



How Do We Build a Climate Resilient Food System in New Hampshire?

Six Ways that Sustainable Food Systems Build Climate Resilience

Created by the NH Food Alliance's Climate Action Team

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Everyone, from farmers and clean energy advocates to school gardeners and local food distributors, plays a part in building a food system that is resilient in the face of our changing climate. How can we align our individual work and actions to collaboratively move towards a food system that will ensure a secure and equitable food supply for everyone in our uncertain future?

The NH Food Alliance's Climate Action Team created this framework in order to articulate how our work building a strong local food system can help communities adapt and thrive as the climate changes. We hope that you will use this framework to identify how your work is connected to building a climate resilient food system and learn how communicating about that connection can be as simple as raising up the food system values we all share.

What is a climate resilient food system?

A climate resilient food system is:

- **Reliable.** We grow, harvest, prepare, and deliver enough healthy food for all people in ways that won't be disrupted by climate-related shocks to our food supply.
- **Equitable.** All people have access to nutritious, culturally preferred food and people who work in the food chain have safe, healthy working conditions and living wages.
- **Regenerative.** We produce and harvest food in ways that protect and restore the health of our soil, water, and ecosystems for us and future generations.

How do we build a climate resilient food system?

1. **Protect farmland, make it accessible to all farmers, and practice regenerative land stewardship**

The foundation of a climate resilient food system is farmland and healthy soil. If our valuable farmland continues to turn into condos and farmers are priced out of land, we'll forever need to rely on other regions and countries to feed ourselves. Agricultural methods and harvesting practices that support



healthy soil, water and ecosystems will help our farms and communities buffer the weather shocks and extremes we'll see more of as the climate changes.

2. Invest in our local food supply chain

Supporting and investing in our local farm, fish, and food businesses— and the infrastructure they need to expand— will increase production and distribution of New Hampshire and New England grown food and create new jobs across the food chain. A strong local and regional food economy will reduce fossil fuel emissions and ensure a reliable food supply for New Hampshire when global and national food chains are disrupted due to climate-related disasters, pandemics, or conflicts.

3. Encourage climate-friendly eating, and make it accessible to all

A “climate-friendly” diet emphasizes whole, minimally processed, and locally grown foods with lots of fruits, vegetables, and plant-based proteins. Animal products are from trusted, local sources, and animals are raised and processed humanely. Plant and animal foods are grown and harvested with the health of our ecosystems in mind. We make climate-friendly eating accessible and affordable for all by supporting food sovereignty through backyard, urban, and community gardening, expanding nutrition support and education programs, and advocating for policies that promote economic justice.

4. Reduce and repurpose food waste

Globally, an estimated $\frac{1}{3}$ of food produced is lost or wasted before it is eaten. Producing this wasted food uses precious land, water, and energy resources, creating greenhouse gas emissions in the process. When wasted food ends up in landfills, it releases methane, the most powerful greenhouse gas. Reducing the food we waste is one of the most important ways we can build a more climate resilient food system. We can repurpose excess nourishing food that would otherwise go to waste by feeding people in need, feeding animals, using it to create energy, or composting it into nutrients that will feed soil.

5. Embrace efficient and renewable farm and food chain energy

Food production and distribution requires a significant amount of energy, and high energy costs can be a burden for New Hampshire's farm and food chain businesses. Promoting and supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy development in our agriculture and food sectors will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build renewable energy infrastructure in our state. Farms and food chain businesses will be more viable, with lower energy costs and new opportunities for revenue from renewable energy production.

6. Lift up local climate knowledge and support community learning and participation



Many people and organizations are already doing this work throughout New Hampshire and New England. If we work together to amplify community-based solutions, rooted in local knowledge, and combine them with policy changes, we can make real progress towards building a climate resilient food system.

How do we talk about building a climate resilient food system?

The Values Menu

When communicating about climate change and its impact on our food system, it's best to strip away the scientific jargon and emphasize values that Granite Staters hold close. Building a climate resilient food system is baked into many of the values we already know and embrace. Browse the values menu below and select the values that resonate with your audience. From there, craft your communications by thinking about how the work you already do contributes to building a climate resilient food system.

Reliable Food Supply	It's important to develop a reliable food supply within my community and region in case disruptions stop food coming from elsewhere.
Rural Character	Farmland conservation protects open space and New Hampshire's rural character, which is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.
Jobs and a Strong Local Economy	Investing in my community's farm and food businesses creates good jobs and helps grow a strong local economy.
Social Connection and Rootedness	Buying local food is an important way to give back to my community, to connect with my neighbors and feel rooted.
Healthy Food	Fresh local food that is grown well and minimally processed is a healthy choice for me and my family.
Social Justice	By participating in a resilient local food system, I can support socially-just business practices, resource sharing, and policy reform that I can see firsthand.
Protecting Natural Resources	Climate resilient farming practices and local food distribution help protect and improve natural resources for my community and future generations.
Food Access for All	A climate resilient food system is one where everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, can access healthy food during supply disruptions and stable times.



Self-Sufficiency	It's important to preserve productive land and sea resources, and the skills of growing and catching food, so our communities aren't reliant on others for basic needs.
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Choose words wisely

Many commonly used words may be too academic or polarizing for some audiences. Below are some alternative words to use to promote engagement and learning for various audiences.

Instead of...	...You Can Use (Depending on Context):
Resilience	Reliability; Adaptability; Robustness
Food System	Farmers/fishers and those who distribute food to people
Food Security	Food Access; Self-sufficiency
Food Hub	Local Food Distributor

CITATIONS

This document was inspired by the Food Solutions New England (FSNE) Communications Community of Practice and their Strategic Collective Narrative, as well as research by Jacob Nelson, UNH Sustainability Fellow 2020 with guidance from the NH Food Alliance Climate Action Team. Read the report informed by Jacob's work, ["Growing a Climate Resilient New Hampshire Food System."](#)