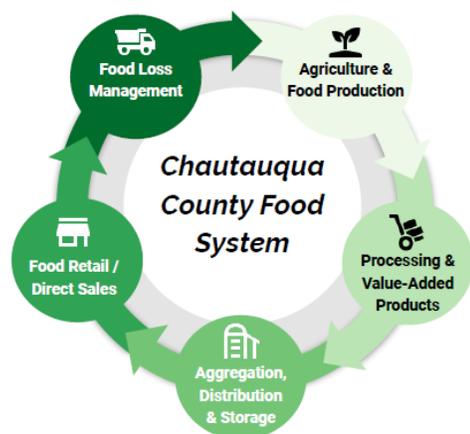




What is a food system?

The food system incorporates all of the steps that food takes – from growing in a field, to your dinner table, and beyond! The food system includes all processes involved in keeping us fed: growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, aggregating, transporting, marketing, consuming and disposing of food.



Where do I fit in?

Below you will find a list of food system sectors, each with a short description. As you fill out the survey, these descriptions will help you to identify which pieces of the food system you are involved in.

Agriculture and Food Production: Food begins with agriculture and farming. The food we consume must first be grown, cultivated, and harvested. Agriculture & Food Production describes any organization or business that produces raw food products.

Processing & Value Added Products: Food processing can provide benefits such as giving foods a longer shelf life, reducing food safety risks, and creating value-added products. Processing & Value-Added Products describes any organization or business that transforms raw foods and ingredients into new products.

Aggregation, Distribution & Storage: Some organizations may choose to self-distribute their products, while others may work with a wholesaler to get their products to supermarkets, restaurants, schools and other locations. Products may be aggregated together from multiple sources to create a larger and more reliable supply to meet market demands. Aggregation, Distribution, & Storage describes any organization or business that collects, transports, or preserves raw or processed food products prior to purchasing by consumers.

Food Retail / Direct Sales: Food makes its way to the consumer and our plates in a variety of ways. Food Retail/Direct Sales describes any organization or business that sells food directly to consumers. This includes supermarkets, restaurants, dining halls, farm stands and other locations an individual can purchase food.

Food Loss Management: In the United States, over one-third of all available food goes uneaten through loss or waste. Food Loss Management describes any organization or business that manages waste produced at any stage of the food system.

Education & Support : There are a variety of resources for people and organizations within the food system. Education & Support describes any organization or business that assists the community at any stage of the food system.