Reinventing Our Local Food Economies to Create Opportunities for All
Where We Work

Forests and Waters
The Athens Community geography at a glance
Where We Work

Small towns
Where We Work

Farmland
Where We Work

Diversified agriculture
Where We Work

Farmers Markets
Where We Work

Season creation and peer exchange
Our Places

Farmstead production
Where We Work

Manufacturing & processing
Committed Local Food Bu
ACEnet’s Mission

The Appalachian Center for Economic Networks is a regional entrepreneurship and economic development organization located in Athens, Ohio.

ACEnet builds the capacity of communities to network, work together and innovate to create a dynamic, sustainable regional economy with opportunities for all.
Appalachian Center for Economic Networks --- community-based, economic development organization --- (ACEnet, Inc.)

Started in 1985 as the Worker-owned Network became regionally focused in 1990. Utilize microenterprise and small business strategies, incubation, access to markets programs and regional brands.
31 Year Focus on Food Sector

1. Business incubation & food enterprise infrastructure
2. Access to markets, regional brands & value chains
3. Access to capital services, partnerships & referrals
4. Food sector training, assistance and replication services
5. Entrepreneurship and workforce development
ACEnet Food Ventures Center

- Compost Exchange
- Produce Aggregation
- Refrigerated & Frozen Walk-ins
- Commercial Food Production
- FDA Processing
- Foodservice Preparation
- Shipping & Delivery
- Cross Docking
- Collaborative Retail
- Regional Distribution

Produce Aggregation
Commercial Food Production
Regional Distribution
FDA Processing
Foodservice Preparation
Shipping & Delivery
Cross Docking
Collaborative Retail
Compost Exchange
Fresh Cut Produce
Commercial Food Production
Youth Entrepreneurs
Restaurants use for food prep
Food preparation for brewery
Catering Enterprises
Local Food Workshops
Thermal Processing for Shelf Life
FDA Thermal Processing

Specialty Bottled Products

Foodservice products

Frozen Foods

Products marketed from local to international exporting
Training the Start-ups
2 Headed Piston Filler
Case study — Green Edge Gardens
Walk-in Storage & Warehouse

✓ Livestock farmers – local meat marketing

✓ Farmers – flash freezing the harvest

✓ Processors & Food Production

✓ Food trucks, caterers, restaurants

✓ Seasonal produce peaks
Farmer friendly infrastructure
Shipping & Delivery
Refrigerated & Frozen Storage
Shipping & Delivery
Cross Docking
Network Partnerships
Regional Distribution
Distribution Infrastructure
Packaging & Labeling
Expanded Warehousing
Distribution Infrastructure
Since early 1990’s we have work to build local networks of collaborators in Ohio & Central Appalachia

1. Local Partners: Rural Action who run the Chesterhill Produce Auction & Community Food Initiatives that aggregates & distributes local food through the Donation Station

2. The Central Appalachia Network – 6 anchor organizations working on processing, aggregation & distribution in sub-regions
Purchased in 2009 by Rural Action

2015 Impacts

• 146 rural farmers sold products through the auction
• Gross sales exceeded $250,000
• Wholesale buyers include restaurants, schools and families
• Community destination in rural economically distressed area
Aggregation expansion
Chesterhill Produce Auction
Restaurant and Organization Buyers

These 82 regional businesses, groups, and organizations bought fresh, local produce from the Chesterhill Produce Auction in 2014.

[Map showing locations and stars indicating participating businesses]
Food moves from auction to hubs for storage & distribution

In 2015, over 14,000 pounds of locally grown food was distributed to small stores in rural food deserts, directly increasing healthy food access to vulnerable populations.
Multi-facility infrastructure & partnerships open up new market channels

From 2014-2015, over 14,000 pounds of fresh locally sourced food has been distributed to area schools.

**Farm to Institution to School Program**

**What?**
- Fresh produce from the Chesterhill Produce Auction and local farmers to your school.
- Produce pre-prepared by Hocking College Culinary under ODA regulations.
- Cooking classes in schools with Live Healthy Kids.

**How?**

Orders from schools placed with Rural Action Order Buyer for the next week. After season, coordinated with Order Buyer to secure prepared items.

- Appalachian Ohio Farmers
  - Network of 125 farmers grow produce to meet demand

- Chesterhill Produce Auction
  - Order buyer purchases for school needs, coordinates delivery to Hocking College

- Hocking College
  - Fresh product prepared by students under instructor supervision

- Regional School Districts
  - Schools receive products and serve in lunch menu. Determine the next week’s order.
In 2015, over 17,000 pounds of fresh food grown by local farmers was donated from the produce auction. The Donation Station acts as an intermediary, distributing the food to partner pantries across southeast Ohio.

In 2012, Community Food Initiatives distributed over 44,300 pounds of produce + local food products to 35 Area Food Pantries and Agencies!

Last year, the Chesterhill Produce Auction supported the sale of over 10,000 bushels of fresh local produce from 100+ local farms!

... AND THIS SUMMER, WE'RE GROWING TOGETHER!
Increasing Food Access
How to Plant:

1 pound of Seed Potatoes

10 pounds of Eating Potatoes
Our local network in a 4 county region includes 6 facilities with additional infrastructure at Hocking College in Nelsonville.
Increasing Food Access
As momentum builds

Networks evolve and accelerate

In the past 4 years ...
✓ The CommonWealth Kitchen Incubator
✓ Lake to River Coop and Hub
✓ The Wild Ramp
✓ The Foodworks Alliance at MCBI
✓ The Somerset Community Kitchen & Farmers Pantry
✓ The Keller Market House
✓ The Canal Market District Pavilion & Food Hub

Studies for food hubs in Portage & Tuscarawas counties
Welcome to Keller Market House
Common Wealth
KITCHEN INCUBATOR
Youngstown, Ohio
Appalachia Ohio Food Hub Network

✓ Secure funding for equipment & facility upgrades
✓ On-going training and technical assistance provision
✓ Support for planning, research and consulting assistance
✓ Linkage between rural & urban hub networks
✓ Advocate for statewide policy to support infrastructure development
Appalachia Ohio Food Hub Network

Farmers
Producers
Value-adders
Processors
Aggregators

Food Ventures

Nelsonville Food Hub

Chesterhill Produce Auction

Farmers markets
Food Access
Restaurants
Wholesale Buyers
Institutions
Mapping Ohio & WV
## Mapping Ohio & WV

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<th>ID</th>
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<td>ACEnet Food Hub</td>
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<td>Chesterhill Produce Auction</td>
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<td>Joe N Throw</td>
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✓ Creates and sustains marketing opportunities for local farmers from very small local supermarkets to large scale wholesale regional markets

✓ Provides training in food safety and handling, organic certification and management practices

✓ 1/3 of farmers are growing certified organic, 2/3 of farmers are growing conventional produce

✓ Since 2000, our farmers have earned more than $11 million dollars in income
Maintains a geothermal packinghouse for aggregation of farm products, grower’s meetings for technical support and food safety training.
Appalachian Harvest has developed solid buyer relationships and has ready-made markets to share with our Appalachian partners.
So Why Networks

• peer leaning & peer exchange
• lift “best practices” of infrastructure operations
• connect infrastructure to leverage resources
• shared analysis communicated to policy makers
• advocacy on regulatory environment

What’s next?
Moving to action and transactions
Sub-regional & Regional Strategies

- Explicit value chain development at state & regional levels
- Sub-regional distribution routes
- Collaborative grants for prototyping initiatives and distribution routes
- Local-regional trade zones