including \$125,000 from the Local Food Fund and demand is constrained by available funds.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service awarded DACF \$2.6 million over three years in Local Food Purchase Assistance funding to establish "Maine Food for Maine People," a project that is expanding marketing opportunities for underserved producers and aggregators. Maine is partnering with the Good Shepherd Food Bank, Cultivating Community, and Mi'kmaq Farms to purchase over \$2 million worth of agricultural products from hundreds of Maine food and farm businesses with an emphasis on socially disadvantaged producers. The food is being distributed through established and emerging pathways to feed underserved Maine communities. These pathways include existing Eligible Recipient Agencies of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP ERA) and tribal pantry networks, as well as innovative, culturally responsive distribution models rooted in community demand.
- Currently, \$1 million in DACF's budget is allocated to support Good Shepard Food Bank's Mainers feeding Mainers program, which procures Maine-grown food for the emergency food system.

- The Maine Milk Commission estimates that 67% of all milk produced in Maine is staying in Maine with 28% of Maine’s production going to provide milk or organic yogurt to the greater Boston area.
- DACF estimates, based on US agricultural census data, that approximately 30% of food-grade grains stay in state for processing and local use.

2023 Updates:

- The New England State Food System Planners Partnership has launched an effort to establish a baseline for local food consumption in Maine. A state-level report is expected in early 2024. A [recent report by the Partnership](#) examined what it would take for 30% of the food consumed in New England to be locally produced by 2030.

Achieving 30 x 30 Presents Consumption, Production, and Supply Chain Challenges

Barriers to Increasing Consumption of Maine Foods

- Maine options are not readily available (or identifiable) where people are spending the majority of their food dollars, i.e., at grocery stores and restaurants.
- Maine has very high per capita food expenditures and high rates of food insecurity, making Maine consumers extremely price-sensitive. Getting to 30% cannot assume the overall capacity of Maine consumers to pay more.
- Maine foods are competing at the point-of-sale with foods from a global system with profoundly different business models, meaning non-Maine products may be benefitting from pricing and marketing forces that put Maine products on an uneven playing field.

Barriers to Increasing Production of Maine Foods

- Maine’s food landscape has high concentrations of small-scale producers with uncertain pathways to scaling.
- Low margins in the sector have tended to produce underinvestment in capital infrastructure.
- Maine’s agricultural and seafood producers face outside pressure from farmland and waterfront development.
- Climate change is impacting and destabilizing growing conditions and seafood production.
- Farm and food businesses face viability challenges including access to and costs of labor, transportation, and uncertainty around other production inputs.
- Input costs are rising while, at the same time, the portion of US food dollars that goes to producers is shrinking. At the same time, Maine producers must often be price-takers so may have limited options for recouping costs of production and maintaining profitability.

Barriers to Processing, Packing, Storing and Distributing Maine Foods

- Most farms and food businesses are small, making it difficult for them to access new markets and cost-effective infrastructure.
- Maine is at the end of most distribution pipelines, which exacerbated access issues for retailers, institutions, and consumers during the pandemic.
- There is a lack of slaughter, processing, and packing infrastructure. However, there have been recent investments through USDA and DACF grant programs in Maine’s meat processing sector.

- Infrastructure is often scaled to (and owned by) individual businesses. There is a lack of sector-scale processing capacity; despite significant investment of state Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan funds via DACF's Agriculture Infrastructure Investment Program (nearly \$20 million), there is still a large, unfilled need for food system and food processing infrastructure investment.

Questions that we will discuss in the Maine Foods Subgroup

- Do we have a consensus on what the barriers and leverageable assets are?
- What strategies will enable access and encourage consumers to purchase more local food?
- How can farmers, ranchers, and fishermen scale their production?
- What infrastructure is needed to process, aggregate, store, and distribute more local food?
- What additional supports do producers, middle of the supply chain, buyers, and consumers need to increase the amount of Maine-grown food that is consumed?

30% Maine Food Subgroup Members

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Melissa	Law	Bumbleroor Organic Farm
Silvan	Shawe	Cultivating Community
Bradley	Russell	Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Johnny	Sanchez	Food AND Medicine
Bill	Seretta	Fork Food Lab
Norm	Daigle	Hannaford
Carol	Weymouth	Maine Association of Conservation Districts
Ben	Martens	Maine Coast Fishermen's Association
Amanda	Beal	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Tom	Gordon	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Emily	Horton	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Craig	Lapine	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
David	Ludwig	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Brittany	Peats	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Jo D.	Saffeir	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Michelle	Webb	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Tanya	Swain	Maine Food Strategy
Christine	Cummings	Maine Grocers and Food Processors Association
Julie Marie	Bickford	Maine Milk Commission
Heather	Spalding	Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Rep. Dean	Cray	Maine State Legislature
Leah	Rovner	New England Feeding New England
Chuck	Penney	Natural Resources Conservation Service
John	Naylor	Rosemont
Laura	Yeitz	State Economist Office
Allison	Bistline-East	University of Maine
Hannah	Carter	University of Maine
Kaethe	Rice	Waterville High School
Ellen	Griswold	Wolfe's Neck Center

Maine Climate Council Natural and Working Lands Work Group

Working Agreements

- Meetings will start and end on time.
- When meetings are held in person, Committee members will make every effort to attend in person to maximize learning, communication, and collaboration.
- Cameras will remain on during virtual meetings to facilitate communication and understanding.
- Meeting materials will be shared in advance of meetings with sufficient time for review.
- Come prepared, having read meeting materials and completed assignments.
- Be present and engaged.
- Strive for equal airtime, enabling all to participate fully.
- Listen with curiosity and an openness to learning and understanding.
- Adopt a creative problem-solving orientation.
- Name the tension, kindly.
- Humor is welcome!

The Natural and Working Lands Work Group will strive for consensus in its recommendations through a facilitated, discussion-based process, and will not hold votes on specific decisions. The Work Group may choose to include a significant minority opinion as part of its final recommendations.