

Urban Food Systems Initiative

Problem/Issue Statement

Our current food system has supported a fast-growing population, economic development, and urbanization world-wide. The increasing and urbanizing world population presents the question of "how to feed cities in a just, sustainable and culturally appropriate manner when faced with looming climate change, widening inequality and worsening world hunger problems." The urban food system (UFS), as part of the global food system, encompasses the different modes of urban food provisioning for the city and is a hybrid food system of local, regional, national, and global food producers and processors. Hence an UFS is not only shaped by the dynamic characteristic for that city/region, but also by dynamics at a distance and are contextualized to go beyond the conventional definition of food systems concerned with activities related from production to consumption of food to include the political, social, and environmental dimensions of food systems. Clearly, there is need to prepare future scientists, leaders, and managers to address these complex, multidisciplinary, systems-thinking challenges.

Request Description

The Urban Food Systems Initiative (UFSI), supported by the College of Agriculture and K-State Olathe, has the expertise and leadership to be a regional, national, and global change leader in urban food systems. With a core faculty of six, and affiliated faculty from 15 different disciplines, the UFSI works to develop sustainable urban food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe, and diverse. With operational and infrastructure investment, the UFSI will secure and maintain the global leadership position on a permanent basis.

With capacity support of \$350,000 we would explore one new unit to the first ever Urban Food Systems (UFS) Research and Demonstration Farm. The Peri-Urban Farm Unit would increase the scale and crop diversity of our established 17 high tunnels on 6 acres to approximately 40 acres of growing space to include a 200-member community supported agriculture (CSA) program and a farm incubator program.

Request Goals and Expected Outcomes

The addition of this will expand our interdisciplinary applied research, education, and outreach, and development and dissemination of extension and graduate education programs that will result in: 1) new improved methods and sustainable practices in UFS that will be implemented by UFS practitioners, resulting in increased profitability, increased local food sales, increased employment opportunities in UFS enterprises, and more food secure communities/municipalities; and 2) increased knowledge and skills related to UFS production practices, activities, and outcomes for UFS practitioners, extension professionals, students, and community members, resulting in an increase in UFS extension programs, an increase in a well-trained workforce able to be future UFS leaders, and more communities/municipalities implementing sustainable city food policies.

Appropriations Subcommittee

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Request Type

Funding Request Bill Language Request