

- **May 21, 2016:** Sustainable Midlands and the MFA hosted the **Midlands Farm Tour**.
- **July, 2016:** Sustainable Midlands and the MFA published a revised **Midlands Food Guide** and distributed 5,000 hard copies throughout the Midlands.

Interviews and Analysis

- **August, 2013-July, 2014:** MLFC members interviewed 77 Midlands farmers to identify barriers farmers face in producing and selling food, the level of demand for locally farmed food, and the potential need for a food hub in the region. The results of these interviews were published in a October, 2014 USC Policy Brief: **Growth and Representation: Decreasing Barriers and Creating Networks Supporting Food Producing Farmers in South Carolina's Midlands.**
- **Fall, 2015:** MLFC members began interviewing food distributors to identify obstacles to local food distribution in SC. The results of distributor interviews was published in an August, 2016 USC Policy Brief: **Local Food Distribution in the SC Midlands: Identifying Barriers to and Opportunities for Food Producing Farmers Entering Wholesale Markets.**

Public Awareness Achievements

- MLFC members supported and/or participated in the Palmetto Tasty Tomato Festival, presented by Sustainable Midlands, every year since 2012.
- MLFC members coordinated and/or supported the Sustainable Midlands "Faces of Local Food" campaign from 2012-2015.
- MLFC was one of 11 SC organizations included in the James Beard Foundation and Food Tank's national "Good Food Guide" (2015 and 2016).

MLFC Members

USDA-Natural Resources
 Conservation Service
 USDA-Farm Service Agency
 USDA-Rural Development
 SC Department of Agriculture
 Richland Soil and Water
 Conservation District
 Central Midlands Council of Governments
 Santee-Lynches Council of Governments
 Richland County Conservation Department
 Clemson University Cooperative Extension
 USC Center for Research in Nutrition and
 Health Disparities
 Sustainable Midlands
 Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
 John M. Newman Planning

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Midlands Local Food Collaborative



2012-2016

Accomplishments Report

The Midlands Local Food Collaborative is a diverse group of organizations that each value sustainable agriculture, land stewardship, and equitable food access, coming together to support a prosperous and thriving local food system in the Midlands of South Carolina.

www.midlandsllocalfood.org

Organizational Growth and Accomplishments



- **2012:** The Midlands Local Food Collaborative formed as a working committee spearheaded by the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District, Sustainable Midlands, and SC-NRCS.
- **2013:** An MLFC brochure was created to explain our mission and organization. It has since undergone five revisions, with the latest version published in December, 2016. Facebook and Twitter accounts (www.facebook.com/midlandsllocalfood and www.twitter.com/midlandsgrown) were also established to promote the work of the MLFC .
- **March, 2014:** MLFC logos were finalized.
- **May, 2014:** The **MLFC website** and Find Local Food widget were launched, with hosting and content management provided by

Clemson University through a contract with the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District.

- **November, 2014:** An official “Terms and Understandings” document was ratified by meeting participants and, within three months, had been signed by 10 charter organizations. As of October, 2016, 13 agencies and organizations had signed the agreement.
- **February 17, 2015:** MLFC members participated in a retreat facilitated by Stanley Green of Clemson University. During the retreat, group members reviewed MLFC goals and identified new objectives.
- **March 5, 2015:** Dr. Dave Lamie was elected chairman.
- **July, 2015:** An MLFC pop-up banner and table runner were printed with funding from USDA-FSA.
- **December 12, 2016:** During a second retreat facilitated by Stanley Green, MLFC participants reviewed and established new goals for the coming year.

MLFC Public Events

- **November, 2012:** MLFC hosted the first **Midlands Local Food Summit**, bringing together agricultural producers, restaurateurs, grocers, food distributors, and support organizations to discuss the needs and opportunities for growing the Midlands local food movement.
- **June, 2013:** The MLFC hosted a second **Midlands Local Food Summit** to give midlands food system representatives an opportunity to provide input on the “Making Small Farms Big Business” assessment conducted by the SC Departments of Agriculture and Commerce.
- **October, 2013:** Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Executive Director Roland McReynolds joined the MLFC to present a **Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Information Session** in Columbia. Proposed FSMA regulations pose issues of real concern to the local food community and, especially, to small farmers.



- **June, 2014:** Midlands representatives from federal, state, and local agencies gathered in St. Matthews for an Agency Stakeholder Meeting to learn more about the MLFC and new developments in the local food system. This meeting was sponsored and funded by the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District through Organic Richland, a cooperative program with SC-NRCS.
- **August, 2014:** **The Future of Midlands Farms and Food Summit** was held at the Phillips Market Center on August 4. More than 100 people participated in the event, which included special presentations by Jack Shull (Palmetto

Agribusiness Council), Scott Park (Greenville County), Sara Clow (GrowFood Carolina), Kevin O’Connell (The Produce Box), Tony Kleese (EarthWise), Rochelle Sparko (Carolina Farm Stewardship Association), and others. Priority areas for future Midlands food systems efforts were identified: increasing agriculture education, improving land access, expanding the Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs, and solving labor access issues.



- **May, 2016:** The **SC Farmer Resource Rodeo** was held at the Phillips Market Center to help farmers and resource providers navigate the complex array of technical, financial, and educational resources provided by various federal, state, local, and non-profit resource providers. The event was attended by 100 people, with participation from 22 statewide resource providers.
- **December, 2016:** The MLFC launched its **Land Access Initiative** with discussion facilitated by David Harper of the Pee Dee Land Trust. Twenty-four agency and organization representatives attended the first meeting and agreed to meet quarterly to further the goal of coordinating stakeholders to identify and address barriers to farmland access .

MLFC Member Events



- **January 22, 2015:** MLFC members toured several local food system sites in **Charleston**, including DirtWorks Incubator Farm, Sweetgrass Gardens CropStop/GAP shed, and GrowFood Carolina.
- **May 10, 2015:** MLFC members met with Gary Prince at the **State Farmers Market** to discuss initiatives which could increase production and distribution of local foods.
- **May 28, 2015:** MLFC members visited **Travelers Rest and Greenville** to tour several important sites in Greenville’s local food economy: The Café at Williams Hardware, Travelers Rest Farmers Market, Swamp Rabbit Café, and Mill Village Farms. The group also spoke with the Greenville County’s Greenways, Natural & Historic Resources Coordinator; and with the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the new Feed & Seed initiative.

Local Food System Planning Achievements

- **2015:** A proposal for a **Midlands Agricultural Economic Analysis** was developed and initial data were compiled.
- **July, 2015:** MLFC was the subject of a presentation at the **2015 Summer SC American Planning Association Conference**.
- **2016:** Several MLFC members partnered to obtain technical assistance through the **Stronger Economies Together** program.

Formation and Achievements of the MFA

- **September, 2014:** As an outgrowth of the “Future of Midlands Farms and Food Summit,” the **Midlands Food Alliance (MFA)** formed as a grassroots group under the nonprofit Sustainable Midlands umbrella to advocate and educate for a sustainable and equitable localized food system in the Midlands of SC. A **Memorandum of Understanding** was created to outline the relationship between the MLFC and the MFA.
- **September, 2015:** Sustainable Midlands and the Midlands Food Alliance published a **Midlands Food Guide** and began hosting regional potlucks to strengthen local networks of food producers and consumers.