



Countryside Conservancy

2179 Everett Road • Peninsula, Ohio 44264 • P 330.657.2538 • F 330.657.2198 • www.cvcountryside.org

For Immediate Release – Wednesday, March 18, 2009
Beth Knorr, Market Manager
Countryside Conservancy
(330) 657-2538

New Coalition to Promote Local Food Networks

Akron, Ohio - A new group in Summit County has its eye on the green—green as in food and the economy. With hopes to increase locally grown food production, distribution, and consumption, members of the recently formed Food Policy Coalition of Summit County will meet at 6 p.m., March 24, at the new Metro Intermodal Transit Station, located at 631 S. Broadway Street, Akron.

The Coalition is an outgrowth of the Northeast Ohio Food Congress held last November, and is spearheaded by Countryside Conservancy, Crown Point Ecology Center, and others interested in promoting community-based food and farming programs throughout Summit County. “Food policy councils and coalitions are a great way to get citizens engaged in their communities around an issue that is important to everyone,” said Beth Knorr, market manager for the Countryside Conservancy. “The Coalition is one of the ways in which the Countryside Conservancy is growing the food scene in northeast Ohio.”

Consumers are beginning to pay attention to production and distribution costs to the environment, and quality comparisons such as taste and nutrients, often missing in food that travels thousands of miles to market. “When making food choices, individuals are increasingly concerned about the health of their families, their community, and the world they are going to leave behind,” Knorr said. “Taking a little bigger bite from local sources can have a huge impact on all three.”

Knorr said there are many benefits from eating locally. Not only does it improve the quality of life for individuals, but a thriving food network could significantly boost the local economy. If 10 percent of the state’s food system was localized, Ohio could reap a \$7 billion economic gain, according to Amalie Lipstreu, sustainable agriculture program manager for Ohio. In Ohio, some 33 percent of consumers are willing to pay more for local or organic food, according to studies from the Social Responsibility Initiative at Ohio State University.

The Coalition's monthly meetings are open to the public. Discussions will focus on agriculture viability, healthy food access, and educational resources for promoting the concept.

Countryside Conservancy has been working in partnership with Cuyahoga Valley National Park since 1999 to revitalize farms within park boundaries. Serving as a catalyst for growing community based food systems in Northeast Ohio, the non-profit runs the Countryside Farmers' Markets in Peninsula at the new Howe Meadow location, and in Akron at Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens. It helps up-and-coming farmers find land, connects local growers to chefs and consumers, and educates citizens about the importance of local food systems. For more information, visit the Conservancy at www.cvcountryside.org or call Stephanie Webb at (330) 657-2542.

###



farmland



farmers



food



community