Getting it There: Truckin’ Food the Biodiesel Way
SPROUT – is that an acronym or something?

- S – Sustainably
- P – Produced
- R – Regionally
- O – On
- U – Ur
- T – Turf
Presentation content

• Legal Status
• Private/Public Partnerships
• Progress
• Lessons learned
• Future Plans
SPROUT MN – formed as both a for profit and MN nonprofit

The for profit side of SPROUT MN is necessary to continue to build infrastructure, working capital and human resources in order to achieve a sustainable “food hub” within the Central Minnesota region, working with buyers and growers in 8 separate counties.
The purpose of the nonprofit arm of SPROUT MN is to provide technical assistance: Hosted 25 growers at a Good Agricultural Practice workshop, instructed by the University of Minnesota in June of 2013 at the Farm on St. Mathias.
Private/Public Partnerships

- Participated in a federally funded HUD/DOT/EPA two year grant of $825,000, in which over 600 unduplicated community residents participated in scenario building and a policy toolkit for a more resilient region.
Local Foods is connected to 11 different themes within the Resilient Region Plan (www.resilientregion.org)

These connections...
Created partnerships with:

- Multiple School Districts; Brainerd, Pierz and Staples.

Whose missions aligned with local foods, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and small sustainable family farms and their incomes and a desire to sustain those systems. How?
Progress: Sustaining local food systems through: Solar Thermal High Tunnels
Have worked with our local community college (Central Lakes College) in Staples to convert 1998 F-800 Cummins Diesel to biofuel (vegetable oil). This truck will not only use biodiesel, but will be a rolling billboard for advertising and will eliminate numerous trips with standard pickups for farm to school and when picking up product.
Bio-Fuel Food Delivery Truck

On its maiden voyage, it drove 138 miles, (but ran for 4.5 hours because you just cannot shut it off) – delivered farm to school and farm to college and picked up over 1300 pounds of local produce from 8 area farmers on 8 gallons of canola oil (at a cost of $2.50/gallon) = $20.00 fuel and, more importantly, 17.25 mpg!!

The same amount of diesel? $32.80 and only 8 mpg.

Biodiesel benefits? Using biodiesel as a vehicle fuel increases energy security, improves public health and the environment, and provides safety benefits.
Lessons Learned

1. Due diligence and research is important.

2. Balance supply & demand, which is seen as a barrier to most food hubs in a recently released Wallace Center study.

3. Diverse Collaborative is critical – Champions who bring new aspects and ideas to the work. (public health, hospitals, energy companies, educators, natural resource experts, social advocates).

4. It takes Champions committed for the long haul, take small steps and focus on the reality of NOW (and really support your Champions!).

5. Every endeavor we pursue, new opportunities are revealed and discovered. You must adjust as you go.

6. It takes all partners (Federal/State/Local partners) who are willing to invest in the infrastructure (without which you have no system).

7. And, without collaboration between private/public partnerships, this endeavor would not have been possible.
Future Plans

Food Processing Facilities for value added opportunities

Building aggregation sites utilizing community assets

Growing growers and supply

Growing buyers and demand.