

FOOD HUBS

PIONEERING NEW DIRECT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FARMERS AND BUYERS

October 25, 2014 at the Maple Hall Conference Center, La Conner, WA



RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

USDA Rural Cooperative Development Centers
Celebrating National Co-op Month!

WORKSHOP #1 -A REGIONAL TOUR OF FOOD HUBS

Workshop Description: Travel with the ambassadors of five regional food hubs who will take you on a pictorial farm-to-market journey. The landscapes and food systems to be covered include the productive river valleys of Southern and Central Idaho; the sunlit orchard highlands of Washington's Okanogan; the bountiful Mid Columbia region of Washington, Western Montana's Flathead Lake and Bitterroot Valley, and the Puget Sound region's farms on the urban fringe.

Presenters

- **TJ Stevens**, General Manager, Idaho's Bounty
- **Dave Acton**, Mid Columbia Market at the Hub
- **Michael Simon**, Member, Okanogan Producers Marketing Association
- **Lucy Norris**, Director, Puget Sound Food Hub
- **Karl Sutton**, Board Member, Western Montana Growers Cooperative

WORKSHOP #2 -YOU KNOW YOUR DOCTOR... YOU KNOW YOUR DENTIST... DO YOU KNOW YOUR FARMER? WHY WE NEED FOOD HUBS

Workshop Description: Learn what distinguishes a food hub from other forms of food distribution. During this workshop, successful food hubs will describe the compelling reasons behind their start-ups and what makes them different from the more traditional ways that food gets to market.

Moderator

Diane Gasaway, Executive Director, Northwest Cooperative Development Center

Panel

- **TJ Stevens**, General Manager, Idaho's Bounty
- **Dave Acton**, Mid Columbia Market at the Hub
- **Michael Simon**, Member, Okanogan Producers Marketing Association
- **Lucy Norris**, Director, Puget Sound Food Hub
- **Karl Sutton**, Board Member, Western Montana Growers Cooperative

WORKSHOP #3-DO FOOD HUBS CREATE VALUE IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN? WHAT THE MARKET THINKS ABOUT FOOD HUBS

Workshop Description: Learn from food industry buyers as they share the good, the bad, and the challenging experiences when purchasing source-identified food through food hubs. This panel workshop will feature buyers representing key categories of the region's food delivery systems.

Moderator

Sara Southerland, Food and Farming Manager, Sustainable Connections Food and Farming Program

Panel

- Retail Supermarket Category-**Jim Ashby**, General Manager, Community Food Co-op
- Restaurant Category-**Lois Blanford Rivera**, Head Chef, Chaco Canyon Organic Cafe
- Health Services Category-**Kathy Pryor**, Program Director, Washington Healthy Food in Health Care Program, Health Care Without Harm
- Institution Food Service- Category-**Anthony Clark**, Bon Appetit Management Company and Chef de Cuisine at Amazon.com
- Farm to School Category-**Georgia Johnson**, Food Services Director-La Conner School District
- Communities-in-Need Category-**Natalie Thomson**, Farm to Table Coordinator, City of Seattle Human Services



Department of Commerce
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WORKSHOP #4-CAN FOOD HUBS OFFER VIABLE NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS?

Workshop Description: Farm owners and support staff will offer compelling reasons as to how food hubs provide new market opportunities. This panel features farmers in the vegetable, fruit, meat, and poultry categories.

Moderator

Sara Southerland, Food and Farming Manager, Sustainable Connections Food and Farming Program

Panel

- **Jen Hart**, Owner-La Conner Flats
- **Chris Iberle**, Food Hub Manager, Seattle Tilth
- **Susan Soltes**, Owner-Bow Hill Blueberries
- **Tim Terpstra**, Manager-Ralph's Greenhouse
- **Eiko Vojkovich**, Owner-Skagit River Ranch

WORKSHOP #5-BREAK OUT SESSION (Two workshops, 45 minutes each)

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Workshop Description: Whether your business effort is organized as a cooperative, a membership organization, or a CSA program, marketing, communication, and engagement is absolutely essential for your survival and growth. Come learn some successful strategies and tactics to inspire, engage, and create beautiful movement within your organization or communities from proven experts.

Presenters

WORKSHOP #1- CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGING AND RETAINING CUSTOMERS (45 minutes)

Audrey Gravley, Regional Vice President-NW Coast, Northwest Farm Credit Services
Northwest Farm Credit Services or Northwest FCS, is a customer-owned financial cooperative providing nearly \$12 billion in financing to farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, commercial fishermen, timber producers, and country home owners in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Audrey will deliver a compelling presentation on how this financial and business services cooperative engages with new customers while also building successful programs to achieve a high level of retention of existing customers

WORKSHOP #2- BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE MEMBERSHIP (45 minutes)

Michelle Grandy, Director of Communications, Sustainable Connections

In April 2002, Sustainable Connections signed up its first business member with early programs that focused on connecting values-aligned businesses, and taking individual steps – “pledges” – to improve the sustainability of member businesses. Since then Sustainable Connections has grown to 500+ local, independently owned business members from Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties. Michelle will provide some history and many of the successful techniques this effective organization uses to engage members and the community at large.

WORKSHOP #6-BREAK OUT SESSION GROUP GAP CERTIFICATION

Jan Tusick, Center Director, Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center

Mike Walker, Field and Global Gap Representative, Cowiche Growers, Inc.

Workshop Description: This one is for agricultural producers, buyers, and anyone who is interested in a new and effective way to achieve Good Agricultural Practices certification. Join certified HACCP trainer Jan Tusick (from the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center) and Mike Webster, Field and Global Gap Representative, Cowiche Growers, Inc. Attendees will learn about new training and certification methods using "Production Groups" for attaining GAP certification.



WORKSHOP #7-BREAK OUT SESSION (Two workshops, 45 minutes each)

FOOD HUB BEST PRACTICES-KEYS TO SUCCESS

Workshop Description: In this segment food hub leaders will share strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges involved with their hubs. Workshop #1 will focus on the areas of infrastructure development and capitalization. Workshop #2 will focus on management, logistics, and operations.

Moderator

Andrew Crow, University of Alaska Center for Economic Development

Panel

- **Harley Soltes**, Owner, Bow Hill Blueberries Food Hub
- **TJ Stevens**, General Manager, Idaho's Bounty
- **Karl Sutton**, Board Member, Western Montana Organic Growers Cooperative
- **Michael Simon**, Member, Okanogan Producers Marketing Association
- **21 Acres**, Robin Crowder, Director of Marketing and Development

#8-BREAKOUT SESSION-LOCAL FOOD MARKETPLACE, A TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION FOR POWERING FOOD HUBS (45 minutes)

Amy McCann, CEO and Founder, Local Food Marketplace, Eugene, OR

Workshop Description: This is the web-based business platform that many food hubs throughout the region are working with to provide for direct relationships and transactions between farmers and buyers, the backend support to track and get the product through aggregation and distribution, and support the invoicing and payment process. Come and learn the ins and outs of this valuable system and technology from Local Food Marketplace, the creative company that provides the platform.

THE DAY'S AGENDA

8:45AM to 9:10AM	Check-in, refreshments, conversation
9:10AM to 9:20AM	Introductions
9:20AM to 10:00AM	WORKSHOP #1-A REGIONAL TOUR OF FOOD HUBS
10AM to 10:45AM	WORKSHOP #2 YOU KNOW YOUR DOCTOR... YOU KNOW YOUR DENTIST... DO YOU KNOW YOUR FARMER? WHY WE NEED FOOD HUBS
10:45AM to 11AM	Break
11AM to 12:00PM	WORKSHOP #3-DO FOOD HUBS CREATE VALUE IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN? WHAT THE MARKET THINKS ABOUT FOOD HUBS
NOON to 1:00PM	Lunch
1:00PM to 2:00PM	WORKSHOP #4- CAN FOOD HUBS OFFER VIABLE NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS?
BREAK OUT SESSIONS	
2:00PM to 2:45PM	#5-BREAK OUT SESSION-MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION, WORKSHOP #1
2:00PM to 2:45PM	#6-BREAK OUT SESSION GROUP GAP CERTIFICATION, WORKSHOP #1
2:00PM to 2:45 PM	#7-BREAK OUT SESSION-FOOD HUB BEST PRACTICES, THE KEYS TO SUCCESS, WORKSHOP #1
2:45PM to 3:00PM	Break
3:00PM to 3:45PM	#5-BREAK OUT SESSION-MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION, WORKSHOP #2
3:00PM to 3:45PM	#6-BREAK OUT SESSION GROUP GAP CERTIFICATION, WORKSHOP #2
3:00PM to 3:45PM	#7-BREAK OUT SESSION-FOOD HUB BEST PRACTICES, THE KEYS TO SUCCESS, WORKSHOP #2
3:00PM to 3:45PM	#8-BREAK OUT SESSION-LOCAL FOOD MARKETPLACE, A TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION FOR FOOD HUBS
3:45PM to 4:00PM	CLOSING REMARKS
4:00PM to 4:30PM	MINGLE, CHAT, SAY GOODBYE

Conference Sponsors



PRESENTERS AND BRIEF BIOS



Jim Ashby, General Manager, Community Food Co-op

Jim has worked in the cooperative natural food industry since the mid-seventies. The Food Co-op is the largest single purchaser of locally grown produce in Whatcom County.



Anthony Clark, Executive Chef, Bon Appetit Management Company

Anthony serves as the Executive Chef at Amazon.com in Seattle. He has been in the Cooking business for 18 years and would not change any of it even if he had to. "I am all about growing my own and keeping it close to home for the food that I eat and purvey for my establishments. You are what you eat!"



Robin Crowder, Director of Development and Marketing, 21 Acres Center for Local Foods and Sustainable Living

On behalf of 21 Acres Robin serves in a leadership role for the Puget Sound Food Hub. Her expertise lies in sustainable marketing initiatives, building supply and demand for local foods, and developing new programs in a wide variety of settings with a conscious attention to environmental issues, climate change and limiting energy use. In her prior position with the University of North Carolina, Robin directed research related to local foods, agriculture and economic impact projects addressing health disparities.



Michelle Grandy, Communications Director, Sustainable Connections

Michelle works daily to find ways to engage the community and encourage people to support local independently owned businesses. She also works to make Sustainable Connections a valuable resource to members. Her 9+ years with Sustainable Connections has put her marketing and communication skills to task and taught her many lessons about what people want and what it takes to get them to participate



Audrey Gravely, Regional Vice President, NW Coast, Northwest Farm Credit Services

Audrey's career with Northwest Farm Credit Services began in 1976. Since she's been fortunate to serve in a number of roles in operations, administration and lending. In 2000 Audrey joined the first group of "Country Home Specialists" and helped to build a strong foundation for the residential loan program offered today. "It's been incredibly rewarding to help many aspiring part-time farmers achieve their goal of a rural lifestyle. Audrey is a graduate of Washington State University, and the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program. Her community activities include the Rotary Club of La Conner, Burlington Chamber of Commerce and the North Puget Sound Association of Realtors.



Jen Hart, Owner, La Conner Flats

Jen is the 5th generation working this diverse 230-acre Centennial farm and business. While La Conner Flats is a working farm; growing fresh market produce, commercial and seed crops, and nursery stock; it is also an agri-tourism destination with a beautiful garden and the facility to accommodate weddings and personal events



Georgia Johnson, Culinary Arts Teacher and Food Services Director, La Conner School District

For the last ten years Georgia has served the students of the La Conner School District. They are constantly working to bring in as much fresh local food possible for kids September through June, composting everything, recycling the plastic, glass and metal. She wrote a chapbook of elegy poems about the Skagit Valley titled Finding Beet Seed which was published in 2000. Georgia apprenticed for three years in a French restaurant 1981-84, and learned a bit about evisceration, traveled the Middle East and Europe, then lived at a bakery and catering company in La Conner from 1991 – 2004. She has always been interested in the history and culture of food, wherever she has landed. "The Skagit Valley seems to have satisfied my longing to experience cooking/writing/people together in one place. I'm still here."



Chris Iberle, Food Hub Manager, Seattle Tilth

Chris manages marketing and distribution for Seattle Tilth's farmer training programs, including Seattle Tilth Farm Works incubator for 20+ immigrant, refugee, and new farmers, Seattle Youth Garden Works, and other partner farms through Seattle Tilth Produce. He runs a 100 member CSA, restaurant and institutional accounts, the Good Food Bag subsidized CSA program, and farm stands in the Seattle area. Seattle Tilth is a 35 year old environmental education non-profit teaching people how to grow food organically. Chris also co-chairs the Food Justice Project at the Community Alliance for Global Justice focusing on policy and the social movement for food justice & sovereignty, and previously worked at Food Lifeline, a Washington-State based non-profit food bank distributor.



Amy McCann, Co-Founder and CEO, Local Food Marketplace

Amy co-founded Local Food Marketplace in 2009 to help level the playing field for local, sustainable food. As CEO, Amy focuses on bringing business best practices and innovative solutions to local food, including introducing the first and only white label mobile app for food hubs. Amy holds a BSE from Princeton University and an MBA in Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Business Practices from University of Oregon. She lives and gardens in Eugene, OR with her husband, Matt, and two small children, Cameron and Elliott.



Lucy Norris, Director of Marketing, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Director Puget Sound Food Hub

Lucy Norris oversees marketing programs for Northwest Agriculture Business Center, including the development of the Puget Sound Food Hub in NW Washington. She leverages the growing demand for locally produced food by connecting farms, businesses, and institutions for economic, public health, and environmental sustainability. Lucy also authored the cookbook *Pickled: Preserving a World of Tastes and Traditions*. She holds an MA in Food Studies and a BA in Performance Studies, Anthropology, and Food from NYU.



Kathy Pryor, Health Care Without Harm

Kathy Pryor is the Washington State Healthy Food in Health Care Program Director for the international non-profit Health Care Without Harm. She has a MA in Environment & Community with a focus in Local & Sustainable Food Systems, and is the author of the children's book "Sylvia's Spinach" and the forthcoming "Zora's Zucchini".



Lois Rivera, Chef at Chaco Canyon Organic Café

Chef Lois Rivera was introduced to the kitchen very early in life by her Mother, who herself learned to cook in very traditional methods. Never using processed ingredients, the components of each dish were made by hand, with an extreme amount of love, and attention. Lois took her love of cooking, and deep sense of community, and combined them in a fantastic and shockingly collaborative environment in the Chaco Canyon kitchen. She took what was once an organic raw juice bar, and developed it into the advanced and technical menu you see today, that reflects deep connections with the lands in the Northwest. You can taste the love in every bite her team creates, a heritage that began many years ago, in a quiet home kitchen, and continues to thrive today



Michael Simon, Member, Okanogan Producers Marketing Association

Michael owns Apple Cart Fruit, a certified organic and diversified tree fruit farm located in Tonasket, WA. He has farmed in Okanogan County since 1975. Michael is also a founding member of the Okanogan Producers Marketing Association (OPMA), a producer-owned marketing and distribution cooperative of six tree fruit and row crop farms located in Okanogan River Valley. Formed in 2006, OPMA has since provided marketing and food hub distribution for these farms, selling product to many of the natural food cooperatives along the I-5 corridor in western Washington.



Harley Soltes, Bow Hill Blueberries

Harley Soltes owns Bow Hill Blueberries, the oldest blueberry farm in the Skagit Valley. In 2014 he successfully completed converting the 73 year old conventional farm to Certified Organic. He and his wife, Susan are one of this year's USDA Value-Added Producer Grant recipients. Harley also manages the online platform and Bow Hill aggregation site of the Puget Sound Food Hub. He is a former Seattle Times photojournalist.



Susan Soltes, Bow Hill Blueberries

Susan Soltes with her husband, Harley own Bow Hill Blueberries in Bow, WA. Her job on the farm is marketing, sales, HR and product development. This year Bow Hill was the recipient of the USDA Value Add Producer Grant which will provide matching funds for their frozen, dried, jam, sauce and pickled blueberry production. Susan was in advertising and film production for 20+ years prior to farming.



TJ Stevens, General Manager, Idaho's Bounty

TJ Stevens has served as the General Manager for Idaho's Bounty since April 2014. Idaho's Bounty is a cooperative food hub that has a retail and wholesale presence in the 3 major valleys in Southern Idaho. She came to Idaho's Bounty from REI where she was a manager for more than 10 years in the Boise location. Additionally, she serves and Board President for Boise Co-op, a local food cooperative retailer.



Karl Sutton, Board Member, Western Montana Organic Growers Cooperative

Karl Sutton and his wife Darci Jones own and operate Fresh Roots Farm, a certified organic produce and vegetable seed farm in western Montana. Karl presently serves on the board of directors of Western Montana Growers Cooperative. Prior to committing to farming full-time in 2013 Karl worked as a cooperative business specialist.



Tim Terpstra, Manager, Ralph's Greenhouse

Tim Terpstra is the Farm Manager at Ralph's Greenhouse in Mt Vernon, Washington, and he has worked at the farm for the past 12 years. Ralph's Greenhouse is a 250+ acre organic vegetable that sells produce year-round, and the farm specializes in root crops such as leeks, carrots, beets, parsnips, potatoes, and some leafy things as well. [no wow factor comes to mind, but if you need something personal try this:] When he's not working (which is almost always), Tim enjoys being a dad, climbing mountains, traveling, and long walks on the beach.



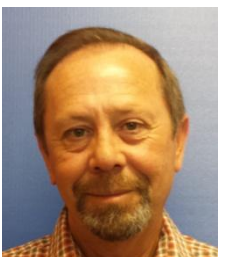
Natalie Thomson, Farm to Table Coordinator, City of Seattle Human Services

Natalie Thomson has been involved with the Seattle Farm to Table Partnership since its inception in 2010. Seattle Farm to Table has received numerous awards and recognition including the 2014 Sustainability Leadership Award from Sustainable Seattle and a 2012 Health Champion recognition from the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Natalie has over 20 years of experience in education, human services and food service.



Eiko Vojkovich, Skagit River Ranch

Eiko Vojkovich is the co-owner of Skagit River Ranch. She and her husband, George, raise and sell Certified Organic Grass-Fed Beef, Organic Pork, Chicken and Eggs. Along with daily farm chores, Eiko is also in charge of the farm's marketing and financing. She holds an MBA degree from the University of Washington.



Mike Walker, Field and Global Gap Representative, Cowiche Growers, Inc.

Mike Walker is a senior field staff member for Cowiche Growers, Inc., an apple packing cooperative located in the Yakima Valley of Washington State. Mike also manages the orchard level food safety program for Cowiche Growers. Mike developed a user-friendly workbook to help the 70 independent grower-members of Cowiche Growers achieve certification of their apples, pears and cherries under Global GAP guidelines. The workbook is on its fourth version and has been adopted by other ag-based companies in the area. A Spanish version of the book has also been printed.