

## Western U.P. Farm & Food Economy



# Buying Local Food Matters!

### The Western U.P. has ample resources:

Residents of the Western U.P. earn \$2.4 billion of income annually.  
Farmers work 106,000 acres of land.

### Yet the region faces immense dilemmas:

Nearly 30,000 residents (39%) earn less than a liveable wage.  
The Western U.P. pays \$67 million per year to treat medical conditions related to obesity and diabetes.

### Farmers do not earn enough money:

- 496 Western U.P. farmers sell \$11.9 million of food products per year (1989-2011 average), spending \$13.5 million to raise them, for an annual loss of \$1.6 million. This is an average net loss of \$3,200 per farm.
- Western U.P. farmers earned \$4 million less by selling commodities in 2011 than they earned in 1969 (in 2011 dollars).

### The Western U.P. food economy drains away \$197 million each year:

- Farmers spend at least \$5 million per year buying farm inputs sourced outside of the region.
- Consumers buy more than \$190 million of food each year that is sourced outside of the region.

### Farmers and consumers are connecting:

- 95 farms sell \$365,000 of food products directly to consumers. This is a 56% **increase** of number of farms selling direct, and a 70% **increase** in direct sales since 2002.
- If each Western U.P. resident purchased \$5 of food each week directly from farmers in the region, this would generate **\$20 million of new farm revenue** for local farms. This would be a 167% increase in farm revenue! **New local food facilities are needed for this to happen!**



Data compiled October, 2013, by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis)  
Sources: USDA, Centers for Disease Control, Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Covers Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keewenaw, & Ontonagon Counties in Michigan  
See full summary at [www.crcworks.org/crcdocs/miupWESTsum13.pdf](http://www.crcworks.org/crcdocs/miupWESTsum13.pdf)