

Local Food Distribution

SUMMARY

Growing consumer interest in fresh, locally produced foods has set off a search for opportunities to efficiently and successfully increase the flow local foods from farmers to traditional retail establishments. Rather than propose the development of new distribution systems, this research looks at existing retail and distribution systems to identify opportunities for growers and farmers to efficiently and effectively deliver their produce to consumers.

SITUATION

This research seeks to identify the opportunities for farmers to work with existing food distributors and retailers to expand their access to markets. Such an approach reduces the start-up costs and risks associated with promoting the development of entirely new and unproven distribution enterprises. This work is of great interest to farmers/growers, existing distributors, food retailers, and economic development and planning officials.

RESPONSE

The research has identified opportunities to work with existing medium scale distributors and also identifies informational and practical needs for farmers to more effectively work with these medium scale distributors.

IMPACT

The research has attracted substantial interest from food system planners and economic development professionals seeking to promote the growth of local food production. Policy changes are forthcoming as the research has been presented to food policy councils throughout the state. The research has garnered national attention and provides useful data on the pathways through which locally grown food can reach the plates of consumers.



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