



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Cass Clay Food Partners
Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG)
Date: May 3, 2019
RE: Cass Clay Food Commission Agenda and Correspondence

25th Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

May 8, 2019 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Fargo City Commission Chambers

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome |
| | a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda |
| | b. Review & Action on Minutes from March 13, 2019 (Attachment 1) |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Check-In – Chair Thorstad |
| 10:40 am | 3. Single Use Packaging Materials Issue Brief & Snapshot – Whitney Oxendahl (Attachment 2a & 2b) |
| 10:55 am | 4. Benefits for Businesses in Reducing Single Use Materials – Paula Setzler, Sodexo |
| 11:10 am | 5. Metro Food Plan Update – Adam Altenburg |
| 11:25 am | 6. Social Network Analysis – Bob Bertsch, NDSU Extension, Graduate Student |
| 11:35 am | 7. Commission Update on Previous & Future Activities – Kim Lipetzky & Noelle Harden |
| 11:40 am | 8. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Thorstad |
| 11:50 am | 9. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable – Chair Thorstad |
| 11:55 am | 10. Commission Action Steps |
| | a. Next First Fridays – May 10, 2019 |
| | b. Next Commission Meeting – September 11, 2019 |
| 12:00 pm | 11. Adjournment |

Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Savanna Leach at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at www.cassclayfoodpartners.org and Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org.

A PLANNING ORGANIZATION SERVING

FARGO, WEST FARGO, HORACE, CASS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA AND MOORHEAD, DILWORTH, CLAY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Attachment 1

**24th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
March 13th, 2019
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commission, Chair
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Sara Watson Curry, Moorhead City Council
Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council
Vern Bennett, Cass County Commission
Bukola Bakare, At-Large Member
Nancy Carriveau, At-Large Member
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Mindy Grant, At-Large Member
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Abby Gold, NDSU Department of Public Health
Tim Hiller, Concordia College
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners
Margie Bailly, Cass Clay Food Partners
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments
Luke Champa, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Chair Thorstad called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

Chair Thorstad noted that the agenda had been revised and that the previous Item 6 on the Pollinator and Solar Garden in Clay County had been replaced with a recap on a panel discussion hosted by Concordia College entitled "Farming for the Future: Cultivating Resilience in a Changing Climate."

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Mr. Bennett and seconded by Ms. Watson Curry. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from January 9, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Carriveau and seconded by Mr. Aasness. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Commission Check-In

Chair Thorstad stated that Commission members and the steering committee had an opportunity to provide updates on news or events happening in the community.

Ms. Johnson indicated that she is currently working to promote additional public events in Horace and that if anyone had any interest in holding future events to reach out to her.

Ms. Carriveau stated that the Cass Clay Hunger Coalition meets the first Tuesday of every month at Fargo Cass Public Health. She indicated that they are always looking for new members to become involved.

Ms. Watson Curry stated that the Red River Market would be hosting its spring farmers market on March 30 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Moorhead Center Mall.

Ms. Harden informed the Commission that the next Heart-n-Soul Community Café would be held on March 24 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Square One Kitchen in Fargo. She stated that the meal would focus on the theme of minimal food waste and ways to reduce waste in the kitchen.

Mr. Hiller explained that, in 2017, Concordia College signed the Integrated Climate Commitment, joining 600 American college and university campuses in the Climate Leadership Network. He stated that by signing this agreement, Concordia College has pledged to reduce carbon emissions as well as work with local partners to increase the community's ability to adapt and flourish in the face of climate change. He explained that he, along with Ken Foster, chair of the president's Sustainability Council, established a task-force to work with other metro-area entities in building a community that is resilient in the face of a changing climate. He stated that one of the areas the task-force will focus on is ways to address and prepare for potential food instability issues that may arise as a result of climate change.

3. Hunger Snapshot

Ms. Lipetzky explained that, in response to the presentation by the Great Plains Food Bank regarding the January Commission meeting as well as the 2018 Hunger in North Dakota Survey (including Clay County), the Cass Clay Food Partners developed a community snapshot regarding programs, services, and interventions available to residents in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area who experience hunger and food insecurity

Annemarie Kettler, Nutrition Intern for Fargo Cass Public Health, stated that one in nine residents in Cass and Clay Counties need food assistance and that according to the 2018 Hunger Survey, 37 percent are children and seven percent are seniors. She provided further statistics that showed that 62 percent of adults and 17 percent of children skip meals regularly, 29 percent of respondents did not eat for an entire day in the last month, and that 70 percent of respondents had a chronic disease.

Ms. Kettler stated that some of the root causes of hunger in Cass and Clay Counties include: affordable housing, poverty, available housing, lack of transportation, chronic disease or other health conditions, language barriers, and limited access to healthy and affordable foods.

Ms. Kettler provided information on federal programs aimed at combating hunger including SNAP, WIC, and the National School Lunch Program. She stated that there were 18,290 SNAP participants in Cass and Clay Counties in 2018, as well as 7,232 WIC participants in both counties. She also highlighted statistics showing that between 28 and 40 percent of metro-area school district students were utilizing free or reduced-cost lunches.

Ms. Kettler emphasized several programs with the Great Plains Food Bank including: Backpack Program, School Pantry Program, Youth Summer Meals Program, and the Farm to Food Shelf Program. She also provided information on listings of local feeding networks as well as donation and food recovery efforts including GleaND, Veggies for the Pantry, and local pantries accepting fresh produce.

Ms. Kettler informed the Commission of a number of local programs to assist in combating hunger and food insecurity including: farmers markets, Double Up Food Bucks, Heart-n-Soul Community Café, community gardens, the Little Free Garden project, and several orchard projects. She also highlighted the work of the Cass Clay Food Partners, the Cass Clay Hunger Coalition, and the Prairie Roots Community Fund.

Ms. Kettler explained that several healthcare programs focused on hunger including food insecurity screening and Essentia and the Food Baskets for Mom program at Sanford.

Ms. Kettler concluded by stating that the Cass Clay Hunger Coalition would be holding a meeting on April 2 at 8:00 at Fargo Cass Public Health and that a planning meeting would be held on May 7 for those interested in becoming more involved.

Mr. Bennett asked what the definition was of a chronic disease and what effect chronic diseases had on the percentages of food insecurity. Ms. Carriveau answered that some of the chronic diseases that the 2018 Hunger in North Dakota Survey inquired about included obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other medical challenges. She indicated that some of these diseases were in fact underreported in the survey. She stated that food insecurity plays a big role in these diseases because people have limited access to foods that support a healthy diet.

Ms. Watson Curry asked whether the steering committee for the Cass Clay Food Partners intended to share the information included in the snapshot with other groups or organizations in the area. Ms. Lipetzky answered that the snapshot was developed more as a recap of the Great Plains Food Bank's presentation in January and to highlight additional information on programs and services but stated she would be happy to do so for anyone interested. Ms. Carriveau stated that the Great Plains Food Bank would share their information with additional organizations as well.

Ms. Bakare asked what networking efforts were being made to involve smaller groups or individuals in hunger and food insecurity programs in the area. Ms. Lipetzky stated that they are in the process of starting up and reorganizing the Cass Clay Hunger Coalition and that the group is taking a look at visioning strategies and a plan for the community. She stated that all are welcome to become involved and iterated that the Hunger Coalition would be holding a meeting on April 2, followed by a larger planning meeting on May 7.

Ms. Watson Curry stated that one of the most interesting pieces of information from the presentation from the Great Plains Food Bank in January was about income disparities and how that impacts hunger and food insecurity. Ms. Carriveau informed the Commission that the information could be found online at greatplainsfoodbank.org or by searching Ending Hunger 2.0.

4. A Sustainable Food System from Soil Health to Human Health

Dr. Dipayan Sarkar, Research Associate at the Department of Plant Sciences, NDSU, presented the Commission information on soil health and the foundation of sustainable food systems.

Dr. Sarkar stated that the planet can sufficiently provide for 12 billion people. However, he explained that emerging global challenges include: inadequate food distribution in which one billion people are still hungry, excess caloric intake by 1.5 billion people which impacts health and leads to chronic diseases, climate adjustment and resilience, and wastage of 1.3 billion tons of food. He indicated that solutions include: addressing food security and food quality, preventing non-communicable chronic diseases, improving plant stress tolerance, and advancements in food preservation and safety.

Dr. Sarkar explained that soil health has a huge impact on plant systems, which in turn has an effect on human health. He stated that diversity and resilience is the most critical component of ecological biodiversity, including microbial diversity, food crop diversity, and food and nutrition diversity.

Dr. Sarkar presented the Commission information regarding innovation for sustainable pre-harvest solutions including: techniques for improving soil health, improving seed vigor, enhancing biotic and abiotic stress resilience, micro-propagation, improving nutrient utilization, and elicitation with mild abiotic stress induction.

Dr. Sarkar explained that post-harvest solutions include: anti-browning and wound healing of produce, fermentation techniques, encouraging indigenous food systems, functional food design, and food processing and cooking optimization.

Dr. Sarkar concluded by comparing state agriculture with local food systems and information on the Global Institute of Food Security and International Agriculture (GIFSIA). He stated that the fifth annual NDSU Annual Food for Health Conference would be held July 7 through July 10 at the Radisson Hotel in Fargo.

Mr. Bennett asked what instructions or instruments are available to help test soil health, especially for community gardens or small scale operations. Dr. Sarkar replied that the issue with traditional soil testing is that they don't provide information on microorganisms or micronutrients, which are more important than nitrogen and phosphorus potassium. He stated that traditional agricultural practices such as applying compost to community gardens is the most effective way of ensuring soil health in smaller operations.

Ms. Gold left at 11:16 AM.

5. Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program in Moorhead

Hayley Hilfer, Sustainability Manager for the City of Moorhead, and Scott Schwandt, GreenCorps Member with Clay County Public Health, provided the Commission information on the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program and the efforts being undertaken in the City of Moorhead.

Ms. Hilfer explained that GreenStep Cities is a voluntary, action-oriented program focusing on sustainable development best practices. She stated that the three primary focuses of the program are cost savings, innovation, and energy use reduction. She explained that there are currently 125 cities in Minnesota currently taking part in the program.

Mr. Schwandt informed the Commission that the five steps to becoming a GreenStep city include: building community interest, being recognized for implementing eight best practices as outlined in the program, implementing an additional eight high-impact best practices, measuring and reporting on 15 city performance metrics, and showing improvement in city performance metrics. He explained that there are currently 168 best practices which fall under

five broad categories including: buildings and lighting, land use, transportation, environmental management, and community and economic development.

Ms. Hilfer concluded by highlighting best practices by the City of Moorhead. She indicated that Moorhead is currently on Step Two of the GreenStep Cities program but working to achieve Step Three.

Ms. Watson Curry indicated that it may be beneficial to include the Metro Food Plan to help boost some of the best practices already being documented as part of the GreenStep Cities program in Moorhead.

Mr. Bennett stated that the best practices being undertaken by the City of Moorhead all seemed practical and beneficial both to the city and at addressing sustainability issues at a state level.

Ms. Johnson asked if there was a comparable program in North Dakota. Ms. Hilfer answered that she is currently only aware of the Minnesota program. Ms. Johnson stated that it may be beneficial to reach out to state representatives to promote a similar program in the state.

6. Recap: Farming for the Future: Cultivating Resilience in a Changing Climate

Ms. Harden provided a brief recap on the panel discussion hosted by Concordia College on January 24 entitled "Farming for the Future: Cultivating Resilience in a Changing Climate."

7. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Thorstad informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments.

Barb Villella, Prairie Roots Community Fund, highlighted community gardening work being done in the Golden Ridge neighborhood in Fargo. She also mentioned the double bucks program that people can utilize at Prairie Roots Co-op.

8. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable

Chair Thorstad asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates.

Ms. Haugen informed the Commission that Growing Together would be hosting a potluck and informational session on the upcoming growing season at Olivet Lutheran Church on March 21.

9. Commission Action Steps

Chair Thorstad stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on May 8. He also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held on April 5 at Theatre B in Moorhead.

Chair Thorstad adjourned the meeting at 11:51 AM.

Single Use Materials

When ordering takeout at a favorite restaurant, it is easy to see the amount of packaging surrounding a meal: polystyrene foam (commonly referred to by the brand name “Styrofoam”) containers, plastic bags, plastic cups, lids, and straws. Most of these **single use materials** (with plastics being the largest contributor) end up in the trash and are hauled to the landfill. The material that evades the landfill ends up littering the ground and getting into the water supply. These plastics and other single use materials will not be leaving our lives any time soon, so individuals, businesses, and governments have focused on reducing these materials in myriad ways.

Problems with single use materials:

- 40% of all plastic produced is used in packaging - most used only once
- Less than one-fifth of all plastic gets recycled
- Each year, 4 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide and just 1% are recycled
- 18 billion pounds of plastics annually enter the oceans from coastal regions, killing millions of marine animals

Tackling the issue:

- California, along with cities such as Seattle and Washington D.C., has banned plastic straws (replaced by washable or paper straws)
- San Diego recently banned polystyrene foam containers and single use plastics (food vendors may only supply plastic straws and utensils to customers upon request)
- European Union Parliament voted to reduce single use plastics across Europe
- Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle have banned retail plastic bags, while other cities and companies have instituted bag fees
- Companies like Starbucks and McDonalds (in the UK) are phasing out plastic straws
- This year, Sodexo, a large foodservice company, will remove plastic bags and stirrers from 13,000 schools, workplaces, and other sites. They will also phase out polystyrene foam by 2025

Key Definitions

Single Use Materials: packaging that is used once and discarded or recycled (e.g. plastic bags, straws, and bottles)

Biodegradable Plastics: plastics made out of plant or raw materials that are able to decompose in weeks or months. A good option if a community has access to a commercial composting facility

Polystyrene Foam (“Styrofoam”): low-cost, lightweight plastic that easily breaks into miniscule pieces (microplastic) and is generally refused by recycling centers

For more information, please contact Kim Lipetzky with the Fargo Cass Public Health Office at 701-241-8195 or klipetzky@fargond.gov

Axios. Kigt, S. By the numbers: How the world is banning single-use plastics (online). Published 2018 July 5. <https://www.axios.com/single-use-plastic-ban-states-world-31debb6d-a167-4370-bee5-19bff05f10f7.html>

Earth Day (online). Fact Sheet: Single Use Plastics. Accessed 2019 January 19. <https://www.earthday.org/2018/03/29/fact-sheet-single-use-plastics/>.

National Geographic. Howard B, et al. A running list of action on plastic pollution (online). Published 2019 January 17. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/07/ocean-plastic-pollution-solutions/>

Single Use Materials

Cass-Clay Community Snapshot

May 2019

Introduction

About 40 percent of all plastic produced is used in packaging and most of this packaging has been designed to be used only once.¹ Most of it ends up in our landfills, littered on the ground, or in our waterways. It can even break down into tiny pieces called microplastics and make its way into the soil or the stomachs of wildlife. Much of this plastic packaging is not biodegradable and will remain in the environment for hundreds of years.

With increasing consumer awareness of the downsides of single use plastics and other packaging material like polystyrene foam (commonly referred to by the brand name “Styrofoam”), has caused companies, governments, and individuals to take action to reduce these **single use materials**.

Various types of packaging exist, but this community snapshot will focus on those used to serve food and beverages. Restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, and other retailers in the Fargo-Moorhead area have initiated changes to reduce single use materials, but there are further actions the community can take to reduce our dependence on these materials and the effect they have on our environment.

Initiatives in Cass-Clay Addressing Single Use Materials

Community Education

F-M Plastic Bag Task Force: This task force, initiated by Clay County, is a nonprofit organization focused on educating the public on plastic consumption and how to recycle different types of plastic. It implemented the Boomerang Bag Program which provides free reusable bags at stores where there are plastic bag recycling drop-offs. They have launched “A Day Without a Bag” campaign to start a conversation about plastic bag usage where individuals can recycle their plastic bags at specific grocery stores in exchange for a reusable bag. In February 2019, the task force challenged fifth graders in the area to collect plastic bags to recycle.

Contact: Darla Lewandowski, F-M Plastic Bag Task Force Coordinator, 218-299-7279

<https://www.facebook.com/ClayCoPlasticBagTaskForce/>

River Keepers: Years ago, their staff noticed bags getting caught in trees along the river, so a board member started the T-shirt to Tote Project, where volunteers make grocery tote bags out of gently used or new t-shirts that have been donated. Shoppers go home with hundreds of these bags each year at grocery stores near downtown Fargo, such as Prairie Roots Food Co-op, Swanson Health Products and Tochi Products, and at local events that River Keepers attends, like Midwest Kid Fest and the Fargo Police community picnic. To learn more about volunteering or making tote bags, email

kimberly@riverkeepers.org or visit their website at <https://www.riverkeepers.org/volunteer/>

Food Retailers

¹ National Geographic. Howard B, et al. A running list of action on plastic pollution (online). Published 2019 January 17. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/07/ocean-plastic-pollution-solutions/>

Coffee Shops: Many coffee shops in the area provide a discount to customers who bring in their reusable coffee cups instead of taking disposable to-go cups, or conversely upcharge those who *do not* bring in a reusable cup. Disposable coffee cups are not recyclable due to the thin layer of plastic inside the cardboard cup that keeps the cup waterproof.

Convenience Stores: Many gas stations in the area, like Holiday Stationstores, will charge a lower price for coffee if a customer brings in their own travel mug.

Grocery Retailers: Most grocery stores contain shelves upon shelves of single use packaging, delis with to-go containers, and plastic bags at check-out.

- In Fargo, plastic shopping bags are accepted for recycling* at Cashwise Foods, Walmart, Hornbacher's, Family Fare, and Lowe's Home Improvement.
- In Moorhead, Cashwise Foods, Family Fare, Hornbacher's, Lowe's Home Improvement, Target, and Walmart accept plastic bags for recycling.*
- Many grocery stores offer shoppers an incentive for bringing in reusable bags, such as Hornbachers, which offers a 5-cent discount for every bag a shopper brings to use at checkout.
- *Prairie Roots Food Co-op:* this local food cooperative has recently gone bagless! They provide t-shirt totes from River Keepers and empty product boxes for customers who do not have reusable bags at checkout. Their deli has recyclable to-go containers as well as washable plates, glasses, and silverware for customers eating in their community room. They encourage customers to bring in their own containers to fill at their bulk section and offer small glass mason jars and spice jars for purchase. The store recently introduced a "Take a Jar, Leave a Jar" station in their Bulk Department where shoppers can drop off jars for others to use after being cleaned and sanitized by staff.
- *Natural Grocers:* this natural foods store in Fargo provides empty product boxes for customers at check-out - no plastic bags.

*See section below called *What can I do?* for a list of additional plastic packaging materials that can be recycled at these grocery retailers and businesses

Governments and Nonprofits

North Dakota: In March 2019, the State Legislature passed a bill (HB 1200) which the governor signed into law that placed a ban on the ban of certain plastics. It restricts cities and counties from, among other measures, banning plastic straws and banning or taxing plastic bags. The bill was introduced by a Minot lawmaker who owns waste-hauling and landfill businesses, and proponents of the bill want to stop a "potential patchwork of regulations across the state and undue burden on businesses." The city of Minot was considering a 5-cent plastic bag tax which they will no longer be able to implement. Opponents of the bill would rather have the issue remain under local control and not be regulated at the state level. (*Note: this is the only instance in this Community Snapshot that would not reduce the use of single use materials.*)

<https://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government-and-politics/4587521-paper-or-plastic-north-dakota-senate-says-cities-cant-ban>

<https://www.kfyrtv.com/content/news/Senate-votes-to-ban-cities-from-banning-or-taxing-plastic-bags-straws-507426351.html>

<https://www.valleynewslive.com/content/news/Bill-prohibits-communities-from-restricting-plastic-bag-use-507454801.html>

Red River Market: This farmers market in downtown Fargo strives to be a landfill-free event where nothing enters the landfill. All disposable materials must be compostable or recyclable. With an estimated attendance of more than 7,000 people per Saturday throughout the summer, this event has an impact on that day's landfill contents. They also have booths to educate consumers on how to recycle materials.

The event lacks enough composting space for all its disposable materials, so some of it ends up in the landfill. A municipal composting site would fill this gap for the farmers market.

www.redriver.market

Businesses and Schools

Blackbird Pizza: The owner's daughter noticed the number of plastic straws that get thrown away, which led this restaurant in downtown Fargo to provide straws to customers only if they request one. Further, they started using reusable plastic lids in the kitchen instead of disposable plastic wrap.

<https://www.kvrr.com/2018/03/22/plastic-straws-plastic-bags/>

Concordia College: This Moorhead university's Dining Services has single use materials in mind when creating policies. They have a "Green-to-Go" program where students can pay a refundable \$5 deposit to their dining hall and receive a card that can be traded for a to-go container. When the dirty container is returned, the dining hall will take it back to wash it and the student receives their card back in exchange. Students can get their \$5 back if they want to stop participating in the program.

The dining hall also has EcoTensil tasting spoons instead of small plastic spoons to reduce plastic waste.

<https://www.concordiacollege.edu/student-life/dining-services/sustainability-in-dining/>

Essentia Health: This area hospital experiences 1,000 transactions per day in its cafeteria along with 300-400 room service orders. Their new dining services manager has already begun reducing their polystyrene foam use by transitioning to plastic cups in their dining area as well as selling reusable mugs. This has reduced costs and disposable cup usage. They are looking for more ways to reduce their single use materials and would welcome the addition of a compost facility to accommodate compostable materials.

<https://www.essentiahealth.org/>

Granite City Food and Brewery: This Fargo restaurant is trying to get rid of plastic straws completely and transition to paper straws.

<https://www.gcfb.com/location/fargo-north-dakota/>

Healthy Food Ingredients: this Fargo company that sells specialty ingredient brands internationally has a mission to be stewards of the land, and this affects how they think of using single use materials in packaging. A large portion of their business is "bulk" business, meaning they package or sell products in bulk hopper, totes or 50 pound bags. By shipping bulk, they use much less packaging material. They recently added compactors at two facilities and are able to bale totes and cardboard to ship by the truckload to recycling. They also have recently switched the workers' disposable gloves at their Valley City processing facility to the biodegradable version.

<https://www.hfifamily.com/our-stewardship/sustainability/>

HoDo Restaurant and HoDo Lounge: This Fargo eatery has tabletop signs stating "Plastic Straws Available Upon Request" and lists the following facts about plastic straw usage:

Each day we use 500,000,000 straws. Enough straws to fill 46,400 large school buses per year! Straws are among the TOP 10 marine debris items. A massive island of garbage over two times the size of the state of Texas is floating in the Pacific Ocean. Plastic constitutes 90% of all trash floating in the world's

*oceans. Check out these websites to educate yourself more on this topic: StrawlessOcean.org / BeStrawFree.org / OneLessStraw.org
<https://www.hoteldonaldson.com/>*

Microsoft: Their local campus' dining center made the decision to have no straws on campus and all their cups and to-go containers are compostable. Similar to the Red River Market (see above), a municipal or commercial composting site would aid in keeping these compostable materials out of the landfill.

Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM): This university has a similar Dining Services program to Concordia College (see above). The Green Box Program allows students to purchase a to-go container that can be returned to be washed by Dining Services and students take a clean to-go container in return.
<https://www.mnstate.edu/student-life/dining/>

Nichole's Fine Pastry: This bakery near downtown Fargo has moved to using paper bags for carry out orders instead of plastic bags.
<https://www.nicholesfinepastry.com/>

Sanford Health: One and a half years ago, the hospital's two largest medical centers moved to compostable to-go containers. These two campuses use no polystyrene foam. The South University campus is upgrading its dining services and will move to these products as well. Additionally, staff members have put up signs in a few dining areas asking customers to refrain from plastic straw use.
<https://www.sanfordhealth.org/>

US Foods: This national foodservice distributor has made a commitment to sustainability with their Serve Good program. Two initiatives within the program, Responsible Disposables and Packaging Standards, focus on responsible sourcing of packaging materials along with waste reduction. Their line of Responsible Disposables contains a minimum of 35% post-consumer content along with other compostable and renewable materials. For example, they offer clients a plant-based straw that composts in 90 days and a fiber-flax towel. To learn more, visit their website: <https://www.usfoods.com/why-us-foods/serve-good.html>

Community Actions

- Local governments can:
 - Create policies for their jurisdictions that limit single use materials at city or county functions
 - Push for a local municipal or commercial composting site so biodegradable materials can be composted locally. Without a composting site, these materials end up in the landfill since they cannot be recycled (*Note: **compostable plastics** are only compostable in commercial high heat facilities while unbleached plant fiber, bamboo, and wood materials are compostable without the high heat*)
 - Provide resources to consumers and businesses on how to reduce their single use materials. This serves the local governments by reducing the load on the landfills and recycling services
 - Provide incentives for businesses to reduce these materials or ban certain single use materials (like a plastic bag or a plastic straw ban)
 - Recognize businesses for their voluntary efforts to reduce single use materials

- Businesses can educate consumers about single use materials or create financial incentives for reductions, like reducing grocery bills when consumers bring reusable bags or charging less for a cup of coffee in a reusable cup
- Food retailers can request large providers like Sodexo, Sam's Club, or Costco carry containers and to-go packaging that is recyclable or biodegradable

What can I do?

- Eliminate plastic straws. Decline straws at restaurants and purchase a washable metal or silicone straw for home if you cannot do without
- Bring your own reusable to-go containers when eating out
- Encourage your favorite restaurants to ditch the polystyrene foam and move to recyclable plastic or washable materials
- Use reusable produce bags and shopping bags at the grocery store
- Buy from bulk bins whenever possible and bring in your own containers to fill
- Reduce your purchases of convenience foods that are wrapped in plastic
- Buy meat and cheese from the deli and have them wrapped in paper
- Carry a reusable water bottle wherever you go so you can avoid using plastic water bottles
- Purchase drinks in glass bottles instead of plastic
- Pack your lunch or leftovers in reusable wrappers made of beeswax or cloth
- Bring washable silverware in your lunch to work or school to cut down on plasticware
- Recycle as much plastic packaging material as possible. Acceptable items you can drop off at grocery retailer recycling locations (see above)::
 - Carryout bags / plastic shopping bags, produce bags, bread bags, product overwrap, shrink wrap
 - Dry cleaning bags, case wrap, air pillows, newspaper bags, bubble wrap
 - Any #4 plastic film or packaging

Resources

Cass County Plastics Recycling <http://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/solid-waste/residential-recycling/plastic-bags-other-items>

Clay County Plastics Recycling
<https://claycountymn.gov/1457/Plastic-Bags-Film-Packaging>

Single Use Plastics - A roadmap to sustainability (UN Environment Program 2018)
https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25496/singleUsePlastic_sustainability.pdf

World Centric - Biocompostables
<http://www.worldcentric.org/biocompostables/bioplastics>

For more information, please contact Kim Lipetzky with the Fargo Cass Public Health Office at 701-241-8195 or klipetzky@fargond.gov