



## Chapter 3

# Accessing Nutritious Food in Low-Income Neighborhoods

By Dr. Alice Ammerman

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# Summary: Dr. Alice Ammerman:

**D**r. Alice Ammerman is a professor in the Department of Nutrition, Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also directs the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, a CDC Prevention Research Center. Her father grew up on a small, integrated farm (tobacco, livestock, garden for the family) in Cynthia, Ky., which she visited frequently as a child.

### **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)).

