

# Mapping Duluth Grill Local Sustainable Food Purchasing:

A 2011 Baseline Assessment



This report details criteria and assessment process used to determine the percentage purchasing by the Duluth Grill, a local, sustainable food restaurant

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**I want to thank Tom Hanson, his wife Jaima, their son Louie and the staff of The Duluth Grill for warmly welcoming me into their restaurant, providing me with copious amounts of coffee, and answering my many questions.**

**Thanks to Natalie Brown for exploring this project with me and working hard to create such an impressive map.**

**Lastly, I want thank ISF Executive Director Jamie Harvie, who has taught me an invaluable amount about advocacy, food systems and community organizing. I'm inspired by your vision and passion for change in the world.**

# Mapping the Duluth Grill Local, Sustainable Food Purchasing: A 2011 Baseline Assessment

## Introduction

Across the country, there is an increased awareness of the positive relationship between local food production and the socioeconomic health and resilience of communities. As a result, local businesses, institutions and consumers are increasingly seeking ways to enhance and promote increased investment in their regional food economy. This awareness and engagement provides the potential to significantly transition away from an industrial food supply system and support regional food value chains. To effectively realize this potential, metrics and benchmarks will be essential to effectively plan necessary regional production, distribution and infrastructure needs.

## Background

The Duluth Grill is a family-owned restaurant located in Duluth, Minnesota well-recognized for its efforts to support a local, sustainable food system. In 2012, The Duluth Grill signed the Superior Compact, a 20% local food purchasing goal by 2020. While The Duluth Grill had a rough sense of local purchasing, owner Tom Hanson, already a strong community advocate of local food recognized that this commitment to his community required better than a rough sense. He needed to establish a baseline measure and, if necessary, benchmarks that would allow him to meet his 20% by 2020 purchasing goal. To this end, he approached The Institute for a Sustainable Future (ISF), a nationally recognized food system policy organization for help in tracking and measuring purchasing. ISF and the Duluth Grill shared a mutual interest in this project, as it would provide the first measure of local procurement within the Western Lake Superior regional food system and assist other local businesses interested in setting a community standard of voluntary measuring and reporting.

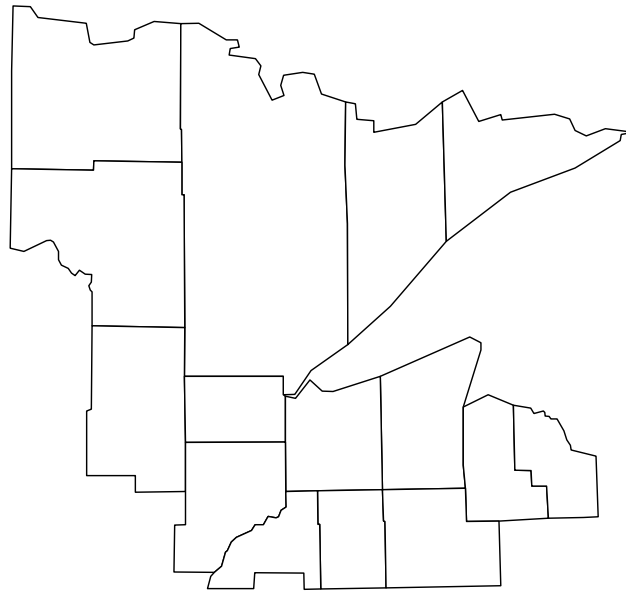
The Duluth Grill (and the many other restaurants and business that have endorsed the Superior Compact) demonstrate that there is no longer a need to convince businesses and communities of the myriad of benefits gained in supporting their local food system. Now efforts must shift to the implementation of regional food system transformation by comprehensively defining, measuring and tracking the efforts of our regional business and institutions working toward positive change.

This report provides an overview of the process and results of the 2011 local and sustainable food purchases by the Duluth Grill. Additionally, this report highlights challenges with, and opportunities to improve, transparency within the supply system.

## Criteria

The local food bioregion determined by the Superior Compact includes Western Lake Superior counties in Northeastern Minnesota, Northwestern Wisconsin and Southern Ontario.

The Superior Compact Region



It Includes:

Minnesota Counties: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, St. Louis

Wisconsin Counties: Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Sawyer, Washburn

Ontario Counties: Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay.

The applied definition of local, sustainable food utilizes the Superior Compact Purchasing Commitment definition of local see Appendix A (designated counties or within 100 miles of a purchasing facility and the Green Guide for Healthcare Operations v2.2 Food Credit 3.1-3.3) third party certified ecolabels and USDA / FDA approved marketing claims (see Appendix A). For processed foods with multiple ingredients, including bread and other bakery items, at least 50% by weight of ingredients must be produced within the Compact region. The Green Guide for Health Care is a voluntary good practices guide developed to create high-performance healthcare facilities. The GGHC food service credits were the nation's first sustainable food service credits.

**Therefore, ‘locally grown food’ items measured in this report are produced in the Superior Compact Region and/or processed in the Superior Compact Region. Additionally, for processed foods with multiple ingredients, at least 50% by weight of ingredients are produced within the Superior Compact region. Sustainable foods include Third Party Certification.**

Examples of local sustainable food items included in the report:

<b>Product</b>	<b>Production Location</b>	<b>Processing Location</b>	<b>3rd Party Certification</b>
Milk	Cook/Meadowlands, MN	Babbit, MN	None
Cabbage	Wrenshall, MN	Wrenshall, MN	USDA Organic
Coffee	Lima, Peru	Duluth, MN	USDA Organic, Rain Forest Alliance
Tomatoes	Superior, WI	Superior, WI	None

## **Methods**

### **Introductions**

The project began with an initial meeting with Duluth Grill owner, Tom Hanson. Almost an hour was spent discussing the history of the restaurant, Mr. Hanson’s passion for cooking and local food, and the challenges he faces as a businessman with ethical purchasing goals. A tour of the kitchen, food storage coolers, freezers, dry-storage, the office, and introductions to key staff members followed. This extensive introduction was helpful not only for practical research reasons, but facilitated a comfortable, friendly acclimation into the busy hub of the restaurant.

### **Getting Organized**

The first task was to determine a process to assess the total purchasing for 2011. The Duluth Grill monitors purchasing through a computer software program, ChefTech. The software can search and sort food purchases by date, date range, supplier, product name, and product type (i.e. dairy, meat, bread). 2011 purchasing totaled \$980,083.88 and was calculated by searching food and beverage products purchased between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011. This information was outputted into a fifty-plus page purchasing report formatted alphabetically by supplier. Suppliers represent either a farm or local business (i.e. bakery, dairy) supplying directly, or regional or broadline distributors (which provide food items aggregated from a variety of farms and processors).

It was assumed that the list of suppliers would provide detail on various foods purchased, and by using supplier’s addresses, and/or any ecolabels associated with these purchases, local/

sustainable food would be quickly determined. Rather, supplier data included the purchase date(s), invoice number(s), number of “items” purchased (with no description of what that item might be) and total cost. While this information was helpful in understanding total purchases from a specific supplier, it was of limited utility to the assessment without an understanding of whether the “ items” purchased were food, and/or what food items they were and/or any certifications. A scanned excerpt from this report is illustrated in Figure 1. below.

Date	Invoice Number	Number of Items	Total Cost
12/31/2011	112311545	68	\$4,241.27
12/30/2011	112300105	3	\$193.60
12/30/2011	112300116	57	\$3,352.93
12/29/2011	112290377	1	\$55.52
12/28/2011	112280102	65	\$2,811.52
12/27/2011	112270146	27	\$1,308.33
12/23/2011	112230196	66	\$3,767.98
12/23/2011	112231490	1	\$44.50
12/23/2011	112241781	30	\$1,427.56
12/22/2011	112229095	2	\$10.96
12/21/2011	112210534	58	\$3,213.51
12/21/2011	112211794	1	\$96.07
12/19/2011	112190020	46	\$1,860.93
12/17/2011	112171502	61	\$2,756.26
12/16/2011	112160115	48	\$2,782.14
12/16/2011	112160150	1	\$105.00
12/14/2011	112140080	51	\$2,295.44
12/13/2011	112130149	1	\$28.11
12/12/2011	112120043	46	\$2,325.76

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**Figure 1. Example of ChefTech Purchasing Report**

As a result, a second approach was developed. This time, rather than search by total purchases, the 2011 Duluth Grill purchases were searched by food items. This search yielded an alphabetical list of food items (i.e. carrots, beef patties, oranges), each with their own suppliers, invoice number, date of purchase, and total cost. For example, a search for ‘beets’ yielded a long list of invoices throughout the year and indicated when The Duluth Grill purchased beets, from who, and the total cost of the beets. As with the search using purchasing data, there was no indication of production standards, i.e. eco-labels. Some months, beets were purchased from large food distributors, while in the summer beets were purchased directly from local suppliers.

It became clear that a baseline analysis would be more arduous than originally anticipated and that it would be necessary to marry, or cross-reference the two searches organizing food items by type, supplier (thus location) and purchasing totals. The information from the searches was manually compiled into Excel Spreadsheets for each type of supplier, subcategorized into ‘Direct Suppliers’ (i.e. farms, ranches, bakeries and dairies) and Food Distributors. Each procurement spreadsheet included headings for product name, supplier/distributor, production location, processing location, third party certification, total 2011 purchases and contact information. Examples for both supplier types are provided in Table 1. and Table 2. below.

Duluth Grill Purchasing 2011					
Distributor A					
Total Purchasing in 2011: \$200,000					
Salesperson: John Doe, 218-222-2222					
Product	Supplier(s)	Production Location	Processing Location	3rd Party Certification	Total Purchased
Beets, Bulk Bunch					
Onions, Yellow					
Turkey, Whole					

**Table 1. Food Distributors Example Spreadsheet**

Duluth Grill Purchasing 2011						
Direct Supplier A						
Product	Supplier	Contact Info	Production Location	Processing Location	3rd Party Certification	Total Purchased
Beef	Direct Supplier A	Jerry, 218-333-3333				\$30,000
Various Produce	Direct Supplier B	The Johnsons, 715-444-4444				\$6,000
Honey	Direct Supplier C	Mary, 612-555-5555				\$1,500

**Table 2. Direct Suppliers Example Spreadsheet**

**Filling in the Blanks: Direct Suppliers**

The Duluth Grill purchases many food products directly from local farms, ranches, bakeries and dairies. Mr. Hanson knows most of these local farms and businesses personally and takes pride in the network of local food producers he has developed. Most are local farms and businesses that produce and process their own products. Because they were local and typically family businesses, direct suppliers were the easiest to contact and interact with. Moreover, their close relationships with Mr. Hanson and The Duluth Grill made inquiries feel more welcome and understood. Many had met Mr. Hanson personally, shared his passion for the local food economy, and enjoyed their business relationship.

Most direct suppliers were contacted by phone. The call was placed, brief introductions were made, an explanation of the project followed, and then the three questions were asked:

- Where was the food item produced, grown or sourced?
- Where was it processed?
- Is it Third Party Certified?

Often these conversations were brief, personable, and easy. Most direct suppliers knew the answers to the questions immediately and were happy to provide them. While the purpose of the research and the use of the information were almost always questioned, every direct supplier was comfortable addressing the criteria. Many times the answers came directly from the farmer, rancher or producer of the food item in question.

These exchanges sometimes even extended beyond the research inquiries and developed into enjoyable conversations about farming, food and the region. One particular conversation with a regional beef producer made an impression. Upon being inquired about third party certification, the old rancher sighed into the phone, thought for a minute and replied, “The only third party certification I have is from the families I feed and get to know. You should talk to them and ask them how my beef tastes, how it makes them feel. That’s the only certification I care about.”

### **Filling in the Blanks: Food Distributors**

While strong relationships with direct suppliers have led The Duluth Grill to be known as a go-to local food restaurant, regional and broadline food distributors are still used to procure a large portion of purchasing. One food distributor alone represented 56% of 2011 Duluth Grill purchasing. As we will discuss, it was very difficult to determine sourcing data from food distributors.

Recognizing that support from his distributors would be essential, Mr. Hanson provided contact information for his food distribution sales people and informed them of the assessment project early on. ISF research staff followed up with a variety of phone calls and emails to these salespeople and after three weeks initial meetings were held with the two largest food distributors.

According to the sales staff, it was the first time either had encountered this type of inquiry. Sales staff had many questions about the nature of the project and its intended use. Ultimately, it was agreed that the best method to facilitate the process would be to provide the salespeople with an Excel Spreadsheet of the food items to be tracked and have them fill in the necessary information. Research staff assumed that this process would be relatively fast and straight



forward because of the “local food” marketing materials featured on the distributor websites, burgeoning public demand for local and sustainable food sourcing in general and the interest of their client for sourcing information.

Due to the agricultural limits of the Western Lake Superior Region, food items like tropical fruits, citrus, olives, shrimp, etc. were not included in the list to be tracked by the salespeople. Seasonality also had to be addressed with the food distribution companies. Large food distributors rarely purchase from one supplier year-round, so it was necessary to determine not only where each food item was sourced, but when. To address this issue, the criteria were duplicated to include a primary supplier of the food item and, when necessary, the secondary seasonal provider of the item. An example of the form, presented in hardcopy and send electronically to either salesperson, can be seen below in Table 3.

Duluth Grill Food Procurement 2011								
Product	Distributor A	Primary Supplier Location	Supply Dates	Processing Location		Secondary Supplier Location	Supply Dates	Processing Location
Apple, Whole								
Basil, Fresh								
Beans, Green								
Blackberries, Fresh								
Blueberries, Frozen								
Broccoli, Florets								
Cabbage, Green								
Cantaloupe								

**Table 3. Food Distributor Local Supplier Data Form**

Almost another three weeks passed before information slowly trickled in from the salespeople. It took over two months to receive complete answers, by the distributors, to the local / sustainable questions criteria. One salesperson provided tracking information in hardcopy with only the primary supplier name provided. The other salesperson provided information via email and included a combination of supplier names and some supplier/processing locations.

The majority of the over 150 food items tracked by the salespeople were sourced from even larger national food distributors sourcing mainly from California and Mexico. However, almost two dozen produce, meat and dairy items were supplied by producers in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and North Dakota. The salespeople were able to provide the supply locations and purchasing availability for these regionally produced items.

From this information, the ChefTech software was used to parse out purchasing information for each food item. Each food item was searched based on the purchasing availability date and the purchasing totals were tabulated. For example, cabbage purchased from Distributor A was grown in Apple Valley, Minnesota from June to October. The ChefTech search for cabbage yielded all cabbage purchased in 2011. By adding up individual cabbage purchases between June to October from Distributor A only, it was possible to determine cabbage grown in Apple Valley and supplied by Distributor A. This was quite time consuming.

Once the 2011 purchasing total was determined for an item, it was converted into a percentage of the total 2011 Duluth Grill Purchasing. An example of how the information was formatted is included below in Table 4. and includes an item from a food distributor and one from a direct supplier.

<b>Product</b>	<b>Distributor</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Production Location</b>	<b>Processing Location</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Party Certification</b>	<b>Dates Purchased</b>	<b>Total Purchasing</b>	<b>% of Total DG 2011 Purchasing</b>
Beets	Distributor A	Large Farm A	Anoka, MN	St. Paul, MN	No	July-Oct	\$1,000	0.01%
Beef	N/A	FARM B	Wrenshall, MN	Cannon Falls, MN	No	Year Round	\$30,000	3%

**Table 4. Sample Tabulation Sheet including Distributors and Direct Suppliers**

## Results

**Local food products within the Superior Compact Bioregion accounted for 25.37% of the Duluth Grill's total purchasing in 2011, including:**

Grass-fed Beef	Squash
Bison	Greens
RBGH-Free Dairy Products	Potatoes
Fish, smoke and fresh	Jams
Hydroponic Peppers/Tomatoes	Honey
Beets	Baked Goods
Cabbage	Pickled Vegetables
Onions	Organic/Fair Trade Coffee
Herbs	Maple Syrup

Items available year-round include beef, bison, dairy, fish, hydroponic peppers/tomatoes, baked goods, jams, honey, pickled vegetables, coffee and maple syrup.

**Almost 9% of food purchases in 2011 were from producers or processors in Duluth, Minnesota, including produce, baked goods, fish, coffee and maple syrup.**

All milk and cream purchased in 2011 was produced in Cook or Meadowlands, Minnesota and processed at a dairy in Babbitt, Minnesota and accounts for almost 6% of total purchasing. Peppers and tomatoes are available year-round from a hydroponic producer in nearby Superior, Wisconsin. While the coffee purchased by The Duluth Grill is produced in Lima, Peru, it is roasted in Duluth, Minnesota and carries two Third-Party Certifications, including USDA Organic and Rain Forest Alliance.

**Moreover, 31.58% of total 2011 purchasing was produced and/or processed and/or Third Party Certified in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa or North Dakota, including:**

Organic Turkey	Parsnips
Organic Eggs	Goat Cheese
Wild Rice	Kale
Bread	Hydroponic Lettuce
Peppers	Sweet Corn
Eggplant	Squash
Cucumbers	Zucchini
Alfalfa Sprouts	

Regional items available year-round include organic turkey, organic eggs, bread, alfalfa sprouts, goat cheese and hydroponic lettuce.

The alfalfa sprouts are grown hydroponically in urban Minneapolis. Lettuce is also grown hydroponically in Baldwin, Wisconsin. The grain for the bread products baked in Saint Cloud, Minnesota is purchased from a co-op of wheat producers in North Dakota. The organic eggs were produced in West Union, Iowa. Goat cheese is available year-round from a farmer in Kimball, Minnesota.

Since 2011, The Duluth Grill has continued to increase purchasing in the Superior Compact Region. In 2012, The Duluth Grill began purchasing eggs from a producer in Wrenshall, Minnesota. This shift to a local producer is significant considering eggs accounted for almost 6% of purchasing in 2011. Also, The Duluth Grill has begun growing produce on its premises and on a nearby lot in Duluth.

### **Mapping Food Purchasing**

This local / sustainable purchasing data provides an important baseline measure for the Duluth Grill. To help illustrate this data ISF worked with Natalie Brown, a student in the University of Minnesota Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program and an intern with the University Office of Sustainability. The idea was to map the purchasing information to determine purchases within the Superior Compact Region and highlight other regional purchases. The following narrative was provided by Ms. Brown and addresses the methods and challenges she encountered in mapping this data. Also included is the 2011 Duluth Grill Purchasing Map produced by Ms. Brown in Figure 2. below.

As mentioned, spatial data is difficult to visualize without a map. The percentages from each food provider were placed in numerical order, from smallest to largest. Because the data was intended to be placed on a map based on spatial location, a new spreadsheet was created that listed purchasing percentages by city rather than by food type.

Once the percent by city was calculated, data was scaled. Originally, random circle diameters were selected, starting with 0.04in for Stillwater, which had the smallest percent (0.0033%) and increased to 0.24in for Duluth, which had the largest percent (8.78%). This was initially used so that there wouldn't be crowding of symbols near the Duluth area. However, this equal increase for each city did not accurately portray the extensive range in data. Instead, data was scaled using the apparent scaling method, making the range of data more visible to the viewer. This

did cause crowding in the Superior Compact region, but the ultimate goal was in fact to show the high percent of purchasing that occurs in the area.

There were not many challenges in displaying the data on a map; however, a few design choice issues had to be made. Firstly, deciding the size of the symbols was more of a task than originally realized. As mentioned before, randomly sized circle diameters were used so that the data wouldn't be too crowded around the Superior Compact region. But after further consideration, crowding of data in the Superior Compact region was actually desired, since the highest percentages of the data is from there. Another challenged encountered was with dairy and milk purchasing from Dahl's Sunrise Dairy. The dairy was produced in Cook, MN and Meadowlands, MN for a total of 5.55%. Each city on the map has a circle corresponding to 2.775%. Yet, it is not known what actual percent of the dairy comes from either city, since the data is only from total amounts from Dahl's.

# Duluth Grill Purchasing 2011

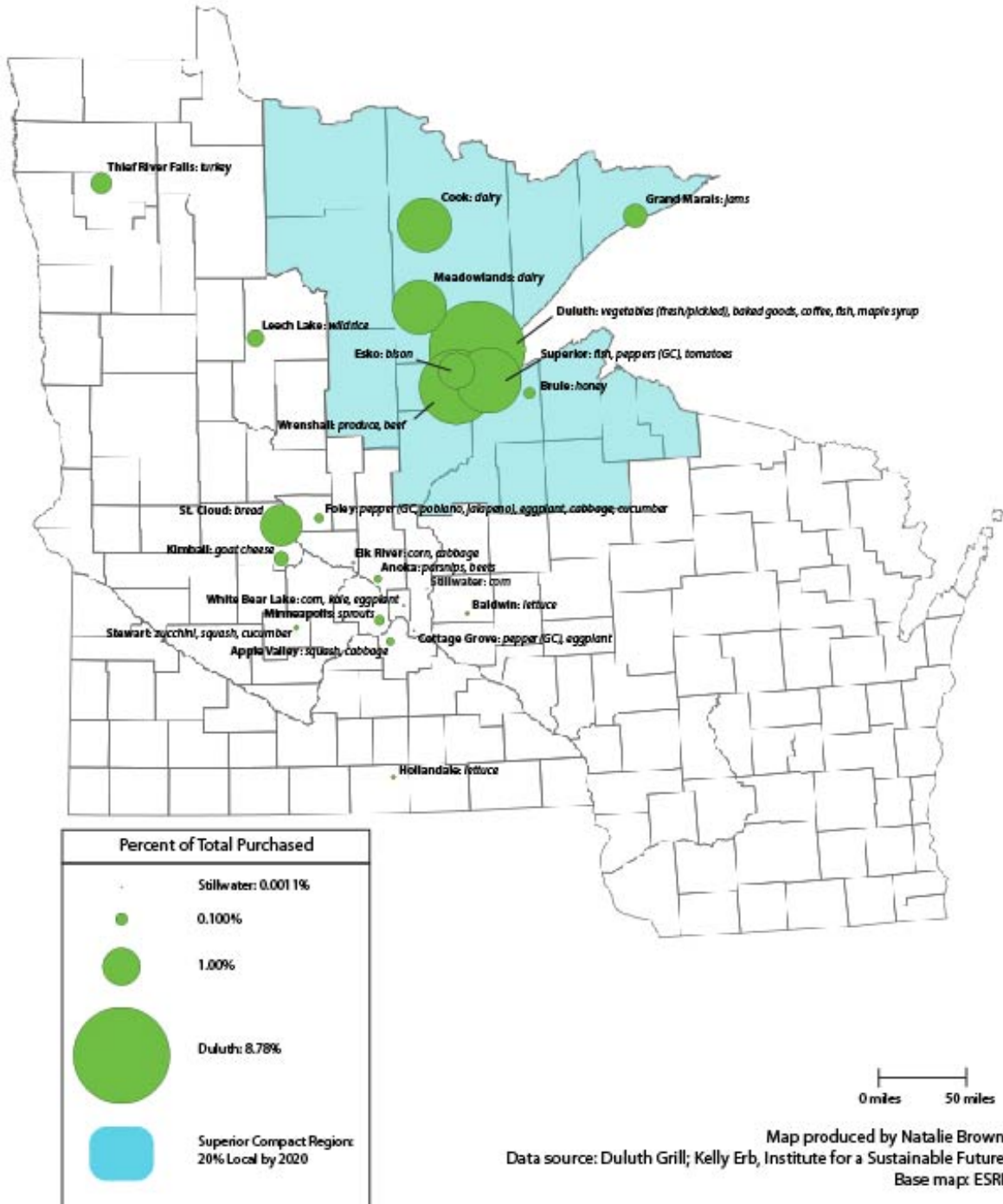


Figure 2. Duluth Grill 2011 Purchasing Map

## Challenges

Working with food distributors was more difficult than direct suppliers and represented the greatest challenge of this project. These companies represent a powerful portion of the Duluth Grill purchasing, almost 60% in 2011, and promote their local sustainable initiatives on their website.

One describes on their website a “... **collaboration between local and sustainable growers and producers as well as local agricultural groups, The Food Alliance Midwest and the Heartland Food Network. Regular marketing activities will feature locally grown and produced products including, but not limited to, items and producers listed below.**”

The other includes a company press release describing, “**a groundbreaking, industry-wide sustainability and local produce initiative**” and “**The foodservice industry’s first comprehensive, national farm-to-fork sustainability program...**” and which “.....has **two primary goals: to create and commit to continuous sustainability improvements at each touch point in the produce supply chain, and to ensure the availability and safety of local produce for operators in all segments.**”

Unfortunately, working with the distributors uncovered a very lengthy chain of communication needed to address the three criteria. Contacting the distributors was difficult, resulting in many fruitless phone calls and emails often being directed to other company branches, other salespeople, other managers, supervisors, etc. Again, it took almost three weeks to achieve a face-to-face meeting, and an additional two months to collect a complete set of responses.

Unlike direct suppliers who provide one or two different items, food distributors provide hundreds of different items for the restaurant, each of which needed to be tracked. Not being an employee of the food distribution company inhibited the ability to contact producers and processors directly. For these reasons, the research became dependent on the food distribution company itself. This waiting was challenging for the research, and it was difficult to determine if the food distributors didn’t have the answers, or just didn’t want to provide them.

Moreover, when the sustainable or sourcing criteria were addressed by the distributors, it was usually framed in extremely vague terms. For example, one distributor of meat products answered that their sources were “confidential”. When pressed further that their customer, the Duluth Grill would like to know where, he then answered, “We source from various places worldwide”. Pressed once more, he finally relented with “Just put United States”. A produce

distributor indicated that all the vegetables procured from his company were “Minnesota Local when Available”. No indication of where in Minnesota, which months and/or from which farms. This led to yet another chase for answers, more unreturned correspondence, more switching of hands.

Production and processing locations for meat and dairy items were difficult to pinpoint due to the nature of meat and dairy markets. For example, one of the food distribution companies purchases bacon from a large national meat processor. This processor, out of Illinois, purchases pig bellies from farmers around the country based on pricing and availability, not geographical proximity. The salesperson indicated it would be almost impossible to track a twenty pound box of pre-sliced bacon back to a specific farm. For this reason, some of the criteria could not be addressed by the food distribution salespeople.

The ChefTech software output did not allow for tracking of local and or sustainable food procurement and proved to be another challenge for the research. Multiple searches had to be threaded together to determine what was being purchased, from who, how much and when. The simple development of an itemized list of food products, their distributors/suppliers and the total 2011 purchasing took hours of number crunching in the back office of the Duluth Grill.

## **Conclusions**

- **This assessment has provided an awareness about the disconnect between sustainability marketing claims of Duluth Grill food system distributors and level of transparency and required by restaurants and food businesses such as the Duluth Grill.**
- **The Superior Compact (20% by 2020 purchasing commitment) has been an important addition to the transformation of our regional food system, as it explicitly requires signatories to measure procurement. Deficiencies in the current ability of food distributors to support necessary transparency provides a potential market advantage for alternative distributors best able to respond to the reporting measurement needs of the marketplace.**
- **While this assessment measures regional sourcing, conversely it measures procurement that might be provided by producers within the Superior Compact. For example, turkeys sourced from Western Minnesota, or bread from grains that might be sourced from within the Superior Compact.**



- **That a profitable family run restaurant, which provides better than market average employee benefits can support greater than 20% local procurement, suggests that a 20% goal is easily attained and removes arguments preventing other restaurants and institutions from supporting a similar level of commitment.**
- **Those distributors working within the Superior Compact region may have a market advantage by identifying and supporting the interests of regional producers. In turn, those regional food restaurants/business marketing regional producers may be helped with a corresponding regional food marketing label.**
- **Seasonal variations in local sourcing highlight the market potential for increased season extension techniques and on-farm storage.**
- **All locally produced meat was processed outside of the Superior Compact and then returned to the Duluth Grill. This highlights the regional demand for meat processing capability.**
- **Mr. Hanson has a wide array of regional producers in his network. Both regional restaurants and producers would likely be helped by a centralized producer/buyer data base.**



# Superior Compact Purchasing Commitment

**WHEREAS**, a local food system can create farming, processing and distribution jobs and increased regional economic resilience; and

**WHEREAS**, building a local food system can provide fresher and healthier foods that can address the obesity epidemic that has resulted in increased food related diseases such as heart disease and diabetes; and

**WHEREAS**, building a local food system can reduce food transportation, soil erosion and ground water contamination with an increased direct relationships between the farmers and the consumers; and

**WHEREAS**, building a local food system can revive small towns, rural schools, businesses, and support the development and diversification of the rural infrastructure throughout our region; and

**WHEREAS**, the Western Lake Superior region has the agricultural potential to produce adequate supplies of healthy food necessary for a balanced diet,

Our organization supports the goal to purchase 20% locally grown foods\* by the year 2020.

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Locally Grown constitutes food produced from:

Minnesota Counties: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, St. Louis

Wisconsin Counties: Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Sawyer, Washburn

Ontario Counties: Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay or a 100 miles from the purchasing entity.

For processed foods with multiple ingredients, at least 50% by weight of ingredients must be produced within the Compact region.

1-3 points

**FS Credit 3.1-3.3****Local, Sustainably Produced Food Purchasing****Intent**

Improve human and ecological health through purchase of local and sustainably produced food products.

**Health Issues**

Shifts in the U.S. food system over the last century are compromising human and ecological health. While total farm acreage has declined, farm size has increased and is more focused on concentrated monocropping. This contributes to declining diversity of food crops necessary to fulfill human nutritional needs, while also leading to a loss of biodiversity. In the U.S., the typical food item now travels from 1,500 to 2,400 miles from farm to plate. This long travel distance disconnects growers from consumers, increases opportunities for food contamination and nutrient loss.

Routine use of antibiotics in animal agriculture has been shown to increase antibiotic resistance among bacteria that cause human infections. Pesticide drift, field dust, waste burning, toxic gases from degrading manure, and diesel exhaust from transporting food long distances are all factors related to food production that contribute to asthma, cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. Commercial fertilizers and pesticides contaminate surface- and ground-water in many locales. Large-scale animal feedlot operations contribute to water pollution with biologically active hormones, nitrates and other breakdown products of untreated animal waste. Calorie-rich, nutrient-poor diets contribute to obesity, diabetes, cancer, and a variety of degenerative diseases. By moving toward a healthier and more sustainable food system, health care can help alleviate human health problems associated with inadequate or inappropriate nutrition, antibiotic resistance, air and water contamination, and global health issues such as climate change.

**Credit Goals**

- Achieve a minimum percentage of annual combined food and beverage purchases (both in-house and contracted food service) from any combination of the following sources:
  - Approved to carry one or more of the following independent third party certified eco-labels: USDA Certified Organic, Food Alliance Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified, Protected Harvest, Fair Trade Certified, Bird Friendly, Certified Humane Raised and Handled, Animal Welfare Approved, Salmon Safe, Marine Stewardship Council or other eco-label that has transparent and meaningful standards and independent verification processes. See Consumers Union Greener Choices Eco-Label Center for individual label ratings. Go to [www.greenerchoices.org/eco-labels/eco-home.cfm](http://www.greenerchoices.org/eco-labels/eco-home.cfm)

*Note: Additional information about eco-labels is available in the Green Guide for Health Care Food Technical Brief, <http://www.gghc.org>.*

AND/OR

- Carry one of the following label claims allowed by USDA or FDA: "Raised without antibiotics" or "No antibiotics administered" (poultry and meat products); "Raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans" (poultry); "Raised without added hormones" or "No hormones added" (beef and lamb only); "No genetically engineered ingredients" (products made from corn, soy, canola or their derivatives); "rBGH-free", "rBST-free", or a statement such as "our farmers pledge not to use rBGH or rBST"/"Our farmers pledge not to use artificial hormones" (milk, butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, sour cream, cottage cheese); "Grass-fed" (products from ruminants such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, lamb); .

AND/OR

## FS Credit 3.1-3.3 continued

### Local, Sustainably Produced Food Purchasing

- Farms, ranches, and production/processing facilities located within a 200-mile radius of the facility.

*Note: All food items that are processed must be sourced from within a 200-mile radius to meet the intent of this Credit Goal. For processed foods with multiple ingredients, including breads and other bakery items, only products with the majority of ingredients (>50% by weight) produced within the 200-mile radius may be included in the calculation.*

Credit	Point total	Minimum Percentage (combined food and beverage purchases, based on cost)
3.1	1 point	15%
3.2	2 points	25%
3.3	3 points	50%

#### Reference Table: Third Party Certified Eco-Labels

Products	Animal Welfare Approved	Bird Friendly	Certified Humane Raised & Handled	Certified USDA Organic	Fair Trade Certified	Food Alliance Cert.	Marine Stewardship Council	Protected Harvest	Rainforest Alliance Certified	Salmon Safe
Beef/Bison	X		X	X		X				X
Lamb	X		X	X		X				X
Pork	X		X	X		X				
Poultry	X		X	X		X				
Coffee		X		X	X				X	
Tea				X	X				X	
Fruit Juices				X					X	X
Wine				X						X
Milk			X	X		X				X
Eggs			X	X		X				X
Cheese			X	X		X				
Yogurt				X						
Fruit				X	X	X		X	X	X
Vegetables				X		X		X		X
Breads				X						
Cereals				X						
Grains				X	X	X				
Sugar				X	X					
Processed Foods				X		X				
Cocoa				X	X				X	
Chocolate				X	X				X	
Nuts				X		X				
Oils				X		X				
Snacks				X						
Premade soups				X						
Fish							X			

## FS Credit 3.1-3.3 continued

### Local, Sustainably Produced Food Purchasing

#### General Label Claims

Label Claim	Food Category
"Raised without antibiotics" or "No antibiotics administered"	poultry and meat
"Raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans"	poultry
"Raised without added hormones" or "No hormones added"	beef and lamb
"No genetically engineered ingredients"	products made from corn, soy, canola or their derivatives
"rBGH-free", "rBST-free", or something to this effect "our farmers pledge not to use rBGH or rBST"/"Our farmers pledge not to use artificial hormones"	milk, butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, sour cream, cottage cheese
"Grass-fed"	products from ruminant animals such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, lamb

#### Suggested Documentation

- Demonstrate through annual purchasing records that combined food and beverage purchases from food service operations (patient food and cafeterias), based on total cost, have met the credit goals over a minimum one-year period.

#### Reference Standards

*Note: For additional information on the Reference Standards for this credit, view the Green Guide for Health Care Food Technical Brief, <http://www.gghc.org>*

Bird Friendly, <http://www.si.edu/smbc>

Certified Humane Raised and Handled, <http://www.certifiedhumane.com>

Certified USDA Organic, <http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOP/indexNet.htm>

Fair Trade Certified™, <http://www.transfairusa.org>

Food Alliance Certified, <http://www.foodalliance.org>

Grass Fed, <http://www.usda.gov>

Marine Stewardship Council, <http://www.msc.org>

Raised Without Antibiotics/No Antibiotics Administered,  
[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Meat\\_&\\_Poultry\\_Labeling\\_Terms/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Meat_&_Poultry_Labeling_Terms/index.asp)

## FS Credit 3.1-3.3 continued

### Local, Sustainably Produced Food Purchasing

Raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans,  
[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations/Use\\_of\\_Ionophores/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations/Use_of_Ionophores/index.asp)

Raised without added hormones/No hormones added,  
[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Meat\\_&\\_Poultry\\_Labeling\\_Terms/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Meat_&_Poultry_Labeling_Terms/index.asp)

Protected Harvest, <http://www.protectedharvest.org>

Rainforest Alliance Certified, <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/index.cfm>

Salmon Safe, <http://www.salmonsafe.org/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Labeling,  
[http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?info\\_center=4&tax\\_level=1&tax\\_subject=273](http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=1&tax_subject=273)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Labeling and Nutrition, <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html>

### Potential Technologies & Strategies

- **Credit Synergies:** *Coordinate implementation of this credit with GGHC IO Prerequisite 1: Integrated Operations & Maintenance Process; GGHC WM Prerequisite 1: Waste Management Plan; GGHC WM Prerequisite 2: Waste Generation Profile and Measurement; GGHC FS Credit 1: Sustainable Food Policy and Plan; GGHC FS Credit 2: Sustainable Food Education and Promotion; GGHC FS Credit 4: Reusable & Non-Reusable Products; GGHC FS Credit 5: Hospital Supported Agriculture: Food and Farm Linkages; GGHC FS Credit 6.1: Food Donation and Composting; GGHC FS Credit 6.2: Food Services Recycling; GGHC FS Credit 7: Food Vendors; GGHC FS Credit 8: Chemical Management for Food Services; and, EP Credit 1: Solid Waste Prevention in Purchasing.*
- There is no single definition for sustainable agriculture; however, such a system includes characteristics such as:
  - **Conservation and preservation:** The use of land and other natural resources does not deplete their existence and therefore makes those resources available to future generations. Agrichemicals (ie., chemical products used in agriculture for insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, etc.) are not conducive to sustainability, and therefore should be used minimally and only when necessary. Conservation in agriculture includes soil conservation, water conservation and protection, and energy conservation during the production process.
  - **Animal welfare:** Sustainably-raised animals are treated humanely and with respect, and are well cared for. They are permitted to carry out their natural behaviors, such as grazing, rooting or pecking, and are provided with a natural diet appropriate for their species.
  - **Biodiversity:** Rotation of a variety of plant and animal types can enrich soil nutrients, prevent disease, and minimize pest outbreaks, whereas continued support of a single species depletes those resources used by that species alone. Ecosystem is integral to sustainability.
  - **Economic viability:** In a sustainable agricultural system, farmers earn fair prices for their products that are appropriate to their reasonable costs. A sustainable system does not depend on subsidies, treats workers fairly, and pays wages and benefits that provides a meaningful livelihood to farmers to enable them to continue their work.

## FS Credit 3.1-3.3 continued

### Local, Sustainably Produced Food Purchasing

The following strategies can be used to identify food and beverages that meet some or all of the characteristics of sustainable agriculture:

- **Third-party certification/eco-labels:** Third-party certifications provide independent verification that standards have been met. These certifications usually include on-farm/ ranch inspections to verify that standards have been met. It is also important that the standards are meaningful and developed through an open process by parties free of any conflict of interest. Certifications such as USDA Organic and the others mentioned herein have been deemed “Highly Meaningful” by Consumers Union, <http://www.eco-labels.org>.
- **Marketing claims:** Some common marketing claims, such as those allowed by USDA or FDA and listed above, can be used by purchasers to identify products that offer measurable social and environmental benefits. These claims are usually a statement made by the producer, sometimes with a signed affidavit as the only verification; thus, they do not represent independent third-party verification.
- **Local, independent family farms/ranches:** Many small, local farm sources subscribe to sustainable agriculture practices and deserve support, though they may lack the resources or have been unable to complete the transition to obtain state or USDA organic certification. Sustainable agriculture is plant and food animal cultivation that is healthful and humane, economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just.
- **Work directly with farmers/ranchers, local distributors and the facility’s Group Purchasing Organization (GPO):** Participate in GPO selection process for food vendors.
- **Identify Local and Independent Family Farms:** The definition of what is “local” may differ in various regions of the country. Ideally foods will travel less than 200 miles or 4-5 hours from the farm to the facility. In areas with abundant year round produce, purchasing even closer is often possible. Purchasing preference should be given to independent family farm/ ranch or cooperative/ network of independent family farms/ ranches where farmers/ ranchers own, labor on and earn a meaningful livelihood from their farms. Similarly, the definition of “family farm” is not always uniform. At the time this document went to print, one eco-label could be used to identify producers that met both family farm and sustainability criteria- the Animal Welfare Institute’s “Animal Welfare Approved” label, which applies to poultry and other meat products (<http://www.awionline.org>). However, the Association of Family Farms (AFF) has adopted similar draft standards for an AFF eco-label that purchasers will be able to use in the future to identify a wide range of sustainably produced products on family farms (<http://www.familyfood.net>).

### Resources

Eat Well Guide, <http://www.eatwellguide.org/index.cfm>.

FoodRoutes, <http://www.foodroutes.org>

Jamie Harvie, Michelle Gottlieb, Roberta Anderson and Marie Kulick, *Green Guide for Health Care Food Technical Brief*, <http://www.gghc.org>

Health Care Without Harm, <http://healthyfoodinhealthcare.org>

National Rural Catholic Conference on the Ethics of Eating, <http://www.ncrlc.com/>

Organic Trade Association (OTA), <http://www.ota.com/index.html>.