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| **What We’ve Learned** **Challenges Summary** | **What we’ve learned****Strengths Summary** | **Opportunities** |
|  **FOOD PRODUCTION, PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION**  |
| **There are challenges in keeping Local Food Local*** **Different standards required for foods grown in Canada verses what is imported.** For example, some Countriesdo not have the requirement for growing practices and pesticide use.This makes Canadian products more expensive to produce.
* During local growing season, products can be imported and sold for less than what Canadian smaller farm operations can compete with.
* Imported food can be cheaper because of their government’s subsidies and cost of operations.
* Canadian exports are lucrative and appealing for farmers.
* International trade obligations have opened up and flooded the market with cheaper products.
* Food can be processed more cheaply elsewhere compared to Canada because of several factors including labour standards and wages.

**Current system does not support localized food system*** **Farmer/Processor Contracts:** Farmers are bound to contracts to meet quantity and quality requirements. After these numbers are met there are still some regulations on what they can do with the product or there isn’t the time or man power to redirect the excess, so typical practice is plowing

the vegetables, grains or fruit into the ground. * **Barriers for producers to get product into local grocery stores.** Corporate purchasing policies make it difficult for farmers to provide local product. This decision is not because of local store managers but corporate purchasing contracts. In the smaller grocery store chains or independent stores, there might be more flexibility with this.
* **Livestock:** Butchers selling meat can no longer slaughter livestock. The livestock is sent to an abattoir and then returned to the butcher for processing which is an added step identified by local meat butchers. Current regulations make it difficult for small scale abattoirs to function to be financial viable.

**We grow for the world!*** Farmers need larger markets because lots of food is grown here and too much product is produced to solely grow for CK.
* Farmers rely on contracts with large corporate food and beverage companies. Therefore; products are distributed to provincial/national and international markets. This is required in order to be viable in current system.

**We don’t plan our spaces with food access in mind.** * Municipal planners have started to integrate food and access when designing land use policies and are open to new opportunities.
* Bylaws for development have limited focus on food access opportunities i.e. open space for community gardens, connections to food retail

**Balancing urban development with preservation of land for agricultural purposes.** * Land protection policies for agriculture are needed to protect the industry. With the current housing crisis and plans for new developments, this is a potential risk for current land designation for agriculture.

**Less people are getting into farming*** Costs of purchasing land and equipment is a barrier for new farmers (supports exists to help mitigate some of these costs).
* New farmersface barriers to receive loans from lenders to purchase land and to finance initial operational costs**.**
* Farmers retire later, so succession planning for children to take over farms happens later requiring them to need a supplemental career until they can farm fulltime.
* Members identified land cost and variation in cost across the Municipality as a barrier.

**Farming is stressful business*** Stress, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion and burnout are higher among farmers than other populations.
* Tradition is a big part of farming- i.e. not being successful or losing a family farm would be catastrophic to the farmer and their family.

**Climate Change could impact types of foods grown*** Weather trends have historically been predictable however with threat of climate changes and increases in temperature, risk for change in weather pattern potentially impacts types of food grown in CK.
* This could lead to unpredictable crop yields, heat-wave livestock threats, pasture availability and pest and disease outbreaks.

**Finding and keeping skilled employees is an issue for agriculture and commercial fisheries.** * Due to the nature of the work as it is seasonal, often has inconsistent hours, physically demanding and is typically minimum wage that many Canadians are not choosing this type of employment.
* Under current regulation, Famers can have a proportion of migrant workers
* Commercial fishing industry cannot utilize programs available to agricultural sector.
* We have a people shortage, eventually technology will help to replace some of those jobs. Businesses want to expand, however, they can’t because people aren’t choosing that area of employment.

**Food Processing sector purchases majority of farm products and hard for small business to stay viable.*** 65% of the farm products are purchased by Ontario’s food processing sector which limits the amount available for local distribution.
* Many of the small processors do not exist because it is not financially viable.
 | **CK is an agricultural community*** 90% of CK land is dedicated to farming purposes and 340 acres of greenhouses. This accounts for 4% of all Ontario farms and 9% of Ontario’s total greenhouse area.
* CK has rich soil and prime growing conditions for a variety of crops.
* **The number of farms in CK remains stable.** Despite a trend of fewer farms compared to ON.
* **We are experts in farming.** We have over 2000 farms with more than 70 different crops. In Canada, we are number one producer for Brussel sprouts, cucumbers and tomatoes. In Ontario, we are number one producer for green peas, quail and field peppers.
* **Livestock is processed locally and available in CK retail** because we have a Provincially regulated abattoir. Local meat products are more commonly available in small independent retailers.
* **Agricultural landscapes provide essential functions** including air and water purification, wetland and watershed protection, wildlife habitat, recreation, tourism and open space.
* **Contracts with large corporations** provides a guaranteed income for producers because the items are purchased at a specified price and quantity. Many famers within this umbrella have scaled their farms to meet these larger product demands.

**Agriculture is significant to our local economy.** * Farming is responsible for 16 000 jobs in CK. The agricultural industry accounts for $3 billion in economic activity every year.

**Wheatley is home to the largest commercial fishing port in the World.** * CK has over 75 commercial fishing licenses and several fish processing facilities.
* The industry has Marine Stewardship Council Certification which is considered the gold standard for fishing practices.

**CK offers garden plots to anyone interested in growing their own foods for free!*** CK has 9 community gardens and 24 school gardens. Community gardens are available free to anyone who is interested in growing their own produce in individual or small group plots.

**Education and Skill Building for Youth and New Farmers*** Community groups such as the Kent Federation of Agriculture provide supports for farmers.
* The 4H club provides hands on education to build skills in the area of agriculture.
* Lambton-Kent "Agriculture in the Classroom” delivers curriculum based agricultural and food programs to youth in CK
* We are Host to the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus, which is a key research facility for agricultural sector.
* Guidance councillors in secondary schools were identified as influencers to direct youth into the areas of agriculture.

**Promoting Positive Mental Health and Well-Being.** * Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has supports and resources available for farmer and their families.
* KFA is putting on a workshop for a Mental Health First Aide

**Climate Change and the impact on types of foods grown.** * CK’s ability to adapt to changing climate and to explore new opportunities for example pilot testing rice fields.
* Could create opportunities to improve soil by enhancing the carbon sequestration processes and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

**Migrant workers are critical to the success of agriculture*** Migrant workers are a vital part of our community’s agricultural sector.
* Fieldwork may not be ideal for some Canadians; however, migrant workers are able to fill the employment gap.

**Food Processing*** There is a lot of knowledge in the processing sector locally which offers opportunity to learn and gain knowledge for new business.
* Incubator Kitchens/Food Hubsoffer small scale processors to avoid costs for purchasing equipment and insuring a commercial kitchen of their own.These kitchens provide technical assistance in food production, business management skills, and networking opportunities. Placing these kitchens in buildings where the kitchen is vacant for part of the year i.e. University/Colleges.
 | * **Policies at the federal, provincial or municipal level** were identified as ways to incentivize local food at community level.
* **Leaders in Business and Government** can set the example for sourcing local food and encourage others in the community to source locally as much as possible. This is happening in the childcare and school settings.
* **Municipal regulations** have influence on what can be grown/raised in rural and urban centers. For example, back yard chickens.
* Canadian food is viewed by other countries as a quality product providing incentive for farmers to export their products.
* **Funding, incentives and business coaching** to support new or innovative entrepreneurial farming ideas.

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| **Challenges** | **Strengths** | **Opportunities** |
| **FOOD BUSINESS (INCLUDING RETAIL AND TOURISM)** |
| **It’s difficult for farmers to keep our food local*** Local food leaves the region because of a centralized purchasing and distribution system; therefore, communities lack local infrastructure to process, distribute and retail local products to keep within the region.
* Current food system has centralized buying and distribution to get bulk purchases cheaper
* Restaurant owners identified that there is a lack of infrastructure to buy direct from farms.
* Large food retailers face barriers to sourcing from local producers due to quantity and quality in product and purchasing.
* Often, farmers cannot compete with cost competitiveness and volumes that large retailers require.

**Availability of local foods can be limited*** Striking up a Balance between the local and ‘global’ markets. Creating structure to support local markets while continuing to grow for larger food markets.
* There is a lack of local foods in mainstream grocers during peak growing season
* Lack of food and local foods particularly in rural areas
* Pay at road side stand or farmer’s markets was identified by some as not viable option for farmers to consider this.

**Local Food Branding: Grown in CK*** Local branding i.e. Grown in CK logo to help consumers easily identify what is grown in CK. Members have identified that there is a lack of awareness about this program. Attaching a social media/education campaign was identified as a priority.
* Market Local foods. Need Better promotion about WHAT is a CK product.
 | **The demand for local foods are increasing.*** Mobile Markets offer local foods in the urban and rural centers.
* A local food hub was identified as potential action where producers bring their product and this would be purchased by retail or consumers.
* Local Procurement programs have been occurring in CK childcare and school programs to promote purchasing seasonal produce into their menu and programs.
* There are several farm markets and farm stands located throughout the region.

**The Buy Local Buy Fresh** **Map** highlights many local products featured throughout CK at farm stands and retail outlets.**Grown in CK Brand** * Developed for farmers, producers or any business wanting to promote CK agriculture.

**The price of local food is comparable*** In general, locally grown vegetables and fruit from markets and stands were priced competitively in compared to that of supermarkets.

**Food is a tourism attraction*** Agri-tourism is a critical component of this plan and can influence the food culture
 | * Creating system for direct purchasing from farm to consumers was seen as a way to achieve supply and demand for local products. For example, people place orders through their workplace and pick up at a central location.
* Opportunities may exist with smaller stores because they have more independence in purchasing decisions. Having access to retail (small and large), restaurants, and institutions provides access to a large consumer market.
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| **FOOD ACCESS AND LITERACY** |
| **People are disconnected from their food source*** Many people do not participate in growing their own food
* Consumer confusion of where food is sourced and how to find this information. Currently, it is difficult to identify where food is sourced, along with confusing marketing and advertising.
* Choosing imported food over local it makes it difficult to have local product available and impacts agriculture.
* Food decisions are influenced by price not local.

**Local food isn’t available where people shop*** With busy lifestyles, one-stop shopping is what most people prefer. Local foods are not typically available in the large retailers.
* The demand for inexpensive food was viewed as a potential barrier to having more local products available.
* Lack of consumer awareness that you can make changes to the availability when you spend money on local food.

**People do not eat based on recommendations** * The majority of Canadians had low intakes of vegetables and fruit, milk and alternatives and whole grains.
* About one-third of total calories came from foods higher in fat, sugar, or salt.
* Inadequate intakes of certain nutrients from food sources were prevalent across many age and sex groups.
* In CK, we are surrounded by fresh seasonal produce yet, community does not meet the recommendation for vegetable and fruit intake.
* People spend money at fast food outlets and restaurants for convenience and taste. Often these options lack the local foods.

**Nutrition knowledge and skills are not enough to ensure optimal eating patterns.** **Income impacts a person’s ability to buy the food they need.** * Approximately 8% of households report being moderately to severely food insecure in that food quality and/or quantity is compromised. This was 2013/14 data and comparable to Ontario with 9%.
* Emergency food programs provide immediate assistance but do not address cause of food insecurity.
* Food is one of the largest weekly expenses and we need adequate income to afford the food we want to eat.

**Price of food influences what we eat.** * Healthy foods are more expensive.
* Food prices are increasing and expected to rise. (Nutritious Food Basket Stat)

**What we eat is influenced by what foods are available close by*** Limited retail options within walking distance and poor access to transportation were identified as barriers to purchasing food.
* Neighborhoods with highest distress were surrounded by variety stores and fast food outlets which typically offer limited healthy, local food options.

**There has been a decline in traditional cooking and food preparation from “scratch” and an increased use of more processed foods** * There has been a general deskilling over the past few generations and this hasn’t necessary been transferred to young adults of today.
* In past generations, people knew how to grow food particularly with the culture of CK being a rural community.
 | **Trends for fresh, healthy, local and sustainable eating is influence consumer purchasing.*** CK residents place a high value on food grown in CK.
* People over 60 were more likely to report purchasing local food compared to other age groups.

**Education campaigns seen as an opportunity to fuel demand, influence purchasing habits and eating habits.** * Canada’s Food Guide is recognized by Canadians
* Health Canada’s website can provide education, information to increase knowledge and inform consumers.
* In 2016, Canadians spent an average of 17% of household expenditures on food and beverages, relatively low compared to other developed countries.
* Almost 30% of household food spending was at restaurants versus food purchased in stores.

**Living Wage/Prosperity Round table*** **The Prosperity Roundtable in partnership with CK Public Health and other community partners, have established a Living Wage calculation for CK and have worked with local businesses to encourage and promote those that are using it.**

**Many community organizations contributing to food assistance programs/emergency food programs****Increased awareness about the link between health and eating.** * Rising obesity rates puts more demand on education and awareness of healthy eating patterns.

**Municipality has explored ways to subsidize healthy local options for prioritized groups.*** Municipal departments provides coupons and incentives for clients to assist with purchasing food.

**A CK Food Policy Council provides opportunities for networking, support and training for the community related to food skills.** * Community groups and health practitioners provide support programs to teach priority groups how to shop, prepare meals in a group setting
* Interest in local Dietitians to network and provide skill building opportunities in community settings
 | **Increased interest in local food and supporting local producers** * Increased consciousness of how and where food is grown and sourced. Combined with increased skepticism about current food system.
* Increased interest to support local producers and local businesses
* Attention to food miles and carbon foot print may be a motivator for consumers to buy local products.
* Changing culture for stronger interest in health, quality and the environment.
* Observation of some habits changing in general, but need greater buy in and support from consumers.
* Consumers are becoming more informed about the connection between food and health and paying more attention to what they are eating.

**Bring healthy, local food to where people live, work and play.** * Mobile markets and pop up farm markets identified as way to bring healthy local options to neighborhoods.
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| **FOOD WASTE** |
| **In Canada, 31 Billion dollars of food each year is wasted*** 47% of foods wasted occurs in Canadian homes
* 53% of food wasted is generated from production, processing, transportation, retail and in commercial and institutional settings.

**Knowledge gap on what the government is doing to update/improve food related packaging.** **Food waste contributes to climate change*** If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases behind China and the U.S
* Food that is produced but not eaten ends up in landfills and creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. By reducing food waste, we can also reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
* Reducing our food waste is considered an tangible strategy to improve climate.
* When food is wasted, all the resources used to produce it are also wasted.

**Food packaging ends up in landfill because it can’t be recycled.*** In Canada, for example, 9% of plastic waste is recycled. The rest ends up landfill, being incinerated, or adding to other areas.

**Food is packaged to reduce risk of contamination due to human contact.** * With concerns over food safety and liability, food is packaged and often individually wrapped, which gives a sense of safer food supply which consumers prefer
* We need to shift consumer mindfulness about packaging on foods and produce**.**

**There is confusion around best before dates verses expiry dates and fear of liability with food donation programs.*** Fear that donating food close to best before date will make people sick and the liability on the business if they get sick.

**We currently do not have a Municipal food and yard waste diversion program.****Production of animal based foods have a greater negative impact than non-animal sources of protein.*** Animal based foods have higher greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming and deplete natural resources, including water, land and energy
* Canadians tend to have high consumption of meat and dairy for protein based foods.
* Making just one pound (454 grams) of lamb generates five times more GHGs than making a pound of chicken and around 30 times more than making a pound of lentils
* Dietary choices are very personal decision for people and want to avoid negative impact and stigma with messaging around food choices.
 | **All levels of Government recognize that tackling food waste and preventing food packaging from landfill is a priority.*** **The Ontario Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016** places responsibility on business and industry for reducing waste associated with their products and packaging.
* The targets are: 30% of waste is diverted by 2020; 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2050
* **Ontario’s plan is to** consider end-of-life materials as resources rather than waste
* Producers will be required to provide education to engage Ontarians.
* The [Food Policy for Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/food-policy.html) includes actions to reduce food waste as one way to create more sustainable food practices.

**In Ontario, the Blue Box program is available in 95% of households** * Keeps approximately 66 percent of residential printed paper and packaging from landfills.

**The Green Bin program is available to more than half of Ontario household*** Offered in some Municipalities, keeps food and yard waste from landfill

**Protein sources such as beans, nuts, fish or poultry emit less GHGs*** Not only are plant based protein better for the environment, eating protein sources like beans, nuts, fish, or poultry in place of red meat and processed meat can lower the risk of several diseases and premature death.
* Shifting opinion and trends on plant based eating

**Better understanding of best before dates and food donation programs**and creating community outlets for food diversion i.e. community pantries/fridges* There currently is no business or municipal pick for food waste.
* CK is host to a landfill site
* CK is host to Food Rescue which provides support for businesses to donate any type of unsold, good food to any organization that feeds people in need.

**Reducing food-related waste****Field Gleaning, harvest and sale of second grade produce*** The CK Gleaning project tis organized by CKPH to divert vegetables and fruit into community agencies.
* Grocery stores are selling Naturally Imperfect products.
 | * Investigate innovative ways to reduce or have more reuse food related packaging
* Many businesses, community events, Municipality events can work towards reducing single use items
* Support Federal and Provincial legislation
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