**Infrastructure Work Group Action Guide**

Three main needs and recommendations surfaced more than others throughout the data and reports we have collected:

1. Establish a cooperative storage, processing, and distribution facility (i.e. food hub)
2. Encourage the procurement of local foods by large (and especially public) institutions
3. Support farmers with educational opportunities, access to land and capital

The tables below summarize which reports each recommendation can be found in, the population and geographic area that the reports were drawn from, and the specific need or recommendation identified by the report.

**1. Establish a cooperative storage, processing, and distribution center (i.e. food hub)**

### 

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Study Name and Citation** | **Geographic area; populations represented** | **Needs / Recommendations Identified by Study** |
| Community Food Assessment (CFA) Summary *Gorge Grown Food Network, 2011* | Gorge-wide: all food system players | Expand and improve producer cooperative marketing and networking opportunities to increase farm viability and growth.  Fill in supply chain gaps with...cooperative opportunities for producers.  Develop stronger food processing (including value-added) infrastructure for products designed for local markets.  Develop stronger food distribution infrastructure, including partnership efforts, for products destined for local and regional markets. |
| Producer Survey Preliminary Report  *WSU & OSU Extensions and Gorge Grown Food Network, 2017* | Gorge-wide: agricultural producers | 30% of farms surveyed expressed interest in a local small farm processing facility to wash, cut, store and distribute products.  28% of farms surveyed expressed interest in a distributor to deliver products locally or to Portland.  About 25% of farmers surveyed are interested in renting cold storage space, but not a single farmer has spare cold storage space to rent.  Meat processing plants and commercial kitchen access were identified as the top two food processing facilities that farmers are interested in accessing (21% and 19% interest). Fruit processing, canning, and freezing were next (11%, 10%, and 10%).  28% of farms surveyed expressed interest in a local food broker to help aggregate and distribute products to schools and institutions. |
| Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis  *Ecotrust, 2015* | Oregon-wide | Food aggregation, processing, and distribution infrastructure is not readily available or affordably accessible by Oregon’s small and midscale, differentiated farmers, ranchers, and artisans, and this lack of access in inhibiting the growth and development of a robust regional food economy.  Last-mile warehousing and logistics seems to be a particular overarching pain point, especially for rural producers. Many describe the difficulty coordinating the myriad details required to manage multiple partners from afar, necessitating frequent trips to town and time spent there coordinating operations rather than meeting with current and potential customers to grow their businesses.  Lack of access to processing facilities is high on the list of overarching concerns, especially among beef and chicken producers, and among value-added producers seeking “right-sized” production space or co-packing. |
| Organizing to Rebuild Agriculture of the Middle: a Needs Assessment of Agriculture of the Middle (AOTM) producers supplying Oregon’s foodshed  *Ecotrust, 2015* | Oregon-wide | Support collaborative efforts between producers. This could include the creation of cooperative entities, the sharing of processing infrastructure and marketing, or regional branding. |

**2. Encourage the procurement of local foods by large (and especially public) institutions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Study Name and Citation** | **Geographic area and populations represented** | **Needs / Recommendations Identified by Study** |
| Community Food Assessment (CFA) Summary *Gorge Grown Food Network, 2011* | Gorge-wide: general population, all food system players | Work with large buyers, including institutions and businesses, to encourage and aid them in regularly purchasing locally produced farm products.  Work with school districts and community stakeholders to access additional food purchasing funding to make it possible to afford, and thus prioritize, local food and improve quality of school meals.  Work with schools to find additional means of increasing students’ exposure to and consumption of fresh food, especially fruits and vegetables. |
| Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Community Listening Session Findings*Community Advisory Council, 2017* | Gorge-wide: targeted recruitment of engaged youth, medicaid recipients, mental health service recipients, seniors, Native Americans, Latinos, and LGBTQ+ | School meals lacking fresh produce and healthy options, and there is a desire for schools to lead by example and offer local fresh foods |
| Producer Survey Preliminary Report  *WSU & OSU Extensions and Gorge Grown Food Network, 2017* | Gorge-wide: agricultural producers | 28% of farms surveyed expressed interest in a local food broker to help aggregate and distribute  products to schools and institutions.  31% of farms surveyed expressed interest in networking with food buyers. |
| Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis  *Ecotrust, 2015* | Oregon-wide | Large institutions--especially public ones--may pose a unique opportunities to act as anchors for regional food economies. |
| Organizing to Rebuild Agriculture of the Middle: a Needs Assessment of AOTM producers supplying Oregon’s foodshed  *Ecotrust, 2015* | Oregon-wide | One suggested policy measure to support AOTM is to create preferences for purchasing local product by institutional purchasers receiving significant state funds. |

**3. Support farmers with educational opportunities, access to land and capital**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Study Name and Citation** | **Geographic area and populations represented** | **Needs / Recommendations Identified by Study** |
| Community Food Assessment (CFA) Summary *Gorge Grown Food Network, 2011* | Gorge-wide: general population, all food system players | Assist beginning and transitioning farmers in securing land on which to operate and start-up capital and materials  Expand and improve producer education and cooperative marketing and networking opportunities to increase farm viability and growth |
| Organizing to Rebuild Agriculture of the Middle: a Needs Assessment of Agriculture of the Middle (AOTM) producers supplying Oregon’s foodshed  *Ecotrust, 2015* | Oregon-wide | Producers, especially first-generation producers, found or wished for a greater connection to experienced producers by meeting farmer advisors in their locality and/or niche who could provide information or specialized equipment, visiting other farms during the season, or attending farmer-specific conferences with unstructured time for peer learning about farm and business techniques, marketing, and how to value their product.  Find or create and distribute educational materials written for producers on how to navigate the challenges of scaling up and the resources available to them.  Assistance in succession planning, and connect young producers to existing enterprises for succession.  Ecotrust could support partner work of conducting comprehensive, hands-on training for beginning farmers, or support programs that provide technical and financial assistance during transition to sustainable systems and certification programs. |
| Producer Survey Preliminary Report  *WSU & OSU Extensions and Gorge Grown Food Network, 2017* | Gorge-wide: agricultural producers | 36% of farms surveyed expressed interest in a farm link program to connect young farmers seeking farmland with retiring farmers and/or farmers willing to rent/lease farmland.  23% of farms surveyed expressed interest in accessing infrastructure to grow products year-round.  26% of farms surveyed expressed interest in mentoring young adults interested in agricultural production as a career.  33% of farms surveyed expressed interest in sharing skills with new/ beginning farmers, e.g. plumbing and welding.  20% of farms surveyed expressed interest in a microloan program.  Producers generally prefer to learn about new skills or topics by themselves (reading, online research, other research), or through one-on-one conversations with experts, or through workshops, classes, and conferences. |