
Food and Farm Business Support Center

Yiyin (Kathryn) Zhang, Karissa Marshall, Carolyn Christensen, Erykah Holland

UW FSNH Capstone | Spring 2020

Seattle-King County Food System Resilience Final Team Project

Table of Contents

Project Details

INTRODUCTION	1
METHODS	1
OUTCOMES	2
IMPACTS	3
SUSTAINABILITY and RESILIENCE	4

Case Study Research

Erykah

Massachusetts - Beginning Farmer Network (BFN/Mass)	5
Oregon Entrepreneurs Network	6
Center for Arkansas Farms and Food	6

Carolyn

Farm Link Montana	7
FarmLINK Agricultural Cooperative Canada	8
New England Food Entrepreneurs	9

Yiyin

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets	9
Boston Food Network	11
Kitchen Town	12

Karissa

The Hatchery - Chicago	13
Vermont Small Business Development Center	14
FarmAid.org's Farmer Resource Network	14

INTRODUCTION

Business Impact NW is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization working to uplift traditionally underserved entrepreneur populations through “coaching, classes, and access to capital” since 1997. With the help of King County’s Local Food Initiative, Business Impact NW is building a specific resource network for food and farm entrepreneurs in the Washington food system, called the Food Business Resource Center (FBRC). Resources for food and farm businesses can often be tedious to sort through or locate, especially when many resources are specific to certain niches in the food system and entrepreneurs have limited time for resource hunting. Resource networks like the FBRC help connect entrepreneurs with these essential services and resources. These resources can include legal services, access to grants, specific business counseling, marketing, education regarding sustainability, and even access to retail venues. Food and farm businesses include people who grow or make products to sell to local restaurants, food trucks, or other local distributors in the community. The FBRC was launched on March 7th of this year and is a “one-stop-shop” for Washington State food and farm business entrepreneurs to access skills, resources, and connections in order to grow their businesses. The site currently features resources like business plans, financial projections, access to funding, loans, skills for profitability, and expansion options. They also offer specialized resources for partnerships and agriculture education. All farm and food entrepreneurs can benefit from this website, especially communities of color, veterans, immigrants, womxn, low/moderate income earners, and the LGBT+ community. We hope our contributions will help in furthering the FBRC’s mission of serving Northwest food and farm businesses through better connections to resources, thus increasing access to healthy food and protecting food system resilience in our area.

Our capstone project focused on gathering information about resource networks across the nation through the use of in-depth case studies. Our community partners are Domonique Juleon, Chief Program Officer of Business Impact NW, and Michael Lufkin, King County’s Local Food Economy Manager and overseer of the Local Food Initiative. They will be reviewing our case studies when we email them on Monday, June 8, after which the timeline will be up to them; they can read our work on their own time and decide on any useful actions as they continue shaping the FBRC. Our work is important in order to improve the current website and better coordinate what support is available for the community in the Puget Sound and Northwest region. By providing examples of other network organizations, we hope that the FBRC will be able to build on their network and better coordinate access to resources in Washington. By being part of a network of resources, the broader community benefits as well, through better connection with food and farm businesses. Additionally, the project fits into broader initiatives that aim to establish resilience of local agriculture and food businesses, such as the Local Food Initiative. Case study information can be used to guide our community partners in organizing their resource network in the most effective manner possible, helping establish a strong organizational structure within the FBRC in order to benefit farmers, food entrepreneurs, and their partners across the Northwest.

METHODS

Our community partners, Domonique and Michael, were straightforward about their desire for a set of case studies featuring different models and strategies that are being utilized by other resource networks across the nation. This enabled us to narrow down our approach early in the process; we would select and research certain networks in order to find any methods or organizational strategies that the FBRC could utilize in the future.

Our first steps were deciding what our case studies would look like and finding relevant networks. In order to be as helpful as possible, we made sure to connect with our community partners early in the development of the project. During a video call with them, we learned that they were particularly interested in other resource networks’ founding stories. For example: What got the ball rolling for them? What organizational elements were present at the beginning? Who was involved in getting it off the ground? With the guidance of our professor Yona Sipos, we decided to attempt twelve case studies - three per teammate - with a set of common criteria to guide us. The criteria would serve as a template we could fill out while doing our individual research, thus helping us maintain a similar depth of data throughout the final product. We made sure to run the criteria by Domonique and Michael before moving forward, and they expressed full support. In our shared team workspace on Google Docs, we collaborated to select networks that could be useful for the FBRC in organizing their own network; the networks needed to have either similarities to the Puget Sound region or unique ways of addressing resource access for their clients.

Our main goal was to research our networks and fill out the criteria template we had created. This resulted in the following comprehensive document featuring the case studies, full of potential recommendations for the FBRC. The following image shows the outline we used as criteria:

Our first criteria section - Basic Details - allowed us to fully visualize the network we were researching. We documented how long they have been around, what kind of roles are required to run their organizations, who invests in their missions, and the specific ways they provide resource access to the food and/or farm businesses in their area, depending on their audience. The FBRC is working to serve farm entrepreneurs as well as food businesses overall, so we made sure to note whether our researched networks were geared towards one or both. It was also important to address any regional differences from Washington - such as climate, culture, economy, and average farm size - because those can have implications on the relevance of their strategies to the Northwest-based FBRC. After our conversation with Domonique and Michael, we made sure to include a discussion on the networks' History and Origins, looking specifically for any involved entities, stakeholders, and founding partners, as well as any notable pre-launch strategies or research. Because the FBRC is still in its beginning stages, information on other networks' origins can be particularly helpful to them. Our final criteria section was looking for any success stories or lessons learned by the networks as they built their product. Overall, our case study research largely consisted of online searches, as well as outreach to the staff of various networks. The networks' own websites were the main sources of information, but online news articles helped to provide an outside perspective into the impacts in each community. Regional information also required separate sources beyond the networks' provided data.

- ❖ Basic Details
 - Years in Operation
 - Staffing
 - Funding
 - Unique features, events, activities
- ❖ Regional Differences from WA State
- ❖ Success Stories & Lessons Learned

The majority of our challenges throughout the project were solved through communication. One of the initial challenges we faced was establishing clear and helpful criteria, which was solved by communicating with Domonique and Michael over Skype and email early in the process. Another challenge was the potential for doubling up on similar networks, combated by communicating with each other via our shared workspace on Google Docs. The main issues in our research was when certain information wasn't available online. It was especially difficult to find success stories or lessons that network builders had learned the hard way. When this was the case, we made sure to reach out to the organizations directly for more information. In the end, there was minimal response from the networks we reached out to, potentially due to the pandemic and limited staff. We hope that our community partners are still able to benefit from the rest of the case study content and that they feel comfortable reaching out to networks themselves with any further questions, once the pandemic passes.

The majority of our challenges throughout the project were solved through communication. One of the initial challenges we faced was establishing clear and helpful criteria, which was solved by communicating with Domonique and Michael over Skype and email early in the process. Another challenge was the potential for doubling up on similar networks, combated by communicating with each other via our shared workspace on Google Docs. The main issues in our research was when certain information wasn't available online. It was especially difficult to find success stories or lessons that network builders had learned the hard way. When this was the case, we made sure to reach out to the organizations directly for more information. In the end, there was minimal response from the networks we reached out to, potentially due to the pandemic and limited staff. We hope that our community partners are still able to benefit from the rest of the case study content and that they feel comfortable reaching out to networks themselves with any further questions, once the pandemic passes.

OUTCOMES

After comprehensive research on twelve case studies, our team has compiled our individual criteria research, such as years in operation, staffing, funding, unique features, events and activities, regional differences from Washington state, backgrounds, success stories, and lessons learned.

Half of the organizations have relatively short histories of below 10 years, while other ones tend to have longer histories around 30 years or beyond (28, 29, 35, 94 years). For those which have a long history, they are generally focused on entrepreneurship, are funded by the government, or are a nationwide program. Those which were founded in the past 10 years are often solely focused on the food industry or exploring niches in the food sector. In general, most of the staffing information we found suggests that the employees are generally skilled in food-related or business-related backgrounds. Websites contained staff who are degree-holders, university affiliated, and others who have simply been in the industry for a long time. Regarding their funding information, most of the privately-owned or non-profit organizations charge member fees to keep themselves sustainable. They also receive funding from governmental agencies such as the USDA, US Economic Development Administration, state or private grants, federal funds, trusts, universities, corporations (QFC, Kellogg, Conagra, Groupon, Pepsico, and Griffith Foods), or private donations.

The diverse networks we researched often had unique, innovative features that made them stand out. One example is Farm Aid's offering of multiple access methods for their network directory; they have hosted services through a hotline and an online form, as well as self-service access to the online directory itself. Other unique features include tailored resources for each region and website ease of access. One site offered connections to information for Native Americans which could be highly useful in the State of Washington, home of many thriving Native American communities. Websites were community-centered and generally featured events, outreach, and programs for those looking to hone new skills. Features, events, and activities hosted by the organizations include: farmer's markets, workshops, newsletters, online-support forums, advising, networking, coaching, mentoring, resource maps, farm-related events calendars, job listings, blog posts, model story sharing, member directories, farm schools, apprenticeships, business startup advice, production planning, field-testing, marketing, farm financials, financing, legal & risk management, accessing land, other resources, planning for on-farm success,

online conference, guest speaker, food safety education service, legislation service, an innovation lab for food creation, sprout incubation services and hotlines.

Differences between our case study regions and Washington State are as follows. In Massachusetts, 29% of all operators started in the last decade, 41% of operators are female and are increasing still in number, and have been increasing in the number of farms and land in farms for over a decade. The number of Oregon farms has been decreasing since the last census, 80% of agricultural products are exported, and 1 in 12 residents of Oregon work in agriculture. Agriculture is Arkansas' largest industry, and its major exports are rice, cotton, and soybeans. Arkansas also has many large farms. Montana is a large, landlocked state with a lot of natural forests, tribal lands, and a population of 1 million, and even though the primary crop is wheat, they also grow Washington crops like apples and cherries. In Canada the main crops are wheat and corn. New York State has a greater population but smaller land area, and higher demands for food compared to Washington State. Boston generally has small farms because of the cool weather and greenhouse farms. Massachusetts is home to a large number of legendary food and beverage brands, food tech giants and agriculture businesses. There are denser food retailers located in the bay area. Corn, soybeans, and wheat make up 90% of Illinois field crops. Illinois has a continental climate and has about twice the number of farms as Washington, and the average farm size is 358 acres. Vermont has less farms than Washington and they are an average of 177 acres each; the vast amount of its agricultural production value (82%) invested in livestock instead of crops, compared to Washington at 31%. All these differences - noted in greater detail in the case studies - enable more accurate comparisons between networks.

The background and origins of the case studies varied; some organizations rose because of the need for an organized resource platform, and others started as a school project. A few projects were established to find next generation farmers, others were expanded from one sector of the food industry to encompass more sectors, one started for profit, and others came out of good will. Most of them simply started because of high demand from users like food and farm businesses.

Success stories from our research include websites merging with other entities, finding funding, or obtaining grants to better connect and operate their unique sites. In the beginning stages of a resource network, finding sources of funding to better operate the program is essential. There are grants and non-profit organizations that provide the necessary finances to make the programs possible and gain sponsors or partners. Network websites have also spotlighted a couple successful pairings of small businesses with large corporations for successful collaborations. Another success story we learned from the case studies is finding alternative methods to gain funding, such as sales of products and member fees. As a team, we learned from those organizations that it is crucial to have multiple methods to access resource directories in order to support users of different technological abilities. Comprehensive assessment of resources - surveys and one-on-one interviews for entrepreneur feedback on services - provides us with better understanding of how the resources are utilized. Legislation services can reduce users' need to navigate between governmental organizations and save them from confusion.

IMPACTS

For this capstone program, we coordinated with our community partners Domonique and Michael to find out what other states have offered to their food and farm related businesses. We completed twelve case studies featuring organizations of different missions but all providing comprehensive resources and support for food and/or farm businesses. Our case studies will be used by our community partners to continue their development of the Washington-based Food Business Resource Center (FBRC). The Food Business Resource Center will hopefully benefit from our research by helping them create a stronger system to connect businesses to technical, financial, and other assistance. Currently, this is an area that doesn't have ideal access to networks of resources, so it would benefit the community in meaningful ways.

The community-identified goals are to find lessons learned from a set of case studies on different models and strategies that have worked for other resource networks across the nation. Our project provides our community partners with examples they can refer to when developing their unique Washington State strategies. The FBRC will provide a platform for programs, departments, and centers to connect food and farm businesses with the resources they may otherwise not have access to or awareness of. The utilization and clarity of resources is essential in order to improve the Northwest region's food and farm sector. Businesses that require regional partnerships will have a solid understanding of what resources are available throughout the region. The most beneficial impacts will be improved partner connections and communication with local entrepreneurs. Through the information provided by our research, the FBRC may provide increasingly effective access to business resources, essential for leaning into its role - supporting the community as a whole.

To assess the usefulness of our project, we could look into long-term changes in the FBRC's website and see if they have incorporated any of our suggestions. Their feedback is the best way to know if we did our part successfully.

SUSTAINABILITY and RESILIENCE

The case studies we conducted in different regions across the country to help develop the FBRC in Washington are important for building the sustainability and resilience of our partners and broader food system. Our research will contribute to our partners by presenting instructive information for the expansion and coordination of services offered by the FBRC. As a result of these recommended features, our community partners will be able to move forward in their journey of increasing support for food related businesses throughout Washington. Through the research we are contributing to our community partners, we are also contributing to the sustainability and resilience of our local food system. The case studies we have produced reveal multiple methods to support the growth of local food and farm businesses, as well as the improved connection between resource providers and local entrepreneurs for the years to come. The projected enhanced services and communication through the FBRC will not only promote the longevity of businesses producing our local food through improved connection to resources. They will also provide a platform for more entrepreneurs to begin food and farm businesses and create more job opportunities through ease of resource access, increasing the resilience of local food production.

Due to the timeline for our project and our case studies being geared towards the beginning stages of development for the FBRC, we are unable to truly test if our models will meet the needs of our region's entrepreneurs to the best of its abilities. Feedback from local food and farm business entrepreneurs, as well as resource providers will be essential in verifying that any changes made to the FBRC will benefit everyone involved in the network. However, we know that our research will contribute to our partners knowledge in resource support center development in large ways moving forward due to our process of choosing networks that are in regions as similar as possible to our own.

Case Study Research

Erykah

Massachusetts - Beginning Farmer Network (BFN/Mass)

The Beginning Farmer Network of Massachusetts is a collaborative effort between beginning farmers and farm service providers from across Massachusetts. The goal of this network is to make information and services for beginning farmers coordinated and easy to find.

- **Regional Differences/Similarities:**
 - Similarities: 94.2% of farms in MA are small farms, average age of farmer is 59.1, products prominent in MA are: dairy, apples, cattle, potatoes, aquaculture
 - Differences: 29% of all operators started in the last decade, 41% of operators are female and are increasing still in number, has been increasing in number of farms and land in farms for over a decade
- **History and Origins:**
 - The main body coordinating BFN/Mass is The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
 - The partnering organizations who have helped develop and provide resources are: Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets, New England Farmers Union, New England Small Farm Institute, New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts, South Eastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, UMass Center for Agricultural
 - This network was founded due to The Commonwealth having many programs and resources that farmers need to be successful, yet it being difficult for farmers to navigate in order to find the specific services needed for their farms. To solve this issue, BFN/Mass was developed as a coordinated website and referral network to help beginning farmers in Massachusetts find the information and services they need. The network is a collaborative group of farm service providers and farmers.
- **Success stories/Difficulties and Lessons Learned:**
 - BFN/Mass conducted a comprehensive assessment of resources for beginning farmers in MA from 2015-2017. This assessment was conducted through a survey and one-on-one interviews, where they connected with farmers through listservs, partners websites, blogs, social media and newsletters, and attended farmer workshops/events. This assessment revealed what the network was doing well and where it was falling short. Farmer feedback showed that resources for setting up a farm business, farm management, and production (growing crops, raising livestock) were easy to find. However, farmers felt resources for marketing, managing labor, infrastructure/equipment/tools, affordable land, start-up capital and nourishing community relationships were lacking. The assessment also revealed farmer preference for one-stop-shop websites, videos, listserv formats, and even farmer-to-farmer events. Through this new information, BFN/Mass has been able to adjust their focus on bridging these gaps to best serve MA's beginning farmer population. Assessment information can be accessed at https://nesfp.org/sites/default/files/resources/bfn_key_findings_june_2017.pdf
- **Years in operation:** 2011-present
- **Staffing:**
 - BFN/Mass is run by a Leadership and Advisory Team that makes decisions on direction, organization, policies, membership, and research, as well as serves as a resource for unique perspectives and support. Each leader represents a region in MA. The organizations the members of L&A Team are apart of are: Red Tomato, USDA-NASS, New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Town of Stow, Farm Credit East, The Carrot Project, Legal Services Food Hub, The Farm School, Land for Good, MDAR
- **Funding:**
 - USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Project, #2010-49400-21765
- **Activities, Events, Features:**
 - Searchable Resource Map, Resource Finder serving as a guide, Referral Network for personal Q/A and help to find resources, state-wide calendar of beginning farmer events, farm jobs/internships posting board, profiles of successful farmers in MA, blog posts with advice

Oregon Entrepreneurs Network

OEN is a non-profit, membership-driven organization that supports start-ups from every industry in Oregon. It is the only organization of its kind in Oregon, helping entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses through being connected to funding, training, and peers/mentors.

- **Regional Differences/Similarities:**
 - Similarities: both top agricultural commodity producers, top agricultural products include: milk, hops, cattle/calves, potatoes, around 40,000 farms and ranches statewide
 - Differences: number of Oregon farms decreasing since last census, 80% of agricultural product are exported, 1 in 12 residents of Oregon work in agriculture, contributes more than \$8 billion to economy
- **History and Origins:**
 - OEN was originally founded in 1991 as Oregon Enterprise Forum, which was a chapter of MIT Enterprise Forum and an affiliate of the Portland Chamber of Commerce. Since OEN was established, it has separated from Portland Chamber of Commerce and MIT Enterprise Forum to become its own organization by 2007. It has also changed names from Oregon Enterprise Forum, to Oregon Entrepreneurs Forum, to Oregon Entrepreneurs Network. OEN has also worked with Oregon Young Entrepreneurs Association and Entrepreneurs Foundation of the Northwest as well.
 - OEN started with launching entrepreneurship awards and entrepreneurship conferences to educate and draw investors and investment bankers interested in expanding Oregon's businesses. They then continued to add further opportunities for businesses to gain investors by adding networks such as the Portland Angel Network and Women's Investment Network, as well as adding social events (PubTalks, CEO Roundtables, tradeshow, OEN Entrepreneurial Summit) and workshops (Executive Leadership Series). In 2006, OEN started their grant journey by receiving a grant from USEDPA. From there OEN was able to start annual fund campaigns, launch a catalyst fund, endowments, seed funds, showcases with prize funds and expand conferences.
- **Years in Operation:** 1991-present
- **Staffing:**
 - OEN is run by a team with positions such as: president/executive director, west metro venture catalyst, board of directors (president, chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, staff liaison, board leadership/development, long-term funding, core curriculum, PubTalk, Central Oregon Advisor, past chair), program chairs (awards dinner chair, awards dinner vice chair, annual campaign)
 - Only the president works for OEN directly, while all other members work for businesses throughout the Oregon community while volunteering on the team
- **Funding:**
 - Grants: Oregon Community Foundation grants, NFS/SBIR grant, Meyer Memorial Trust grant, Business Oregon grant, US Economic Development Administration grant
- **Activities, Events, Features:**
 - Networking events (PubTalk, Member Mixers, Startup Tradeshow), business coaching (workshop series, bootcamps), education tailored to needs of network (workshops, startup series), mentoring and coaching, avenues to access capital, entrepreneurship awards, blog for OEN news and updates, resource map separated by region, member directory, how-to on gaining membership

Center for Arkansas Farms and Food

The Center for Arkansas Farms and Food was developed to provide new opportunities that shape current and future farmers, food entrepreneurs and food systems leaders. It is a program developed through the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station within the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

- **Regional Differences/Similarities:**
 - Similarities: greater than 94% of farms are family owned, greater than 6,000 female farmers
 - Differences: agriculture is Arkansas' largest industry, major exports are rice, cotton, and soybeans, about 49,000 farms statewide, average Arkansas farm is 319 acres
- **History and Origins:**
 - The team that runs the CAFF are faculty and staff of University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture who partner with NWA businesses, organizations and local farmers that lead change in their food system.

- CAFF was created with the intention to strengthen and expand the food and farming system of Arkansas. Programs have been established to increase experiential learning for farmers and food entrepreneurs to build production and business skills, as well as resources to develop resilient businesses in Arkansas.
- The partners of the program are major contributors to the success of the CAFF. The partnering groups are: Arkansas Food Innovation Center, National Center for Appropriate Technology, National Agricultural Law Center, Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, NWA Farmlink, Farmers' Market Alliance, The Food Conservancy, Walton Family Foundation, and various UofA branches
- **Years in Operation:** 2017-present
- **Staffing:**
 - All staff are faculty and staff of University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in positions as: professor, horticultural specialist, program manager, department head, director, associate dean, senior staff attorney, associate professor, research scientist
- **Funding:**
 - The CAFF was founded by the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, which has been funded for years by federal funding through the Hatch Act of 1887.
- **Activities, Events, Features:**
 - Resource listserv, list of farms apart of CAFF for direct referral to farm services (CSA, online order, delivery), workshops, news postings about agriculture in Arkansas, Farm School, apprenticeship, outreach opportunities, interest submission page for all programs and services including farm mentorship and sponsorship/donating

Carolyn

Farm Link Montana

This site is also a “one-stop-shop” geared towards Montana-specific lands to connect farmers or ranchers to business, marketing and financial resources. Farm Link Montana is primarily run by Community Food & Agriculture Coalition which is a non-profit in Missoula, MT.

<https://www.farmlinkmontana.org/resources/>

- **Regional Differences/Similarities:**
 - Montana is a large state with a lot of natural forest, tribal lands and population of 1 million. The state is landlocked and the primary crop is wheat. Similarities include crops like apples and cherries.
- **History and Origins:**
 - The project stemmed from the program grant “Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)” funded by the USDA to enhance sustainability and educate the next generation of farmers. The grant is Grant no. 2015-70017-22851 through the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. There are three main programs that operate cohesively to ensure that farmlands are conserved and farming provides viable livelihood for residents. Additionally, there are links to access nutritious, affordable, locally grown food.
- **Success stories/Difficulties and Lessons Learned:**
 - Positions have been created to teach new skills for Montana Farmers. They made an application process in order to work with farms and make arrangements. This is a great way to present farms with partnerships in a systematic way to see what services people can bring to the farm. Creating a schedule has helped organize events seasonally and competitively.
- **Years in Operation:** Launched in 2006
- **Staffing:**
 - Website manager; Community Food & Agriculture Coalition and partners from the Community Food & Agriculture Coalition
- **Funding:**
 - United States Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Community Food & Agriculture Coalition, Missoula County Weed District and MSU Extension, Northwest Farm Credit Services, Montana Organic Association, Western Montana Grower Cooperative and Quality Foods Distributing

- **Activities, Events, Features:**
 - The program offers courses and workshops to teach both beginning and established farmers and ranchers all year long. Summer workshops are offered through on-farm events to teach first-hand methods that are difficult to teach in the off-season. Autumn and winter workshops are offered indoors, where available and focus on business planning and development, marketing, financing, financial management, risk management.
 - Resources offered: Business Startup Steps, Production Planning, Field Tested, Marketing, Farm Financials, Financing, Legal & Risk Management, Accessing Land, Other Resources, Planning for On-Farm Success

FarmLINK Agricultural Cooperative Canada

This site is interesting because of its user-friendly way to navigate through it's options. The website is flawless and gives users a destination to find land, opportunities and resources. Canada-style. This site had me believing I could make it as a sheep farmer in Courtenay BC.

<https://farmlink.net/>

- **Regional Differences/Similarities:**
 - The United States Northern neighboring country Canada is very similar geographically and produces similar crops. Their main crop is wheat, corn. More similarities include being a country with similar climate and ecosystems both coastal and inland for farming.
- **History and Origins:**
 - Canadian agriculture is experiencing change and transition of farm land at an unprecedented rate. 92% of farmers looking to retire/downsize don't have successors. This site helps to bring together resources to land and financial sources for young, aspiring Canadian farmers (and second career farmers with various backgrounds) The website was a pilot project from FarmStart. 2013 it transitioned into FarmLINK.net in hopes of becoming a national platform, then in 2015 Linking Land and Farmers (LLAF) joined the team and became a member. (LLAF is a non-profit society aimed to help farmers find land)
- **Success stories/Difficulties and Lessons Learned:**
 - The site was first a project FarmStart which needed more capital to gain a wider audience and help more of the country. The project entrepreneurs began to shift towards a connection between those who simply want to start a farm to those who are looking to retire. Additionally the site offers guides for agreements and tips to make arrangements for borrowing land. Lastly, the link helps those connect to business partnerships, loans and funding through national listings in Canada.
- **Years in Operation:** 12 years.
- **Staffing:** Anahita Belanger, Keeley Nixon, Christie Young
- **Funding:** Partners are both the Ontario Farmland Trust and the Kawartha Land Trust.
- **Resources offered:**
 - Business Development, Case Study, Record Keeping, Risk Management (*Viability*)
 - Land, Readiness and Soil (*Assessment*)
 - Case study, Guide and Templates (*Succession*)
 - Guide, Template and tutorials (*Agreement*)
 - Expanding, Exploring, Non-Farm Land Owner, Planning, Restrategizing, Retiring, and Start up (*Farm Stage*)
These are curated resource categories to help users find tools and guides along with loans and finances like in the "readiness" section
 - Options to curate and tailor what resources you need and massive stores of information.
 - There's everything to educate farmers about expanding, start-up, planning and more. Finance and loans not available but options to take over operations, begin partnerships and more guides are offered.
- **Activities, Events, Features:**
 - Facebook link with community involvement. Online conferences, guest speakers, resources. The events are a great way to connect local partnerships and people in Canada that are interested in agriculture and farming. Connections to large food brands and farmers are featured and easy to find. The people are committed to making a dynamic online platform that provides essential resources for farmers and opportunists around the nation of Canada.

New England Food Entrepreneurs

This site provides university, state, and federal resources for small food businesses.

Partners are universities along the Eastern coast

<https://nefoodproducers.org/food-entrepreneurs-specialty-food-processors/business-plans-marketing>

- **Regional Differences/Similarities:**
 - Eastern states, main crop livestock and agriculture varies by state. Differences, 5 states covered by the “new england” region. Similar outreach program from the university system aimed to help improve the farm and food operations of entrepreneurs. The universities are heavily involved with this project and may have great connections to businesses and individuals that have new ideas. The departments are all health science and food- safety related.
- **History and Origins:**
 - The site was created to meet the needs of each sector of the food system, providing food science education from some of the top universities along the Northernmost East Coast states. The site aims to implement safety programs and provide education on a variety of food related topics.
- **Success stories/Difficulties and Lessons Learned:**
 - Through the university students have helped get federal funding to the communities surrounding the eastern states. Funding was obtained in 2014 called the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, which helped development and operations.
- **Years in Operation:** ~6 yrs
- **Staffing:** Regional network of Cooperative Extension food safety and produce specialists
- **Funding:** Partners with University of Connecticut, the University of Maine, UMASS AMHERST, University of Vermont, the University of Rhode Island, and University of New Hampshire. Funding came from the 2014 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant through the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food.
- **Resources offered:** Many links to information regarding:
 - Starting a Food Business - links to venture capital and start up guides
 - Business Plans & Marketing -development and plans
 - Product Development
 - Food Safety & Sanitation
 - FSMA & HACCP
 - Food Regulations
 - State Specific Resources
 - Training & Education
 - Resources -extensive lists of resources
- **Activities, Events, Features:** NEFE implements food safety education programs

Kathryn

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

One website to help new and beginning farmers get connected to opportunities for assistance in starting and expanding their farms. It is a one-stop website for farmers and food businesses to find authentic programs and resources in New York State. Our mission is to promote New York State agriculture and its high-quality and diverse products, foster agricultural environmental stewardship, and safeguard the state’s food supply, land, and livestock to ensure the viability and growth of New York’s agriculture industries.

<https://agriculture.ny.gov/farming/beginning-farmers>

- **Organizational structure**
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
 - Farming
 - Beginning Farmers
 - Laws and Regulations
 - Licensing and Registration
 - Weights and Measures
 - Farmers’ Market
 - Healthy Communities
 - Animals
 - Companion Animals
 - Complaints
 - Milk and Dairy
 - Funding Opportunities
 - Fairs
 - Business Development

- Import and Export
 - Livestock
 - Pet Dealers
 - Resources for Veterinarians
 - Food safety
 - Plants and Natural Resources
 - **Overall model**
 - Stepwise guide for beginner farmers and farmers with expansion needs to collect information on various programs offered in New York State. Relates relevant information in a comprehensible and easily manageable way.
 - **Regional differences or similarities to the WA food system**
 - NY State has a greater population of 19.45 million compared to WA state 7.615 million. However, it has a smaller land area compared to WA. NY's demand for food is at a higher quality than WA.
 - **History and origins**
 - The department's progenitor was the 1884 New York State Dairy Commission that inspected dairy production and sales facilities, which was abolished in 1893 and its functions transferred to the Department of Agriculture that inspected farms, set agricultural quality standards, and operated agricultural experiment stations. A separate Department of Foods and Markets was established in 1914 to set standards for grading and selling food, supervise markets, and publish information on dairy prices and marketing methods. In 1917, these two departments and the 1851 Office of State Superintendent of Weights and Measures were consolidated into the Department of Farms and Markets, headed by the Council of Farms and Markets.
 - Involved entities and partnerships: Agri-Business Child Development (ABCD); Creating Healthy Schools and Communities; New York Crop Insurance Education Program; Pollinator Network at Cornell; Cornell Cooperative Extension; Cornell University Beekeeper Tech Team; New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program, etc.
 - Presence of pre-launch strategies such as networking, regional research, or marketing: Supplier Diversity; Specialty Crop Block Grant Program; New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health; Farm-to-School; Source Water Buffer Program; Ecosystem Based Management Program; Commodities Program; Advisory Council on Agriculture; Milk Security Program; Dairy Programs; Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture; No Student Goes Hungry; Council on Hunger and Food Policy; Pet Food; Farmland Protection; Agricultural Non-point Source Abatement and Control; Agricultural Environmental Management; Halal Foods Protection; Kosher Law Enforcement; Home Processing; Food safety Inspections; Good Agricultural Practices; Farmers' Markets; Vital Brooklyn; Empire State Animal Response Team; Farm Products Dealer Licensing; Licensing & Registration; Wood Products Development Council; Beginning Farmers; The Great New York State Fair; Taste NY; New York State Grown & Certified.
 - **Wins, success stories**
 - It is a governmental organization, therefore, they could deal with licensing and other legislation issues when farmers and food businesses need legal validity.
 - **Failures, difficulties, lessons learned**
 - This website covers a wide range of topics. It is both a blessing and a curse. It is harder to find what exactly is in need.
 - **Years in operation:** Since 1926 - almost 100 years
 - **Funding details such as source and utilization**
 - State tax money channeled to the Grant Opportunity Portal, a one-stop shop to access all available state agency grant funding.
 - **Activities, events, unique features**
 - It encompasses a wide range of opportunities for people working with food and the environment.
- Agricultural Districts
 - Farmland Protection
 - Honey Bee Health
 - Plant Health
 - Soil and Water conservation Committee
 - Wood Products Council

Boston Food Network

Food business network starting from the producer all the way to food preparation and rescue. The website listed players in the food industry including producers, distributors, prepared food, food rescue and support network facilitators in the Boston region. Support network facilitators include incubators/coworking/shared kitchens, education/information/advocacy, food media/publications, government initiatives, consulting/business services, investors/funders. They provide the website and introduction of the different players. They also have a job finder webpage for people seeking employment in the food industry in Boston. Names and websites of food organizations in the great Boston region, including producers, distributors, prepared food, food rescue and support network facilitators. An email listserv service is available.

<http://bostonfoodnetwork.branchfood.com/>

- **Regional differences or similarities to the WA food system:**
 - Similarities: Both places have cool climates. They have common products such as dairy, apples, cattle, potatoes, and aquaculture.
 - Differences: WA produces a lot of fruits such as apples and raspberries. Boston generally has small farms because of the cool weather and greenhouse farms. Massachusetts is home to a large number of legendary food and beverage brands, food tech giants and agriculture businesses.
- **History and origins:**
 - Dan Peckham and Lauren Abda found there were a lot local food companies and players but yet little network together. They started this website to pull the larger picture of the local food network together. Hence get a sense of how many players there are working on local/sustainable food in Boston and how they are all connected and working together.
 - This website is a database of organizations in Boston's food network.
 - Involved entities and partnerships: its parent website Branchfood Website has partnership with Consulate General Of Canada, Off Their Plate, Clover Food Lab, AmazStev, PivoHub, Partake Brewing, Good Food for Good, Scout Canning, Foodboro, Roche Bros Supermarkets, Survey.com, BREX, and the Faneuil Hall Marketplace etc.
 - The food network program simply puts down the organizations in the region for viewers to reach out to.
- **Wins, success stories**
 - They are open to suggestions from their website viewers. They provide feedback channels and newsletter services. The website is clear and easy to follow.
 - Helps workers to find openings in food industry businesses.
- **Failures, difficulties, lessons learned**
 - Not much support is provided. The website does not help viewers connect with different organizations but just listing them.
 - No direct financial support. No direct advising support.
- **Years in operation:** Started in 2013 - 7 years now.
- **Staffing:**
 - Dan Peckham is an Environmental Analyst.
 - Lauren Abda is the founder of Branchfood. She had a B.S. in nutrition and food science and a M.S. in food policy and nutrition.
- **Funding:**
 - Parental website:
 - Sponsors: Consulate General of Canada in Boston, United States; Brex; Wolf & Company; Cambridge Innovation Center; Providence City Hall; Nutter.
 - Membership fees (\$40/month)
 - Food Network Program:
 - Donation from viewers
- **Activities, events, unique features:**
 - Simple website with clear information listed on the website.
 - More events, and support with paid services available in the main website.

Kitchen Town

KitchenTown, CA Networks for food-business related startups For startups: innovation lab, commercial kitchen, partnerships program, workshops & events. Kinds of startups they serve: meal kits & food technology; ingredient innovation; consumer packaged goods; consumer packaged goods; artisan bakeries. For corporations: KitchenTown provides catered innovations according to the corporation needs. It also helps to bridge startups to corporations. Good Food Maker's Program with Barilla. Participants can test, prototype, and collaborate with Barilla's team of experts in a flexible 8-week program designed to solve their startups' current challenges with no cost. SpeakEasy Program to innovate food products that suits cultural needs. Curbside pickup service for local residents to purchase produce innovated by local startups.

<https://kitchentowncentral.com/about-us/>

- **Regional differences or similarities to the WA food system**
 - KitchenTown is California based. It is located in San Francisco. There are denser located food retailers in the bay area compared to the Puget Sound area. The website focuses on local restaurants, bakeries, and food processors.
 - Similarities: Both regions have plenty of support in place to help startups running their businesses.
 - Difference: California has warmer climates and grows more fruits than WA. California has a more robust food industry compared to WA. The number of startups are greater in CA. CA has more home-based food businesses.
- **History and origins**
 - Involved entities and partnerships: Oisix, Barilla, Smucker's, and Royal DSM.
 - Presence of pre-launch strategies such as networking, regional research, or marketing: Innovation lab, commercial kitchen, partnerships program, workshops & events are offered for startup entrepreneurs. While Good Food Maker's Program, SpeakEasy, Curbside are open for all.
- **Wins, success stories**
 - The innovation lab helps startups to test out their recipes and create labels that fits the legislative needs of commercialization. This provides small businesses with an opportunity to start with little funding.
 - Partnership Program: It helps startups get connected to branded big companies.
 - Curbside helps startups get connected to consumers in the local area.
- **Failures, difficulties, lessons learned**
 - The organization is targeted in the bay area, it is hard to apply to larger areas. More funding would be needed to set up more satellite locations for the innovation labs.
 - The path for startups is largely pre-set with little alternative given.
- **Basic details**
 - KitchenTown helps startups in the development, commercialization, and launch of impact driven and transformational food products. They provide a community for food entrepreneurs and innovators to support each other and create a new sustainable food system
 - They provide infrastructure and expert guidance, and the right tools at the right times. We tap our vast network of mentors and industry veterans to help guide the next generation of entrepreneurs, and give them space to guide each other too.
- **Years in operation:** Founded in 2014, it has been 6 years.
- **Staffing details such as expertise, experience, education, volunteership vs paid positions**
 - They function like a company with 9 paid positions listed on their website.
 - Amongst them they have experienced entrepreneurs (Founder & CEO), food scientist (Director of Product Innovation), operations specialist with a background in food business entrepreneurship, restaurants, and natural food grocery (COO), academic and professional research (Research & Partnerships Manager), culinary and nutrition (Culinary Director), partnership specialist (Head of Business Development), administrative (Office Manager), senior level executive experience providing financial and operational leadership and consulting advice to companies (CFO), technical expertise in sanitation and fixing things (Facilities Manager).
 - Besides the personals listed on the website, We believe there are more employed workers to maintain the facilities and keep the company running.

- **Funding details such as source and utilization**
 - Private for-profit company, sponsor or funding not available online.
- **Activities, events, unique features**
 - Innovation lab, commercial kitchen, partnerships program, workshops & events, Good Food Maker's Program with Barilla, SpeakEasy Program, and Curbside

Karissa

The Hatchery

The Hatchery is largely set up as a food business incubator, offering facilities like kitchens, co-working spaces, and storage units. They also offer services such as business support, connection to capital, and specific incubation programs. "The Hatchery Community Advisory Council, which includes leaders from groups that represent all of the involved West Side neighborhoods, meets quarterly with The Hatchery team to share ideas and progress. In addition, all are welcome to attend events at The Hatchery to learn more about what is happening to benefit the community."

- **Regional differences or similarities to the WA food system**
 - Corn, soybeans, and wheat make up 90% of Illinois field crops. It is a continental climate, more extreme in all seasons than Western Washington.
 - Illinois has about twice the number of farms as Washington, and the average farm size is 358 acres. Both Washington and Illinois have most of their production value in crops rather than livestock.
- **History and origins**
 - "The Hatchery Chicago started in the struggling East Garfield Park neighborhood as part of the local incubator, Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago. [It] has attracted the backing of big businesses, including Kellogg, Conagra and Mondelez -- all looking to help food startups. The Hatchery's new \$34 million space took over a year to build and opened in January. But entrepreneurs didn't start cooking until February. And work on the 67,000-square-foot space is ongoing."¹
 - "The Hatchery is a joint venture between two Chicago non-profits: Accion and the Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago (ICNC). The City of Chicago and its affiliates provided a portion of the land, grants, tax increment financing, and new markets tax credits to help reduce the debt the project must carry, and a lengthy list of donors, investors, and sponsors provided crucial support to the project."² They are joint venture partners and mutual building owners.
- **Success stories**
 - Much of the Hatchery's success lies within its community partnerships. Though it was started by two non-profits, they fully relied on the support of smaller community businesses to create a meaningful resource for their region
- **Years in operation:** Opened in April 2019
- **Staffing:** Office Manager, CEO, Marketing and Events Coordinator, Kitchen Supervisor, Program and Curriculum Coordinator, COO, Marketing Manager
- **Funding:** Non-profit, relies on the sponsorship of various-sized companies like Kellogg, Conagra, the City of Chicago, Groupon, Pepsico, and Griffith Foods. They also accept individual donations on their website.
- **Activities, events, features**
 - Event calendar - \$20-40 ticket prices for classes on topics like E-commerce, branding, food customer demographics, etc.
 - Sprout Incubation Services for pre-launch businesses. Six month program under \$400 with specialized support and tools to get products and businesses launched.
 - Bloom Membership for businesses 12 months or older: allows access to the Service Provider Database (password protected), coaching, exclusive events, data, HR services, promotion, and many other avenues of business support. Requires an application, acceptance relies on specific criteria and space in the program.
 - "The Hatchery was built on the land that was used for the East Garfield Park farmers market, but don't despair. The Hatchery will host the Garfield Park Neighborhood Market starting this summer in front of the building. We actually hosted a test run indoor market in February. We had 32 vendors come out to

¹ <https://news.wttw.com/2019/04/25/hatchery-chicago-cooking-food-and-jobs-west-side>

² <https://thehatcherychicago.org/faq/>

participate, 80% were local entrepreneurs, and 20% were Hatchery entrepreneurs. And some of the food entrepreneurs inside will be selling their goods outside in the market this summer.”³

Vermont Small Business Development Center

The Vermont Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC) is a statewide program of the Vermont State Colleges, hosted by Vermont Technical College. VtSBDC is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development and nationally accredited by the Association of Small Business Development Centers. They help small businesses in any stage of the startup process with startup planning, financing, sales/marketing, growth strategies, financial management, operations. The focus is on advising and training, and it is not exclusive to food businesses.

- **Regional differences or similarities to the WA food system**
 - Vermont is home to about 7,000 farms averaging 177 acres each, while Washington has over 37,000. Vermont has the vast amount of its agricultural production value (82%) lying in livestock instead of crops, very different from Washington (31%).
- **History and origins**
 - The VtSBDC has been around for almost twenty years, and has undoubtedly changed in many ways since its inception. Their website currently has no details on their founding history, and they did not respond with comments.
- **Years in operation:** Started in 1992.
- **Staffing**
 - Large paid staff of state and local advisors particular to businesses in each county. Advisory board members include employees or members of Vermont Technical College, Department of Economic Development, Founder, Whistlekick Martial Arts Sparring Gear and Apparel, Vermont Innovation Commons, Telequity, LLC, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Vermont Business Magazine, Community National Bank, USDA
- **Funding**
 - Funding partners include Department of Economic Development, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont State Colleges, Vermont Technical College, U.S. Small Business Administration
- **Activities, events, features**
 - Guides, workshops, tools for start up businesses like Business Planning, Management & Operations, Financials, Marketing & Sales, Human Resources, Business Transition, Cyber security, etc.
 - Free access to advisors to find capital and grow businesses

FarmAid.org’s Farmer Resource Network

The Farmer Resource Network is a tool run by the nonprofit Farm Aid, whose mission is to “celebrate and strengthen farmers, advocate for fair farm policies, connect farmers and eaters, and bring family farm food to everyone”. They host an annual festival benefiting and featuring farmers, they connect farmers to retail opportunities, they support farm families in crisis, and advocate for fair policy for family farms at local, regional, and national levels. Beyond the nonprofit’s main work, they run a Farmer Resource Network, featuring an online and telephone accessible Farm Aid hotline, a searchable online resource directory, topical resource guides, a Resource Spotlight blog, and disaster relief funding and resources.

<https://farmaid.org/our-work/resources-for-farmers/>

- **Regional differences or similarities to the WA food system**
 - The Farmer Resource Network is a tool for farmers across the United States, but its focus is on family farm businesses.
- **History and origins**
 - “Farm Aid received a record number of contacts to the hotline in 2018, such that it hired an additional farm advocate to help field the many calls received. In July, Annie Heuscher joined the Farm Aid team to relieve some of the call volume and conduct a survey of farm service providers across the country to help inform Farm Aid’s understanding of what farmers are experiencing on the ground and the capacity of service providers to keep pace with the need. In 2018, there were 1,034 farmer contacts via the Farm Aid hotline, a

³ <https://news.wttw.com/2019/04/25/hatchery-chicago-cooking-food-and-jobs-west-side>

109% increase from 2017, and surpassing any other year the organization has on record. In response, Farm Aid doubled its annual emergency grant budget. Farm Aid has also reconvened the Farm Advocate Link network via regular calls to strategize with our resource partners about how to strengthen the network in times of crisis.”

- **Years in operation:**

- The first Farm Aid concert was in 1985, founded by Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp and Neil Young. The Farmer Resource Network, however, has been organizing resources for over 30 years, per their website.

- **Staffing**

- Farm Aid has an extensive full time staff, but the Farmer Resource Network is run by only two - a Farmer Services staff consisting of a Hotline Manager, and an additional farm expert to help connect farmers to resources and vice versa.

- **Funding**

- Recent corporate sponsors have included Patagonia Workwear, Horizon Organic, Harbor Harvest, Frontier Co-op, Spindrift, as well as many individual contributions through their fundraising events.

- **Activities, events, features**

- The 1-800-FARM-AID hotline and alternate online Hotline form allow Farm Aid’s in-house Farm Advocate and other Farmer Services staff to connect farmers to family farm and rural support organizations, nation-wide. The online form lists the following areas in which farmers can request help: Financial Counseling & Business Planning, Crisis Assistance, Legal Help & Mediation Services, Resources for Beginning Farmers, Resources for Socially Disadvantaged farmers, Funding Opportunities for Farmers, Direct Marketing Assistance, Institutional & Wholesale Markets, Organic/Sustainable Transition & Support, Conservation Programs, Land Access, Farm Energy Options, Industrial Ag & Factory Farm Issues, and Activism & Organizing.
- The Farmer Resource Network searchable directory at <https://frn.farmaid.org> features more than 700 organizations to provide guidance, direct assistance, and support for those transitioning to sustainable methods. “Individuals, farm service organizations, and businesses” can connect via this resource. It features the same search criteria as the online Hotline request form - it seems to be a self-service method of accessing the same resources as the Hotline. It allows farmers to search by state and resource type, as mentioned earlier.