Chapter 3

Accessing Nutritious Food in Low-Income Neighborhoods

By Dr. Alice Ammerman

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**Tobacco transition:**
- Fewer economic opportunities for small-scale farms with removal of tobacco supports
- Produce or integrated agriculture offers an option for small acreage farms (vs. commodity crops)
- New markets needed to make transition viable – local food interest creates opportunities
- Innovation around value-added products and agro-tourism
- New marketing strategies include farm-to-institution, CSAs, online ordering systems
- Need to attract and keep younger farmers

**Environmental challenges and opportunities:**
- Large-scale commodity crop production is often heavily fossil fuel dependent (oil, pesticides, fertilizers) and creates environmental problems with agricultural run-off
- Increasing market opportunities for sustainable agricultural practices – high demand
- Need for research on labor-saving devices for smaller-scale farms
- Heavy use of antibiotics for animal production raises concern about food supply for humans and antibiotic resistance

**Policies to support sustainable agricultural practices:**
- Zoning to protect from development and high taxation rates
- City/county/state commitments to sourcing local foods
- Support for land acquisition or borrowing for young farmers
- Farm incubator programs, help with GAP certification

**Multiplier benefits of federal food programs (SNAP, WIC, School lunch/breakfast):**
- Dollars spent in local food venues (grocery stores, convenience stores)
- Jobs creation to support food distribution systems (e.g., Farm to School), 10% campaign, FMs
- Sourcing locally grown food benefits producers as well as vendors.

**Community and economic benefits of local/healthy food access and sustainable agriculture:**
- Healthier workforce – less absenteeism, more “presenteeism”
- More potential for recruiting industry to a location with a healthier workforce
- Community spirit of supporting local businesses

**Innovations- North Carolina:**
- Quick Chef – to teach cooking on a budget and healthy cooking skills
- Green Cart – delivering healthy lower cost foods to low-income people.
- Produce Packs – increasing access to fruits and vegetables for WIC clients and others in corner stores

**Innovations- Kentucky:**
- Community Farm Alliance: [www.communityfarmalliance.org](http://www.communityfarmalliance.org)
- MACED (Mountain Association for Community Economic Development), [www.maced.org](http://www.maced.org)
- Center for Rural Strategies ([www.ruralstrategies.org](http://www.ruralstrategies.org))