

## Notes from Langley Food Hub Workshop March 12<sup>th</sup> 2015

### Who came to the event?

- 39 ppl (excluding ToL and Consulting team staff)
- One Township Councilor and chair of the AAC- Cnclr Dave Davies
- When asked who is here to learn, a few hands went up
- When asked who is here who may be interested in food hub investment opportunities, about 5 hands went up
- The remaining participants seemed to be there for general information
- There was about 10-15 producers
- There were support-type businesses there as well such as food marketing and branding, financial institutions (Vancity), local universities (Kwantlen), and the farmers markets.
- One person in the room is already running a very small informal food hub off of their farm.

### Amy's presentation

- Food hub activities happen on a large continuum from aggregation in the back of trucks, to using more sophisticated systems and facilities.
- Health and safety regs can be a barrier- success in other jurisdictions (e.g. Local food marketplace) have asked to be treated as a farmers market instead of a food distributor- that has more regs and costs associated with it.
- Key success factor: Meaningful producer engagement, if not producer led process. First manager/coordinator must have strong connections to the producers.
- Difference in quality from different farms can be managed through establishing quality guidelines, rejecting low quality product, and grading.
- "wholesale success training" is a program in the US- can be expensive but super helpful for food hub entrepreneurs.
- Hubs can manage organic and non organic
- >500k+ in sales likely required physical infrastructure, <500k in sales on-line, back of truck, on farm can suffice for facilities. Micro aggregation can happen at schools, in parking lots....
- A key role and differentiation of food hubs vs. conventional distribution, is the connection to the producer, story of the farm is maintained through aggregation, processing, and distribution functions of a hub
- Onsite food services may be more appropriate for an urban hub, given visible and geographic access needed to draw customers in.

## Exercise Notes

Demonstration Farm	
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Health conscious ethical consumers</li> </ul>
Producer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training e.g. organic farming, composting, sustainability</li> </ul>
Buyer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and transparency</li> <li>• Cost; value products</li> <li>• Convenience</li> </ul>
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active farming at the hub</li> <li>• Educational hub</li> <li>• Use existing farms</li> <li>• Farm tours</li> <li>• Hub co-ordinates events</li> <li>• Township helps with advertising</li> <li>• <a href="#">LEPS</a> and non profits (e.g. <a href="#">4H</a>) do demonstration and education</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already on farm</li> <li>• Chairs/tables/tents provided by hub</li> </ul>
Managed	Hub manager (oversee) with individual farmers
Other	

On-Site Food Services	
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High end?</li> <li>• Specialized</li> <li>• Must buy in to the vision of the food hub</li> <li>• How many?</li> </ul>
Producer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Buyer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source from multiple food hubs</li> <li>• Capitalize on "local" for marketing</li> <li>• Location? Rural?</li> <li>• Bakery/restaurant</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Managed	
Challenges	<p>Lack of traffic in rural area            Seasonality and year round sourcing of food            Onsite food services must adapt menu to seasonal availability            Can create scarcity and excitement around food</p>

Agri-food distribution hub	
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Circle, Family, friends, community</li> <li>• Restaurants using their products and their additional needs for composting, manure etc.</li> </ul>
Producer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media, marketing, networking</li> <li>• Ability/options for aggregation</li> <li>• Formalizing marginal producer distribution</li> <li>• Food safe/sanitation</li> </ul>
Buyer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media, networking, advertisement</li> <li>• Safety, quality of product</li> </ul>
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal connection, networking</li> <li>• Aggregation</li> <li>• Capacity, storage, product diversity and storage needs respectively</li> <li>• Direct distribution</li> <li>• Transportation logistics</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location/type – need of location</li> <li>• Hub capacity, infrastructure collaboration</li> </ul>
Managed	
Other	

Farmers' Market	
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General public</li> <li>• Loyal customer base</li> <li>• Producers – wineries, bakeries</li> </ul>
Producer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More producer specialties</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Help produce to market</li> <li>• Logistic: farm to market</li> <li>• Spend more time selling</li> </ul>
Buyer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atmosphere</li> <li>• Year round</li> <li>• Consistency, quality and availability</li> </ul>
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start small and grow</li> <li>• Start by addressing specific needs</li> <li>• Vendors pay for booth ahead of time</li> <li>• Approval of what is sold</li> <li>• Advertising by the farmers' market</li> <li>• Simpler the better</li> <li>• Open more than one day</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical location</li> <li>• Zoning, Parking</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered structure</li> <li>• Certified facilities; processing, curing</li> <li>• Size: 40 to 50 vendors/day (80 total vendors)</li> <li>• 60% food vendors</li> <li>• Online ordering (multi farm CSA)</li> </ul>
Managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules around self-produced products</li> <li>• Partnership with the food hub, share common facilities</li> <li>• Producers co-op run like a board</li> <li>• Administration grows as the market grows</li> <li>• Volunteer co-ordinator to start</li> </ul>
Other	

<b>Excellence Centre</b>	
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producers, processors</li> <li>• Consumers, chefs</li> <li>• Educators</li> <li>• Waste processors</li> </ul>
Producer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing practices</li> <li>• Product quality</li> <li>• Grading training</li> </ul>
Buyer Needs	•
How it works	•
Infrastructure	•
Managed	
Other	

<b>Processing</b>	
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller growers</li> </ul>
Producer Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to market</li> <li>• Traceability, facility, packaging</li> <li>• Branding</li> <li>• No intermediate step from kitchen to facility.</li> <li>• Commissary kitchen</li> </ul>
Buyer Needs	•
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaging, value add, labeling</li> <li>• Food scientists and nutritionists on hand</li> <li>• Location: urban/rural?</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial equipment</li> </ul>
Managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common ownership could facilitate access</li> <li>• Profit share</li> </ul>
Other	

**Storage** - No one sat at the table

## Top Priorities

- Farmers help farmers
- Farmers initiative
- Educating on local
- Be viable market
- Access for small producers
- All year round physical/virtual market
- Doorway to wholesale
- Community connectedness
- Food rescue for eating
- Bring players together
- Connection in the ??