

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

Jacob Brimlow, PhD

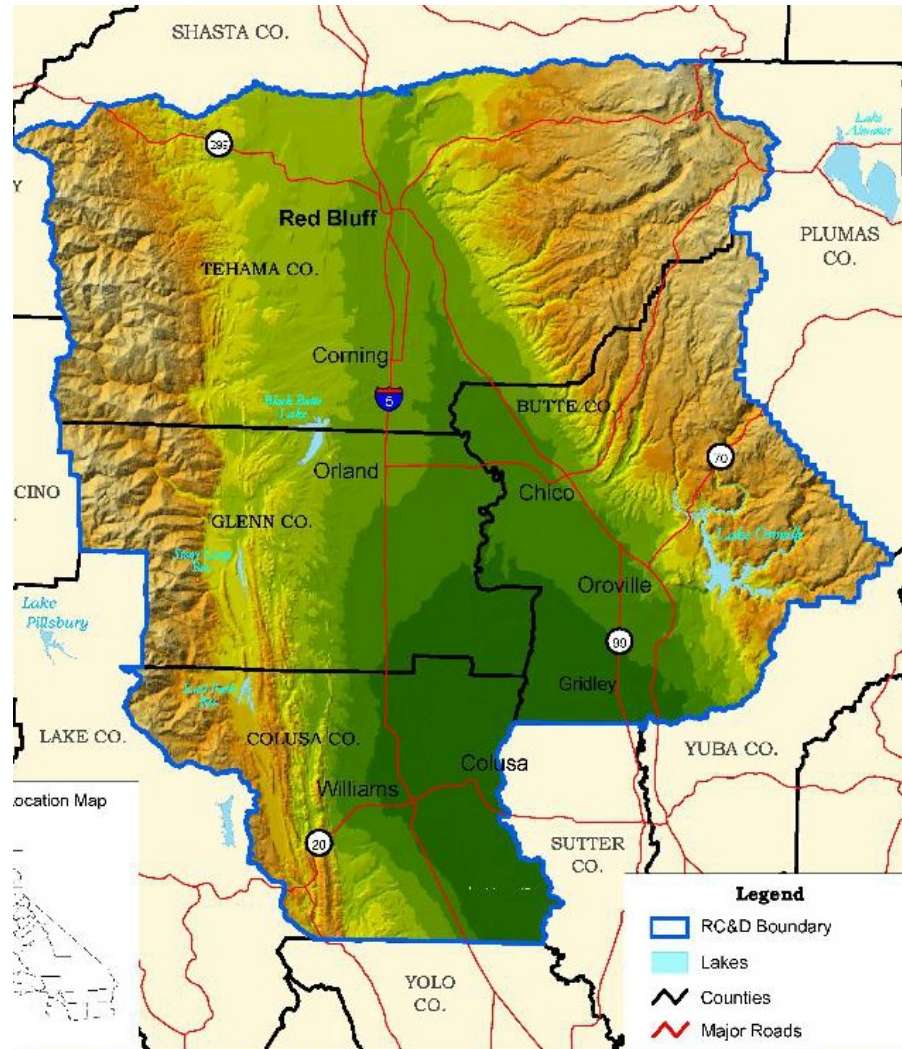
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Business
California State University, Chico

C. Noelle Ferdon, JD

Director
North Valley Food Hub



Regional Case Study



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*

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

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!!





What is the North Valley Food Hub?



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.

The screenshot shows the North Valley Food Hub website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About, How It Works, Meet Our Producers, Resources, Contact, and Donate. A 'BUY & SELL HERE' button is prominently displayed. The main heading is 'How It Works', followed by a brief description: 'The NVFH is an online marketplace designed to expand existing local food markets and create new opportunities for wholesale and retail food buyers and growers in California's North Valley.' Below this, a diagram illustrates the flow between 'SELLERS' (Local farmers, growers and producers) and 'BUYERS' (Grocery stores, schools, distributors, hospitals, restaurants and hotels) through the 'North Valley FOOD HUB'. Two columns provide detailed information for each user type, each ending with a 'START SELLING' or 'START BUYING' button. At the bottom, there are sections for 'Pop Up Markets' and 'Deliveries'.

SELLERS
Local farmers, growers and producers

Sellers create a profile on the site and once verified by the North Valley Food Hub Market Manager can begin listing their products and quantities.

- Sellers to post the products and quantities they have available and the marketplace updates inventory in real time
- Overcome the challenges and logistics that currently limit local food sales like managing multiple relationships, sorting out food safety requirements, marketing and other transactional logistics.

START SELLING

BUYERS
Grocery stores, schools, distributors, hospitals, restaurants and hotels

Buyers create an account and once they have agreed to the terms of the service and are verified by the Market Manager can start shopping immediately!

- Buyers to purchase from multiple growers through one order and transaction. Buyers can also aggregate like-products from different growers in order to meet larger volume demand
- Overcome the challenges and logistics that currently limit local food sales like managing multiple relationships, sorting out food safety requirements, marketing and other transactional logistics.

START BUYING

Pop Up Markets
The North Valley Food Hub will hold Pop-Up Markets each week where the products will be exchanged. A Pop-Up Market is just a temporary place where we will arrange for growers to deliver and buyers to retrieve their products. The Pop-Up Markets will not be open to the general public. Growers can deliver all orders to one location. The NVFH staff will consolidate the orders by buyer and the buyers can then pick up their order in the same location. Buyers will receive an invoice onsite with 15-day terms. Growers will be paid upon receipt of the product.

Deliveries
We are very excited about a project we are developing that will enable us to provide smaller-scale, local deliveries. Please check back here regularly for more information on the addition of our delivery plan to the North Valley Food Hub and feel free to call or email us with any questions!

How Distribution Works

Growers

Buyers
(e.g., schools,
restaurants)

“Pop-up”
Distribution



Barrier Survey Summary: Food Hub

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?

Jacob Brimlow, PhD

Assistant Professor of Agricultural Business

jbrimlow@csuchico.edu

Noelle Ferdon, JD

Director of Local Food Systems

Noelle@northvalleyfoodhub.com



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