



— **DISCOVER** —  
NEW THOUGHT FOR  
**FOOD**



**InFACT**

INITIATIVE FOR FOOD+AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION



Strategic Plan Summary | January 2020

# Setting the Table for Food Security in Ohio and Beyond

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.

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## 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.

‡ **Indigenous knowledge** balanced with **scientific discovery** 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 a number of 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.

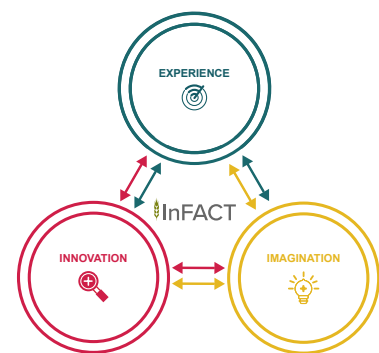
Ohio State's InFACT is poised to pioneer new conceptual and physical models of food systems that promote health, while balancing technological, ecological, economic and social justice challenges.

## 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.



Transdisciplinary Approach

### Availability

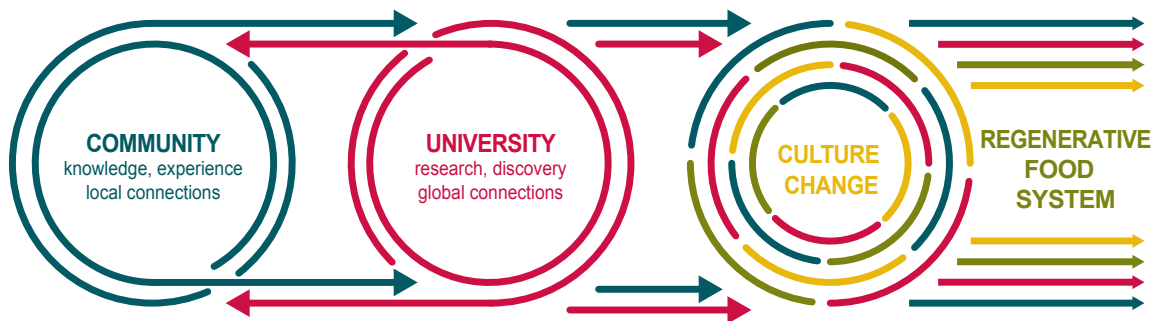
- Discover diversified farming systems with economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Discover economies of scope that support diversification of agricultural landscapes.
- Discover landscape designs and policies that support diversified agricultural systems.

### 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 inequities in food access 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.



InFACT Theory of Change

## 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 higher-than-average levels of food insecurity across Ohio and in the world. Our Theory of Change, presented schematically above, reflects our foundational assumption that not only are we addressing problems existing in communities, but the solutions are inherent there as well, and we must offer our research capabilities in a respectful and engaged approach with communities to discover, understand and implement those solutions.

With offices in Columbus, Wooster and Mansfield, we are proud to be halfway 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 a transformation to more just and regenerative food systems for the future.

## Leadership and Staff

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