Facilitating Local Food Sales to Schools:
Evidence and Experience from Rural Northern California

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Regional Case Study
Perceived Barriers Survey

Design/Implementation

- Designed by a team from CSUC College of Ag, Center for Healthy Communities (CHC), and Northern California Regional Land Trust

- Participants randomly selected from lists of permit applicants provided by the Butte, Glenn, and Tehama County agricultural commissioners’ offices (e.g., certified producer certificate, pesticide use, organic cert)

- Survey administered over the phone to 200 growers in 2014
Summary: Demographics

Demographics/Descriptors

- 41% have less than $100k in sales, 31% greater than $250k
- 78% have been farming over 10 years, 7% less than 3 years
- 76% use all of their productive land area
- 7% certified organic

Sell to:
Institutions: ~ 5%
Grocery stores: ~ 10%
Restaurants: ~ 10%
Farmers’ markets and other direct sales: ~15%
Growers’ cooperatives: ~25%
Wholesale buyer/broker/packer: ~70%
Summary:
Perceived barriers to local food sales

Things >15% cited as barrier to local food sales

- Too large for small buyers
- Too small for large buyers
- Finding local buyers too time consuming
- Worried local buyers will back out
- Delivery too expensive/difficult
- Marketing too expensive
- Storage (cold/dry)
- Year-round production doesn’t meet demand
- Can’t find enough labor
- Limited Access to loans/financing
- Laws and regulations make it too difficult/expensive
Barriers Survey Results: Food Safety

Grower Food Safety Activities/Perceptions

Have completed food safety training course: ~50%

Have a written food safety plan: ~20%

Feel food safety training is not necessary for their business: ~40%

Feel having a food safety plan is not necessary for their business: ~60%

USDA grant project, “Marketing Food Safety”

Buyer requirements (new survey) vs.
Grower activity (producer survey)

Outreach (trainings, workshops)
Group GAP?
What is the North Valley Food Hub?

An easier way to buy and sell local food!!
An **online marketplace** designed to facilitate increased sales between local growers and local wholesale buyers like grocery retailers, restaurants, distributors, hospitals, hotels, and other institutional buyers.

The NVFH is also committed to providing **workshops and trainings** to growers and buyers, and is a centralized place for **resources** supporting the development of local food systems.
How Distribution Works

Growers

“Pop-up” Distribution

Buyers (e.g., schools, restaurants)
If a food hub was available, growers are interested in

- Aggregation for large volume buyers: 25%
- Food safety services: 17%
- Brokering: 15%
- Marketing: 25%
- Cold storage: 17%
- Dry storage: 20%
- Light processing/packaging: 20%
Critical Barriers/Next Steps

- Increased transaction capacity/volume
- Delivery (availability/frequency)
- Pricing support/guidance for growers
- Food safety
- Cold storage?
Thank You!

Questions/Comments?

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