



The Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT) is a transdisciplinary program at The Ohio State University aimed at designing and implementing food systems that are sustainable, defined as achieving a balance of ecology, economy, technology, and culture to promote the overall well-being of people, animals, and the natural environment.

Mission

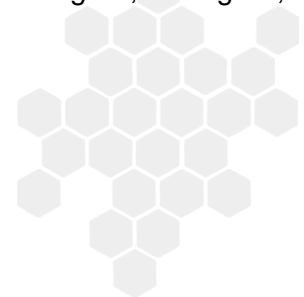
InFACT will transform the way we grow, process, and distribute our food, leading to vibrant, sustainable, and resilient agriculture that places nourishing food at the center of just and vital communities in Ohio and beyond.

Core Values

- **Innovation, Leadership and Ecological Awareness** in our academic endeavors and engagement with communities.
- **Equity and Social Justice** for all.
- **Diversity, Transparency and Continuous Improvement** in farming and food systems.
- **Scientific Discovery** balanced with **Indigenous Knowledge** to honor diverse sources of knowing as well as generations of students, teachers, communities, families, and farmers working together.

The Situation

While achieving unprecedented levels of productivity, the food system in Ohio and across the country faces some major challenges. This system leaves many people without access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food, while others struggle with preventable and diet-related chronic diseases. In addition, the production and distribution of food causes several unintended environmental problems, including degradation of soil, air, and water quality. Farmers are increasingly open to implementing practices to assure long-term resilience but cannot bear the full costs of doing so alone. In brief, there is an urgent need for redesign and transformation throughout the food supply chain. Ohio State's InFACT is poised to pioneer new conceptual and physical models of food systems that promote health, while balancing technological, ecological, economic, and social justice challenges.



Strategic Goals

1. Research Agenda and Progress Tracking – Continuously build research capacity and new models of transformational agriculture and food systems while measuring progress on our vision.
2. Network Convening and Goal Setting – Build a broad-based, interactive network of stakeholders convened at least once every year, to coordinate work on a set of common goals.
3. Local and Sustainable Food Availability – Facilitate a comprehensive system, involving production and purchasing, to make fresh food, produced as locally and sustainably as possible, available to all students, faculty, and staff.
4. Transdisciplinary Food Systems Clinic – Establish a transdisciplinary food systems clinic, known nationally for its expertise in, and support for, the development of resilient, just, and equitable food systems for all.
5. Six-Campus Collaborative Presence – Establish an InFACT presence on each of six Ohio State campuses with at least one part-time staff position that would work collaboratively to positively impact each campus community.

Research Agenda

InFACT is coordinating and supporting the work of faculty from 10 colleges to provide research-based transition pathways to new diversified agricultural landscapes that improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of both people and the land. InFACT faculty affiliates and our many partners work together using a transdisciplinary approach to discover how to transform agricultural and food landscapes, with new models that offer measurable improvements in food and nutritional security. Following is our current InFACT blueprint for transformational research to improve food security:

Availability

- Discover diversified farming systems with economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- Discover economies of scope that support diversification of agricultural landscapes.
- Discover landscape designs and policies that support diversified agricultural systems.

Access

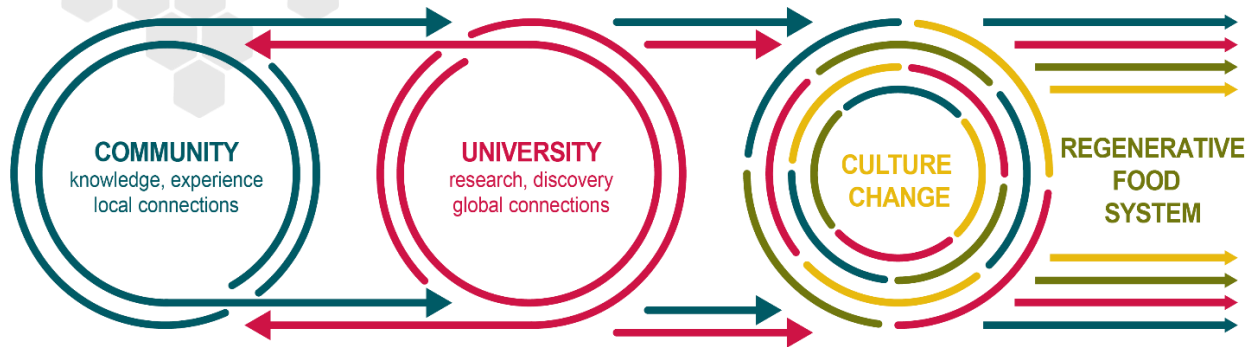
- Explore balanced and integrated supply chains from local to global scales for access, safety, and transparency.
- Discover means of reducing food waste across the supply chain and turn remaining waste into raw materials for value-added processing.
- Measure, expose, and explore how to reduce food access inequities among populations.

Utilization

- Explore how food landscapes impact geographic patterns of food consumption.
- Discover the multiple values that influence transitions in food culture and use.
- Discover creative new dietary patterns that improve health and well-being in communities.

Theory of Change

The following graphical depiction shows InFACT's assumption that, not only the problems we wish to address, but also the key elements of solutions, are inherent in the communities we serve, and that's where we should start in defining our work. Ultimately, it is in the relationship between communities and the university, acknowledging and utilizing the resources each has to offer, where necessary culture change can occur, leading to a more regenerative food system.

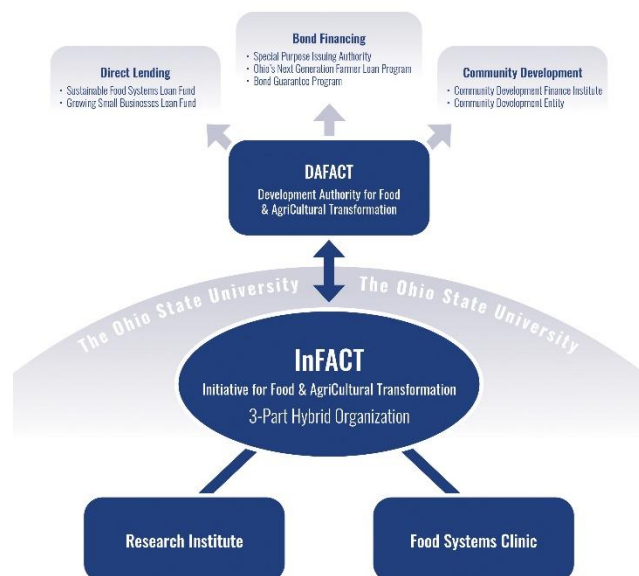


The Outcome – A Threefold Hybrid Organization

Key to the plan is a strategy that combines transdisciplinary research and technical assistance, both as described above, to support the knowledge discovery, culture change, and new food systems we wish to see. But to really drive this agenda forward there is one additional element that is needed, which is innovative

financing to assure the new food system infrastructure needed for transformational change can be built. To that end, InFACT intends to pursue a development finance approach with the dual intent of funding both the necessary infrastructure, working with community-based partners and entrepreneurs, and the research underpinning to improve chances of success and help us learn from mistakes made along the way. Each of the three main aspects of the plan (research, technical assistance, financing) will support the other two in a synergistic manner, and collectively they will provide opportunities for both faculty and students

to participate in a dynamic learning process. The endpoint of the strategic plan is then to create a hybrid organization that operates as a research institute and food systems clinic within Ohio State, and an InFACT-led development finance agency outside the university as a catalyst for critical food system infrastructure in the community.



About Us

The Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT) was originally conceived as a method and pathway for The Ohio State University to coordinate its vast resources and expertise to address the wicked challenge presented by lower-than-average levels of food security across Ohio and elsewhere in the world. Our Theory of Change, presented schematically above, reflects our foundational assumption that not only are we addressing problems existing in communities we serve, but the solutions are inherent there as well, and we must offer our research capabilities in a respectful and engaged approach with those communities to discover, understand and implement solutions.

With over 150 faculty affiliates (18 hired with InFACT support), over 200 partnering organizations, and significant project involvement in Columbus as well as five regional campus communities, we are proud to be well on our way to realizing our strategic goal of establishing an InFACT presence on all six Ohio State campuses. We maintain a commitment to beginning with our own campus communities, borrowing freely, and sharing widely with the world beyond, as a practical and ethical way to support transformation to more just and regenerative food systems for the future.

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