FOOD HUBS
WHAT THEY ARE, HOW THEY WORK, AND EXAMPLES IN KANSAS

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ASSESSING THE LANDSCAPE

• How would you characterize your local food system?
  • Undeveloped
  • In its infancy
  • Developing
  • Robust/Mature
THE ROLE OF FOOD HUBS

• First Step or Next Step
  • Regardless, there is plenty of room for growth of your local food system
THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT…

• …runs the risk of stalling, or being absorbed by larger, non-local food corporations, unless a concerted, locally rooted initiative is launched to overcome current obstacles and build a new base of customers and supporters.*

*vaguely concerned, sporadically motivated consumers
DEFINING FOOD HUBS
TIERS OF THE FOOD SYSTEM

- **Tier 0**: Personal Production of Food
  - Backyard gardens, community gardens, canning, hunting, gathering, fishing

- **Tier 1**: Direct Producer to Consumer
  - Farmers' markets, farm stands, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

- **Tier 2**: Strategic Partners in Supply Chain Relationships
  - Organic Valley, Alsem Produce, food co-ops

- **Tier 3**: Large Volume Aggregation and Distribution
  - Sysco, Reinhart, Kroger

- **Tier 4**: Global, Anonymous Aggregation and Distribution
  - Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill, Ajinomoto
MOVING BEYOND TIER 1

Can the local foods movement enter the mainstream while maintaining its fundamental values of health, land stewardship and sustainability, and economic viability for small to mid-size farmers?
WHERE CONSUMERS PURCHASE FOOD

Farm Direct

Everything Else
FOOD HUBS FOR FARMERS

- Competition?
- More diversified market outlets
- Reduced marketing effort
- Meeting standards
- Crop Selection (and quantity)
- Labor
- Manager more than farmer
- Equipment needs
- Efficiencies
- Packing house
- Transition over time
- Stay away from the middle
OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION → FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT → BUSINESS PLANNING → FUNDRAISING → LAUNCH → STABILIZE AND GROW
LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM GROWTH IS FACED ON MANY FRONTS

Food Hubs can play a role in this growth, but should not be considered THE answer.
Why Food Hubs?
ROLLING PRAIRIE FARMERS ALLIANCE

www.rollingprairiecsa.com
Feasibility Studies
OWNERSHIP

Current Owners/Members

1. Buller Family Farm, Lawrence, KS
2. Red Ridge Farms, Odessa, MO
3. Moon on the Meadow, Lawrence, KS
4. Green Gate Family Farm, Wheatland, MO
5. Pat & Rachel’s Gardens, Olathe, KS
6. Jet Produce and Meats, Leavenworth, KS
7. County Line Produce, Bates Co, Mo
8. Green Thumbs Up, Leavenworth, KS
9. Bud’s and Berries/Wisely Farms, Adrian, MO
HOW FFHQ WORKS NOW

Olathe, KS  Greater Kansas City Metro  Odessa, MO
KEY TASKS

• Marketing & Sales
• Aggregation & Delivery
• Crop/Stock Planning
• Food Safety Planning
• Bulk Packaging Supply
• Technical Training
PRODUCTS

- Conventional and Organic
- Mix of Vegetables
- Fruits
- Proteins
OPPORTUNITIES

• Support

• Demand

• Some farmers have surplus capacity
  • Storage and Processing cap
  • Land to Grow
CHALLENGES

• Supply and Demand - the chicken and the egg
  - Farmers
  - Small size of many producers in the region
  - Scale up

Buyers
  - Right markets/ right pricing

• Logistics
Food Hubs:
What are they, how do they work and examples in Kansas?

Kansas Rural Center
Conference 2016

Leon Atwell
Food Systems Development
HPFC MISSION & BACKGROUND

HPFC Mission
1. Producers and consumers uniting interests in locally grown food
2. To be environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially just
3. Cultivate farmer-consumer relationships
4. Enhancing overall rural sustainability

HPFC Background
1. A Rocky Mountain Farmers Union supported cooperative
2. A regional food aggregator for nearly 50 producers and over 300 customers
3. Experiencing over 30% annual growth utilizing on-line ordering system
4. Distributing over 750 locally grown food or value added agricultural items
HPFC SERVICE AREA

Customers

Aggregation, Distribution & Processing
HPFC DIFFERENCE

- Virtual
- Geographic coverage
- Producer based and led
- Values chain
- Linked with other similar coops
HUB OPERATIONAL MODELS

- Direct from producers to consumer
  - Direct Retail
- Source from producers to stores, distributors, restaurants or institutions then to consumers
  - Wholesale
- Both models
  - Hybrid
FOOD HUB ROLES

- Sourcing
- Aggregation
- Processing/Packaging
- Distribution logistics and coordination
- Markets and Marketing
HPFC GROWTH CHALLENGES

• Retail – wholesale continuum
• Production
• Logistics
• Hold to purpose
• Timing of production to market need
• E-commerce back office
PANEL QUESTIONS

• Importance of food hubs in food system?
• Overall future of food hubs in Kansas?
• Next steps with food hub examples?
Q &A

Thank You!

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