



Chapter 5

Farmlands that Provide

Yohwa?ektá.ke tsi? twáhahse?

RESOURCE HISTORY

For centuries the people of the Oneida Nation (OnyotaVa.ka) lived a very rich life surrounded by an unlimited supply of the necessities of life. The Oneida and the other Iroquois nations developed strong political, economic, cultural and spiritual communities. Ceremonially, we developed an annual calendar of celebration of the good fortune we had been given by the Creator. Hunger and diet related diseases were unknown to us. In 1615, a French delegation visited the Seneca village of Ganondagohn (near present day Rochester, NY), and reported that the village had three large granaries. Upon inspection, it was estimated that these granaries were filled with nearly 3 million bushels of corn. This visit was made in June of that year, and the French reported that nearly 500 acres were under cultivation. Shortly after the Declaration of Independence, in 1779 General John Sullivan raided the Iroquois, yet made many notes in his journal about abundant crops, including “the field contains about 100 acres, beans, cucumbers, watermelons, simblens (squash) and pumpkins in such quantities would be almost incredible... also destroyed 200 acres of excellent corn with a number of orchards, one of which had in it 1,500 fruit trees” (*Iroquois Uses of Maize and Other Food Plants*, Arthur C. Parker, 1910).

The Oneida’s were farming people with a mix of fishers, gatherers, and hunters, but their main diet came from farming. The Oneida’s practiced farming using “slash and burn” horticulture. This was characterized by the clearing and burning off of an area, the temporary cultivation of crops, and then shifting to a new location when the soils became depleted of nutrients. The main crops were grown by women. The crops were corn, beans and squash, which were called “the three sisters” and were considered special



gifts from the Creator. These crops are grown strategically. The cornstalks grow, the bean plants climb the stalks, and the squash grows beneath, inhibiting weeds and keeping the soil moist under the shade of broad leaves. In this combination, the soil remained fertile for several decades. Food was stored during the winter and lasted for two to three years. Gathering was the job of women and children. Wild roots, herbs, greens, berries and nuts were gathered in the summer. During spring maple sap was tapped from trees and made into syrup and herbs were gathered for medicine.

The role of the men was hunting, fishing, and protecting the villages. Game consisted of deer, elk, and other game such as wild turkey and migratory birds. There was a seasonal emphasis on whitetail deer. Not only were deer the main source of meat, but they also furnished the raw materials to be used in the manufacture of clothing, footwear, shelters, and other items. Muskrat and beaver were hunted during the winter. Fishing on rivers and the shores of lakes was also a significant source of food. Oneidas fished salmon, trout, bass, perch and whitefish. In the spring Oneida netted, and in the winter fishing holes were made in the ice.

In 1824, the first Oneida came and settled in Wisconsin from New York in what was initially 8 million acres with rights purchased with Presidential approval from the Menominee and Winnebago Indians. In 1831, the Menominee balked at the purchase transaction and reduced, by treaty, the land purchase to 500,000 acres. By 1838, the land designation was reduced further to approximately 65,430 acres. The area where the Oneida's settled in Wisconsin was similar to their homelands in New York. The Oneida's immediately began clearing some of the forest for cropland and for lumber to build longhouses. The women planted fields to maize, beans and potatoes while the men hunted deer, turkey and duck or fished.

Because of the experience with European settlers in New York, farming had become primarily a man's occupation. Cattle, horses, pigs and sheep were raised but apparently the fields were not enough to insure winter forage. Oneida's tied down branches of trees so the animals had buds to eat. Corn planted in the fields provided the mainstay of the diet.



With this crop, women shared equally with men in planting, hoeing, and harvesting the corn. Agriculture was largely of a subsistence nature. Cash was derived from the sale of berries, corn husks (used for bedding and braided mats), and maple syrup in Green Bay. As the fur trade upon which the city of Green Bay depended declined, there was a shift to lumbering, and much of it coming from the Oneida Reservation.

In 1844, 722 Oneida's lived on the Reservation with 2,200 acres of land under cultivation, over 100 horses, 500 head of cattle, 500 hogs, chickens and a few sheep. In addition to salting the pork of slaughtered hogs, oxen were butchered, and venison and hulled white corn combined for corn soup. Small smoke houses cured meats for preservation and by 1864 the farms were impressively productive. Men did much of the farming, but women still worked in the cornfields which had been their traditional concern. Agriculture steadily grew throughout the 1880's.

In 1889, the General Allotment Act (or Dawes Act) called for the allotment of the Oneida Reservation, and in 1891, the Oneida received 1,530 allotments. From 1906 to 1936 most of the original Reservation land was lost or sold to non-tribal settlers. Most of the allotments were lost as a result of nonpayment of taxes, failure to pay mortgages, and outright fraud, so many Oneida's had difficulty in providing for their families. More lost land was cleared for farming, and dynamite and horse teams were used to remove the last stumps from fields. In 1905, the Oneida boarding school ran a farm with two barns, horses, a cow herd, and an orchard of 300 apple trees. As a result of allotment, only a bit over 1,000 acres was still in Oneida hands by 1930, resulting in a rapid outmigration of Oneidas from the Reservation. The passage of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) in 1934 ceased allotments and the alienation of Indian trust lands. The IRA charter helped the Oneida Tribe reorganize and stabilize, halting any further allotment of land. Limited lands were repurchased under the IRA.

In 1965, the Oneida Reservation comprised 2,592 acres, of which 2,058 were Tribally owned and 534 were allotted. Most of the 800 Oneidas living on the Reservation made their living on small farms and/or employment in industry in nearby cities. It was not until the passage of the Indian Self Determination Act of 1975 that the Oneidas, again, began to set their own destiny for greater self-sufficiency.



Oneida Nation Farms

In the late 1970's Oneida agriculture began to re-establish itself. A grant was obtained from U.S. Department of Labor's Native American Economic Stimulus Program to provide training for prospective agriculturalists and permit a substantial expansion of the Tribe's community garden operations. A 56 acre farm was purchased on a land contract. It was considered a great potential for future activities particularly in hog production. This farm, which grew to 159 acres, was the "Iroquois Farm" where 35 beef cows (called "Oneida Reds") and a few pigs were raised.

Today, in 2010, this operation has evolved into the Oneida Nation Farms and Agriculture Center that grows 5,000 acres of crops, raises 450-550 head of feeders, 150 head of grazed cow-calf, and 177 head of grass-fed bison. Other lands on steep soils (slopes) are being used for 30 acres of non-cultivated apple crop production without causing soil erosion and 10 acres are used for production of strawberries, raspberries, pumpkins, and squash. Oneida Farms and Agricultural has leased lands where the fertility was run-down by former landowners/managers, which required high cost and several years of soil improvement practices to restore soil fertility.

The Oneida Nation Farm is using sustainable agricultural practices that include:

- No drainage of existing wetlands
- Maintenance of existing drainage ditches as needed
- Drainage work done with approval of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency
- No-tillage
- Minimum tillage
- Reduced machinery travel in fields to eliminate soil compaction
- Pastured cow and calf operation
- Bison grass-fed conservation project
- Nutrient management plans



- Natural fertilizer (manure) applied per soil analysis/crop uptake needs
- Planting of hybrid seed/crops to maximize yields and quality of crops and minimize or eliminate pests and diseases
- Crop rotation to:
 - ▶ Improve carbon sequestration
 - ▶ Improve and maintain soil health and fertility
 - ▶ Eliminate diseases/pests
- Precision agriculture/farming through:
 - ▶ Detailed testing and mapping of soil fertility in each farm field
 - ▶ Soil fertility analyses entered into computer software program and downloaded to computer on the farms' tractor for accurate planting and fertilization
 - ▶ Crop yield monitoring
 - ▶ Control and minimize the addition of chemicals and natural animal produced fertilizers
 - ▶ Nutrients (Nitrogen (N), Phosphorous (P), Potash (K), and trace elements) individually applied per soil analysis and use of variable rates spreading
 - ▶ Nutrient application amounts and placement to eliminate ground and surface water contamination
- Pesticide applications minimized and only as needed
- Herbicide applications minimized and only as needed
- Conservation projects on farmlands:
 - ▶ Grassed waterways and ditch buffers
 - ▶ Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) projects
 - ▶ Tillage practices leave residue on topsoil to prevent erosion
 - ▶ Manure storage pits
 - ▶ Roof runoff management



Apple Orchard

In 1994, the Oneida Tribe purchased a 3,100 tree Apple Orchard as part of their continuing strategy of reacquiring lands within the original boundaries of the Reservation.

Part of the Orchard's goal is to generate interest in the area of agriculture as well as encourage our children to understand at a young age, the importance of growing healthy food, and finding natural ways to eliminate pests. The Apple Orchard hosts a tour of school children from the Tribal Elementary School each spring, with approximately 45 children partaking in this tour. It has been successful in generating the children's interest in agriculture and teaching the many techniques used to naturally eliminate pests such as trapping insects and releasing bugs to control other bugs.

Food Distribution and Pantry

The Food Distribution program began in 1980, and it assists in feeding low-income community members. The program gives food in lieu of food stamps. A food package from the USDA is worth approximately \$100 per person per month, and is well balanced in all food groups. Over the years, the caseload has fluctuated between 400 to 1000 certified participants. The average caseload in 2005 was over 600 clients monthly.

The Director of the Oneida Food Distribution Program began the Food Pantry 2000. It was set up to assist low-income families that did not qualify for food stamps. The Food Pantry is run by a volunteer task force in order to operate more hours and assist more needy families. The Pantry's fund-raising practices helped sustain them through the first couple of years. The volunteers have found several ways to raise money such as: luncheons, soliciting products from retailers and having auctions, and holiday basket making. In 2005, Pantry volunteers raised over \$5,000 by selling brats and burgers at the Oneida Farmer's Market. With assistance from the First Nations Development Institute, the Pantry was able to formulate an endowment fund for the Pantry in 2004. The Pantry puts 20% of all its fundraising efforts toward the endowment fund.



tsyunhéhkww and Cannery

The tsyunhéhkww program is an agriculturally, community, and culturally based entity primarily focused on the education of self-sustainability and food security. tsyunhéhkww started with the idea of a community cannery in 1973 by a Tribal member who was a community worker. In the planning stages, a grant was pursued and obtained to purchase cannery equipment. In 1977, a grant was obtained for additional canning equipment and setting up the equipment. Many meetings were required to get the approval from the Catholic Diocese to set up the Cannery in the Norbert Hill Center (formally owned by the Catholic Diocese). A Tribal member was recruited from the Brown County Extension Office in Green Bay to teach nutrition, recipes, canning and summer youth groups.



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Canned white corn from the Cannery was sold to the community starting in 1982 and canned pork corn soup starting in 1983. Sales for corn bread began in 1985 on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. In 1993, an assessment was completed for building a new food processing facility. In 1994, a new food processing facility was discussed, but not acted upon due to budgeting constraints. However, it is currently being reviewed for possible implementation and updating.

Around this time ideas of going back to our original and traditional foods began to take hold. With this new Indigenous diet awareness, tsyunhéhkww began community workshops to identify our own traditional Iroquois foods and to promote eating them. Corn bread was sold weekly, and in 1995 a retail area was developed to provide teas, tinctures, vitamins, health care products and cannery products. The opening of the retail area developed more awareness of the health problems our Nation was facing and the relationship between diet and these health problems. Customers were requesting natural medicine remedies and tinctures to help with high blood pressure, diabetes, stress, hyperactivity, arthritis, weight control and menopause to name a few. Also in 1995, with the expansion and development of the three distinct components, a new name was found in tsyunhéhkww (Life Sustenance). tsyunhéhkww would be the umbrella for the three departments, Tsi[?]tkutekwayVhe (Where they put food away), Shakoahuntahsluni (He prepares the fields for them), and Teya[?]kwasniheatunjetsli-yo (They support and encourage the good life).



In 1996 the first Wellness Conference, which was designed to educate the community on what the programs can provide, inspired representatives from other Native communities to look at our program as a model. In 1997, a USDA Rural Development grant helped to reconnect our families with the animal world and teach them how to raise their own animals and be more self-reliant. The grant provided expansion into animal husbandry projects and funding included: a permanent and seasonal green house, fencing to set up rotational grazing pastures, a compost system, farm equipment, staff training and four agricultural positions. Additionally, the Community Harvest and Husking Bee was another community activity started in the mid 1990's. The week long community gathering revolves around the harvesting of white corn and sharing the knowledge of snapping, husking, and braiding the white corn. The 20th annual Community Harvest and Husking Bee will be held in 2013.

Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS)

In an effort to give direction to our agricultural/food producing operations, the advisory group Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS) was established in 1994. OCIFS' first task force identified that there were initially four agricultural operations that were specifically "food related":

- Oneida Nation Farm
- Oneida Food Distribution
- Oneida Apple Orchard
- Oneida tsyunhéhkvw

After numerous community meetings and input, these four were brought together within the Development Division as part of Community Development. The OCIFS entities are committed as a team to assist low income families by institutionalizing an economically based, community food system. This system aims at incorporating indigenous, traditional food products and creating a local economy that will provide employment opportunities. OCIFS attempts to foster the self-reliance of low-income community members, promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm and nutrition issues, and encourage long-term innovative solutions to hunger on the Oneida Reservation.



As part of a strategic plan the following phases were created jointly by the OCIFS entities to meet unmet needs, which are: reduce incidents of diabetes, reduce incidents of obesity, increase low-income community member self-esteem, provide training for community members in retail and agricultural related businesses, and begin small business development in Oneida.

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

Productive agricultural land is a finite and irreplaceable natural resource. Prime farmland is land best suited for producing human food, grains, livestock feed, fiber, and oilseed crops. Because there are many competing uses of land for homes, parks/recreation, conservation/hunting, and businesses it is important that Oneida strikes a balance between uses in order to protect Oneida’s local food supply and preserve the rural character so importantto Tribal members.

The USDA soils manuals for Brown and Outagamie Counties show a large amount of Reservation land as prime farmland. These acres currently produce a high volume of crops. The acreage of prime farmland, broken down into quadrants, is as follows:

Table 5.1 Acreage of Prime Farmland

Quadrant	Northwest	Northeast	Southwest	Southeast	Total Acres
Prime Farmland	5,171 Acres	5,879 Acres	10,488 Acres	5,898 Acres	27,436 Acres

Oneida Farm

The Oneida Nation Farm is a modern, approximately 7,500 acre operation that produces fruits, vegetables, meat, feed for animals (grains, alfalfa hay, corn), and grassy fields for grazing beef and buffalo. The Oneida Nation Farm uses sustainable and best management practices, new plant varieties, and fertilizers that can double the yields of major crops. Selecting livestock genetics increases the amount of meat that animals produce.



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No steroids, hormones, antibiotics, or animal by-products are used. The Oneida Nation Farm features a “point-of-origin” cow-calf pasture, a beef feedlot, and a pastured bison herd. Modern equipment reduces needs for farm labor. The Oneida Nation Farm uses Precision Farming methods featuring no wetland drainage, soils analysis, no-till or minimum tillage to assure maximum carbon sequestration, crop rotation to maintain soil quality and insect control, nutrient management, and low-input controlled pesticide and fertilizer applications (only where needed). Oneida agriculture is a business with expertise in scientific agriculture, accounting, marketing, and financing. Selling crops and meats to consumers and businesses helps to pay wages and land taxes, purchase machinery, fertilizer, supplies, and also contributes to the Tribe’s general fund.



Oneida Farm Signage



Using Oneida land for agricultural production to produce crops and meats for the local community exercises sovereignty and helps Oneida be more self-reliant, self-sustaining, and self-sufficient in food. Farming provides economic diversification, revenue generation, and employment. Agriculture contributes to protection of a rural atmosphere and helps preserve the Oneida way of life. The long-range environmental benefits of the Oneida Nation Farm's modern farming methods include seeking lowest impact farm chemicals, contributing to wildlife food supply and habitat, use of bio-diesel fuels to promote clean air, and using buffers to protect Reservation surface waters. Keeping the most productive lands available to farming reduces energy, fertilizer and other inputs, minimizes environmental hazards, and returns optimum profits.



Of the 7,500 acres managed by the Oneida Nation Farm, 5,000 of these are tillable, and the remaining 2,500 acres are in various conservation programs and wildlife restoration initiatives. The lands are located in various sites throughout the Reservation, and the crop breakdown generally is as follows: 1,350 acres in alfalfa, 1,990 acres in corn and 518 acres in wheat. 127 acres are in pasture for the Black Angus beef and an additional 398 acres in pasture for bison. The farm herd currently consists of approximately 450–550 Black Angus steers, 150 cow/calf operation and 177 grass-fed bison. The farm has recently acquired an additional 15 female bison, which should allow the herd to become self-sufficient in reproduction terms. The bison are not only a spiritual link to the past for the Oneida people, but they may also serve as a healthy nutritional option in controlling the diabetes problems on Native American Reservations.

Apple Orchard

The Oneida Apple Orchard has 34 acres of orchard, which now totals approximately 4,500 trees. The majority of the apples are Macintosh, Cortland, and Honey Gold. Fifteen other varieties are also available. There is also a wide variety of fresh produce products such as: strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, sweet corn, squash and pumpkins.

The Orchard offers fresh fruits and vegetables to all community members. They can purchase produce generally at a lower price than they can off the Reservation. The Apple Orchard also assists the low-income community by donating apples to the Oneida Food Distribution Program and supplies fresh fruits and vegetables to the elderly at the Oneida Senior Center.



tsyunhéhkvw

The tsyunhéhkvw program is located on a 83 acre site, which raises 30 acres of organic crops on a rotational basis including traditional white corn, hay, fruits and vegetables, and a pasture for 25 grass-fed cattle. It has three main components: Agriculture, Cannery and Retail. It is founded on a natural and organic lifestyle that services the Oneida Tribe and community. The primary focus is on the education of self-sustainability and food security. A greenhouse grows seedlings for sale and distribution to community members. tsyunhéhkvw uses a poultry and vegetable facility to process poultry and clean the organic produce. Free-range poultry and farm-fresh eggs are also sold. Organic certification was obtained in 2001 for white corn, hay, pasture, pumpkins, and other fruits and vegetables.

The agricultural sites includes: a greenhouse, hoop house, chicken/vegetable processing facility, organic gardens, free range chickens, grass-fed cattle, and the preservation of our heirloom White Corn in planting and harvesting. The site is located within the Duck Creek watershed, which is a natural waterway system that runs through the





Oneida Reservation and surrounding communities. Each year the program services 250 families with a seed and bedding plant distribution project. More than 70 families are provided with garden bed preparation through the tilling service annually. Area youths are involved with the community gardens in hope to accomplish several things:

- Get the young people interested in their proud natural heritage and knowledge of self-sustainability.
- Teach them self-sufficient behaviors at an early age thus increasing self-esteem.
- Assisting to get natural, organically grown foods and herbs out to the elderly and community members.



Cannery

The Cannery handles canning processes, food preservation, and the processing of the white corn for corn soup, corn bread, dehydrated corn, corn mush, and corn flour. The facility also preserves apple products, jams/jellies, salsa, pickles, and other garden fresh fruits and vegetables. The cannery is open for use by any community member that would like to utilize it. The retail area assists customers with product selection and provides information on traditional uses of herbs and essential oils, research on health care products, and initiates product development. Knowledge is shared with the community by providing numerous hands-on events.

Food Distribution and Pantry

The Food Distribution and Pantry are concerned with all the issues that low-income community members face, (low education, unemployment and low self-esteem). That is why their goals are more than just supplying food. They are fighting hunger by giving the community people a “hands up” and not a “hand out” by:

- Educating the low income community by supplying food handling, nutrition and budgeting classes.
- Increasing the employment opportunities for low-income members by having the W-2 program and the JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) summer workers train at the warehouse.



- Raising the low income members self-esteem by having them do volunteer work at the Pantry, which permits them to be eligible for free food, and allows them to contribute to the community.
- Providing outreach information to direct clients about other programs that may meet their needs.
- Providing free delivery service for the elderly, disabled and for other emergency situations.

Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS)

OCIFS members consist of various food, health and fiscal departments within the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. The six members of this team today are: Oneida Nation Farm, tsyunhéhkwv, Food Distribution, Health Center, Grants Office and Food Pantry. The Oneida Nation Farm/Apple Orchard and tsyunhéhkwv are the two food producing and processing entities. Food Distribution and Food Pantry serve as a distribution and education center for low income community members. The Health Center assists in the connection between diet and health, and the Grants Office provides grant writing assistance to OCIFS.

In addition to providing the community with products and education about health and diet, OCIFS members are deeply concerned for the Oneida youth. OCIFS was involved with the start-up of the Oneida Falling Leaves 4-H club, which has a 12 acre parcel with a vegetable garden, a tree pilot project, 10 different Sweet Grass rings, a flower plot, a pumpkin patch, and a Miscanthus research test plot. Programs on this parcel grant youth experience and first-hand learning about what it means to work the land and grow crops. It is our hope that some of these youth will be the next generation of people to operate the Oneida Nation Farm and/or the tsyunhéhkwv program.

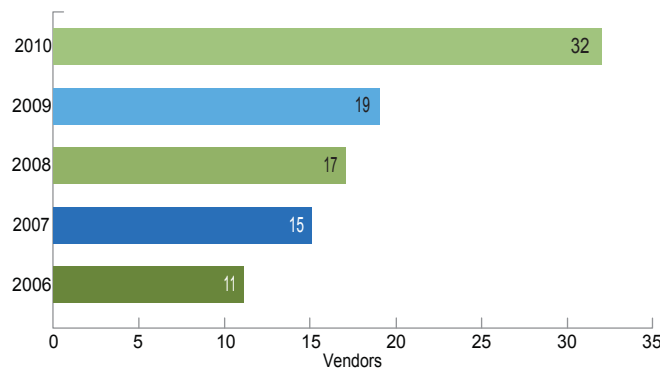
The Oneida Farmer's Market is located in the One-Stop parking lot on Highway 54 in Oneida. A 2007 community survey about the Farmer's Market revealed that 73% of respondents would rather have the market on Thursday instead of Tuesday. Thus, the Farmer's Market now runs Thursday afternoons from late-June through mid-October.



In 2010, 5,511 visitors passed through the Farmer's Market over 14 weeks of summer, which is an average of 394 customers each Thursday. In addition to increased customer presence, the average number of vendors present each week has increased from 11 per week in 2006 to 32 per week in 2010. As an added bonus, the Oneida 4-H youth and pantry volunteers run a brat booth at the Farmers' Market featuring Oneida Black Angus beef hamburgers and brats. These sales have raised \$35,932 for area non-profits over the last 5 years.



Figure 5.1 Vendors Per Farmer's Market



OCIFS members are also in the process of developing an OCIFS Cultural Activity Book to be used as a learning tool at the Oneida Elementary School. This book is designed to teach youth about opportunities the OCIFS entities have to offer, the importance of culturally based healthy foods, the need for exercise, and to increase interest and involvement in cultural and agricultural projects. OCIFS members recognize the value of having a comprehensive guide of area farms and farmer's markets and were involved with the Farm Fresh Atlas of Northeast Wisconsin. OCIFS members also teamed up with the Oneida Living In Balance (OLB) group, to work on an Oneida Community Food Assessment. This assessment will be the foundation to develop a Food Policy Council, which will detail capacity building to strengthen the Oneida community's ability to be self-sufficient and provide local food security.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

2008 Community Food Assessment

The Oneida Community Food Questionnaire was developed to gather information on food resources and community needs on the Oneida Reservation, including who is producing foods locally, where the community is getting their food, whether they have access to healthy locally grown foods, and what assistance they need to integrate healthy, local foods into their families. The questionnaire was developed by OCIFS and the Oneida Living In Balance Team. 342 completed surveys were compiled with the majority of respondents being 61% Caucasian, 36% Oneida, and 6% other Native American. The following are several of the results:

How much of your food is grown by family members from your own field or garden?

When asked how much food the family grew themselves 57% said “None”, 31% growing less than 10% of their food, 7% growing between 11–25%, and only 1% growing 26–50% of their food. Figure 5.2.

How much back-up food do you currently have on hand?

When asked how much back-up food they had on hand in case of an emergency the numbers were equally concerning. 28% said over 1 week; 17% said they had enough for 5–6 days; 27% had food stored for about 3–4 days; 20% of the people had only 1–2 day supply and 6% had no food stored at all. Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.2 Food Grown In Your Garden

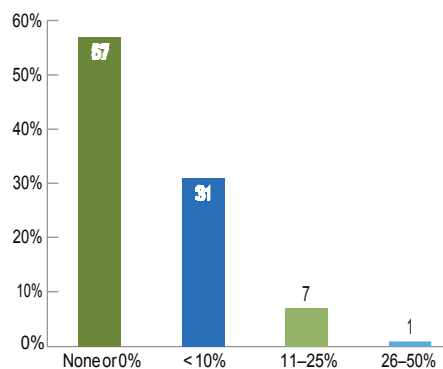
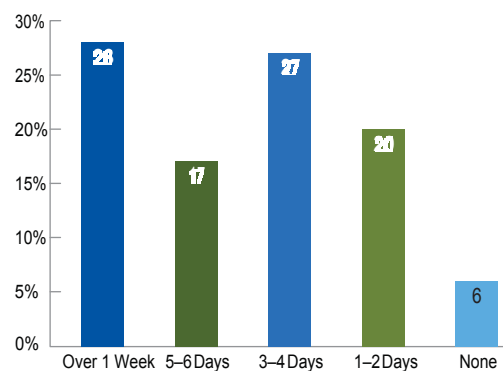


Figure 5.3 Back-up Food On Hand






2008 Quality of Life Survey

The Quality of Life Study had similar findings in regards to health and diet as did the Community Food Assessment study. 635 completed surveys were compiled, with 431 surveys received from within the Reservation. 100% of respondents were Oneida.

How would you rate the nutritional values of your diet?

The participants in the Community Food Assessment considered themselves to have a  less nutritional diet than the participants in the Quality of Life study. 5% Excellent compared to 12% Excellent; 41% Good compared to 55% Good; 47% Fair compared to 29% Fair and 5% Poor compared to 4% Poor. See Figure 5.4.

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What is the present condition of your health?

The results of these two study's are almost identical when it comes to what the participants feel is the condition of their present health. 8–12% Excellent, 55–56% Good, 27–31% Fair, and 5% Poor. Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.4 Nutritional Value of Diet

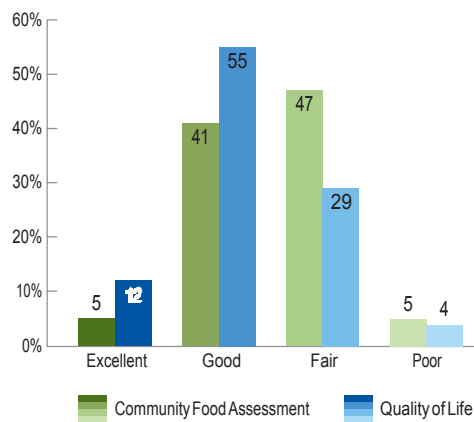
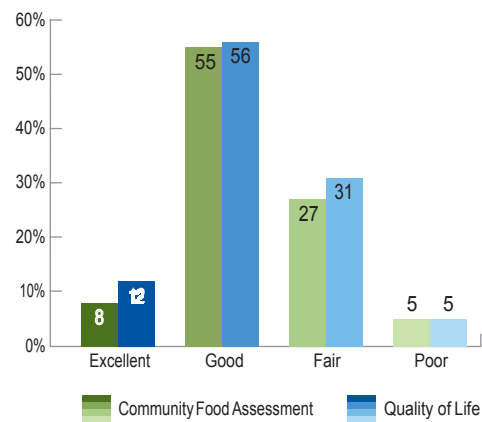


Figure 5.5 Present Health Condition



2009 Live SustainGrow Survey

Responses in the agricultural section were very similar to the ones from the Oneida Community Food Assessment. 529 completed surveys were compiled with 100% of respondents Oneida.



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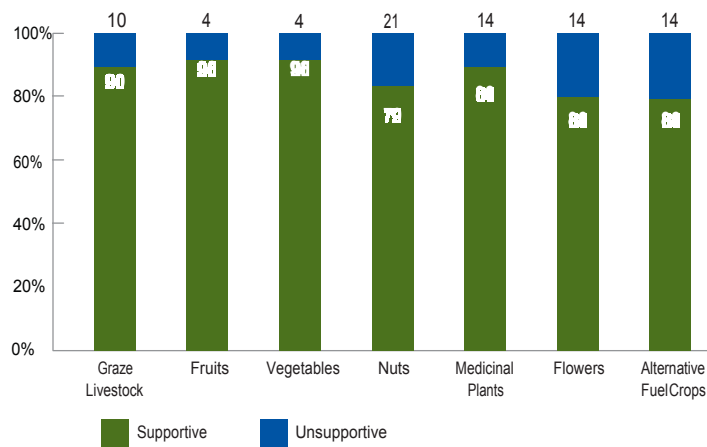
The respondents were asked which specific areas the Tribe should focus on regarding agriculture. 69% think the Tribe should focus on using environmentally-friendly farm management practices. 59% think that they should focus on diversifying the types of crops produced. 39% think that the Tribe should focus on modernizing the farm and 35% suggest expanding the farm. In the Oneida Community Food Assessment survey, 79% of the people said they did not keep a food producing garden. When asked if they were interested in having a garden in the Live Sustain Grow Survey, 71% of the people said they would be Interested or Very Interested in gardening.

Respondents were also asked which type of crop Oneida Tribe farmland should produce. The vast majority of respondents, 94%, are supportive of the Oneida Tribe using farmland for the production of both fruit and vegetables. 90% are supportive of using farmland for graze livestock, 86% are supportive of using farmland to produce medicinal plants, and 79% are supportive of producing nuts.



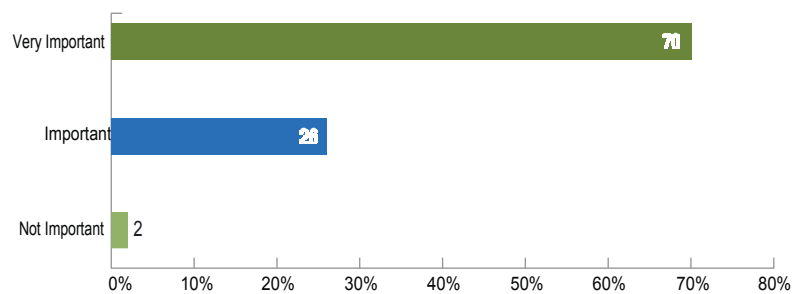


Figure 5.6 Crops Respondents are Supportive of the Oneida Tribe Using Farmland to Produce



Finally, 95% of respondents think that it is important for the Tribe to produce food locally for its members, with 70% thinking it is very important.

Figure 5.7 Importance of Locally Produced Food for Oneida Tribal Members





Survey Summary

All three of these surveys showed the Oneida Community wants the Nation to be involved in “capacity building”, strengthen the Oneida Community’s ability to be self-sufficient, and provide local food security. Some topics that need to be addressed include:

- Fresh and healthy foods in our schools and institutions
- Reduced dependency on outside food supplies
- Reduced energy usage (fuel costs to bring in food)
- Increased local employment in agriculture and agribusiness careers
- Strengthen the local communities by diversifying the economy
- Provide opportunities for youth to reconnect with the land

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Next Steps for the Oneida Nation

Work with schools to stop selling sodas, junk food, and sports drinks. Over the last two decades, rates of obesity have tripled in children and adolescents aged 6 to 19 years. Oneida should subsidize the school menu to offer healthier foods.

School Gardens. Summer FFA, 4-H youth, and other community members can assist in harvesting food for community events. The cannery can also be used as a classroom as part of school curriculum.

Coordinated food system planning. Efforts are currently underway to create and expand processing infrastructure, marketing, and entrepreneurial opportunities for local foods; including strategies to promote health and nutrition using local produce.

Allocate more Tribal land for community gardens. Community gardens can be coordinated with various programs, including direct marketing, CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farms, farm stands and U-Pick operations.



Establish a 10% policy for food service. Oneida should purchase 10% of food locally from within Oneida for its consolidated food services within two years.

Sustain and diversify seed saving. Strengthen and expand the existing program.

Research viable alternative fuel crop. Collaborate with Tribal, State and National officials to overcome barriers in place to produce a viable alternative fuel crop.

Network with existing Oneida Nation health and nutrition projects. Support options for increasing physical activity through bike paths, after school programs for youth, and adult recreation opportunities.



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BENEFIT ASSESSMENT

Environmental

- Purchasing food locally reduces the need for transporting food from great distances. This not only means less fuel burned, but also less carbon dioxide emitted to the atmosphere as a global warming gas.
- Researching a viable alternative fuel crop can provide solutions to reliance on fuels from other countries and the cost of transporting these imports.

Cultural

- Growing and purchasing our own food dramatically increases the nutrition level of our diet. Increased nutrition equals increased quality of life for the Oneida people.
- By increasing the number of gardens and providing technical assistance in food growing, processing and storage people would not just increase health, but also work together as a family in preparing and providing food.



Social

- Planting, processing and storing food reduces external dependencies and restores true sovereignty as food security increases.
- Getting healthy Oneida food products into the school system can make a huge step towards reversing some behavioral issues youth presently face.

Economic

- Purchasing Oneida food keeps money circulating within the Oneida community and strengthens the local economy.
- Improved nutrition is part of a proactive health care approach. As the number of doctor, clinic, laboratory, and hospitable visits decline (along with prescription medications needed) the Oneida Nation saves money.
- Decreased clinic and doctor visits will help decrease insurance costs due to the improved health of the people. This would save the Oneida Nation money as well.

Summary

- Increase local food production and promotion
- Increase commitment to buying local
- Increase local entrepreneur opportunities
- Increase food diversification and security
- Increase awareness and education about nutrition, food, and health
- Increase number of people growing their food
- Decrease diet related diseases and insurance costs
- Decrease petroleum used for shipping and reduce CO₂ emissions
- Establish a network of local producers and consumers



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- For the Oneida Nation to purchase Oneida food and local food products we would need a policy change that would stress the commitment of the Nation to do so.
- The Oneida Nation would have to do an equipment assessment in the Oneida Cannery to see what changes would enable more community members to utilize the cannery for food processing and storage.
- Financial commitment of the Tribe to support coordinated food system planning, efforts to create and expand processing infrastructure and marketing, entrepreneurial opportunities for local foods, and strategies to promote health and nutrition using local produce.
- Encourage certification, inspection, and labeling initiatives that spur market based efforts to increase farm income and meet the increasing consumer demand for high-quality and traceable products.

