Community Food Assessment
Clackamas County 2015
Assessment Team

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Cover photos:
Slice of Heaven farm (top)
Clackamas County farmland (bottom)
Acknowledgements

The Oregon Food Bank and Resource Assistance for Rural Environments AmeriCorps, would like to extend our great appreciation to the residents of Clackamas County, including the farmers, chefs, grocery store owners, OSU Extension agents and volunteers, teachers, food pantry volunteers, farmers’ market managers, and more who offered their time and shared their experiences to help make this assessment possible.

And special thanks to Harbourton Foundation for their generous support of this project, without which it would not have been possible.
When the first settlers came to Oregon they were amazed by the rich soil, abundant water supply and even the islands of productivity in Oregon’s deserts. They were thrilled with the crops, fruits and berries they were able to raise, the rich pastureland as well as the streams teaming with fish and the bounty of wild game available to feed a growing population. It would have been impossible for them to believe that anyone could be hungry or food insecure in this land of plenty. It is incredible that hunger and food insecurity abound in Oregon nearly two centuries later. In fact, many of the areas that seemed so bountiful to those early settlers have the least access to food today.

Seven years ago the Oregon Food Bank in partnership with University of Oregon RARE program began to conduct community food assessments in some of Oregon’s rural counties. Very few community food assessment efforts have been undertaken in rural America with a county by county approach. The report you are about to read is a result of conversations with the people who make Oregon’s rural communities and their food systems so very unique. These reports are also a gift from a small group of very dedicated young people who have spent the last year listening, learning and organizing. It is our sincere hope that these reports and organizing efforts will help Oregonians renew their vision and promise of the bountiful food system that amazed those early settlers.

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Agriculture in Douglas County

Introduction

Extending from the Willamette Valley lowlands to the peaks of the Cascades, Clackamas County is a diverse and abundant landscape. With 391,525 residents, Clackamas County is one of the most populous counties in Oregon. Although most residents are concentrated in the northwest corner, which is part of the Portland metropolitan area, the county is still home to rural communities. Much of the area is heralded for its world class soils and agricultural production, and with 3,745 farms of varying sizes, is a leader of diversity and small farm production in Oregon. And yet, much of the agricultural land is not used for food production, and a good deal of the food that is grown leaves the county. In 2012, 28,123 families relied on federal assistance to put food on the table, and an average 47% of students in the county’s rural school districts qualified for free or reduced-cost school lunches. In one of the most affluent counties in the state, an estimated 37,977 people fall below the federal poverty level—many of whom are under the age of 18.

Clackamas County boasts a wealth of resources: from fertile soils to governmental and non-governmental agencies providing farmers with education, support, and technology; from a strong regional network of emergency food services to the devoted volunteers who make that network run smoothly; from long-standing traditions of community gardens and local granges to the county grants available to support them. Multiple assessments, too, have been written on the state of agriculture, poverty, hunger, and health in the county over the past decade.

And yet hunger still exists. Many families face food insecurity and rely on federal assistance or food boxes to put food on the table every month. Small farmers still struggle to make ends meet. Rural towns have become bedroom communities as the Portland metropolitan area grows, and with the blurring of urban and rural comes a disconnect between local participation and rural resiliency.

The question is why? With the multitude of information, reports, resources, and people working hard every day to make a difference, why does the food system still have holes, through which our farmers, and our neighbors fall through? How can we ensure that our local farmers can access markets, especially rural ones, to keep their farms in business? How can we guarantee that everyone in rural Clackamas County has access to the food they need? To answer these questions, we need an inventory of the existing challenges and assets of our local food system.

This community food assessment aims to provide this inventory. A Community Food Assessment (CFA) is a collaborative, participatory project that looks at the big picture of a local food system—from farming and food production to consumption and waste. This CFA focuses on the stories told by community members of rural Clackamas County instead of solely looking at statistics. The priority of this CFA, as with any grassroots assessment, is to focus on building existing community resources; to engage with community members through participatory processes; and to include tools for moving forward to implement change.

This CFA should be used as an organizing tool. It is a compilation of existing data, and, most importantly, stories from the communities themselves. It highlights both the struggles of these communities and also the success stories and powerful initiatives that are already in place. The overall purpose of the assessment is to encourage discussion, provide resources, and prompt coordinated action to improve the local food system.
Development of Assessment

This CFA was researched and written over an 11-month time span from September 2014 through July 2015. The assessment uses a mixed-methods, wholistic approach to food system research, with a focus on collecting qualitative information.

The assessment focuses on rural communities in Clackamas County, including the incorporated cities of Sandy, Estacada, Molalla, and Canby, as well as the many unincorporated communities. Each city, town, village, and hamlet in the county is unique with its own set of assets and challenges. Due to the scope of the assessment, however, individual communities are often grouped together to describe the county’s food system as a whole.

Formal interviews and informal conversations were conducted with a variety of stakeholders living and working within the food system in Clackamas County, including: farmers, food producers, grocery store and restaurant owners, food pantry directors and volunteers, individuals experiencing food insecurity, OSU Extension workers and volunteers, government officials, directors of non-profit organizations, and community leaders. The quotes, profiles, and much of the direct information included in this report resulted from these conversations.

A diversity of farmers were interviewed for this assessment. Farms varied in size (3 to 400 acres) and scope: nine farms participated in a direct-to-consumer market, two sold to Portland-area restaurants and grocery stores, and one farm partnered with the regional distributor Organically Grown Company. This primary information is supplemented by secondary data from the latest USDA Agricultural Census (2012), the Clackamas County Agricultural Producers Survey (2012), and local farm websites.

Focus groups were used to foster discussions about food issues in the community. Participants included emergency food service workers, community officials, educational instructors, community garden and farmers’ market leaders, and community members at large.

FEAST and Community Conversation workshops were used to engage diverse stakeholders in a facilitated discussion about local food system needs and opportunities, and to identify resources and opportunities to move forward. The results of these workshops and the meetings that followed are woven throughout the report.

Additional, quantitative data was used whenever necessary to provide context for the qualitative research, and the most recent data was used whenever possible. Principal sources include: USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture; the Clackamas County Agriculture and Foodshed Strategic Plan; Indicators Northwest; and the Clackamas County Board of Commissions Report on Poverty in Clackamas County, 2014.

In this wholistic approach to food systems research, it is understood that this food assessment is limited in depth and scope. Food and hunger issues are by nature broad, sweeping issues that affect and are affected by a multitude of factors. This CFA attempted to identify as many resources, challenges, and opportunities as possible in a limited time frame. However, this is a working document and should be added to and amended as needed in the future.
Food has a rich history in Clackamas County. The Willamette Valley of Clackamas County was home to the first permanent agricultural settlements by non-native peoples west of the Rocky Mountains. Before these settlers traveled west, the native tribes of the region, the Clackamas and the Molallas, flourished in the valley and the Cascade foothills. Neither of these groups practiced agriculture. Rather, they fished salmon and steelhead trout from the Willamette, Clackamas, and Sandy Rivers, hunted small game from the valley or larger game in the Cascade foothills, and foraged for nuts, berries, and root vegetables to supplement their diet. The centuries-old land management practices of the native tribes, including digging, slashing, and burning, helped build the fertility of the soil. The traditions of the Clackamas and Molalla tribes, among others, should be recognized for the advent and success of agriculture in Clackamas County.

Following the settlement of the area, agriculture flourished. In 1926 the USDA Bureau of Soil published a Soil Survey of Clackamas County, which provides a lovely perspective on the history of agriculture in the region:

“For many years before any other parts of the West were occupied, the settlers of this section constituted a self-sustaining community. Grains, vegetables, and fruits were grown from the beginning, and have always occupied a prominent place among the crops. Livestock, including cattle, sheep, and hogs, were early introduced, although for many years they were produced only for home consumption, there being no opportunity for sale outside the immediate vicinity...”

“At the present time [1921] the agriculture of Clackamas County consists principally of the production of general farm crops for sale and for home use, dairy farming, and, in the vicinity of Portland, the growing of berries and truck crops for sale. The principal crops are oats, wheat, clover, and other hay crops, potatoes, corn, apples, prunes, and vegetables. The grains and hay crops cover more than 90 percent of the acreage. However, since 1910 there has been a falling off in the acreage of some of the staple crops and a material increase in the acreage of such specialized crops as hops and berries...”

“Most of the farm work is done with medium-sized horses, although tractors are becoming more common in the valley sections of the area. In most cases the farm machinery is of a modern type, gang plows, disk harrows, potato diggers, etc., being in general use... Except during rush season, most of the work is done by the farmer and his family.”

As lower valley gives way to forested foothills, soil structure changes. The more fertile soil of the southwestern valley and the mostly-level land is conducive to a diversity of crops and large-scale systems. Many of the large farm operations in the county are located in the southwestern area, near Wilsonville, Canby, and Molalla. The northern uplands of the county (an area including the communities of Damascus, Boring, and Sandy) are characterized by silty soil, and many farms here thrive with specialty crops, including fruits, tree nuts, and berries. In the central-eastern section of the county, where soils have a high content of volcanic ash, farming on the steep hillsides is limited. Small-scale farms are found here, but much of the land is dominated by timber production.

Excluding the area around Mount Hood, average elevation in these areas is approximately 60 feet above sea level. Average temperatures range from 40 degrees Fahrenheit during the winter months to well over 80 Fahrenheit degrees during the summer months. The area receives approximately 40 inches of rain annually and is recognized for abundance of landmarks and natural resources.
Food Production: Agriculture

Scope of Agriculture

Farm products grown in Clackamas County are a “broad mix of food and nonfood products,” according to the 2012 Clackamas County Agricultural Producers Survey. Food products include berries (blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries), fruits (apples, cherries, grapes, peaches, pears), nuts (mostly hazelnuts), grains (mostly wheat), livestock, milk, eggs, and vegetables. Nonfood products include Christmas trees, grass and other seeds, horses, nursery stock, and timber.

Clackamas County boasts the highest total number of farms in Oregon, with 3,745 farms registered in 2012. Eighty-one percent of all farms are 49 acres or less in size, and the median size for a farm is only 15 acres. These numbers are both encouraging and deceiving. Typically, these small- to mid-size scale farms are more likely to produce diverse foods (including vegetables, root crops, berries, dairy, eggs, and meat) for local markets. However, many of these smaller farms are not food-based, but instead are nurseries or used for Christmas tree production. For example, in 2012, 157 farms reported producing vegetable crops for sale (for a total land area of 3,996 acres in vegetable production) while 461 farms reported producing cut Christmas trees and woody-crops for sale, and 554 farms reported producing nursery and greenhouse products.

When talking about the farming environment in Clackamas County, a significant portion of the agricultural land and economy does not go to local markets, but to commodities sold to the state, national, and international market.

Timber & Nursery Industry

One hundred years ago wheat, oats, and hay dominated the countryside, and now Christmas trees and nursery crops lead the agricultural and economic landscape in Clackamas County. Nursery, greenhouse, and horticultural products (e.g. seeds), and Christmas trees, generated over $274 million dollars—or over 80% of the total sales of agricultural products—in 2007. The county is ranked first the nation for sales of Christmas trees, and the second in the state for nursery, greenhouse, and horticulture production.

Although the focus of this agricultural assessment is on food production in the county, the important role of the timber, nursery, and horticultural industries should not be overlooked. The economic success of these sectors attracts agricultural suppliers as well as agricultural researchers and scientists to the county. However, large-scale Christmas tree and nursery companies drive land prices up, and often render the land infertile in the ten-fifteen year process of conventionally-raised trees. The high use of chemical inputs, combined with an absence of ground cover and soil compaction from heavy machinery, can lead to chemical runoff from these farms.

“The land is locked in Christmas trees.”

- Clackamas County farmer
When Cathy and Roger Fantz decided to grow organic Christmas trees on Trillium Forest Farm, they had no idea what they were getting themselves into. "It was a real eye-opener," Cathy said of the process, especially when they were told by OSU Extension that they would not succeed in trying to grow the trees without chemical inputs. Thirty years later, they run one of the few—if not the only—chemical-free noble fir operations in Clackamas County.

Christmas trees are the highest-earning agricultural product in Clackamas County, yet most people aren’t aware of the management practices used to support this market. About 99% of all Christmas trees are conventionally farmed, relying on heavy inputs of fertilizers and pesticides. For Cathy and Roger, consumer lack of awareness is the biggest challenge they face. "I wish there was more interest and support locally, but most of our trees go to Santa Cruz [California], where there is a big awareness about organic production." They sell locally to friends and family, and rely on word-of-mouth to encourage others to come to their farm and learn about their production practices. These noble firs might not look like the typical Christmas tree ("we like to think they look much more natural"), but they are doing much more for the health of the land.

Trillium Forest Farm is not just a Christmas tree operation, but a diverse farm with a variety of fruits and nuts: blueberries, currants, gooseberries, apples, plums, walnuts, grapes, and dwarf kiwis, to name a few. At just 3 acres, this small farm is an example of the rich abundance that farmland in Clackamas County can offer, especially when grown with the stewardship and mindfulness practiced by the Fantz’s for the past thirty years.
Farmworkers

Farmworkers are generally defined as employees who work principally in agriculture, specifically on a seasonal basis. Migrant farm workers are those employees who establish temporary residence while performing farm work; seasonal farm workers are employed at least 25 days of a year on farm, on a seasonal basis and without a constant year round salary or wage. Oregon farmers have used migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFW), typically from Mexico and Latin America, for decades.

The Willamette farm region has one of the largest agricultural workforces in the nation, with estimates of MSFW at over 90,000 in 2013. Some of these farmworkers come and go seasonally, often traveling from Oregon to California with changing seasons. Others live permanently in the area, and Clackamas County has a few MSFW communities, notably around Canby, Molalla, and Sandy, where large farms and processing companies are located. “Some of these workers are housed at labor camps that are located on the employer’s property, and some stay with family or acquaintances. I have found that they may be staying in Clackamas County but working in Marion or Washington counties, or vice versa,” says Rosa E Guitron-Galvan, a MSFW representative with WorkSource Clackamas.

Farmworkers in Clackamas County mostly work in the fields harvesting organic vegetables, berries, and herbs. Some may work at packing sheds, processing companies, and on large-scale nurseries or tree farms. Traditionally there has been a labor peak during harvesting season, although with the growth of the Christmas tree and nursery industry, there is no longer one peak season but a year-round need for farm labor.

Regional Agricultural Development

Clackamas County is not only rich in agricultural resources, but also supplies a growing consumer demand for fresh, local food in the Portland metro area. Because of the importance of Clackamas County to this regional foodshed, other food and agricultural assessments of the area have been produced. Notably, the Clackamas County Agriculture and Foodshed Strategic Plan developed in 2012 by the County’s Business and Economic Development Department, is a strategic economic analysis of the supply and demand chain of the regional food system and focuses on expanding economic growth. Data was gathered from producer, processor, and distributor surveys and interviews, as well as other reports commissioned by the county. As a result of the strategic plan, the Clackamas County FoodSystem ONEStop was developed.

ONEStop, which is in the process of implementation, aims to be an online platform that supports producers and processors in meeting regional demand for local food through technical assistance. ONEStop will facilitate vertical partnerships among public, private, non-profit, and academic organizations and agencies through a core online network. “A lot of these relationships already exist,” explains Rick Gruen, the Ag, Forestry, and Natural Resources Manager for the county and one of the leaders of the project. “ONEStop will help formalize and legitimize these relationships.”

The Agriculture and Foodshed Strategic Plan focuses primarily on the economic development of the regional foodshed and economy. The agricultural information presented below, along with the rest of this CFA, will ideally be used in partnership with the Agriculture and Foodshed Strategic Plan and ONEStop.

“Migrant workers are hard workers and I believe not valued for what they give us that have the luxury of wanting an apple reaching to our table and just taking it.” - Rosa Guitron-Galvan
After many years in the farming business, Susie and Dan Wilson of SuDan Farm have succeeded in accessing all kinds of markets. They raise and sell lamb, pastured chickens, turkeys, and eggs directly on the farm, at various farmers markets in the Portland metro area, to restaurants and grocery stores in Portland, and throughout the Pacific Northwest. SuDan Farm also sells various wool products both locally in Clackamas County and internationally.

SuDan Farm wasn’t always this widespread. Susie and Dan began with just a few sheep in the ‘90s, the wool of which Susie would spin for her own enjoyment. The demand for high-quality fiber grew, so SuDan Farm grew to meet it. Although meat was a natural byproduct of the wool, the demand for grass-fed lamb grew as well, so Susie and Dan expanded their flock, and became a commercial farm in the early 2000s. Located south of Canby in the small community of Yoder, the farm is 17 acres, though the Wilsons “rent grass” from other farmers further south in the valley to support the large flock of sheep for meat. All animals on the farm, and especially the sheep, are held to an extremely high standard: which sheep are inseminated (via artificial insemination), how long the sheep are grass-fed, where they graze, and how the wool and meat are processed. The wide variety of cuts they sell—from legs and chops, to tongue, cheek, sausage, jerky, and bags of bones for broth—prove that no part of the lamb goes to waste after it is butchered, sometimes by Dan himself, right on the farm.

The greatest asset to SuDan Farms? Two USDA-inspected meat processing facilities nearby, one in Mt. Angel, just south of Clackamas County, and the other in Canby, which really cut down on the cost of transportation and made the entire operation much more affordable. Ultimately, though, the success of SuDan Farm can be attributed to the high quality of meat production and customer satisfaction. They made sure that scaling-up their operation to meet market demand never got in the way of raising happy lambs or inviting local customers onto the farm to buy directly from their farmer.
Organic Farming

There were 36 organically-certified farms in Clackamas County in 2012, with 18 transitioning into organic production (USDA Census). Most of the farmers who use organic methods do so because they believe in the ecological benefits. As Julie Schedeen, of Schedeen’s Farm, remarked, “my customers know me and trust me to grow my product in the way we feel is best.” Julie has operated two farmstands, one in Boring and the other just north of the county line in Gresham, for over thirty years. Although she has never applied for organic certification, the direct-to-consumer relationship she has created over the years has allowed Schedeen’s to successfully market their no-spray, environmentally-friendly operation.

For other farmers, the high cost of organic certification is prohibitive. The majority of farms practicing organic methods do not obtain any certification\(^\text{1}\), and instead rely on word-of-mouth to convey their farming practices. Other farmers, who feel that the market value of an Organic label is worth the effort, seek help with price-matching programs, like the USDA Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.

The Business of Farming: Economic Challenges

Out of all the challenges that farmers face (“and what challenges DON’T we face,” joked one farmer) economic viability of the farm was the most reported, most discussed, and most worried-over barrier. Organic certification is just one of the multi-faceted costs of running a farm. Labor, payments on land, consumer education, the rules and regulations of farming: all of the challenges discussed later highlight the overarching issue that a farm is a business and in today’s economy of large-scale agriculture, many small farms cannot support themselves without off-farm income.

This issue is deeply seated and complex, and includes government farm subsidies helping large commodity farms, vertical integration of companies that discourage small businesses, and modern expectations of cheap food available throughout the year. For many small farmers in the county, who cannot depend on government resources or consumer demand for local products, their businesses struggle to keep up. Of all the farmers interviewed, only those on farms greater than 50 acres did not rely upon off-farm income.

For the majority (60%) of farm owners, part-owners, or tenants in Clackamas County, farming was not their primary occupation\(^\text{2}\). Some of these farm owners are hobby farmers or homesteaders. They enjoy farming and producing food for their families, but intentionally keep their operation limited because they do not want to become full-time farmers. For the small farmers who need off-farm income to make ends meet, a second job can be restrictive to the farm operation. “We aren’t able to consider expanding our farm, because it is just my husband and me, and I have a full-time job and another part-time job,” explained one farmer.

There are some opportunities for small farmers to receive financial assistance. Friends of Family Farmers, an Oregon-based non-profit founded to promote and protect socially-responsible farming, provides a list of grant-based resources on their website. Among the programs included are grants through the Oregon Department of Agriculture; funding for organic agriculture; funding to support animal welfare projects; grants which support protection and restoration of natural resources; and grants to promote farm to school programs.

Land

In 2008 the Portland metro regional government re-designated the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), which is an invisible line demarcating land available for urban development from land reserved for rural use, including for farm use. This re-designation pushed housing and industrial developments right up against longstanding farmland in the northwest corner of the county. Damascus, a traditionally rural community in northern Clackamas County, is now inside the UGB.

“We’ve noticed a lot of increased traffic on the road [Highway 212] in the past ten years because of the growth of the metro, and it becomes a problem for our trucks to move the produce from the farm to the processor,” explains Bobbi, a representative from Siri and Sons Farm. Siri and Sons is a fourth-generation farm located just outside the Damascus UGB. “We see people get annoyed at these trucks and tractors on the road, but they don’t realize that’s where their food is coming from.”

The growth of the Portland metro also means a push for housing developments. Land for sale in the area is set for housing developer prices instead of farming prices, which forces farmers to look elsewhere for affordable land. Unfortunately, land designated for farm use in Clackamas County is often tied up in Christmas tree or nursery production. Christmas trees take ten to fifteen years to grow, so farm owners sign longer leases at higher prices than many start-up small farmers can afford. Every six years, the Metro Council reviews the land supply and re-evaluates the Urban Growth Boundary. As population in the metropolitan increases, farmland in Clackamas County is increasingly threatened.

Clackamas County is praised as a county of high agricultural production, and the regional food system is highly dependent on this production system. If agriculturally-productive land is taken over by development or non-food items, then food supply for the growing population is threatened.
Lili Tolva, chief operator of Flying Coyote Farm, has cultivated a wonderfully diverse farm on just three acres of land, just outside of Sandy. Utilizing one greenhouse and a one-acre vegetable garden, Flying Coyote Farm produces over 100 different varieties of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Lili also raises laying hens, meat birds, goats, and pigs, all of which are rotationally grazed on 1.5 acres of land.

Lili is dedicated to biodynamic, or “beyond-organic” farming, a holistic approach to food production that emphasizes spiritual, ethical, and environmental health. She is currently in the process of applying for organic certification. “I want people to trust that the food they buy from us is produced socially and morally in line with their values, and putting that organic label on my products adds another layer of understanding.” Lili recognizes the market value of being able to communicate her high standards of farming directly through the organic label.

The transition to organic agriculture is not easy or cheap. One challenge is that Lili’s fields border conventionally-treated land, so she worries about cross-contamination from chemical runoff. Like most other small farmers, cash flow is a major challenge, and Lili continually looks for ways to supplement her farm income. Her dedication to growing and raising food that is environmentally- and ethically-responsible may drive her food prices higher than conventional products, but she hopes that creating stronger community relationships will grow awareness about the true worth of her food.

“I love being up and about on the farm at first light; hearing the animals slowly coming to life as the sun rises, enjoying the quiet of the farm. I’m sure many farmers would agree that there is something truly magical that happens on the farm during dusk and dawn.” - Lili Tolva, www.fromfieldtofeast.com
Labor

Often, the kind of small-scale, diverse, intensive farming that is so important to supporting a local food system also requires the most hands-on labor. Many small-scale farmers growing for the local market, including the majority of those interviewed for this assessment, choose hand-pulling weeds over spraying herbicides, integrated pest management instead of applying pesticides, and rotational grazing rather than keeping animals inside. These environmentally and ethically responsible practices are part of the farming package for many small farmers, but also entail hours of labor and a dedication to the farm.

Supporting farm labor with a steady wage is a huge challenge for many small farmers, who are holding second or third jobs to make sure they can pay their own expenses. Oregon law allows exemption for minimum wage and paying overtime for small farms with specific criteria (Oregon.gov, “Technical Assistance for Employers”), although financing outside labor can still be overwhelming. As one mid-size farmer pointed out, “I can hardly afford to pay myself and my husband a decent wage, so how am I supposed to pay for a full-time employee?”

On-farm internships that include monthly stipends or room and board are a common method of connecting farmers to people looking for agricultural experience. Internships can provide invaluable training to new farmers interested in starting their own farm one day, and in turn defray the costs of employment. One should note, though, the US Department of Labor has specific definitions for both an internship and an apprenticeship, and most farm employment arrangements do not fall within those definitions. Rogue Farm Corps is an organization that provides new farmer training and internship programs across the state of Oregon, and ensures that that the internships are legally recognized by the Department of Labor. These programs combine farming education with practical experience and mentorships, so newcomers to the field can learn from experienced farmers. “People need to understand the level of commitment and responsibility this kind of farming takes,” says Rachel Kornstein of Boondockers Farm. “We see a lot of people wanting to farm for idealistic reasons, but they aren’t really prepared for the ups and downs of farm work, for the hours of work in the rain and mud.” Rachel hires farm interns to help share the workload, but only after a lengthy application process to ensure that the intern is right for the job. “We hope people will sign on for a year, and require a minimum of six months working with us, because it takes that long to learn how the farm operates and really get comfortable working here.” Even with the six-month minimum, Boondockers Farm experiences a lot of turnaround, and like so many small-farmers, finding people who are willing to embrace the hard work of farm life is still a constant struggle.
Melissa and Teague Cullen began their farming career as backyard gardeners in the city of Portland. They began a CSA for plant starts, selling to other Portlanders interested in learning how to grow their own food. As the business grew, and they developed their love for combining farming and education, they looked to expand their business—and were contacted by a women with land in Boring who wanted to support agriculture ventures but wasn’t able to farm the land herself.

“We were definitely very lucky in finding this situation,” Melissa and Teague are quick to acknowledge, and point out that creative solutions like theirs are becoming more common and can benefit both young farmers looking to expand as well as aging landowners.

Currently, Melissa and Teague are developing Winslow Food Forest, an alternative type of farm that utilizes the closed-loop, regenerative forest ecosystem to grow diverse, edible plants from canopy to forest floor. Although a food forest is a long-term investment, and most of the trees are only saplings at this point, they already offer a CSA with produce and eggs from their chickens. “Most of our CSA members are in Portland, because that’s where we come from and where we know people. We are interested in connecting to the local Boring community,” they say, although that might be a harder sell to people in the area who aren’t familiar with this kind of food production. To raise awareness about food forests, and all the benefits they provide, Melissa and Teague plan on holding on-farm classes, retreats, and workshops. “Food can, and should, be about sharing within a community, including sharing ideas and experiences.”
Food Production: Agriculture

Consumer Education

“There’s a presumption that food should be next-to-free,” observes Conor Voss of Diggin’ Roots Farms, “and it’s because we live in an age where most food cost is externalized and people are used to buying cheap food from the grocery store.” For many small farmers, who sell farm products at costs which reflect the true price of food, this cultural presumption is debilitating. Conor, along with his wife Sara Brown, grew organic vegetables last year to sell at the Silverton Farmers Market. Though they believe very strongly in supporting local food systems, they debated whether they needed to turn to farmers’ markets in Oregon City or Salem, where they could sell more of their produce at a higher price.

This debate is all too common for farmers located in rural areas of Clackamas County. Driving long distances to participate in Oregon City, Salem, or Portland-area farmers markets may be the only way to keep a small farm in business. Farmer Rachel, of Boondockers Farm, prefers selling at larger markets because that’s where the farm reaps profit: “In Portland I can sell duck eggs at $12/dozen,” and explains that this price reflects the cost of raising a rare heritage breed on organic feed, the labor used to harvest and clean the eggs, the transportation costs of driving to the market, and the labor of maintaining a stand at the market. Rachel tried selling her chicken eggs at a local rural corner store, and reduced the price to about half of what she would sell in Portland, and yet the eggs didn’t sell. “I think people out here don’t understand as much why you should support your local farmers instead of going to the grocery store.”

Rules and Regulations

“Things are getting much more complex these days,” observes Julie Schedeen, of Schedeen’s Farms in Boring, when asked about her biggest challenges as a farmer. Since they first bought their farm in 1977, regulations for food safety have grown, and compliance rules and paperwork are much more detailed and dense. “This is great for the consumers, but not for the farmers.” Julie has seen a huge loss in mid-size farms in the past thirty years, including their own farm: to cope with the complexity of the system, farmers either get bigger and vertically integrate their own processes, or down-size and find niche markets to fill.

State and federal laws regulate how food can be sold and marketed to retail, wholesale, and direct-to-consumer markets (which include farmers’ markets, farm stands, and CSA’s). For example, selling meat at a farmers’ market requires processing meat via a state-licensed and USDA-inspected facility, as well as obtaining a meat-seller’s license. Certain value-added foods can be prepared in a domestic kitchen; other food products need to be prepared in a commercial kitchen. Oregon is one of the few states that allows the direct sale of raw milk, although advertising raw milk is
illegal, the farm can only have two producing cows, and milk must be sold directly to consumers on the farm.

Considering the intricate web of regulations, it’s no surprise that mid-size farms—those that don’t receive any small-farm exemptions—choose to scale down, and that beginning farmers struggle to navigate the system. The OSU Extension Small Farms program offers comprehensive training for new farmers to better understand compliance rules. A summary of this training has been published as an online document, “Keeping It Legal: Regulations and Licenses for Growing and Selling Food in Oregon,” which is a great place to start looking for more information and resources.

Other Challenges and Resources

The issue of storage emerged in the discussion of food preservation and waste for farmers, food distributors, and households. One farmer in Clackamas County was able to sell fresh produce, including fresh greens, during the winter months at the farmers market because he had access to a large on-farm refrigerator/freezer. For farmers without that option, whatever produce is left at the end of the season is kept for personal use, donated, or left to decompose in the fields.

An aging farming demographic is a national concern. In Oregon, the average age of the principal farm operator is 59.6 years old—older than the national average of 58.3 years. Of the 900 principal farm operators that responded to the Clackamas County Agricultural Producers Survey, over half were 63 years or older. Only 11% are 45 years or younger. Over 60% of respondents do not have a plan to transfer farm ownership when they retire. Farm turnover rates will increase in the coming years, and young farmers need to be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to take on farming opportunities.

Besides training programs offered by OSU Extension and Rogue Farm Corps, informal farm networks are also a great asset to beginning farmers. Many farmers interviewed mentioned strong relationships with other farmers as one of their greatest assets. Beginning farmers and seasoned growers alike benefit from problem-solving together, shared through Facebook groups, potluck dinners, or attending farmer workshops like the annual OSU Small Farms Conference.

The Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical assistance, educational outreach, and other conservation services to landowners, including farm owners. They understand that farmers engaging in sustainable agricultural practices support the land’s natural resources and systems. The District also understands that without viable local food markets, small farmers who conserve natural resources won’t be able to maintain their farm business. Located in Oregon City, the technical assistance and educational support offered by this organization is a wonderful asset to farmers of all sizes in the county.

Further Information:
OSU Extension Clackamas County
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/clackamas/
503-655-8631

Rogue Farm Corps
http://roguefarmcorps.org
541-951-5105

Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District
https://conservationdistrict.org/
503-210-6000

Oregon Department of Agriculture
http://www.oregon.gov/oda/Pages/default.aspx
503-986-4550

Clair Klock, Senior Resource Conservationist with Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District
Many farmers mentioned the complexities of navigating the rules and regulations applied to food producers, especially with meat processing. First, selling any kind of meat requires obtaining a meat-sellers license. An exemption is given to farms processing less than 1,000 poultry per year for direct retail sales. This licensing exemption does not apply to red meat.

Second, the slaughter and processing (cleaning and cutting) of animals for human consumption is regulated by both the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the USDA. Selling meat in a retail setting for public consumption requires slaughtering and processing meat via a state-licensed and USDA-inspected facility, as well as obtaining a meat-seller’s license. The only exception to operating in a USDA-inspected facility is when selling meat by the whole, halved, or quartered animal, in which case a state-licensed facility without the USDA inspection can be used.

Of the fourteen USDA-inspected slaughter facilities in Oregon, two are located within Clackamas County, and a third located just south in Mt. Angel: Malco’s Buxton Meat in Sandy, Mark’s Meats in Canby, and Mt. Angel Meat Company. These facilities are licensed to slaughter red (non-poultry, fish, or game) meat. There are no USDA-inspected poultry facilities in the area. More USDA-inspected processing facilities are available in the county, including Ebner Custom Meats in Canby and Shy Ann Meats and Sausage Co., Inc., in Oregon City.

A poultry producer may process up to 20,000 birds per year, that he raises himself, in a state-licensed facility to sell as a retail product (i.e. at a farmers market), as long as the poultry is only sold in Oregon. Harrington’s Poultry in Boring is a state-licensed poultry processing facility. Mineral Springs Poultry, in Yamhill County, is another state-licensed processing facility highly recommended by a few local farmers. For small-scale producers, the 20,000 bird limit is well above an annual operation and their markets are often local or regional anyway. Large-scale producers looking to sell high quantities of meat across state lines will have to ship poultry out of state to USDA-inspected facilities. Unfortunately, as Julie Schedeen cautioned, it is the medium-sized farm that will struggle more with these regulations.

Another option for meat processing is the custom-exempt
rule. Under this exemption, the owner (or owners) of an animal can use a state-inspected slaughter and/or processing facility for personal consumption. In other words, the meat producer (farmer) needs to sell the live animal to the owner (consumer) before slaughter. The meat cannot be otherwise sold, traded, bartered, or given away. This option works for hunters looking to process their own game, but also is legal for meat CSA’s, in which customers pay for the live animal before slaughter. More details about custom-exempt processing can be found in the OSU Extension Small Farms article “Frequently asked questions about using custom-exempt slaughter and processing facilities in Oregon for beef, pork, lamb, and goat.”

Finally, mobile slaughtering is often a sought-after service for meat producers looking for a more humane end for their animals. Falling under the custom-exempt rule (there are no USDA-licensed mobile slaughters in Oregon), this service all but eliminates the stress of travel and slaughter on the animal, which produces higher-quality meat. There are a few mobile-slaughter companies in the area with years of service and good reputations providing an ethical alternative for many small-scale meat producers. Unfortunately, within the past few years extremist animal welfare groups have lashed out toward meat processors in the region. While still in operation, many small-scale processors choose to keep a low-profile, including those interviewed for this CFA.

For more information on where to find USDA-inspected or state-inspected facilities, including mobile slaughter companies, search the Oregon Department of Agriculture online database of food safety licenses.15

Oregon’s Farm Direct Law allows for small producers to create certain value-added foods (raw materials transformed into foods which can be sold at a higher retail price) without the use of a commercial, inspected kitchen. Of course, there are stipulations: farmers must sell directly to consumers, and the principal ingredients must come from the farm (with the exception of herbs, spices, salt, vinegar, pectin, juice, honey, and sugar). Products covered by this law include fruit-based syrups; jams, jellies, and preserves; acidified fruits and vegetables (often pickled); and lacto-fermented fruits and vegetables.

A few farmers expressed interest in processing their own food into value-added products. Nathan and Amanda of Moomaw Farm would like to provide foods like bone broth to their CSA customers, because “it’s a great way to use existing products that can’t work in a CSA.” Rachel of Boondockers Farm is interested in using her commercial kitchen to prepare and season poultry meat: “I can sell ready-to-cook meat at a much higher price than just the cuts.”

For farmers looking to sell other types of food than what is allowed in the Farm Direct Law, a licensed facility is necessary. Farmers can set up their own facility or find a local food processor that will make the product, package it, and label it. Another option would be to rent a public commercial kitchen, often called incubator kitchens. There are a few incubator kitchens available for rent in Portland and Salem, such as KitchenCru in Portland. However, no official incubator kitchen is available in Clackamas County.
Jaime Holub and Lili Tolva are co-creators of Sweet Honey Farmacy, a farm-based apothecary that sells natural medicines. Located on Flying Coyote Farm, just outside of Sandy, Sweet Honey Farmacy sells an array of infused oils, honeys, salves, tonics, soaps, and elixirs, and a variety of food-based medicines, including sauerkraut, kimchi, pickled vegetables, herbal truffles, and bone broth. "When we met two years ago, we discovered our mutual love for farming and plant-based medicines," says Jaime, "and the Farmacy just fell into place."

Sweet Honey Farmacy exemplifies the diversity of value-added foods that can be produced from a farm. Jaime and Lili try to source as many ingredients as they can directly from their garden, and use a commercial kitchen located on the farm to create their medicines. Although the Oregon Farm Direct Marketing Bill allows for the direct sale of certain foods processed without a commercial kitchen, Jaime and Lili offer a greater variety of products that aren't covered under the bill.

They sell their products through a CSA membership and at various farmers’ markets. "We've grown a lot in the past two years because of the response we received from our customers. One of the ideas behind the Farmacy is that everything can--and should--be used in meals. The medicine doesn't just exist on its own, it's a part of a broader system of healing through food."
Food Production

Opportunities & Recommendations

- Provide online marketing & social media education and resources for farmers

Many farmers cited online resources, including Facebook and farm blogs, as one of their most important connections to consumers. Linx Media LLC is one example of a company that works with small businesses in rural Oregon towns, including farms, to assist online business growth. Affordable community classes are another option for improving online engagement.

*Potential partners: Linx Media LLC, OSU Extension Small Farms Program, Clackamas Community College*

- Document commercial kitchens in rural communities that are available for rent by local processors

Community centers and local churches may already be equipped with commercial kitchens through which local farmers could process value-added products. Appropriate locations need to be identified and made available to farmers.

*Potential partners: Community centers, churches, and granges*

- Organize farm tours, including local farm loops, to increase community education on local farms

Guided, public farm tours and farm events, including farm-to-table dinners, can provide much-needed community education about local farms and engagement with farmers. Local community organizations, including granges, community gardens, or interested individuals could serve as coordinators of such events.

*Potential partners: Granges, OSU Extension, farmers’ markets, community food groups*

- Conduct feasibility study for agricultural storage facility and processor facility, including an incubator kitchen

Providing year-round storage for fresh produce, especially space made available to small farmers, would increase a farmer’s capacity to access markets, support year-round farmers’ markets in rural areas, and decrease food waste.

*Potential partners: Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District, OSU Extension, Oregon Food Bank*

- Opportunities to strengthen farmer networks and pool resources

Open communication and resource sharing was identified as one of the greatest assets to farmers in the county, and yet the county lacks formal and consistent networking opportunities. Monthly potlucks in the off-season, regional farmer coalitions, and online social networks would provide much-needed peer support.

*Potential partners: Friends of Family Farmers, community food groups*
Regional Distribution

Getting food from farm to the consumer's table can be a long process or an immediate passing from farmer to consumer. Clackamas County farms distribute products locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Specialty crops, including hazelnuts, are often specifically grown for export. Berries and Christmas trees are produced for both local and national markets. The distribution chain often depends on the size of the farm and how the farmer chooses to market the product.

Farmers interested in turning over large quantities of food at wholesale prices can look to regional food distributors like Organically Grown Company (OGC), Duck Produce, or McDonald Wholesale Co. OGC specializes in organic produce, and buys organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs from farms of all sizes, amalgamates the produce under one brand (Ladybug), and sells them to retail markets in the Pacific Northwest. Both Duck Produce and McDonald Wholesale Co carry organic products and also emphasize buying from regional producers.

Siri and Sons Farm, a mid-sized farm based in Damascus sells its organic produce to OGC and Duck Produce. When the farm's own produce supply can't fulfill a large order, Farmer Joe turns to other, often smaller, farms in the area for help supplying the demand. Even though farmers sell to regional distributors at a lower wholesale price, the partnership ensures Siri and Sons Farm a constant market to keep up with its growing power. “It also feels good to see our produce on the shelves of Whole Foods and New Seasons in our own community,” says Brad, a farmer at Siri and Sons.

Rural Grocery Stores

Although OGC can be a viable distribution option for some organic growers, retail grocers that carry OGC products like Whole Foods or New Seasons haven’t yet found their way to rural communities in Clackamas County. Some large-scale retail outlets are found in Molalla, Estacada, and Sandy, including Safeway and Fred Meyer, although these stores rarely buy and distribute local farm products.

There aren’t too many rural grocery stores left in Clackamas County, and most of those that are left operate more like gas stations. “I don’t think people from Colton really shop at the Colton Market,” comments a local resident, referring to the retail food store on the corner of Highway 211 and Wall Street. “Sometimes they have potatoes and onions. But people mostly buy beer, cigarettes, and fast food there.” A lot of people in Colton, an unincorporated community between Estacada and Molalla, head to Molalla’s Safeway to buy their food. Some residents group together to buy from Azure Standard, an online organic and natural market and distribution company. The company delivers food monthly at drop points around the county, including in Molalla and Beavercreek. For fresh fruits and vegetables, people from Colton and all over central Clackamas County drive to Milk Creek Produce in Mulino. A survey developed by Kansas State University (Appendix A) is used by the Oregon Food Bank to gather information on challenges and opportunities to support rural grocery stores throughout Oregon.
Milk Creek Produce is an independently-owned retail store carrying primarily fruits and vegetables. Crates of apples, pears, oranges, peaches, and plums overflow in the shaded store-front, right off Highway 213, and a diversity of vegetables and berries are found inside. Most items have a sign detailing where they were grown and whether they are organic. John, the owner of Milk Creek Produce is “very conscientious in purchasing our produce from local farmers whenever possible,” although since they supply fresh produce year round, local produce isn’t always available in the winter months. People from neighboring communities, including Molalla, Colton, Estacada, and Oregon City, travel to this grocery store for their supply of fresh produce. The success of Milk Creek Produce shows that the demand for fresh, healthy food exists in rural Clackamas County. Of course, this grocery store benefits from proximity to the highway and Oregon City, resources that other rural stores don’t have. However, finding ways to overcome those challenges and integrate more local food into existing rural grocery stores could have huge implications for the health and food security of rural communities.
Local Farmers’ Markets

Farmers’ markets are one of the most recognized and sought after venues for shortening the distribution chain and connecting consumer to farmer. For many farmers and eaters alike, a thriving farmers market is the pinnacle of a successful local food system: consumers and producers can meet face-to-face and establish a long-term relationship; local food and food dollars stay in the community; food is fresh and in season and, especially for fresh produce, is often cheaper than found in a grocery store.

However, not all farmers markets are successful. In fact, many new markets don’t make it past the first few years. Researchers from the OSU Small Farms program have published a few studies discussing why new markets fail, using data specifically from markets in the Pacific Northwest. They identified five interconnected factors that related to failed markets:

1.) **Small size:** Market size will be influenced by the size of the community, local interest in purchasing food at a farmers market, and number of local farms in the area. Planning for a new market needs to take into consideration the appropriate size for the market. Small markets are not always unsuccessful, but they need to be carefully planned.

2.) **Need for farm products:** Shortage of farm products (as opposed to crafts) and need for product diversity was an indicator of failed markets. A successful market, no matter how big, needs to partner with vendors, especially farmers, who can supply food.

3.) **Low administrative revenue:** Most markets rely on revenue from stall fees to cover operation costs including a paid manager, and most markets that failed were not able to generate enough fees to remain sustainable. Farmers view high stall fees as a barrier to turning profit at a market, although paying a weekly fee is imperative to the longevity of the market. Other options include pursuing community financial support via local government or faith entities.

4.) **Volunteer or low-paid manager:** Although a volunteer may be appropriate for some very small markets, all markets benefit from having a paid manager. Manager payment affects how much time and effort can be expended managing the market, including recruiting customers and vendors.

5.) **High rate of manager turnover:** Data from all markets, including successful ones, shows a high turnover rate of market managers. Consistent management is necessary for stability of markets and long-term investment in market outreach opportunities.
Food Consumption: Distribution

The size of the market does not have to be an indicator of failure. New markets, and especially small markets, need to be mindful of the challenges they will face, and plan accordingly.

Jackie Hammond-Williams, who has managed the highly successful Oregon City Farmers Market for about 10 years, observes “There is always a struggle to maintain balance between community outreach and farmer support. Really, though, it’s all about whether the community sees the advantages of shopping locally and eating healthily.” In her experience, successful outreach has included using local media, and capitalizing on local culture, to garner community support. For example, she’s used the public library to spread interest about healthy eating by promoting books or showing movies on food. Jackie also says that accepting SNAP (or food stamps) at the market—allowing customers to exchange EBT dollars for tokens to use at the market—is definitely a necessity. Promoting the use of SNAP dollars allows the market to be much more accessible to low-income families and contributes to a more equitable local food system overall. The Oregon City Farmers Market offers a SNAP Match program: through donations from local businesses, up to $5 can be matched to SNAP dollars, meaning that the participant has access to $10 to buy farmers market goods—and that extra money also supports the farmers. Jackie is using a SNAP Match survey to gather information on the usage and importance of this program, and hoping to gain more funding support (Appendix B).

Above all, Jackie echoes the most common sentiment voiced by farmers: the market is all about strengthening the relationship between farmers and consumers. So one of her primary goals as a farmers market manager is to “bring the farm to the market,” by encouraging farmers to be present and using photos of local farmers and food producers. A community that realizes where their food comes from, and where their food dollars go, is the ultimate factor for a successful market.

“That extra food with the SNAP Match makes a world of difference.” - Farmers’ market participant
“There’s no reason that people from Sandy should have to drive to Gresham or Portland for fresh food every week,” says Nunpa of the AntFarm, a local nonprofit that works with local youth and families to build community. “There is so much food produced right in this area, we just need to find a way to get the farmers to stay here.” Like so many other small rural markets, the farmers market in Sandy traditionally struggled with competition from large and long-established markets nearby. Without steady supplies of fresh produce, a farmers’ market staple, numbers of customers dwindled.

In 2015, with support from the City of Sandy, the AntFarm took over the community farmers market, gave it a new name and location, and focused on outreach to local farmers. Currently the steering committee is looking into alternative strategies to attract food producers. One idea is to manage a “community-stand,” which would allow small farmers, who aren’t able to produce enough for an individual stand every week, to still bring their products to the market.

The AntFarm also hired Tammy Rodriguez and Chelsey Cornell as co-managers of the market. Besides starting up their own nonprofit focused on local food and farming, Tammy and Chelsey are also farmers. “We’re bringing our own produce here every Saturday, so we have a deep investment in the success of the market. We also personally understand the challenges that the farmers face and how to work with them better.”

Currently the Mount Hood Farmers Market offers a variety of food products, including fresh produce. The market menu will vary with the season—vegetable starts are available in the spring, berries will be introduced in the summer, and greater amounts of produce will come to the market as the season moves to fall. Market size will vary week to week as well, and will never reach the size of larger urban markets. However, by accepting SNAP and providing programs like POP (a children’s program, founded at the Oregon City Farmers Market in 2011), the AntFarm is hoping to establish community support that will ulti-
Direct to Consumer

By nature, farmers markets involve a direct-to-consumer distribution chain, although they require both farmer and customer to travel to the market. Even shorter direct-to-consumer distribution chains are found at farm stands and through CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) memberships. Both options usually (but not always) require a greater investment in the consumer to support the farmer.

Farm stands are a wonderful option for distributing fresh and local produce. Often located on the farm itself, most farm stands are open multiple days a week. Produce can be harvested on Monday morning and sold later that day, instead of relying on a single-day farmers market. Farm stands also lower costs of transporting farm products to markets every week, although they may raise labor costs if extra help is needed to keep the stand open daily.

Most CSA programs require a pre-season payment by the consumer, for which they receive a variety of farm products all season long. CSA models can work differently: some distribute CSA baskets from the farm, others use an in-town drop site for customers. Regardless, the initial buy-in from the consumer means that the farmer has a steady market for his or her product and has more autonomy within the food system. As farmer Nathan Moomaw notes, “My CSA gives me the most control over everything. I don’t work with middlemen, and I have a lot of flexibility with my farm.”

In Clackamas County, there are a few rural farms offering CSA shares, although a lot of these shares are consumed in Portland. “It seems like people in Portland are more educated when it comes to understanding how a CSA works, and so I can sell my food at a higher price there,” explained one CSA farmer. Another farmer mentioned that she had tried a CSA once, but was disappointed with the local community’s response. “The customers wanted to be able to pick and choose what they received in their CSA basket each week. If they didn’t recognize or didn’t like some of the produce included, it was wasted.” Some farms, including Winslow Food Forest in Boring and Flying Coyote Farm in Sandy, are making efforts to transition their CSA shares to the local communities. “Driving to Portland every week to deliver the baskets wasn’t cost effective,” says Lili Tolva of Flying Coyote Farm. “And I would like to invest more in this community, because this is where I’m growing the food.” Lili envisions an on-farm pick-up, so people can really get to know where their food is coming from.
Food Buying Clubs

Less widespread than farmers’ markets or CSA’s, food buying clubs are an innovative solution to the problem of buying healthy, affordable, and often local food. In a cooperative food buying club, people join together to buy bulk orders of food at wholesale prices. Benefits of a buying club, besides the cheaper price, is that members get to control who they order from and what kind of food they order. For example, a club might choose to order only from local farmers and producers, or choose to buy organic food from local distributors. There are online resources about how to form a buying club (startabuyingclub.com).

Early in 2015, a group of community members from the Mount Hood Village formed the Hoodland Farmacy Buying Club. Mount Hood Village, which includes the communities of Welches, Rhododendron, Zigzag, and Brightwood, is located about 20 miles east of Sandy on the edge of Mount Hood National Forest. A few thousand residents live here year-round, and many were unhappy with the limited selection of overpriced food at the single Thriftway in the area.

“We call it Theftway because the prices are ridiculous for the quality of food you get” says Amber Spears, local health coach and restaurant owner. Currently the Hoodland Farmacy has 64 member families, with an average of 30 families placing orders on a regular basis. Paid membership helps cover cost of overhead fees, like the cost of food scales for dividing bulk orders.

Short term, the club focuses on bringing organic, “farm-to-table eating” to the community through buying from local or regional farmers whenever possible. Longer term, Hoodland Farmacy has goals of increasing community food security by establishing a club community garden, where members can grow their own food. Recognizing that all community members deserve high quality food, whether or not they can afford it, the buying club also donates extra produce toward boxes that are given to community members in need. Capitalizing on the community built by the Hoodland Farmacy, Amber also plans to introduce gardening, cooking, preservation, and yoga classes, with the aim to empower the community to live healthier lives all around.
Food Consumption: Access

Regardless of how much food is produced and where that food is sent, a food system is not whole when a consumer or a community does not have ready access to that food. Barriers to food access are far-reaching and may include economic insecurity, poor public transportation networks, housing insecurity, a lack of rural food resources and poor consumer education.

Clackamas County is one of the wealthiest counties in the state. In 2013 the population was estimated at 388,263 people. The median household income in 2015 was $64,352, meaning half the county’s population earns above that mark. In contrast, the median household income for the state of Oregon was $50,229. The 2013 percentage of people living in poverty in the county is 9.3%, the lowest rate in the state. Unemployment in the county, at 7.7%, is also below the state average (8.7%).

Residents in the county are generally better educated, relative to residents in other areas of the state. However, roughly the percentage of residents who have a bachelor’s degree or higher is the same percentage as those with a high school degree or less, which implies a widening gap between these segments of the population. This gap impacts not only wages and earnings, but also the economic stability of local residents.

Poverty

The 2010 Poverty Rate map for Clackamas County shows that the majority of Clackamas County has a poverty rate of less than 10% or less. The urban northwest exhibits higher rates of poverty, as does the rural farmland area south of Canby. In stark contrast, the southeastern portion of the county has a poverty rate of 31.9%-69.4%. There are no incorporated or recognized unincorporated communities in this part of the county, which is designated Mt Hood National Forest. However, a small number of people do live in these forests.

Although Clackamas County in general has low poverty rates, it is essential to keep in mind that poverty rates are calculated from total populations. At over 398,000 people, Clackamas County is one of the most populated counties in the state—meaning that there are still high numbers of people in the county who experience food and economic insecurity. So although a seemingly low 9.7% of county residents fall below the poverty level, this equates to 37,662 people living in poverty. About half of this population, or 17,240 residents, earns less than half of the Federal Poverty Limit, and are considered to live in extreme poverty. To put in perspective, Malheur County in southeast Oregon has the highest rate of poverty in the county at 22.7% (2010 estimate). However, the entire population totals 31,326 people, equating to somewhere around 7,111 people live in poverty—or less than one-fifth the number of people in poverty in Clackamas County.

Further, the U.S. government determines poverty levels each year based on a calculation set in 1964, which looks at the cost of a minimum food diet and multiplies that cost by three, under the assumption that a family will spend 1/3 of its income on food. The 2015 Federal Poverty Guidelines were set at $11,770 annual income for a one-person household, $20,090 annual income for a three-person household, etc. Many federal programs that address food insecurity and poverty use these guidelines to determine eligibility, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the School Lunch Program.

Food insecurity is broadly defined as the inability to access adequate, healthy food throughout the year due to limitations of money and other resources. Food insecurity is often assumed to be a chronic symptom of poverty, and often poverty is the only factor considered when measuring food insecurity and hunger. However, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) does not take into account the nuances of food and economic insecurity. For example, Clackamas County has one of the highest costs of living in the state. From housing and land prices to childcare costs to taxes, people pay more to live in this area than in other areas of Oregon. So, although a family’s income technically raises them above the federal poverty level, they may still struggle to make ends meet.

An alternate method of looking at poverty and food insecurity in Clackamas County is the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Developed at the University of Washington, this measure takes into account the cost of basic services and needs in a given area, and includes factors overlooked by the FPL, like housing and childcare costs, transportation, health care, and taxes. The 2014 Self Sufficiency Income level for Clackamas County was $24,469 for a single-person household (as opposed to the federal poverty guideline of $11,670 in the same year), meaning that amount is the minimum annual income.
to allow an individual to be self-sufficient. For two adults with one preschooler and one school-age child, that minimum annual income is raised to $65,490. These standards are some of the highest in the state, and have increased annually.\textsuperscript{21}

With this Self-Sufficiency Standard in mind, recall that the median household income in Clackamas County in 2015 was $64,352. Although this statistic in no way specifies family make-up, it still alludes to the fact that many families make less than the minimum income to maintain self-sufficiency, while remaining above the federal poverty guidelines and are therefore ineligible for nutrition assistance.

**Transportation**

In rural communities, where distances between resources are greater, transportation can play a big role in food access. Individuals without vehicles rely on walking or public transportation to get to markets for food. For some of the larger rural communities in Clackamas County, there are a few options for public transportation:

- Canby Area Transit (CAT) provides service in Canby, and connects to the Portland TriMet transportation system in Wilsonville.
- South Clackamas Transportation District (SCTD) provides service between Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, Molalla, and Canby, with connections to TriMet at the college.
- The Sandy Area Metro (SAM) provides service in Sandy and Estacada, with connections to TriMet in Gresham.

The TriMet Fare Relief Program provides grants of up to $25,000 in TriMet fares for qualified non-profit and Community Based Organizations. For those communities in Clackamas County with access to the TriMet system, these fares can be given to low-income clients, even if it means having to access one of the above local buses to get to the TriMet bus. Solutions like the TriMet fare grant may provide immediate assistance for persons without transportation, but more concrete changes are needed to ensure access to transportation to all.

No public transportation is provided in the Damascus/Boring area of the county, because citizens have opted out of paying taxes. Local residents call this area the “black zone,” because without public transportation, low-income individuals are extremely limited in how they can access resources. For example, a large community of migrant farmworkers and their families lives in the Pioneer Mobile Home Court in Boring. “This is an area where we see people experience more food insecurity because there is no public transportation,” explains a social service worker from nearby Sandy. “A lot of people can’t get out of the mobile court because they don’t have a car, or they work all day and there is no option for transportation in the evening.”

Transportation has also been an issue for rural food pantries, who need to drive to the Oregon Food Bank warehouse in Northeast Portland for their weekly supply of food. A round trip can take over two hours, which can be prohibitive to nonprofits with limited resources, such as gas and volunteer time. As a solution, the Oregon Food Bank is working to open a produce hub in Oregon City, which will make fresh produce much more accessible for food pantries and the clients they serve.

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\textsuperscript{1} Office of Business Intelligence, Oregon Department of Human Services. 2013. DHS County Quick Facts.

Food Deserts

Food deserts are defined by the U.S. government as a census tract with a substantial share of residents who live in low-income areas that have low levels of access to a grocery store or healthy, affordable food retail outlet. For rural areas specifically, low access means 10 or more miles from a grocery store. In addition to the sparsely-populated southeastern area, the map on the next page shows that parts of Molalla qualify as a rural food desert.

The US food desert definition and locator fails to account for quality, price, or cultural appropriateness of food available. For example, only one grocery store is located in Estacada, which has a city population of just over 2,900 with many more people living outside city limits. The Thriftway Harvest Share market is not locally or independently owned and carries a limited supply of fresh fruits and vegetables. Many people in Estacada choose to travel to the Fred Meyer in Sandy for a larger selection of cheaper goods.

Availability of culturally-appropriate food is also a factor that limits healthy food accessibility and security. A clear example is the immigrant communities in Clackamas County, which may have access to large retail groceries but not to traditional foods. Access to traditional food is essential to the cultural integrity and health of an immigrant community. In general, people are less likely to try unfamiliar foods, especially when unsure of how to prepare or cook them, and turn instead to processed foods or prepackaged meals.

Farmworkers

Though all farmworkers work closely with the land and are an essential force in the food system, not all are able to reap the rewards of their effort. **Farmworkers, specifically migrant and seasonal farmworkers, are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations in Oregon.** In 2013, it was estimated that over 87,000 migrant and/or seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) worked in Oregon’s food system, with over 7,000 located in Clackamas County. Approximately 70% of MSFW are foreign-born, most often coming from Mexico and Latin America. Food access issues such as economic insecurity, language barriers, and cultural appropriateness disproportionately affects MSFW and their families.

Marion County, directly to the south, has the highest number of farmworkers in Oregon, and was recently the location of an assessment of food access for a migrant farmworker community. Although every community has locally-specific experiences, key findings from this assessment can relate to Clackamas County:

- With few exceptions, most MSFW labor camps (as opposed to formal housing developments) in the Willamette Valley were not located within walkable distance to a food retailer, and 95.4% of all labor camps in the valley do not have walkable access to a reliable source of produce and healthy food options.
- Farmworkers or family members interviewed indicated that their diet had changed since moving to Oregon, turning to more processed food in the absence of a variety of affordable, fresh (and culturally appropriate) produce.

Many farmworkers face extreme food and work insecurity. Some are not able to afford food until they get their first check. “During berry harvest, they may be so hungry that they eat the fruit [in the fields] without washing it, consuming pesticide,” explains Rosa E Guitron-Galvan with WorkSource Clackamas. If there are too many workers available, then individuals might not be able to generate enough income to travel back home, becoming “hungry and homeless.” MSFW utilize community health clinics, food pantries, housing shelters, and farm worker services when available. However, there is no real data for farmworkers specific to Clackamas County, so determining the exact situation and resources needed for this community is difficult.

Homelessness

Every two years, Clackamas County initiates a homeless count, which is part of a nation-wide efforts to document homelessness and housing insecurity. This count identifies people living without shelter or in housing assistance program, as well as families and individuals who experience unstable living situations, including living with multiple families in one home. Although not entirely comprehensive (due to the nature of homeless counts), the data collected attempts to shed some light on the state of homelessness in the county.
Food Consumption: Access

The survey showed that 2,196 individuals identified as homeless on January 22, 2015. Of these individuals, 47% were under the age of 18. The number of unsheltered individuals (staying in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, and on the street) counted was 484, and 1,504 people identified as living in double-up or unstable housing. Finally, a significant number of families were identified—1,262 individuals in households with adults and children—defying many stereotypes of homelessness. Economic hardship, including too-high cost of rent and unemployment, was the most cited reason for housing insecurity.

This snapshot of homelessness paints a wider picture of poverty and food insecurity in Clackamas County. The same economic hardship that leads to housing insecurity also means restricted food budgets and increased food insecurity. Temporary or unstable housing often implies limited or no space for food storage and few cooking utensils. Without the infrastructure for cooked meals, food options are limited to less-nutritious prepackaged food or fast food.

Emergency Food Services

Socio-economic status, ethnicity, and location should not determine whether people can eat good food. Food pantries, hot meal sites, and other emergency food programs play a vital role in hunger relief and food security, but are also signs of existing gaps in the food system. Although food pantries are designed as an emergency response to hunger, often people rely upon them as a constant source of food. One food pantry volunteer noted that “Molalla is a good place to be hungry,” because there are hot meal sites and food boxes offered throughout the month. At another food pantry, it was estimated that between 60-70% of clients come in regularly every month. “It can be discouraging,” admitted one volunteer, “because you want to make a difference instead of just becoming part of the system.”

However, as so many food pantry volunteers and social service workers realize, reliance on emergency food services is indicative of a larger web of economic, housing, or health insecurity. Since hunger is such an immediate symptom of these larger issues, food pantries that provide other kinds of resources, including information on local affordable housing, low-income health programs, or even substance abuse programs, can make a huge difference in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Many of the food pantries throughout the county are partner agencies with the Oregon Food Bank (OFB), although many successful agencies operate independently. Food given

“My vision is to understand the real reason why a family comes to a food bank, and then heal those problems so the family can be whole again.”

– Rise Estergreen
Molalla Service Center

OSU Extension FFE volunteers give a “healthy one-pot meal” demonstration at a low-income housing development in the county. Photo courtesy of Kelly Streit.
Located along Highway 26 in downtown Sandy, the Sandy Community Action Center serves low-income individuals in the Oregon Trail School District, which extends from Boring over to Mount Hood. Its primary program is the shopping-style food pantry, where clients are able to select their own food from a variety of options. Setting up a shopping-style food pantry gives the client more control over the food he or she takes home, empowering the client to make his or her own food decisions and minimizing food waste. With this method, the Action Center distributes about 280 boxes per month, which equates to approximately 800 people served. The Oregon Food Bank is a major supporter of the Action Center, and donates over 2,000 lbs of food each week.

Besides providing food boxes through the traditional food pantry, the Action Center offers other programs to extend the reach of emergency food services. Volunteers at the Action Center coordinate a monthly Community Basket, which allows families to pick up a box containing about 35 lbs of food on a donation-only basis (the above photo shows volunteers sorting food for community basket boxes). New this year is a mobile food pantry that will extend the Action Center’s services to Boring, a nearby community with no permanent food pantry of its own. “We’re going to start out small and see how it goes,” explains volunteer coordinator Dena Isbell. “Hopefully we’ll be able to reach a new community of people that haven’t been able to access our food boxes yet.” The mobile pantry will park at the Pioneer Mobile Home Court, a community largely of migrant farmworkers and their families, and the Boring Fire Station.

As part of a political action campaign in Salem to support emergency food providers, the Action Center asked clients to write on paper plates why they are grateful for their local food pantry. The resulting plates were thought-provoking and showed exactly why local food pantries and other social service agencies play such an important role in the entire community. This kind of exercise could be replicated around the county, and may help raise community awareness about local hunger or support applications for funding to increase the capacity of local food services.
by the OFB to local pantries totaled 3.89 million pounds, which was valued at 4.1 million dollars. Weekly, that approximates 88,000 pounds of food to partner agencies in Clackamas County. Other kinds of support offered by the Oregon Food Bank include Network Support Grants, which assists pantries in infrastructure for building healthier, more accessible pantries; technical and educational support; networking opportunities with other pantries and social service agencies; and an Oregon Food Bank advocacy team.

SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Program, or SNAP, is a federal assistance program designed to help households increase their purchasing power of healthy food by providing EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) credit, formally known as food stamps. SNAP eligibility is based on federal poverty guidelines. In 2012 the number of families in Clackamas County that received SNAP benefits was 28,123.77

SNAP recipient numbers have actually decreased in recent years: in 2009, 37,693 people received SNAP benefits in Clackamas County. However, that same year it was calculated that an additional 26,238 more people were qualified to receive SNAP but didn’t, meaning that there are more people in the county every year who struggle to place food on the table.28

SNAP education is imperative to increasing food access and food security among low-income individuals in Clackamas County. Many people don’t know they qualify for federal assistance and struggle to purchase healthy, quality food, so education among the general public about SNAP eligibility and how to apply would help lessen that gap. Organizations that offer assistance to low-income individuals, especially food pantries and farmers markets, need to be aware of the eligibility rules and regulations for SNAP, including what SNAP funding can buy. Not all food at a farmers market is available through SNAP dollars. Ideally emergency food assistance organizations will be able to connect SNAP-eligible clients with other resources in the area, such as OSU Extension’s nutrition education resources.

Other Food Resources

The Women Infant and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program is a federal food assistance program for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women and children under the age of five. This program issues vouchers that can be used to buy a predetermined list of food items, including fresh fruits and vegetables, hot and cold cereals, canned fish, milk, cheese, juices, and baby food. In addition to food assistance, WIC also offers nutrition education, breastfeeding support, health screening, and referrals to other social service agencies. In 2014, WIC served 6,691 infants and children under five, and 2,652 women—including 29% of all pregnant women in the county. The program brought in $3,487,229 in vouchers that were spent at local retailers. Farmers’ markets and farm stands are able to accept WIC vouchers. There are five WIC offices in the county, including in Canby, Sandy, and Oregon City.29

The National School Lunch Program serves children in public and nonprofit private schools and child care institutions by providing nutritious, low-cost or free lunches. School districts that take part in the program must serve lunches that emphasize the availability of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and they must offer free or reduced-price lunch to eligible children. Eligibility for this program is based on federal poverty guidelines. In 2015, a family of four with income at or below $31,525 would qualify for free meals. In the 2013-2014 school year, 36.8% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch in Clackamas County, although rural rates tended to be much higher.30

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>% Free &amp; Reduce Lunch 2011-2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>44.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colton School District</td>
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<tr>
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<td>45.70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon Trail School District</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food in Schools

Thousands of school-aged children eat lunch, and often breakfast and afternoon snacks, in public and private lunchrooms in Clackamas County. School districts are a major player in the county’s food system, and increasing their access to healthy, local food will not only improve child nutrition but increase food dollars spent in the local economy.

However, many rural school districts have limited resources and face challenges in making these changes. For example, the Estacada School District currently serves about half their meals cooked from scratch, meaning that recipes use as little processed food as possible and capitalize on locally-grown, in-season produce. The school district would like to only serve meals from scratch, instead of using pre-cooked, frozen foods. “The problem is that it’s costing us an arm and a leg,” explains Julie Theander, Nutrition Services Coordinator. “It’s just cheaper to get the heat-and-serve food. With scratch cooking, you need more people [to prepare the food], more product, and more equipment—which all equates to more money.”

Estacada Elementary and Middle Schools qualify for the fed-
Generating Rural Options for Weight (GROW) Healthy Kids and Communities, an Oregon State University integrated research, education, and Extension program, was established in mid-2012 in Clackamas County. Partnering with the local school districts, GROW has involved and engaged Estacada and Molalla communities and families to improve the rural obesogenic environment and reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity in children living in rural communities by providing healthy eating and physical activity opportunities.

The OSU Extension GROW staff in Clackamas County, Beret Halverson and Erin Devlin, have worked extensively in Estacada and Molalla since 2012. Their first initiative was to create a local health assessment, called “HEAL MAPPS.” By engaging community members in photo mapping the community environment, the GROW team was able to identify both resources and challenges to a healthy community environment in Molalla and Estacada—and also document local people’s experiences and perceptions of that environment in order to understand the communities’s level of readiness to address the issue of children’s weight health. These HEAL MAPPS have guided long-term efforts and community goals toward building a healthier environment in both Estacada and Molalla.

As a result of the partnership with GROW HKC and OSU Extension’s Family and Community Health program, the Molalla River School District has received $160,500 in grant funding. Notably, $70,000 from the Oregon Department of Education helped to implement a district-wide Farm to School program for the 2013-2015 school year. Through the program, the school district was able to build several school gardens, which increased access to fresh produce on the high school campus and at several elementary schools. Other grant-funded projects include new running and walking trails, running and walking programs, activity games on elementary school play grounds, classroom Better Energy Physical Activity tool kits for several schools, and a wellness committee at Molalla Elementary and in the Molalla community.
Food Consumption: Access

eral Community Eligibility Program, meaning that they receive funding to provide every child free lunch because over 40% of their students were eligible for free meals. This also means that the school district has less money overall to purchase their food. Julie Theander recently applied for a grant that would help purchase the equipment necessary for a scratch kitchen but, she says, her long-term vision is to incorporate the school gardens into the meal plan. Using gardens to supply lunches comes with its own barriers, including labor and the growing season of the vegetables.

The Estacada School District also hopes to increase its purchasing of local foods. Currently the schools source their food through the Oregon Child Nutrition Coalition, which is a state-wide network of school districts that manages school food supply. The OCNC’s major supplier is Sysco, a multinational food distribution corporation with a location in Portland. “The state doesn’t look at who’s local,” explains Julie, so she’s looking forward to a partnership with the Gladstone and Oregon Trail School District. “We’re partnering up to go through the process of RFP (request for proposal) to get more vendors to give us more bids so we can have more to choose from, with choosing local being our number one priority.”

In the city of Milwaukie, Schoolyard Farms has partnered with Candy Lane Elementary and Jennings Lodge Elementary to provide weekly garden lessons for students, a summer camp for garden and cooking education, and fresh produce in the lunchroom. The funding for these classes and programs comes from the farm’s own CSA members, as well as produce sales to Head Start and local restaurants. Through this model, the local community is able to support healthy education opportunities and healthier school lunches. Funding for Schoolyard Farms also comes from a HEAL Grant (Healthy Eating Active Living) through the county and other county partnerships. For rural schools with limited resources to facilitate food and garden education on their own, partnering with a “middleman” farm could be a very successful alternative.

“Why can’t we start growing our own food for our kids?”

- Julie Theander,
Nutrition Services

Courtney Leeds, co-founder and director, and Brooke Hieserich, education director. Photo courtesy of Schoolyard Farms.
Food waste is often the least talked about aspect of the food system, yet it happens during every other part of the cycle. When produce is left behind in fields, when it is thrown out at the market, when only some parts of the plant or animal are used for cooking—this loss of food is a loss of the energy and resources that went into making the food. An environmentally and economically sound food system will reduce food waste during all phases of the food cycle or find alternative uses for inedible food stuffs.

One effort to eliminate food waste and hunger together is the nonprofit Gleaners of Clackamas County, Inc. Founded in 1969 and based out of Oregon City, the organization focuses on collecting and distributing perishable and nutritious foods to low-income households, usually from large grocery retailers but sometimes from farms, when produce is left after the harvest. Gleaners of Clackamas County is an entirely volunteer-based organization. Currently about 550 households are members of the organization, and with a payment of $20/month, a member household can receive food 1-2 times per week. Food is picked up at the Oregon City warehouse, but is often brought to rural households as secondary distribution sites to increase access. Gleaners must “adopt” another non-member, often a senior citizen, with whom to share their food, so upwards of 1200 individuals benefit from food that would otherwise become waste.

The Clackamas County WE COMPOST Program was developed to reduce food waste from businesses that typically throw out a lot of food, including restaurants, schools, and grocery stores. The program encourages businesses to reduce the amount of organic material going into the landfill by connecting with local food pantries (“Donate the Best”), and offering composting support through consultations, trainings, and materials (“Compost the Rest”). Although currently only offering services to urban communities in the county, this model is a great example for all businesses looking to reduce waste in the food system.

A good deal of food waste occurs in the kitchen, often because fresh food is not prepared quickly enough or because a family doesn’t know how to prepare it. The Clackamas County OSU Extension Family Food Education program (formerly the Master Preserve program), supports food preservation, food safety, and nutrition education. Volunteers sign up with OSU Extension to become Family Food Education (FFE) volunteers. They receive training on a wide variety of food preservation techniques, from canning to smoking to pickling. The volunteers are then responsible for conducting workshops and demonstrations in communities throughout Clackamas County, including at farmers markets, local festivals, or community centers. Food preservation is a wonderful way to reduce food waste because it can dramatically lengthen the shelf-life of a food item while maintaining the nutritional quality of that food. Large quantities of food can be preserved at once—as long as the necessary storage is available—so bulk buys of fresh produce don’t have to go to waste.

**Storage**

Food pantries often struggle with storage and food loss, because they are a food distribution site as well as an outlet for reduction of food waste. People with good intentions try to donate leftover produce to food pantries instead of throwing it away. “The problem with this,” notes a representative Sandy Community Action Center, “is that we don’t always have the resources—the space and labor—to deal with that much food, especially the fresh produce.” The fresh fruits and vegetables require extra washing and room in coolers to keep them from going bad, especially if a food pantry is only once a week or a few times a month and can’t distribute that fresh produce every day. Unfortunately the Community Action Center is forced to throw away food that goes bad too quickly.

“People try to streamline the distribution chain straight to food pantries, because they are seen as a necessary function of the food system, but they aren’t thinking about the other side of distribution—of how we get that food to our clients.” The Oregon Food Bank provides grants to partner food pantries to help with costs of buying refrigerators and freezers, but pantries still need the volunteers to handle food as well as the demand for it.

Food pantries in Molalla facing similar problems have come up with a creative solution: they donate old produce to nearby farmers with pigs to feed. Not only does this system reduce the amount of food ending up in the trash can, but it creates a whole food cycle where resources are not wasted.
Food Consumption

Opportunities & Recommendations

- Determine feasibility of sourcing local produce in rural retail stores
Increasing access to local food in rural grocery stores would support local farmers and improve food security for rural communities. An assessment of potential stores with interest and capacity for sourcing local food, as well as interest of community to buy local produce, is the necessary first step.

*Potential partners: Local grocery retailers, local farmers, OSU Extension*

- Research and generate reports on migrant and seasonal farm workers specific to Clackamas County
There is no information specific to Clackamas County on MSFW, although there are a number of communities of farm workers and their families in the county. Culturally-sensitive surveys and assessments of the county could bring in much more support to this important agricultural workforce.

*Potential partners: WorkSource Clackamas, farm employers, farm worker housing complexes*

- Increase SNAP outreach & education at food pantries, farmers’ markets, and small grocery retailers
Accepting SNAP benefits (or food stamps) at farmers markets and small grocery retailers is essential to creating a more equitable local food system. Education and support for how to accept SNAP at markets is needed, including opportunities for grant funding for infrastructure support. Local food pantries are a natural hub for disseminating SNAP eligibility education and outreach to low-income residents, and should be prepared to provide that information.

*Potential partners: Local food pantries, Oregon Food Bank, Clackamas County DHS, OSU Extension, farmers markets, local businesses for SNAP match funding, low-income housing*

- Develop food nutrition, preparation, and preservation classes with low-income individuals
Food education classes that utilize local produce would support local farmers, increase access to affordable food for low-income individuals, and increase food literacy overall. Cooking Matters is another program offered through the Oregon Food Bank which provides cooking education classes and materials to low-income individuals.

*Potential partners: OSU Extension Family Food Educator volunteers, food pantry directors, farmers’ market managers, low-income housing developments, community centers with commercial kitchens, Oregon Food Bank*

- Strengthened communication networks and resource inventory for social service agencies
Realizing that hunger is just one among many interconnected factors of economic insecurity, social service agencies can play a huge role in addressing the multiple needs of clients. Producing an up-to-date inventory of local social service resources, as well as increased communication among these agencies, will provide much more support for low-income individuals.

*Potential partners: Oregon Food Bank, food pantries, churches*

- Explore feasibility of composting programs within rural communities
Clackamas County’s WE COMPOST program currently only offers services to urban areas, although would provide many benefits to rural business in the county. A feasibility study of the cost and benefits of bringing composting resources to rural communities (including composting materials) would pave the way for partnerships between community gardens, local farmers, pantries, and local businesses.

*Potential partners: Clackamas County, local farmers, food pantries, community gardens*
Behind every organization, initiative, or event centering on food in the county, there is always a hard-working individual or group of people dedicated to improving the health of their environment and their community. Growing a sense of community and togetherness can be an undervalued outcome of local food efforts, and most of the strongest food systems are a result of the support from an entire community. This section highlights some of the wonderful groups and resources available within Clackamas County.

**Community and School Gardens**

Community gardens come in all shapes and sizes, but the primary goal is usually the same: to allow community members to grow their own food or food for others. For individuals without a backyard or access to their own land, or for those who prefer to work with and learn from others, community gardens can provide a space for sharing of information, seeds or garden produce, and a place to build community. The Canby Garden Club is a long-standing example. Founded in 1948, the club maintains community gardens and hosts seasonal gardening workshops. The Garden Club also supports annual scholarships to send two students from Canby to Clackamas Community College to study horticulture.

OSU Extension offers a Master Gardeners Program, which trains volunteers in the art and science of home growing. The cost of training varies with the program, but OSU Extension does offer a discounted Fellowship for Master Gardeners who meet low-income criteria. The Volunteer Educator Training program involves 56 hours of education with 56 hours of volunteer service. Once trained, Master Gardeners guide home growers in communities all over Clackamas County. They have an informational stand every Saturday at the Oregon City Farmers Market, hold community forestry events monthly at the Hopkins Demonstration Forest, and conduct an annual Spring Garden Fair at the Clackamas County Event Center in Canby, which connects home gardeners with gardening vendors, support, and education.

**Local Businesses & Local Food**

Local food businesses, especially restaurants, can make a huge impact on the community food system by supporting local food. Businesses that visibly promote buying and consuming that food—whether they call it “Farm to Table” or something else—will increase community awareness and culture for eating local. Portland has become a hub for local food restaurants, and tends to attract the chefs and business owners that know how to turn local farm products into a feast. Still, there are a few businesses in Clackamas County doing their share to support the local food system.

The Wade Creek House Antiques in Estacada is a local business which, as the website proudly proclaims, is so much more than an antiques store. Besides owning a chicken coop and selling fresh eggs daily, the Wade Creek House is the site of the Estacada Farmers Market every Saturday morning during summer months. The Rendezvous Grill in Welches, and Bailey’s Pub and Grub in Estacada, source local ingredients when possible. The AntFarm, in Sandy, uses its own community garden to grow local produce for the AntFarm Café and produce stand.

Sissymama’s Bistro, located right off Highway 26 in Welches, offers a variety of healthy, whole food-based meals with a menu that changes daily and emphasizes local food whenever possible. Amber Spears, bistro owner, opened Sissymama’s in early 2014 to respond to the need for wholesome, healing food in the Mount Hood Villages area. She actively pursues opportunities to sell local food, although this isn’t always easy in the Mount Hood area, where soil structure and weather are not optimal for agriculture. “I think of all the things we can do to make significant changes in our world, supporting the people closest to us who are stewarding the land and treating the animals with respect is the most valuable tool I have to make a positive impact around me.”

Another business that supports local food production is the Union Mills Feed Store. Located in Mulino, this family-owned business provides custom-order livestock feed. Farmers concerned with providing their chickens, goats, or cows healthy feed—whether non-soy, non-corn, or organic—can order directly from Union Mills.
Estacada SEED (Stewarding an Edible Estacada District) is a non-profit, community-based program that infuses garden education in Estacada Schools with community building and community food security. Created in 2009, there are now gardens located at the Eagle Creek Elementary School and the junior high school, and a greenhouse located near the high school.

Each garden tailors to the different school needs: at the elementary school, the focus is on embedding knowledge at an early age of what kinds of food comes from the ground. “Young kids love coming out to the garden to pick herbs and nibble on them,” says Mary Ann Bugni, who helps to run the program. “It’s a great way to introduce young kids to new, healthy food—a lot of kids love onion tops, amazingly.” In this school garden, a voluntary after-school program encourages kids to take home fresh produce in exchange for helping with garden chores. During some school years, an elementary teacher and his or her classroom has “adopted” the garden as an outdoor science learning classroom for hands-on biology lessons.

The junior high gardens is challenged more often with student involvement, though this doesn’t necessarily point to a lack of interest with students. “Teachers are asked to fit so much into one school day that they can’t figure out how to make time for going out to the garden,” explains Mary Ann. The gardens here rely on community volunteers for maintenance, and SEED uses this garden in a partnership with the Estacada Area Food Bank. In 2014 over 2,000 pounds of produce were harvested for the local food pantry.

Fortunately, the greenhouse fits right in with horticultural classes taught at the high school. Students operate the greenhouse as a business model, receiving orders for seedlings and plants from SEED for the other school gardens, and they have to determine growing cycles and harvest to fill those orders on time.

Estacada SEED projects and materials are funded primarily by grants, including from Lowe’s, from the Whole Foods Whole Kids Foundation, and from Clackamas County through its Healthy Eating Active Living program. Local community donations are made during SEED’s biennial Harvest Celebration Fundraiser, and through SEED’s “Friends of SEED” membership program. Support funds are also received from local community organizations, including the Estacada Area Food Bank, Estacada Garden Club, and Estacada Literary Art Fund.
Education

From a farmer’s perspective, consumer education is one of the biggest barriers to supporting local food. Many farmers observed that their customers don’t understand why food is priced so high (as compared to food prices in large grocery retailers), or why certain food can’t be offered year round, or even how to prepare some of the different kinds of produce offered at a farmers market, all of which deter consumers from buying the farm product. Education can be a barrier for farmers themselves, specifically on how to expand their farm business or prepare for a farmers market, or any home grower looking for new techniques.

Nutrition and cooking education is also paramount to healthy individuals and communities. “I hear all the time that people don’t have the time to cook for themselves,” says Brenda Thrasher, of the community food group Food for Life. “But cooking healthy, whole foods is so important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.” Accessing the information and skills necessary to cook healthy meals is important for people of all income levels.

Community food groups that strive to tackle these educational issues are imperative to overcoming some of the biggest challenges of a food system.

“We don’t know how to cook a meal and share it with friends anymore. We place such an emphasis on making a life, but we’ve forgotten how to live.”

- Cathy McQueeney

One example of a strategy to incorporate both cooking and nutrition education into local food systems is found at the Oregon City Farmers’ Market. Jackie Hammond-Williams, the market manager, has organized a weekly cooking demonstration with funding through a county HEAL grant. Every Saturday, guest chefs use the local food from the market to cook seasonal recipes. Through open dialogue with market customers, the chefs share cooking techniques, nutrition information, and advice on how to shop the local market. Funding from the HEAL grant helped provide a portable stove and gas, promotional materials, cooking utensils, and a weekly food budget. Feedback from the farmers’ market community has been very positive. “This is why I keep coming back to the market every Saturday,” said one community member.
Food for Life began with two women’s quests for healing through whole, nutritious foods. Brenda Thrasher and Heidi Lessick met in Oregon City over a shared concern for the harmful effects of today’s highly-processed, nutrition-deficient diet. “I made the change and got rid of every packaged food in our house. I had to change my thinking on what type of food to eat and how to prepare it,” Brenda recounts. “I just got so excited when I saw my body start to change, to not have daily chronic fatigue, to not have daily debilitating fatigue. I felt that I must share this with others.”

Now with branches in Oregon City and Molalla, Food for Life strives to share knowledge with community members on a variety of health, wellness, and food-related topics. The group meets monthly at different members’ homes. Through a shared potluck-style meal and presentations and demonstrations, they share healthy food and knowledge together. Past class topics have included: food fermentation, canning, health benefits of probiotic foods, home gardening, nutrition education for young children, and culinary and medicinal uses of herbs.

Understanding that eating nutritious, seasonal, whole food means supporting local organic farmers, Food for Life also encourages farmers-eater connections through farm tours, presentations, and the annual Farmer Fair held in Molalla. Food for Life invites local and sustainable farmers from Clackamas County to share information on their products, their farms, and their growing practices with the community. In February 2015, with help from the Molalla High School Culture Club, 39 farmers and food/health organizations set up booths in the Molalla High School and connected with over 400 people.
Launched in 2014, the Bull Run Foodshed Alliance is the result of the mother-daughter team Tammy Rodriguez and Chelsey Cornell. Both passionate about food and farming, Tammy and Chelsey envisioned a non-profit organization that would support local farmers and the local food environment in northeast Clackamas County. With a background in food systems and community education, Tammy realized the need to spread awareness about the importance of local food—both growing it and buying it—in her home community of Sandy. “I saw people driving all over the place to buy food from all over the place. There is no reason for that. So we created the Bull Run Foodshed Alliance.”

Tammy and Chelsey, who own their own farms in Sandy and Estacada respectively, offer technical education courses for home gardeners in the area. They are also collecting data from their own experiences on preparing a farm business for a farmers market. “A lot of farmers don’t realize the investment and upfront costs that getting ready for a market requires,” explains Tammy. “From buying the tent to the regulated food scale to all the other equipment necessary, I’ve estimated it costs about $1200 for a beginning farmer to enter a market. That’s really important information to have when deciding if you are able to be at a market, and we want to make that available to everyone.”

The Bull Run Foodshed Alliance prioritizes partnering with other local food groups, including the Hoodland Farmacy and the Wy’East Food Web. “We are all working toward the same goal of a healthier food system, but we’re working toward that goal from different paths.”
A FEAST (Food – Education – Agriculture – Solutions Together) event is a one-day organizing workshop for rural communities to identify challenges to, and brainstorm solutions for, their local food system. Hosted by the Community Food Systems team at the Oregon Food Bank, these workshops create a space for people of all sectors of the community and food system to learn from each other.

In April 2015, a FEAST was held in Sandy. Presenters included Lili Tolva, of Flying Coyote Farm; Matt Brown of the nonprofit FoodWaves; Dena Isbell of the Sandy Community Action Center; Olga Gerberg and Maria Meraz, representing Sandy’s farmworker community; and Damon Schwab, co-founder of the nonprofit AntFarm and the new Mount Hood Farmers Market. Small breakout groups focused on food education, community gardens, food access and emergency food relief, and local farmers/food production.

These breakout groups developed visions and action plans relating to the above themes.

**Local Resource Guide:** A community-specific resource to provide information on local food & farmers, how to plant and buy food in season, and healthy food and nutrition education, in both English and Spanish.

**Food Systems Map:** Where are our local farms and where can we buy food produced locally? This visual aid would connect local food production to community access points.

**Local Food Hub:** An online system to connect buyers to producers specifically in the Sandy area.

**Local food research:** What real impact (economic, nutritional, and environmental) does supporting local food have for our community? How can we measure these impacts to gather more support?

**Ongoing, Meaningful Meetings & Discussions:** To encourage continuing community collaboration and resource-sharing for the long-term strengthening of our food system

As a result of the FEAST workshop, a core group of community members have identified themselves as the Wy’east Food Web. Recognizing that Sandy is not an isolated community, but rather shares resources and people with Boring, Mount Hood Village, Eagle Creek, and even Estacada, the group chose the native name for Mount Hood to reflect the broader scope of the area’s foodshed. Right now, the Wy’east Food Web’s main goal is to strengthen the local food system through on-going, meaningful discussions, relationship building between farmers and the community, and becoming an information and education hub for consumers in the area.

The Sandy FEAST is not the only FEAST event held in the county. Damascus held a FEAST in 2012, although no long-term plans or leadership emerged. For any FEAST workshop to have lasting effects in the food system, including in Sandy, the host community needs to take responsibility for its food system. Without both personal and collective responsibility for action, whatever that action may be, there will be no change in the food system.
“You know how when you drop a pebble in the water and ripples expand outward?” asks Matt Brown, executive director of the Clackamas County non-profit FoodWaves. “That’s what happens when you teach someone how to grow food in a community. They share food and knowledge with their neighbors, and it creates a wave.” FoodWaves was founded in 2010 with a mission of cultivating food justice and access to healthy produce in Clackamas County and the surrounding communities.

With their partner Converging Creeks Farm in Colton, they host on-farm trainings and internship programs to teach future farmers how to use sustainable, organic methods to grow fresh produce. FoodWaves also hosts a garden education program to increase food security for low-income families. With grant funding, recently through the Clackamas County’s HEAL grant, FoodWaves has provided garden beds, materials, and training to enable low-income families to grow their own food. Partnerships with Head Start in Sandy, Colton Helping Hands food pantry, and the Assemblies of God Church in Estacada have enabled FoodWaves to connect to community members.

Similar to the FEAST workshop model, the purpose of a Community Conversation is to identify challenges and resources to a local food system. A Community Conversation was held in Estacada in May 2015. A variety of community stakeholders attended the two-hour intensive workshop, including representatives from: the Estacada Area Food Bank, the Community Center, the Yellow House, the SEED School Garden program, the Estacada School District, OSU Extension and the Master Preservers program, the fire department, and the Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Among the many ideas brainstormed, one overarching theme stood out during group discussion: the need for better communication and collaboration, and to share information and common resources throughout the community. To address this issue, the group established two communication networks. An email list serve will directly and immediately connect community members and organizations involved in food system resources. A longer-term solution will involve the group of stakeholders meeting every two months. The main objective of this group, called Estacada Connect, will be to build and maintain relationships and collaborations among community organizations.
Community Partnerships

No one farm, non-profit organization, business, or government can solve the challenges within the food system. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Rather, a resilient food system—one that can weather multiple challenges without disintegrating—is built through community partnerships and mutual support. This food assessment has already highlighted some of those partnerships. Below are a few more examples of successful collaborations in Clackamas County:

Victory Seeds in a heritage seed company based on a fourth-generation farm in Molalla. Their mission is to preserve heritage seed varieties, and support agricultural practices that build healthier soils, diverse ecosystems, and stronger communities. This for-profit business sells seeds to farmers throughout the Pacific Northwest, and yet they also see the value of donating seeds to local non-profit organizations and school clubs. In 2014, Victory Seeds donated thousands of produce seeds to the Molalla Service Center, a local food pantry. The Molalla Service Center, in turn, asked local farmers to take those seeds and grow a few extra rows of food on their farms. Those farmers will harvest the fresh produce and return it back to the food pantry, which will provide a full year's supply of fresh produce to the families it serves.

"I've learned a lot of things about people and humanity from working at the food pantry, and what a little bit of kindness can do for people."

–Rise Estergreen, Molalla Service Center

Food pantries are working together throughout the county to share resources and information. The Oregon Food Bank promotes and facilitates Neighborhood Networks, which are formal networks between food pantries and other social service agencies within communities. At a recent Neighborhood Network meeting in Molalla, food pantry directors shared tips on which community organizations had a surplus of donated household items and which farmers to call for fresh produce. Recognizing that hunger is only one immediate symptom of food insecurity and poverty, the directors will invite other social service agencies and community organizations into the Neighborhood Network for better communication across the network, to better serve those in need.

The gardens at the Lewis and Clark Montessori School in Damascus are more than just educational: they provide fresh produce for food-insecure seniors living in the area. Middle school students plant in the spring and harvest the fresh produce in the fall, and then pack up the food so it can be driven out by community volunteers to senior citizens in the area. In 2014, 34 seniors were served with this program, many of whom are house-bound and otherwise would have no way to receive fresh food.

In Colton, an unincorporated community in the heart of Clackamas County, there is no grocery store or farmers market. “We tried for a few years, but ultimately it failed,” says Cathy McQueeney, the past manager of the farmers market. The big success of the farmers market, though, was that it became a gathering place for community members to meet and connect over farming and food. “Building those relationships has been so important for us.” Cathy went on to describe trading her garden produce for meat from a neighbor, and the ways that everyone chips in to help keep animals fed and milked when a farmer has to go out of town. “A lot of us [in Colton] are trading food now, and helping each other in a way that helps us to be more resilient as a community.”

“What truly makes a strong food system is having a tight community of people who can depend on and support each other for healthy food. Food can – and should – be about sharing within a community, including sharing ideas and experiences. Besides being a more realistic system, it’s a lot less lonely!”

–Teague Cullen, Winslow Food Forest

OSU Extension FFE volunteers demonstrate food preservation techniques at the Oregon City Farmers’ Market. Photo courtesy of Kelly Streit
Opportunities & Recommendations

- Local food research
What are the real economic and social benefits for both farmers and consumers when supporting local food? A focused study with quantitative data might keep farmers and consumers from moving to metro markets, and encourage local restaurants to buy from farmers.
*Potential partners: OSU Small Farms Program, Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, Ecotrust*

- Create a Clackamas County local food guide
Most food guides, including farmers market and CSA information resources, lump Clackamas County farms and markets with the rest of the Portland metro, causing confusion and inefficiency when looking for local, rural farms and markets. A locally-produced community guide will be easier to update and maintain.
*Potential partners: Local farmers, community food groups, Chamber of Commerce*

- Include diverse members of community into food systems work and conversations
Low-income residents, farm workers, minority populations, and senior citizens all have stakes in the local food system, but are often left out of community conversations or working groups. A strong local food system needs the input and involvement from the entire community. Creative solutions, like bilingual meetings, are necessary.
*Potential partners: Farm workers, senior centers, school parents’ associations, student groups, churches*
Conclusion

Clackamas County has a diversity of resources with which to strengthen rural (and urban) local food systems, many of which have been highlighted above. One of the most significant challenges to strengthening rural food systems is the struggle to build rural capacity while capitalizing on urban resources. This challenge was identified in the many conversations held during research for this food assessment. The rural communities in this county are undeniably dependent on the Portland metropolitan. In many ways, proximity to the metro area is a wonderful opportunity. As an economic hub of the state, Portland provides resources and market access for farmers; jobs for rural community members; and social services for our transient homeless population, to name a few.

And yet with all roads leading to Portland, it can be easy to lose sight of the need for local food markets and community responsibility for its food system. People in Portland need to eat too, and Clackamas County provides a much needed agricultural backbone for the state. “But why,” asks one Sandy community member, “should we have to drive into Portland for food that was grown out here?” The fine line between using and appreciating the resources that the city has to offer, and realizing the importance of rural resiliency and empowerment, is a discourse that needs to accompany every conversation about local food systems in the county.

Ultimately, farmers and food organizations in Clackamas County struggle from diminished communication and collaboration within and between rural communities. While some of the opportunities listed in this assessment outline a need for certain resources or information, many of them depend on increased resource sharing and better communication networks. So many wonderful initiatives and people are already committed to bettering rural food systems. Future actions that focus on building the capacity of these efforts will go a long way toward growing a resilient, bountiful food system.
Works Cited


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Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey
Oregon Food Bank
Rural Community Food Systems Assessment Project

Name of store: ________________________________
Address: ____________________________________
Phone number: _______________________________
Contact person for store: _________________________
Email address: _________________________________

Would you like to be added to a listserv for rural grocery store owners and advocates?

____ yes  ____ no

1. What major products and services does your store offer? Check all that apply.

   ATM Bank
   ______ Books/cards/gifts
   ______ Café/restaurant
   ______ Catering
   ______ Delicatessen
   ______ Fuel
   ______ Groceries
   ______ Other (specify)
   ______ Hunting/fishing/camping supplies
   ______ Institutional supply (school, hospital)
   ______ Pharmacy
   ______ Photo development
   ______ Pre-packaged snacks
   ______ Self-serve snacks/drinks
   ______ Video rental

2. Who is/are your primary grocery supplier(s)?

____________________________________________________________________________________
3. What products do your secondary suppliers supply?

____________________________________________________________________________________

4. Do minimum (purchasing/ordering) buying requirements create a problem for your grocery store?
   
   ____ yes   ____ no
   
   If yes, how?

5. If minimum buying requirements are a problem, what solutions might you suggest?

6. As an independent grocer, do you feel you are getting fair pricing from your suppliers compared to chain stores?

   ____ yes   ____ no
   
   Comments:

7. Have you had problems getting products delivered because of your location?

   ____ yes   ____ no
   
   Comments:

8. Do you sell locally-produced food in your store?

   ____ yes   ____ no
   
   If yes, what products?

9. Do you accept Food Stamps/SNAP*  ____ yes  ____ no

   Do you accept WIC**  ____ yes  ____ no

   * Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
   
   ** Women, Infants and Children Program

10. Has your business been negatively affected by the presence of emergency or supplemental food distribution in your community (i.e. people get bread from food pantry or gleaners so don’t buy it from you)?  ____ yes  ____ no

   If yes, explain:
11. Which of the following are major challenges for your store? *Check all that apply.*

- [ ] Availability of satisfactory labor
- [ ] Competition with large chain grocery stores
- [ ] Debt and/or high payments
- [ ] Government regulations
- [ ] High inventory costs/low turnover
- [ ] Shortage of working capital
- [ ] High operations costs (utilities, building lease, repairs/maintenance, etc.)
- [ ] Lack of community support
- [ ] Low sales volume
- [ ] Narrow profit margins
- [ ] Required minimum buying requirements from vendors
- [ ] Shoplifting/bad checks/internal theft/unpaid accounts
- [ ] Taxes
- [ ] Debt and/or high payments
- [ ] Government regulations
- [ ] High inventory costs/low turnover
- [ ] Shortage of working capital
- [ ] High operations costs (utilities, building lease, repairs/maintenance, etc.)
- [ ] Other (specify)

Which of the above do you feel is the most significant for you and your store?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

12. When running a grocery store, how important is it to you to offer each of the following? Rate the importance of each by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quality of food</td>
<td>1  2   3   4   5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Availability of food (variety, brand choices)</td>
<td>1  2   3   4   5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prices of items offered</td>
<td>1  2   3   4   5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Customer service</td>
<td>1  2   3   4   5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Business hours</td>
<td>1  2   3   4   5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Buying locally</td>
<td>1  2   3   4   5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the above do you feel is the most significant for you and your store?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Do you collaborate with other small independently owned stores?
How does your store do at providing the following to customers? Rate your store by circling the number that best fits your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Very</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Quality of food</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Availability of food (variety, brand choices)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prices of items offered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Customer service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Comments:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Business hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Buying locally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Accepting Food Stamps/SNAP and WIC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the above do you feel is the most significant for you and your store?

____________________________________________________________________________________

How do you assess the buying needs of your customer?

Is your stocking of products responsive to customer requests?

What other concerns or comments do you have?

Tell us about your store:

How long have you been in the grocery business as an owner? ________
Appendix A

Are you open on the major holidays (Christmas, New Years, Thanksgiving, etc.)? _____

Are there other grocery outlets in your community?
   _____ a 'quick shop'
   _____ another full service grocery

How far is it to the nearest discount grocery (Wal-Mart, etc?) _____

How many employees do you have, not counting yourself?
   _____full-time (40 hrs/week minimum)   _____ part-time (less than 40hrs/week)

What are your average weekly gross sales?
   _____ Less than $5,000
   _____ Between $5,000 and $10,000
   _____ Between $10,000 and $20,000
   _____ Greater than $20,000

This survey was developed by Kansas State University Center for Civic Engagement and is being used with their permission. We thank them for their support of this project. For more information, please contact Sharon Thornberry, Community Food Systems Manager, Oregon Food Bank, sthornberry@oregonofoodbank.org, Megan Newell-Ching, Community Resource Developer, Oregon Food Bank, 1-800-777-7427 x2270 or mnewellching@oregonfoodbank.org.
Appendix B

Farmers Market SNAP Match Impact Survey

1. How many years have you received **Match tokens** at any farmers market? (Check one.)
   - _____ This is my first year
   - _____ Last year was my first year
   - _____ 2 or more years

2. Outside of this farmers market, how easy or difficult is it to buy quality fresh fruits and vegetables in your neighborhood? (Check one.)
   - _____ Very easy
   - _____ Easy
   - _____ Neither easy nor difficult
   - _____ Difficult
   - _____ Very Difficult
   - _____ Neither easy nor difficult

3. How important are the **Match tokens** in your decision to spend your food stamps or market checks at this farmers market instead of elsewhere?
   - _____ Very important – I wouldn’t have come without them
   - _____ Moderately important
   - _____ Slightly important
   - _____ Not at all important – I would have come without them

4. Which federal nutrition benefits do you currently receive? (Check all that apply).
   - _____ SNAP (Food stamps)
   - _____ Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP) market checks
   - _____ WIC Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP) checks or Fruit & Veggie Vouchers (FDNP FVV)

5. On an average day, how much do you spend at this market using...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spending Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SNAP/food stamps, WIC or Senior FDNP/market checks, or WIC FVV</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Match Tokens</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash, credit, or debit</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

6. How important are the following in your decision to come to this farmers market?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of fresh fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of fresh fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts food stamps/farmers market checks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting local farmers/businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking part in the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activities/events at the market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Do you have plans to spend money elsewhere in the area (close to the market) today?
   ______ Yes, I estimate I have spent or plan to spending $________ at nearby businesses.
   ______ No, I am only spending money at the farmers market today I don’t know

8. How often do you usually shop at the Oregon City Farmers Market when it is open?
   This is my first time (SKIP TO question #12) ________ 1-2 times per month________
   Less than once a month ________ 3 or more times per month ________

9. As a result of shopping at the farmers market this season, it is easier for you to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.
   Strongly Agree_______  Disagree_______
   Agree_______  Strongly disagree_______
   Neither agree nor disagree_______

10. During the season when the farmers market is open, what amount of your fresh fruit and vegetables do you estimate you buy from the market?
    None_______  Some_______  About half (50%)_______  Most_______  Almost all or all_______

11. As a result of shopping at the farmers market this season, the amount and variety (or different kinds) of fresh fruits and vegetables you have eaten has...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increased greatly</th>
<th>Increased some</th>
<th>Stayed the same</th>
<th>Decreased some</th>
<th>Decreased greatly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of fresh fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of fresh fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. What is your gender?
   Female_______    Male ________

13. How many people are in your household?
   Children (under 18 years old) ________   Adults (18+ years old) ________

14. How old are you? _____________________

15. What is your zip code? _____________________

16. What is your race? (Check all that apply.)
   Black/African or Caribbean-American____    Hispanic or Latino____
   White/Caucasian____                   Asian or Pacific Islander____
   American Indian____                   Other (please specify): ____________________________

17. Would you be willing to share a little more about your experience with this program? Please help us by sharing a quote that speaks to how the Match program has impacted you?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

18. (Optional) Would you be willing to speak more about the program with staff?
   Name: ________________
   Contact information (phone or e-mail) ____________________________

This shoppers survey was developed by Wholesome Wave in collaboration with partner organizations and farmers markets throughout the United State
Appendix C

Funding Support & Grant Opportunities

County-Wide Grant Programs

- **Clackamas County Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Grant Program**: Provides grants for projects throughout the county that promote an active lifestyle and healthier food choices. [http://www.clackamas.us/publichealth/heal.html](http://www.clackamas.us/publichealth/heal.html)

- **Clackamas County Small Grants Program**: Supports agencies that are making an effort to develop and implement innovative projects that help the most vulnerable families, seniors, and others meet their basic needs such as food assistance and abuse prevention. [http://www.clackamas.us/bcc/smallgrants.html](http://www.clackamas.us/bcc/smallgrants.html)

- **Clackamas County Cultural Grants Program**: Grants are awarded to projects and opportunities that respond to the Cultural Plan Goals and Funding Priorities. [http://clackamasartsalliance.org/grants/](http://clackamasartsalliance.org/grants/)

- **Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District Financial Assistance and Partnership Assistance Programs**: The district provides an array of financial support programs to meet most needs for implementing conservation practices, as well as funding support for farmers markets and watershed councils. [https://conservationdistrict.org/programs/](https://conservationdistrict.org/programs/)

State-Wide Grant and Funding Opportunities

- **Oregon Community Foundation Community Grant Program**: Addresses community needs and fosters civic leadership and engagement through our state, in focus areas including; health & wellbeing of vulnerable populations, education opportunities & achievement, arts & cultural organizations, and community livability, environment, & citizen engagement. [http://www.oregoncf.org/grants-scholarships/grants/community-grants](http://www.oregoncf.org/grants-scholarships/grants/community-grants)


- **Meyer Memorial Trust Responsive Grant Program**: Awarded for a wide array of activities in the areas of human services, health, affordable housing, community development, conservation and environment, arts and culture, public affairs, and education. [http://www.mmt.org/program/responsive-grants](http://www.mmt.org/program/responsive-grants)


National Grant Programs

- **USDA Grant Programs**: USDA offers a variety of grant funding opportunities: [http://www.rd.usda.gov/](http://www.rd.usda.gov/)
  - Rural Development Initiative Grants
  - Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program
  - Farmers Market Promotion Program & Local Food Promotion Program

Online Grant Databases & Resources

- **Rural Assistance Center**: Provides data and grant opportunities for health issues in rural Oregon. [https://www.raconline.org/states/oregon/funding](https://www.raconline.org/states/oregon/funding)

- **Friends of Family Farmers**: List of grant resources available to support farmers and farm-focused organizations. [http://www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org/](http://www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org/)