

Bringing farm-fresh food to Kent County's vulnerable communities



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

RELEVANCE



Kent County has the poorest access to healthy food options.



South Dover to Milford has the fewest large food retailers.

RESPONSE



A Healthy Retail Survey asked Delawareans how they preferred to shop.



- 250 respondents indicated interest in
- online food shopping
 - purchasing healthy food at convenience stores



The Delaware Council on Farm & Food Policy worked with Upstream Strategies to identify...

- How to get local foods to locally-owned stores
- How to increase opportunities for online food shopping



Rescue 412 tested the proposed solution.

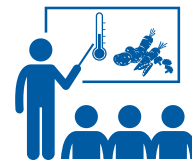
RESULTS



A participating farmer provided 819 total pounds of healthy food



...to three stores in Farmington, Harrington and South Dover.



- These stores received technical assistance
- Promoting healthy foods
 - Ensuring food safety
 - Improving customer ease of access

RELEVANCE

According to Robert Wood Johnson's County Health Rankings, Kent County has the poorest access to healthy food options in the state. Further, a GIS analysis of food retailers and resource locations highlights South Dover to Milford as the area with the fewest large food retail opportunities. This lack of food stores is an environmental indicator that influences health, impacting how people purchase healthy and affordable foods.

RESPONSE

A Healthy Retail Survey was launched to determine how Delawareans preferred to shop, especially considering the new online opportunities established during the pandemic. Respondents completed nearly 250 surveys, indicating a continued interest in online food shopping and purchasing healthier foods at gas stations and other convenience stores.

To address these interests, the Delaware Council on Farm & Food Policy worked with Upstream Strategies to identify how best to get local foods to locally-owned stores and how to increase opportunities for online shopping in the future. Throughout 2022, the Council worked with a local farmer (Shane Marvel), the Food Bank of Delaware, the Delaware Department of Education and Food Rescue 412 to test the proposed solution. This program would allow stores to order fresh food directly from farmers, delivered weekly for sale to consumers.

RESULTS

During the 2022 fiscal year, the participating farmer provided 819 total pounds of healthy food to three retail sites in the at-risk communities of Farmington, Harrington and South Dover. The three stores received technical assistance in promoting healthy foods and were provided with resources from the Delaware Department of Agriculture to ensure that food was stored safely and was easy for consumers to access.

RECOGNITION

This project was made possible with assistance from Upstream Strategies, LLC; Shane Marvel (local farmer); the Food Bank of Delaware; Food Rescue 412; the Delaware Department of Agriculture; the Division of Public Health through the community health workers and Dover Youth Committee; and the Delaware Council on Farm & Food Policy, a coalition including the Delaware Department of Education, Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination, Delaware State University, University of Delaware, the Kenny Family, Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids, Christiana Care, Food Bank of Delaware, Historic Lewes Farmers Market, One Coastal, Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition, Delaware Health and Social Services, Marvel Farms and Delaware Restaurant Association.

PUBLIC VALUE STATEMENT

This initiative supports the local economy by supporting local farmers and retailers and promotes public health by improving access to healthy foods that can decrease the risk of chronic disease. Improving food access is essential, especially in disadvantaged communities with higher health risks.