

**RESETTING THE TABLE:
A REPORT ON THE 2016 LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SUMMIT
CONVENED BY MONTANA GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK**

**Organized by the Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition and Partners
October 28-29, 2016
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana**



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December 2017

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our research team gratefully acknowledges the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) for making it possible for students to attend and participate in the 2016 Governor's Summit on Local Food and Agriculture.

KEY LINKS AND RESOURCES

The **Governor's Local Food and Agriculture Summit** website: <https://foodsummit.ncat.org/>

The [Final Report](#) presents all of the Action Plans generated at the Summit, as well as an [Executive Summary](#). [Detailed notes](#) for each Summit track are also available.

Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition: <http://growmontana.ncat.org/>

Douglas Simpson and James Drysdale, graduate students in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism at UM, produced the 6-minute video about the event, which gives the viewer a sense of the dynamic nature of the discussions held there. To access their short **video** about the Summit, see: <https://youtu.be/F1M8eqCImXs>

MONTANA'S CIVIC FOOD NETWORK: AN INTRODUCTION

Neva Hassanein*

In October 2016, over two-hundred Montanans gathered in Bozeman for the second [Governor's Summit on Local Food and Agriculture](#). A similar summit had been held in Great Falls in 2007, convened by then-Governor Brian Schweitzer. At the request of current-Governor Steve Bullock, the [Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition](#) organized a committee¹ made up of an array of organizations, agencies, and university partners that worked together to plan the event, held over the course of two days at Montana State University, October 28-29, 2016.

As a scholar-practitioner interested in sustainable, regional food systems, I jumped at the chance to participate in this event and to involve eight graduate students as well. Specifically, during a course that I offered at the University of Montana (UM) in Autumn 2016, these students and I studied various aspects of the Summit—its participants, processes, and products. As I explain below, we sought not only to understand substantive ideas about the local food and agriculture system, but also to observe the processes by which these ideas were generated. We were interested in the potentially democratic space the Summit created for

Goals of the Summit

- ✓ “Celebrate programs that are currently improving the creation of a Montana-based food economy;
- ✓ Learn about efforts to continue developing local food systems that support producers, consumers, and communities;
- ✓ Discuss how to continue improving Montana’s food processing and distribution capacity and markets;
- ✓ Develop ideas on how working together we can increase access to healthier and more nutritious food for all Montanans;
- ✓ Connect why local foods are important to improving the food system for both producers and consumers on a national scale.”

[Final Report](#) by NCAT and Grow Montana (April 2017)

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¹ Established in 2005, [Grow Montana](#) is “a broad-based food policy coalition whose common purpose is to promote community economic development and education policies that support sustainable Montana-owned food production, processing, and distribution, and that improve all of our citizens’ access to healthy Montana foods.” The following organizations and agencies collaborated on the organizing of the Summit: Alternative Energy Resources Organization, Community Food and Agriculture Coalition, Lake County Community Development Corporation, Montana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Farmers Union, Montana Governor’s Office, Montana Office of Public Instruction, Montana State University, Montana Team Nutrition, National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), Northern Plains Resource Council, and University of Montana’s Environmental Studies Program.

Montanans to play a meaningful role in shaping their food system. This report presents the results of a survey of Summit participants and researchers' observations of the process, both in preparation for and at the event itself.

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE 2016 GOVERNOR'S SUMMIT

A week before his re-election for a second term, Governor Steve Bullock (below) opened the Summit with brief remarks, stressing the strength of Montana's agricultural heritage and how it



remains the backbone of the state's economy. He challenged attendees to look to the future—to build the local food and farm economy, to advance sustainable agriculture, and to address food insecurity. And, then, he turned the meeting over to attendees.

The participants came from across our vast state, representing at least 20 counties. They brought with them knowledge and experience gained from an array of different roles in the food system. The group included farmers and ranchers, educators and researchers, government officials, food business entrepreneurs, institutional food buyers, food pantry staff and dietitians, economic development specialists, students and FoodCorps volunteers, non-profit advocates, and more. Some participants had worked on food system issues for decades in Montana, while others were relatively new. Two national leaders and authors—Fred Kirschenmann and Michael H. Shuman—delivered [keynote addresses](#) (see summit website for video links to the talks), and participated in the rest of the events. By the end of the two days, the Summit attendees produced an extensive set of action plans intended to further transform Montana's local food and agricultural system in the next decade.

The Governor's Summit was far from your ordinary "conference." Rather, organizers and facilitators designed a process that was meant to be highly participatory and generative, drawing heavily on the experiential knowledge and creative energy of the attendees and presenters. Specifically, each participant selected one of five topical tracks to be part of during the entire meeting. The topics included:

1. Food Manufacturing and Distribution in Montana
2. Farm to Folk: Positive Economic and Health Benefits of Communities Becoming Markets for Local Food
3. Supporting a New Generation of Farmers
4. Resilience in Agriculture

5. Marketing Montana Products: Growing Businesses and Distribution

In all, participants spent eight hours in their track sessions in order to dive deeply into their topics, working with the support of a trained track leader, a facilitator, and a recorder. In general, each track included sessions designed to: (1) recognize the successes that have occurred or other assets we have; (2) identify barriers that exist; and (3) develop action plans for moving forward on specific goals that aim to address problems and seize opportunities. Participants from the tracks reported out periodically to the full convening of the meeting.

BUILDING FOOD DEMOCRACY THROUGH A CIVIC FOOD NETWORK

Given the Summit's strong emphasis on engagement, the graduate researchers and I decided to use the concept of "food democracy" to frame our inquiry. Food democracy is the idea that all members of a food system ought to have equitable and meaningful opportunities for actively shaping that system, given how important food is to all of our lives (Hassanein 2003; 2008). Such participation requires knowledge of the food system and access to reliable, transparent information. There must also be people and organizations endowed with the capacity and desire to act collectively in order to regain control over the ways their food is produced, over who produces it, and over how it is provided (Carolan 2016; Renting et al. 2011).

Observing the so-called "local food movement," which has gained momentum in recent decades, yields an abundance of examples of such civic participation and innovation in Montana and elsewhere. This idea shifts our traditional notions of "producer" or "consumer," to "food citizen" who engages with others in civil society to develop potential solutions to complex social, economic, and ecological problems. These relationships and collaborations among various food system actors have been referred to as civic food networks (Renting et al. 2012).

Using a food democracy lens, student researchers developed three main strategies for documenting and learning from the Summit. The first two of these three are presented in this report:

1. Conducting a **survey** of Summit participants; results are presented in Chapter 1 by Gillian Thornton.
2. Reporting on **participant-observation** in each of the five tracks. In Chapters 2-6, the contributing authors—Lauren Johnson, Kaitlin McCafferty, Brittany Palmer, Catie DeMets, and Naomi Neal, respectively—describe the process and outcomes of the track discussions, followed by their observations. Readers are referred to the Summit Final

Report to see the full Action Plans; here, only the goals of the Action Plans are discussed.

3. Producing a **video** that gives the viewer a sense of the dynamic event. Douglas Simpson and James Drysdale, graduate students in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism, created the video which can be accessed [here](#).

As one reads through the following chapters and views the video, the idea of a civic food network will, I think, come alive. The report helps us understand the Summit participants, as well as their perceptions of and visions for Montana's local food and agricultural system. We also learn about what these various actors are grappling with—from how to improve food processing and distribution, to how to build more resilient farming systems, to how to facilitate statewide food policy and planning, and much more. We see, too, numerous examples of people sharing knowledge with one another and using their cumulative experiences to begin to develop new ideas. And, we learn about the tremendous value that these food citizens place on the social network and relationships that have formed around doing this food systems work.

Creating a space for many Montana food citizens to come together and generate action items was, of course, one step in a long process of change that has been underway in the state for several decades now. Even though the Summit provided an incredibly valuable opportunity to reflect on achievements and generate new ideas for the future, the question of how well the Action Plans will be implemented remains. Participants repeatedly mentioned their desire to hold future summits and to ensure that their hard work at this one will not go to waste. So, there is a need for greater synthesis and prioritization of the ideas generated, as well as collaboration among actors to move them forward. Indeed, many of the Action Plans developed call for just such coordination and sustained leadership, including creation of a statewide food policy council.

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CHAPTER ONE
VIEWS ON PROGRESS AND VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE:
PARTICIPANT SURVEY AT THE 2016 MONTANA LOCAL FOOD AND AG SUMMIT
Gillian Thornton*

INTRODUCTION

In October of 2016, Montana Governor Steve Bullock convened the Summit on Local Food and Agriculture, providing an opportunity for interested individuals and stakeholders to “come together, share information and strategize about the next 10 years of working to build the state’s food economy” (National Center for Appropriate Technology 2017). The Summit sought to address a key question: How can more of the food grown and raised in Montana be used within the state to benefit communities? For two days, participants worked to articulate a common vision for the future of Montana’s local food and agricultural system, identify the strengths and challenges of the state’s system, and establish a list of initiatives and action items for moving forward. This participation represented a cooperative and democratic attempt to better meet the needs of Montana communities and ultimately develop a more sustainable food system.

To learn about the Summit participants and their perceptions of the state of local food and agriculture in Montana, a group of researchers from the University of Montana designed a short survey to be completed by those in attendance (see Appendix). Part of the purpose of the survey was to provide insight regarding the extent to which individuals involved in Montana’s food and agriculture system are engaging in food democracy. The concept of food democracy relates to citizen engagement and active participation in finding workable solutions to conflicts in the agro-food system (Hassanein 2003:79). The Governor’s Summit not only offered an occasion for citizen engagement, but it also provided a unique chance to learn about the food citizenship patterns of Summit participants. The following report shares those results.

METHODS

We gathered data on some demographics of the Summit participants, their perceptions of the current state of the food and agricultural system in Montana and their visions for the future of that system. Comprised of both closed-form and open-ended questions, the survey was offered both in hard-copy form and electronically through Qualtrics, a web-based survey platform. In a public announcement made on the first day of the Summit and in several reminders, the research team encouraged participants to complete the survey.

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Of the 209 Summit attendees registered, 110 responded to the survey, giving us a response rate of 52.6 percent. While survey researchers disagree about what constitutes an adequate response rate, generally anything below 50 percent is considered poor and over 90 percent is excellent (Neuman 2000:267). Though we have no reason to believe that the other 99 Summit participants would have responded differently than those who did complete the survey, we cannot know for certain. For the purpose of this analysis, we consider our response adequate, but recognize it might not fully reflect all Summit participants' demographics, perceptions and values.

Once the surveys were completed, we used an iterative process to identify themes in participants' responses to open-ended, qualitative questions. All quantitative data was organized using the Qualtrics Research Suite and analyzed for significance. Cross tabulations yielded no statistically significant relationships among variables (e.g., gender).

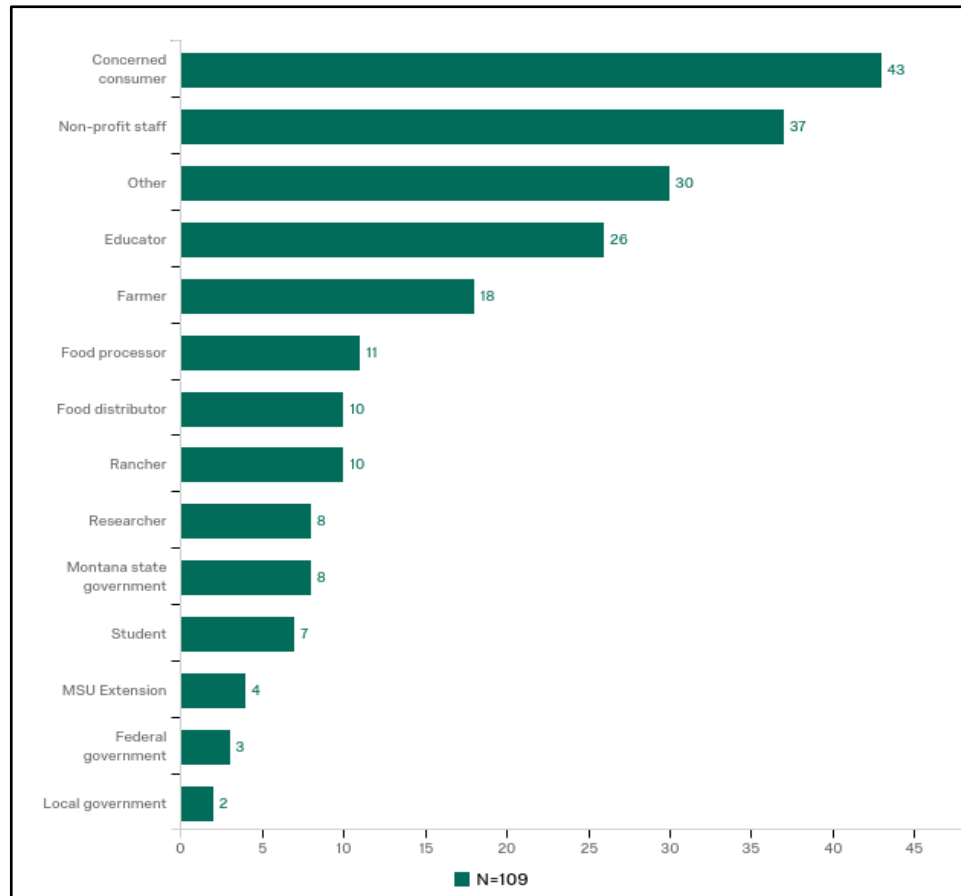


FINDINGS

The following synthesizes responses collected from survey participants. These findings provide insight into the demographics of Summit attendees, their perceptions of the greatest strengths and most significant challenges associated with the current local food and agriculture system, and their vision for that system in 2025.

Demographics. Participants indicated their role(s) in the food system as presented in Figure 1. Forty-three participants identified as concerned consumers, yet only one person reported this to be their only role in the food system. Common roles included: non-profit staff members (34%), farmers and ranchers (26% total), and educators (24%). Thirty people selected “other.”²

Figure 1. Summit Survey Participants' Roles in the Food System



² Other: including non-profit member/board-member, media, caterer, food system advocate, FoodCorps member, chef, healthcare professional, facilitator, business owner/retailer, home gardener, investor, university/college faculty (including tribal colleges), institutional food service professional, legislative candidate.

Participants came from many areas of the state (see Figure 2). Overall, 20 out of Montana’s 56 counties had at least one representative in attendance. Montana State University in Bozeman hosted the event which likely explains why residents of Gallatin County made up the greatest percentage of participants (32%). Participants ranged from 19 to 76 years in age, with the average respondent having been a Montana resident for 21 years (ranged from less than one year to 71 years). Seventy-seven percent of the respondents are women; 33% men.

When asked why they chose to attend the Summit, responses fit into seven general categories: personal interest in the subject matter; to learn; for work or professional reasons; to share ideas and contribute to the discussion; invited as a panelist or speaker; involved in the Summit process.

Figure 2. County of Residence for Survey Participants

County of Residence	Number of Participants
<i>Gallatin</i>	34
<i>Missoula</i>	12
<i>Lewis and Clark</i>	8
<i>Yellowstone</i>	6
<i>Hill</i>	5
<i>Carbon</i>	4
<i>Flathead</i>	4
<i>Lake</i>	4
<i>Madison</i>	4
<i>Butte-Silver Bow</i>	3
<i>Cascade</i>	3
<i>Jefferson</i>	3
<i>Park</i>	3
<i>Ravalli</i>	3
<i>Rosebud</i>	2
<i>Broadwater</i>	1
<i>Chouteau</i>	1
<i>Deer Lodge</i>	1
<i>Granite</i>	1
<i>Stillwater</i>	1
<i>Out of State</i>	3

State of Local Food and Agriculture in Montana. The local food system in Montana has undergone many changes since the 2007 Governor’s Summit. In order to better understand perceptions on the state of local agriculture, we asked survey participants to rank Montana’s local food and agricultural system on a scale from “thriving” to “struggling” (Figure 3). We also asked them to consider the changes that have been made in the food system over the past decade and to rate the progress or lack thereof (Figure 4).

The responses to these two questions indicates a positive perspective on the state of Montana’s local food and agricultural system. Of the 108 survey respondents, 48% view the local food system as doing well or thriving. Furthermore, 94% of participants perceived that Montana’s food system has made progress over the past decade. While this may be evidence that improvements have been made since the last Governor’s Summit on Food and Agriculture, many participants also shared their concerns with the food system.

Figure 3. Perspectives on Montana’s Local Food and Agriculture System Today

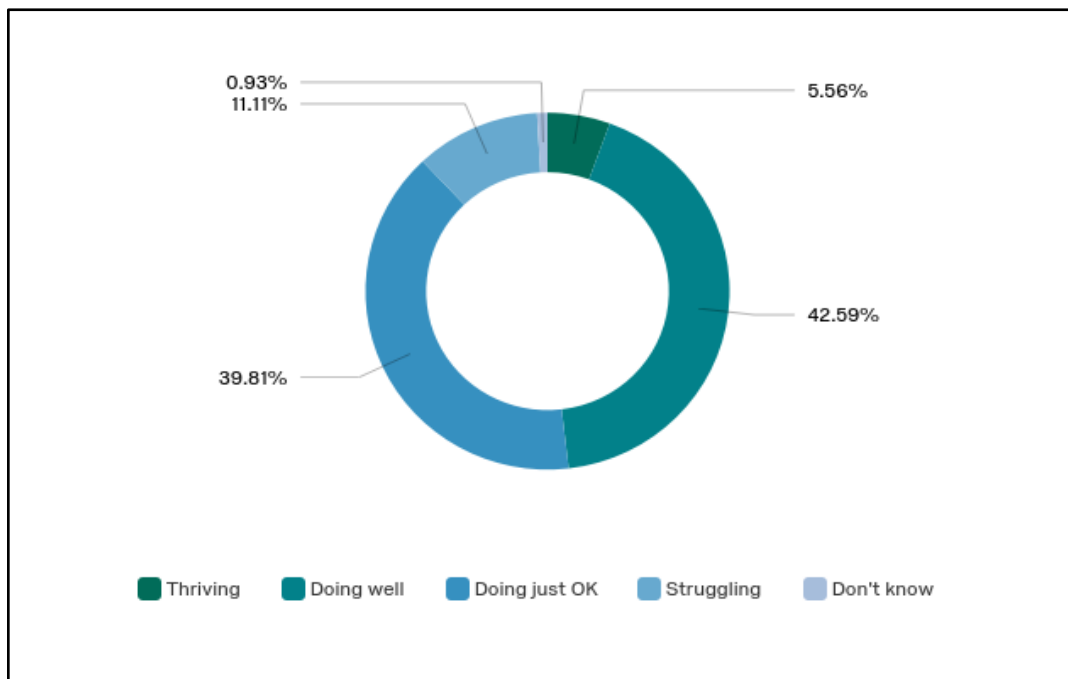
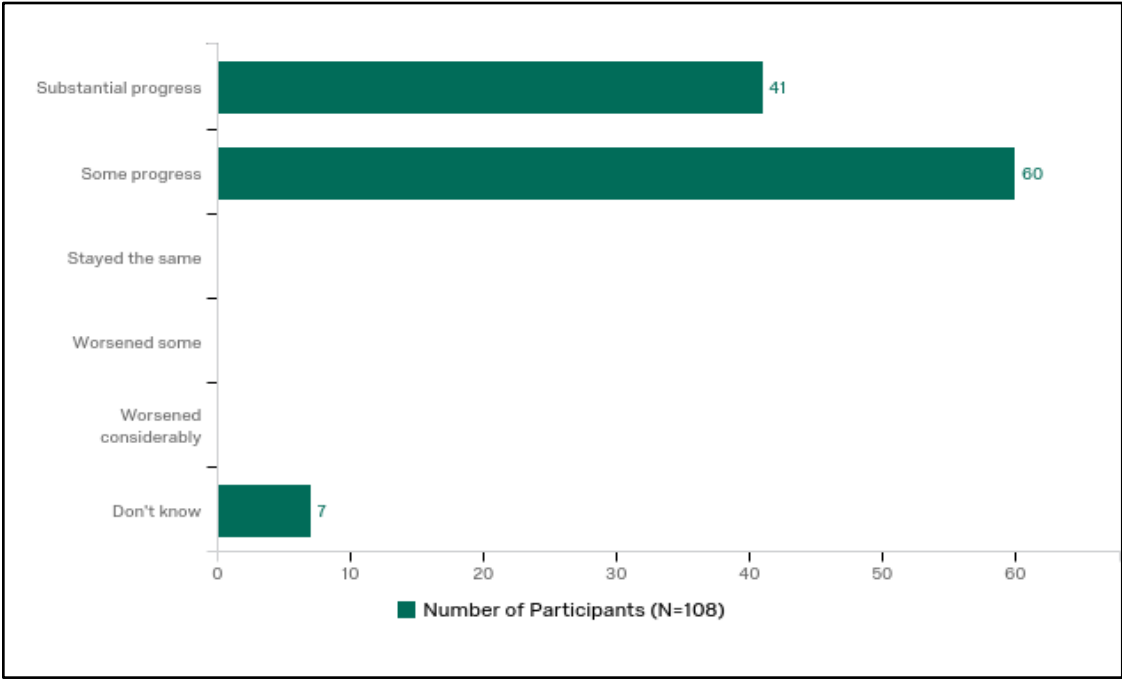


Figure 4. Perceptions of Progress Made in Montana’s Local Food System over the Last Decade



To help us identify the problems of Montana’s local food system as well as its assets, we asked participants to respond to the following open-ended questions: *What do you think is the most valuable strength that Montana’s local food and agricultural system has going for it? What do you think is the most significant challenge that Montana’s local food and agricultural system faces?*

Most Valuable Strengths. When asked to identify the greatest strengths of Montana’s food and agricultural system, four overarching themes emerged in the responses: the social networks and dedicated individuals working to strengthen the food system, or Montana’s *social capital*; Montana’s *production capabilities*; *consumer support* for local food and markets; and the existing *local food infrastructure* that functions as a foundation for building a stronger food system (see Figure 5).

Seventy-five percent of all respondents noted aspects relating to *social capital* as our most valuable strengths (N81). Many respondents cited the people within the local food system—and specifically their commitment, dedication, passion and “grit”—as our greatest asset (N34). The tendency for the food system to be community-oriented was seen as another strength (N7). These individual human and social attributes described people in all roles of the food system, from advocates, to farmers, to engaged Montana citizens. In particular, the innovation

and resilience of Montana’s farmers and producers, was seen as a major strength (N6). Along with these qualities, respondents viewed the relationships and collaborative efforts within communities and across the state to be a significant asset (N19). Such collaborative action—a key dimension of food democracy—cultivates a shared vision and a willingness to work together (Hassanein 2008: 290). Another concept that emerged as a valuable social resource was the sense of pride people feel for Montana and in its products and people (N7). Montana has a strong agricultural heritage, an asset identified by several participants, and this “history embedded in agriculture” speaks to the experience of producers as well as a commitment to an agricultural lifestyle (N5).

Figure 5. Strengths of Montana’s Local Food and Agriculture System

OVERARCHING THEMES	DIMENSIONS
<p>Social Capital (N=81)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people involved • Relationships and collaborative efforts • Community • Pride and sense of place • Farmers who are innovative and resilient • Montana’s agricultural heritage • Small population
<p>Production Capabilities (N=28)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plentiful land base • Ability to produce diverse, high-quality products
<p>Consumer Support (N=14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appeal of local foods and local food production
<p>Local Food Infrastructure (N=4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The systems currently in place

The second major theme centered around the *production capabilities* of the state (N28). Montana is the nation’s fourth largest state and has a great deal of land suitable for production (N17). As one participant stated, Montana has the “available acreage to produce quality foods.” In addition to our vast land base, participants commented on our ability to grow diverse crops and quality products (N11).

Consumer support for local food markets was another major strength identified by survey participants (N14). The public is interested in local food, and many consumers are choosing local products (N9). Five participants specifically noted that the appeal of local foods—such as the creation of local jobs and its proximity to markets, as well as its reputation for being “cool”

and “sexy”—is a significant contributor to consumer demand for local products (N5). Having such a supportive consumer base is an essential part of our local food system.

The final theme that came through in participant responses related to the current *local food infrastructure*. Montana already is home to an existing local food system, and the systems in place that currently support it are a major asset as we continue to grow our local food system (N4). Some of the infrastructure mentioned included local markets and global relations, existing social networks and local food programs (such as Farm 2 College and the Homegrown Certification).

One participant replied that the most valuable strengths Montana’s local food and agricultural system has going for it are, “good natural resources, great human resources.” This response succinctly encapsulates the primary themes that emerged through the survey responses: the state of Montana has a great deal of agricultural land with high production capabilities, but it is the work of the people involved and the relationships formed that are perceived as the most significant assets.

Most Significant Challenges. Participants expressed a number of concerns when asked to state what they perceive to be the biggest challenge facing the local food and agricultural system in Montana (see Figure 6). Responses to this question can be categorized into eight main themes: 1) challenges with Montana’s *in-state infrastructure*; 2) challenges related to the *environment*; 3) the difficulty of influencing dominant *cultures and behaviors* of citizens and consumers; 4) pressure from the *dominant agri-food system*; 5) *economic viability* of local food and agriculture; 6) *access to food*; 7) *regulatory and policy-related* challenges; and 8) the general *shortage of new farmers*. The following paragraphs will discuss the main dimensions of each challenge as noted.

Over one-third of all participants commented on *in-state infrastructure* as a challenge (N41). Within this theme, responses fell into several sub-categories. Distribution was noted as a significant challenge by many survey participants, specifically in terms of transportation costs and the size of the state (N26). This concept encompassed the difficulty of local food being distributed to rural communities, the challenge for small producers to distribute widely, and the inefficiencies of our current transportation system. Another category of responses related to processing: seven participants stated that the lack of processing facilities was the greatest challenge facing Montana’s local food and agricultural system (N7). A need for more education (N4) and better branding of local food (N1) were also mentioned as significant.

Figure 6. Challenges facing Montana’s Local Food and Agriculture System

OVERARCHING THEMES	DIMENSIONS
IN-STATE INFRASTRUCTURE (N=41)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution • Lack of processing facilities • Need for more education • Lack of effective marketing
ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES (N=24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate • Water • Short growing season • Loss of agricultural land
CULTURE AND BEHAVIORS (N=22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and personal values • Attitudes • Consumer interest • Collaboration and relationships
DOMINANT AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM (N=15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure from industrial food system • Consolidation of corporate power • Competitive advantage with economies of scale • Industrialized farming practices
ECONOMIC VIABILITY (N=15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevailing economic system • Access to capital
ACCESS TO FOOD (N=12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability • Access in rural areas
POLICY & REGULATION (N=11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government interference • Lack of supportive local food policies
NEW FARMERS (N=6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to capital • Aging farm population

Another theme that emerged centered around challenges related to the *environment* (N24). The primary concern had to do with the impacts of climate change to production (N10). While most of these comments explicitly mentioned climate change as a significant cause for concern, one simply identified “climate” as a challenge—this concern is perhaps best categorized with other environmental challenges, including Montana’s short growing season (N3) and issues related to water (N2). Another key concern was the loss of agricultural land to development (N9). As one respondent stated: “Preservation of ag land is the best first step to ensuring food security for Montanans.” Development, changing climates, and other environmental factors impact the production capabilities of Montana’s agricultural lands, which was identified by participants as a primary asset of the food and agricultural system.

Twenty-two respondents suggested that a significant challenge for the local food system is influencing the *values and behaviors* of citizens and consumers (N22). Many participants cited that cultural values and opinions surrounding local food production and procurement often function as barriers to local food becoming more mainstream (N10). Working to expand consumer interest for local products was seen as a challenging task (N2), but a necessary one for developing a more vibrant food system. Attitude is another barrier to the local food and agricultural system: being apathetic to the issue of local food production or becoming hopeless (N1). As one participant argued, “changing mindsets” is the most challenging task that faces the local food and agricultural system. Finally, while the networks and relationships among those involved in Montana’s local food and agricultural system were seen by participants as a major strength, nine respondents commented on the need to build stronger relationships between groups with differing ideologies and wanted to see a more inclusive food advocacy process (N9).

Another distinct category that emerged was related to the *economic viability* of local food and agricultural production (N15). Insufficient access to capital and other resources constituted a significant barrier for local producers (N5). Adequate and reliable funding for local food advocates, educational and training programs, land acquisition assistance, and marketing campaigns could also be unreliable (N1). Finally, eight participants specifically cited the current economic system, which favors corporate farming and “puts little value on external costs,” as a major financial obstacle for many local farming operations (N8).

In a similar vein, the *dominant agri-food system*, which is characterized by industrialized farming practices and the consolidation of corporate power, was identified as a major concern by about 14% of participants (N15). Due to their ability to mass produce goods at a cheaper cost, these producers often have a competitive advantage over small-scale, local farmers due to economies of scale. In order to compete, many local farmers are pressured into adopting industrialized farming practices, a point of concern for several survey respondents (N3).

Difficulties related to *food access* was seen as a major challenge by many survey participants (N12). Respondents noted that affordability and accessibility of local foods are significant barriers for many low-income families and for tribal communities (N5). As one participant stated, the biggest challenge facing Montana’s local food system is “becoming affordable/mainstream.”

Many participants expressed dissatisfaction with current *policies and regulations* regarding local food systems (N11). Specifically, participants noted a “lack of supportive policy to encourage local foods in Montana” and “not enough progressive food policy.” While some

participants were critical of the lack of policies supporting local food systems (N7), others voiced concern for government interference (N2). These opposing perspectives both speak to the challenges surrounding the role of government in Montana's food and agricultural system, representing a lack of consensus among participants. Two participants cited the current political landscape as an obstacle to establishing an effective and policy-supported local food system (N2).

The final theme that emerged related to the fact that the average age of farmers in Montana is steadily rising. Concern about the *shortage of new farmers* was expressed by six participants (N6). Again, access to capital for beginning farmers was noted as a significant challenge, and a major factor in deterring would-be farmers (N1).

Engagement in Food Democracy. At the heart of *food democracy*—a theoretical framework for understanding the role of civic engagement in determining agri-food policies and practices—is the idea of “effective coalitions [working] toward sustainability” and individuals engaging in “meaningful participation” in the governance and shaping of their food system (Hassanein 2008:290). According to the framework, meaningful participation includes: (1) gaining *knowledge* relevant to food systems in order to effectively participate in affecting change, (2) *exchanging ideas* with others and engaging in deliberation, (3) developing *efficacy* as an actor within the food system, and (4) promoting *community-oriented* solutions to problems. The Governor's Summit was an opportunity for food system actors to share information and ideas, and work together to improve the local food system. That is, participation in the Summit itself served as an occasion to engage in food democracy.

In order to better understand the involvement of Summit participants in the democratic process of agri-food politics, as well as how effective they viewed their participation to be, we asked these two questions: *Over the course of the last year, how often have you participated, on average, in civic, political, or service activities? Overall, how much impact do you think people like yourself can have in improving Montana's local food and agricultural system?*

Figure 7 shows how often respondents participated in civic, political or service activities in the past year. Nearly everyone reported involvement on at least an annual basis (99%), with 51% indicating frequent participation (two or more times per month). Furthermore, when asked what sort of impact their engagement has on improving Montana's food system, 86% reported feeling that their actions have at least a moderate impact (Figure 8). As will be discussed further in this report's conclusion, these findings suggest that the majority of survey respondents are active food citizens who experience a sense of efficacy with respect to their contributions to the food system.

Figure 7. Reported Participation in Civic, Political, or Service Activities over Past Year

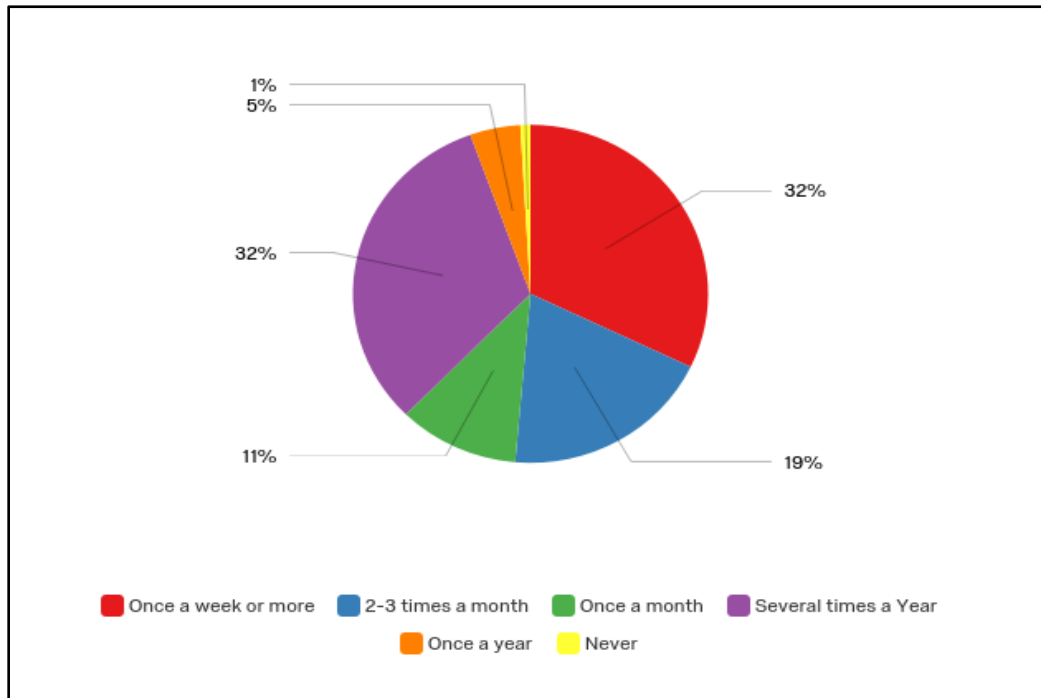
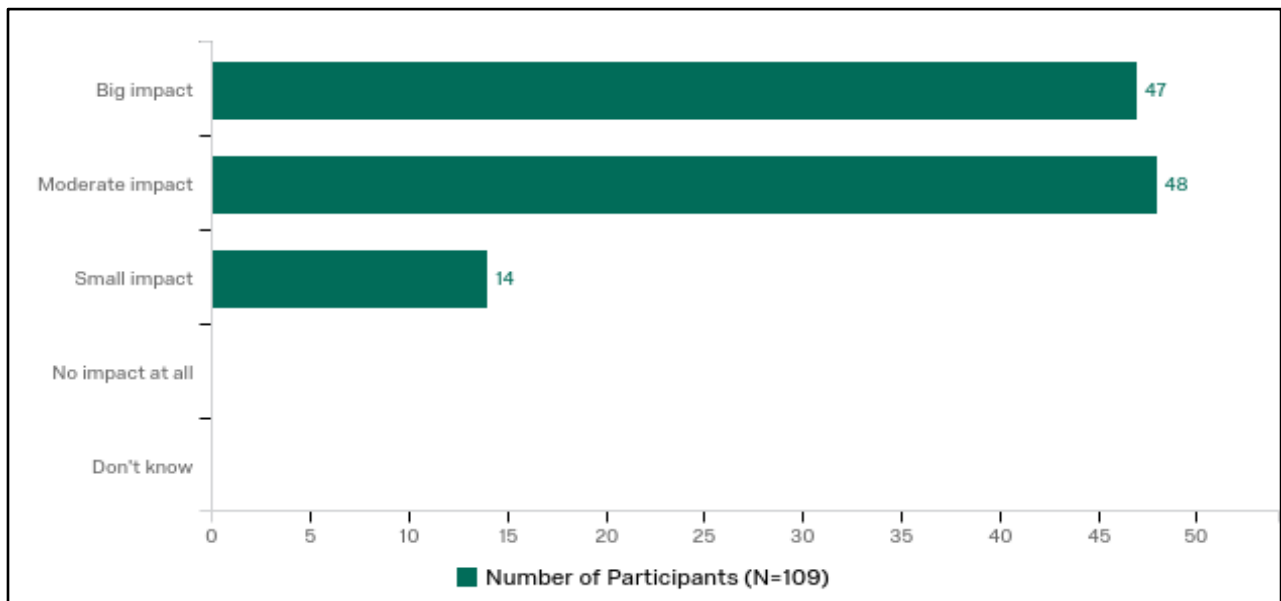


Figure 8. Amount of Impact Respondent Feels They Have in Improving MT’s Local Food and Ag System



Data presented in Figure 9 were derived from questions we asked as part of a larger study on food democracy. While a full discussion is beyond our scope in this report, a brief glimpse at the kinds of values and behaviors food citizens in Montana report is interesting. Items in Figure 9

are listed in descending order based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the statement was “very true” for them. Note, for instance, the very strong agreement with the belief that food is a basic human right (Row #1), but far fewer report feeling a strong sense of responsibility for hunger and food insecurity in their community (Row #9). Different democratic theories place emphasis on citizenship conveying certain rights (afforded to all, guaranteed), versus implying certain responsibilities (e.g., through volunteerism). Many reported that they consider food and agricultural concerns when they vote; this reply may have been influenced by the fact that the survey was administered a couple of weeks before a major national election. Far fewer reported talking with friends, family, and government officials about such topics (Rows 10 & 11).

Figure 9. Perspectives and Reported Behaviors on Various Food-Related Concerns (N=108)

Row #	Indicate the degree to which each of the following is true for you	Very true	Somewhat true	Not true	Don't know
1	I believe safe & nutritious food should be considered a basic human right guaranteed to all people.	93.52%	3.70%	0.93%	1.85%
2	I consider food and agricultural concerns when I vote.	85.32%	10.09%	4.59%	0.00%
3	I feel government should be doing more to protect agricultural land in the face of rapid development.	81.65%	13.76%	4.59%	0.00%
4	I am willing to pay more for food produced in Montana.	81.48%	16.67%	0.93%	0.93%
5	One reason I enjoy working on food system issues is because of the relationships I build with others.	77.06%	20.18%	0.92%	1.83%
6	I am concerned about consolidation and lack of competition in the dominant food system.	74.07%	19.44%	6.48%	0.00%
7	I think Montana's food and agricultural system is at serious risk from the impacts of climate change.	64.81%	24.07%	8.33%	2.78%
8	I tend to have more trust in the safety of food grown by MT farmers.	62.96%	26.85%	7.41%	2.78%
9	I feel a strong sense of responsibility for addressing hunger and food insecurity in my community.	61.47%	34.86%	1.83%	1.83%
10	I devote time to talking with friends and family about the need to improve Montana's food system.	58.72%	34.86%	6.42%	0.00%
11	I often communicate my opinions on food and agricultural issues to government officials.	36.11%	41.67%	22.22%	0.00%

Vision for the Future of Local Food and Agriculture in Montana. As the purpose of the Governor’s Summit was for participants to collaboratively strategize to build the local food economy, working to articulate a common vision for the state’s local food and agricultural system was an essential component. On the first day, attendees participated in a visioning exercise that helped guide discussions throughout the conference. Because this visioning process is such a vital part of shaping future policies and actions, we asked survey respondents

to share up to three words or phrases that best describe their vision for Montana’s local food and agricultural system in 2025. We received nearly 300 words and phrases from participants describing their vision, presented in Figures 10 and 11. Through an iterative process of categorization, we identified 20 overarching themes that emerged to describe the future of the local food economy and agricultural system.

Figure 10. Visions for Montana’s Local Food and Agricultural System in 2025

THEMES	TIMES MENTIONED
Vibrant and Thriving	67
Sustainable	30
Diverse	27
Accessible	24
Healthy and of High Quality	19
Mainstream	19
Community-Oriented	16
Local	14
Education	11
Collaborative	10
Processing	9
Adaptive	8
Valued	7
Innovative	7
Distribution	6
Food Security	5
Progressive	3
Transparent	3
Supported by Policy	1
Empowering	1

These vision terms suggest that Summit participants envision a food system that, above all, is thriving, meaning a local food system that is profitable, effective, viable for beginning farmers, resilient, and supported by customers (N67). Furthermore, participants envision a sustainable food system that reliably produces diverse, quality goods that are both affordable and available to all Montana communities. The terms used by participants paints a hopeful vision, in which the challenges that the food system currently faces are overcome, and the current strengths are enhanced.

communities. Participants shared ideas and information and collaborated to design a strategy for the coming decade. This active engagement in the civic process is an example of food democracy at work. As our data shows, collaboration and a willingness to work together are viewed as significant strengths currently exhibited by actors in the local food system, indicating events such as the Governor's Summit are valued tools in maintaining a strong food system based on working relationships.

While survey participants noted a variety of challenges that face Montana's food system, the terms they used to describe their vision for the future overlap with the strengths they identified in the current system. This is perhaps the most salient finding that resulted from the analysis of the survey data. For example, respondents perceive our diverse production capabilities to be a valuable strength, and also envision a food system that can produce diverse, quality products and distribute them to all Montana communities. Similarly, respondents recognize the strength of social networks and the energy of individuals in the shaping the food system, and visualize a collaborative, community-oriented and innovative food system in the coming decade. This overlap suggests that Montana has the scaffolding of a thriving, sustainable, and accessible local food system, but work must be done to enhance our existing efforts.

Our data represents the perceptions of a portion of the people who are most active in trying to shape an alternative food and agricultural system in Montana, and thus is limited in generalizability. In order to effectively implement the policies and programs that best suit the needs of our state, research encompassing a wider range of participants ought to be conducted, especially with more specific questions regarding policy and infrastructure. Our findings illuminate the perspectives of those Summit participants who responded to the survey and help to frame their engagement in the food system in terms of food democracy.

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CHAPTER TWO

LOCAL FOOD MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING

Lauren Johnson*

INTRODUCTION

In Track 1 of the Governor’s Summit on Local Food and Agriculture, participants deliberated the “Challenges of Local Food and Agriculture Manufacturing and Processing.” This track explored how food processing and distribution in Montana could increase 25% by 2025. Participants considered certain core questions posed by facilitators, envisioned the ideal future of food processing and distribution in the state, drafted initiatives, and planned actions steps to meet their goals.

PROCESS

To begin with, facilitators asked the 30-35 participants to stand up to identify their affiliation to different categories of food systems work. About half of the room identified as either a farmer, manufacturer, or producer. Three participants worked in food access or distribution (e.g., Montana Food Bank Network, Food Services of America, and an online farmers’ market). The University of Montana (UM) and Montana State University (MSU) were represented by three students, an extension agent, the Director of MSU’s Dietetic Internship program, and an advisor for MSU’s new hospitality program. Two panelists came from Oregon State University’s (OSU) Food Innovation Center, and they worked directly with the groups during action planning. Seven participants worked or volunteered for an economic development district or a nonprofit; most of the organizations represented had started or hoped to start some sort of food hub, online farmers’ market, or food processing program. MSU’s Food and Process Specialist was also present, along with the general manager of a community food co-op.

Facilitators broke the participants up into five smaller groups for the majority of the session. The participant make-up of these smaller groups changed several times early in the process, though participants later stayed in the same groups from initiative development through action planning. For these final steps, participants chose an initiative to work on. The facilitators encouraged participants to create diverse groups to avoid the overrepresentation of one interest or demographic (i.e., a group of entirely students). Diversity within groups occurred naturally, however, as participants themselves held many roles and interests.

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Track 1 participants consistently identified the importance of collaboration and cooperation to stimulate food processing and distribution in Montana. From the beginning, participants suggested the need for state-wide planning efforts by agencies and organizations working together to solve common problems, and producers and manufacturers cooperating to avoid destructive competition. Collaboration informs many of the resulting initiatives and action steps.

Core Questions. Facilitators posed the following questions to participants to guide their thinking:

1. How do we develop value chains/networks of food manufacturers in Montana to increase our efficiencies? What are key strategies we need to stimulate a robust supply chain of local food to local/regional markets?
2. How do we increase our food production and distribution of Montana grown food by 25% in 2025? What are the essential resources that food processors need to expand their operations?
3. How do we encourage entrepreneurship to facilitate the development of new businesses?
4. How can agencies and statewide partners meet the educational and resource needs of food processors in fulfilling new and upcoming food safety regulations?

Participants answered these questions many times throughout the action planning process. The initiatives and action steps that the group identified often addressed all of these questions, or at least several of them, at once. Indeed, while each priority may fall under one question in particular, steps within that priority often answer one of the other questions as well.

Keynote Presentation. Neil C. Doty, Technical Director and Consultant to food processing businesses at the Northern Crops Institute, kicked off Track 1 with a presentation. Doty described the steps necessary to start a successful business venture, including conducting a feasibility study and writing a business plan. A feasibility study ascertains if your plan is worth pursuing. Doty then stressed the absolute necessity of writing your own business plan, based upon your feasibility study, to succeed. The business plan pinpoints who will manage your business; projected sales and product selling price; and the necessary profit margin to bring in revenue.

Finally, Doty introduced the concept of Red and Blue Oceans. A red ocean is a saturated market; your product is merely one of many others like it, undifferentiated from the competition. A Blue Ocean is an uncontested market because your product is categorically different from competitors. Doty emphasized the importance of creating a product that sails in the Blue Ocean. In other words, he advised participants to invest in products that customers feel is special. While discussing the presentation in smaller groups, one group stated that

Montana should create a statewide business plan for food production, manufacturing, and distribution. Although a business plan is only used for individual businesses, the implication was that stakeholders across the state should plan collaboratively with the kind of depth and detail that Doty described.

Panel. Six panelists well versed in food processing and product development presented to the group, grounding participants in a context of real world challenges and successes. The panel consisted of:

- Neil Doty, Northern Crops Institute;
- Claude Smith, MSU's Food and Process Specialist;
- Christina Angell, Root Cellar Foods;
- Jan Tusick, Lake County Community Development Corporation; and
- Sara Masoni and Jason Ball, Oregon State University's Food Innovation Center.

Claude Smith of Montana State University underscored the huge importance of food safety, especially since the passage of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act in 2011, the largest overhaul of food safety law in 70 years. Smith described food safety as a process: evaluating each stage of production for potential food safety risks and considering what could go wrong.

Jan Tusick works with **Lake County Community Development Corporation**, which runs the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center. The Center's greatest challenge is finding a labor pool that can deal with inconsistencies in the supply chain: work is only available when there is produce, requiring flexibility in their employees. Further, the Center must retrain employees on food safety constantly to ensure that each different process fulfills all legal requirements.



Neil Doty built on his keynote presentation by providing examples of Blue Oceans that he had created in his own career.

Christina Angell spoke about her business, **Root Cellar Foods**, a small for-profit, vegetable processor in Belgrade that buys local vegetables, processes them, and sells them in the area. No other for-profit business in the country was doing the same thing, and Angell highlighted the

difficulty of making everything up as they went along. She also identified pricing as a huge barrier: industrially produced shredded carrots are cheaper, for example, than raw local carrots.

Sara Masoni of OSU's Food Innovation Center stressed the importance of knowing what specialty crops (fruit, vegetables, nuts, etc.) are grown in Montana. Taking these crops to the first level of value added (i.e., chopping or drying them) represents low-hanging fruit in stimulating Montana's food processing sector. Further, Masoni identified a need to evaluate what Montana-made value-added products are currently available so that institutional buyers know their options and new businesses know potential market gaps to fill.

Jason Ball of the Food Innovation Center advised entrepreneurs to consider the top three food trends: health and wellness; transparency (customers understand the origin and manufacturing process of your product); and making more with less by utilizing food waste, using less labor and fewer ingredients, and staying as local as possible. The panel considered challenges in small-scale food processing, identified opportunities for growth, and stressed the absolute importance of food safety, information that undoubtedly guided participants in the following steps.

Opportunities and Challenges. Participants identified the following opportunities and challenges in creating a healthier food processing sector in Montana. Facilitators instructed each small group to write 4-5 opportunities and challenges on separate sticky notes and post them at the front of the room. Facilitators grouped similar notes together and recorded them as one idea.

Challenges

- Marketing
- Transportation/distribution/aggregation
- Montanans don't collaborate: neighbor as a competitor
- Barriers to infrastructure
- Need for more capital, labor, food safety resources
- Montana has a huge land area with a low population density
- Economy of scale: difficult for a small processor to compete with the big guys
- Land: protecting land, the high cost of land
- Lack of reliable labor

Opportunities

- Montana's incredible resource base for agricultural production
- Create a food science lab—invent value added products with pulse crops
- Use empty buildings and closed schools for processing and education opportunities

- Utilize existing school kitchens for agribusinesses during off-hours
- Create regional food processing facilities and help existing manufacturers grow
- Cross-dock with empty refrigerated trailers
- State inspected poultry processing facility
- Job creation that stays in the state
- Innovate with food waste
- Farm to School used to expand markets for local foods



Visioning and Initiatives. Facilitators asked participants to write 4 or 5 expressions of what they hope Montana’s food processing sector will look like by 2025. Track facilitators grouped like-visions together, identifying four themes that led to the following four initiatives: instituting a tax credit for agribusinesses; providing each region with a Farm to School coordinator; creating a statewide food policy council; expanding Food and Agriculture Development Centers; and increasing support for meat processors. As mentioned above, participants chose which initiative they worked on and stayed with that topic through the end of the conference.

ACTION PLANNING

During the second day of the conference, participants worked in their previous groups to plan next steps, identify potential partners, and lay out timelines to make their initiatives a reality. Within the strategies that participants laid out, the following themes recurred:

- A need for assessment of the current state of production

- A need for increased training in production and processing
- A need to assist producers and processors to understand the business planning process and existing food safety regulations
- The opportunity to use existing facilities for processing
- The possibility of leveraging existing positions, such as school food service directors, to increase the demand for locally produced food
- The importance of collaborating with all stakeholders
- The necessity of creating new sources of capital for Montana-owned agribusinesses, as well as funding sources to increase the demand for local food in institutions
- The prospect of a new Food Policy Council to pick up many initiatives and continue action planning

What follows is a brief outline of the main goals from the action plan. Please see the full action plan document for details.

1. Legislate a tax credit for agribusiness for value-added processing (similar to the one in Wisconsin) by April 2017.
2. Employ Regional Farm to School Coordinators Across the State. Increase the amount of local food served in schools. Develop mentorship/training programs to connect high school kids to food/ag/culinary industry to create new generation of food entrepreneurs.
3. Implement a statewide food policy council that incorporates diverse stakeholders to create and advocate for local food policy
4. Increase support for meat processors to meet state demands, while not decreasing sanitation or food safety
5. Expand Food and Agriculture Development Center Network. Eliminate the limits on the Food and Ag Development Center Network (FADCN) and expand existing centers to include food processing centers (not just ag.) Employ at least one food scientist in Montana to develop value added products for this state's processors and producer

OBSERVATIONS

The overall design of the Summit rested upon participants identifying problems and solutions within Montana's local food system. Typical conferences privilege experts through presentations. Aside from a series of introduction speakers, two keynote speakers, and a panel presenting to each track, the Summit centered on the voices of participants. This design contributed to a balanced decision making process that seemed to empower all participants,

regardless of their background, to speak up. The panelists contributed to this by giving participants up-to-date knowledge on which to build their deliberation.

Track 1 participants consistently identified collaboration and cooperation as vital components to reinvigorating Montana’s food processing sector. During the visioning process, collaboration was mentioned by 3 of 5 tables. One group said that Montana should have a “shared vision” of its food system, underscoring the need for collaborative planning. Another called for “an overarching organization to keep us all organized” (which turned into the Food Policy Council during action planning). A third group hoped for a “statewide change in mindset between producers and processors to be more community minded. [We need to be] not as competitive and work together.”

Participants consistently identified grower’s co-ops and food hubs as important points of leverage for food systems planning. During the initiative phase, one table suggested more shared marketing “like a farmers’ cooperative.” Another initiative called for more community-owned food processing equipment, and another plainly stated that “we should have something like the Western Montana Growers’ Co-Op here in the Gallatin [Valley]” (referring to a successful growers’ cooperative based in Missoula). One group explained



cooperation among growers as such: when farmers are “not competing over one another, everyone gets their fair share. Otherwise, the vegetable prices go up and it makes it really hard to be a processor because then you are paying even more money.”

Although participants also identified the competitive nature of the food processing sector, they demonstrated an interest in setting up systems to enable entrepreneurs to cooperate more and in bringing stakeholders together to plan strategically. One unacknowledged conflict arises in the subject of pricing: producers observed the importance of farmers not competing so that prices don’t go too low, while processors hoped that farmers would sell equally to all processors so that prices don’t go too high. Although participants never realized this conflict, it is obvious that participants placed a lot of hope that cooperation among businesses would lead to fair prices for everyone involved.

This summit aimed to leave participants with a sense that they could make changes in their food system. A casual conversation outside of the Summit agenda pointed to this sense of efficacy in Track 1:

Participant 1: We had so much energy after last time [Governor's Summit] and then we nose-dived.

Participant 2: I question that we nose-dived. There's amazing work being done. We just need to figure out how to communicate with each other better and make sure we all know what everyone else is doing.

Participant 3: Are we dealing with the same problems now as we did from 9 years ago? No, it's different, we're talking about different things—well, there's your movement. We're dealing with different problems than from 9 years ago.

Here, Participant 1 worries that the energy created during the Summit would dissipate after the conference ended. Participant 2 turns the conversation around, however, pointing to the need for collaboration to keep the work of the Summit going, while Participant 3 makes room for participants to appreciate how much has happened since the previous Governor's Summit nine years ago. This exchange epitomizes the sense of efficacy in Track 1: a general confidence in the planning process, a slight fear that nothing would come of it, and a bolstering of hope from people who point to all the progress that had been made. This highlights a possible change to future Summits: to feel truly effective, participants need to know what will happen with their action plans. In effect, Summit organizers should better plan what they aim to do with the action plans and communicate this with all participants from the outset.

Perhaps as a result of not knowing who would move their action plans forward, many groups within Track 1 included the Food Policy Council in some step of their plan, expecting it to continue the planning and implementation process, especially when it came to policy initiatives. In effect, participants pointed to the need of an identified actor who would continue their work after the Summit. This indicates a sense of realism about the Summit's efficacy—that the action planning stage would only create change if a group carried the work on. Planning with this eventuality in mind—that action steps would be taken up by the Council—allowed participants to think within the realm of the probable, while still targeting important points of change. The groups found efficacy *within* collaboration at the conference and, perhaps more importantly, beyond the conference.

Finally, participants exhibited a solid understanding of their food system during their planning efforts. An intimate knowledge of the food system guides informed decision making because it is difficult to change a system that you do not understand. Participants identified problems within their food system that pointed to their understanding of it: specific critiques that someone could only know if they were engaged with the process. For example, participants identified the need for “more slaughter places,” “community sales yards so that animals do not have to be moved as far,” and a “centralized database for the processing side of things” so that

producers and processors could more easily communicate. These kinds of actionable, tangible goals could only come from people who have a working understanding of their food system.

An example of successful knowledge transfer occurred while a group planned for improving the state's meat processing system. Participants identified a bottle-neck in the meat processing industry, citing the long waiting period for small producers. MSU's Food and Process Specialist worked with this group. During their first report-out after a session of action planning, a group member said "we thought that we needed to relax meat processing standards to open the bottle neck and speed up the process, but [the Food and Process Specialist] let us know that the current standards are good, we don't want to relax them." Although participants knew enough about the food system to identify a specific problem, their lack of expert knowledge within the processing sector became apparent in the presence of such an expert. This sort of knowledge transfer is important—if this group had progressed without the input of the processing specialist, their action plan would have been non-actionable because it would not have reflected the reality of federal food safety regulations. Track 1, then, had a useful mix of expertise that identified the need for collaboration and cooperation within the agrifood sector, allowed participants to feel effective in action planning, and fostered the sharing of knowledge within the group that led to a well-informed action plan.

CONCLUSION

Track 1 participants used their core questions as a basis to envision a food manufacturing economy that is healthy, vibrant, and decentralized. They identified available resources and important partners; recognized gaps in knowledge about the current state of production and manufacturing; considered different methods to increase capital and training for agribusinesses; identified policy and funding needs; and acknowledged the limitations of the process by calling for a Food Policy Council to implement their ideas. Participants answered general questions such as "How do we encourage and assist food entrepreneurship?" with detailed, creative, and thoughtful action plans. Imbued with a sense of efficacy, participants worked together to consider how their food system could better encourage collaboration among agencies, nonprofits, and agrifood businesses for the benefit of Montana's food processing economy.

CHAPTER THREE

FARM TO FOLK: ECONOMIC AND HEALTH BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES

Kaitlin McCafferty*

INTRODUCTION

In October 2016, Montana’s second “Governor’s Local Food and Agriculture Summit” created a space for food and agriculture professionals, as well as other concerned citizens, to “come together, share information, and strategize about the next 10 years of working to build the state’s local food economy” (<https://foodsummit.ncat.org/>). The Summit was mainly broken down into five tracks (with various keynote and lunch sessions where participants of all of the tracks came together as a whole to share). Attendees choose a track and stuck with it throughout the two days. In each track, participants worked to identify challenges and solutions within each assigned realm.



My role in the Summit was to participate and observe Track 2 – “Farm to Folk: Positive Economic and Health Benefits of Communities Becoming Markets for Local Food” — with the assignment to analyze, take notes, and publish a summary-style report. Approximately fifty participants signed up for this track, not including the four facilitators and two note takers. The facilitators kicked off the track by welcoming participants, giving them a chance to introduce themselves to each other, and explaining the layout of the weekend. The purpose of the track structure was to make the Summit a highly participatory event, exploring the opportunities and challenges of a given topic. The goal of the summit was to identify strategic priorities and action steps towards building a local/regional food market in Montana.

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Four **core questions** framed the discussion in the track:

1. What innovative approaches are Montanans currently using to connect food, agriculture, health, and local economies?
2. What are the opportunities for further developing local/regional food markets within Montana? Are there particular needs and opportunities in communities not served well currently, such as Eastern Montana, rural areas, tribes, and people of moderate to low income?
3. What are the barriers to further developing local/regional food markets and other provisioning systems in Montana?
4. What projects, programs, or policies (strategic priorities) can we identify that will help overcome existing barriers? What actions steps need to be taken? By whom and when?

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

The first question, **“What innovative approaches are Montanans currently using to connect food, agriculture, health, and local economies?”** was tackled through two panels and a keynote speaker. The first panel was titled “Innovations in Food Production, Processing and Distribution” and the other, “Innovations in the Marketplace”. Citizens active in Montana’s food system development in these ways stood on the panels. Each panelist spoke for five minutes on his or her current projects, and how they are providing answers to the first core question. They then answered questions from the track participants. During the panels, audience members were instructed to specifically listen for examples of innovation and successes in the local food system that were mentioned, or sparked in the discussion. Participants were to write down these ideas on provided post-it notes, and set them aside for a later activity.

“Innovations in Food Production, Processing and Distribution” included three panelists: Laura Garber from Homestead Organics, Bryan Ulring from Yellowstone Grassfed Beef, and Dave Prather from Western Montana Growers Co-Op.

First up was **Bryan Ulring**, who spoke on his work at **Yellowstone Grassfed Beef (YGB)** and their mission to nourish the community with healthy beef that benefits consumers, the land and Montana. Ulring explained how YGB almost takes an opposite approach to innovation through taking food back to the basics. YGB uses natural ecological processes to raise cattle sustainably in a way that regenerates the land and produces healthy beef for consumers. Ulring noted that transparent relationships are one of the most important parts of his work because, as he sees it, relationships are what connect food, health, and agriculture. Ulring pointed out how the dominant market for conventional agriculture has been successful in the past 40-50 years in a large part because of a lack of transparency. They use strategic marketing to keep their processes hidden and relationships distant, while convincing the consumer that the opposite

reality exists. As consumers begin to realize this, Ullring and YGB are pushing to lead by example in maintaining complete transparency, and to form deep, resilient, and personal relationships with customers. Ullring sees value in his work by nourishing the land, keeping millions of dollars in Montana's local economy, aiding ecological resilience, managing for healthier soil, helping to clean rivers and sustain wildlife habitat, and retaining social resilience by providing millions of meals to family dinner tables, restaurants, and hotels. YGB crosses the boundaries between business and friendships, and consequently builds community through a beef production company.

Next up, **Laura Garber** spoke about a new poultry processing facility installed on her family's farm, Homestead Organics, near Hamilton in the Bitterroot Valley. Garber, who has been farming for 18 years, described many of their activities, including: a regular farmers market, open farm tours, a value-added shop, small animals for children to pet, and a catering business. Homestead Organics also regularly holds events, such as fundraisers and weddings, on the farm. The latest project to take place at Homestead is the creation of **an inspected processing facility for the Montana Poultry Growers Cooperative**. Previously, it was nearly impossible for independent, small-scale growers to afford to process their poultry in accordance with laws and regulations. Garber and her team recognized this problem, and raised the seed money needed to launch a processing facility for the Co-Op. They raised about \$180k, and built a facility that meets all poultry processing standards. This facility makes it possible for anyone in Montana to process chickens legally. Anyone who belongs to the Co-Op can use the facility, which includes a commercial kitchen where members can also produce value-added food products. Garber's work exemplifies a successful shared business plan that connects community members and helps local businesses thrive.

Dave Prather, General Manager of the Western Montana Growers Co-Op (WMGC), explained their mission to improve local food systems by helping farmers access local and regional markets. WMGC works on capacity building projects with local farmers such as providing



market assessments to find out what consumers are interested in and helping producers and growers meet those demands. Branding and marketing assistance, connections to grocery stores, restaurants and other institutions, as well as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program are among the other services they provide to Montana's farmers. Recently, WMGC has been implementing technology such as a platform that updates growers' stock in real time,

making it possible for consumers to know what goods are available and when. The Western Montana Growers Co-Op provides connection and assistance to its members across the western part of the state. This is a business that supports the type of farmer and consumer who care about local connections and all the benefits that come along with them, an especially important service as Montana grows in population.

After a discussion and a break, the track then moved on to the second panel, titled **“Innovations in the Marketplace.”** It featured Jessica Wilcox from Livingston Health Center, Jill Flores from Montana State University Food Services, Mark LoParco from the University of Montana Dining Services, and Maria Pace from Boulder Elementary School.

First, **Maria Pace, principal at Boulder Elementary,** presented her work prioritizing healthy food options into the school’s cafeteria. With 1600 students in the free and reduced lunch program, the interest for healthier options came about through the community. Three passionate community members started a garden on the campus and advocated for healthier lunch options. Support of a local food system at the school increased with the partnership of Food Corps, as well as with a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), under which they had to increase local food purchasing by 30%. As these changes were implemented, Maria noticed not only a shift in children’s attitudes on healthy eating, but also increase in positive engagement between parents, staff, and children.

Mark LoParco then described the UM Dining’s sustainability and local food purchasing initiatives. Since 2003, Mark made it a priority for his institution to “buy local” in order to support fair wages for Montana’s producers, as well as to build a vibrant and secure food system. UM Dining runs a **Farm-to-College Program** that is nationally recognized. The program spends over \$1 million a year within Montana’s economy. Separate from that, Mark also launched a program that gives loans (payable through produce and without interest) to the local, student-run farm at UM. He has also made a conscious effort to buy value added products from Western Montana Growers Co-Op, Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, and other local vendors. UM Dining also runs gardens on campus which function as learning labs for students and staff, serves approximately seven thousand pounds of organic produce per year, and a hosts a compost program. Overall, UM Dining’s programs reflect a commitment to Montana’s farmers, ranchers, and agricultural landscapes.



Next up was **Jill Flores**, production manager at **Montana State University's (MSU's) Miller Dining Hall**. Jill expressed that MSU's biggest challenges in terms of local food procurement are the large quantities needed and the limited budget she has. Flores stressed how partnerships have been instrumental in getting local food into Miller Dining Hall. Flores has been so creative as to negotiate off-site processing, making it much easier to accept and serve local produce. She also buys local meat at County Fairs. Jill has seen an increase in interest in local food from students and is happy to use her skills to deliver both what the consumers want and what is good for them.

Last to speak was **Jessica Wilcox, registered dietitian at Livingston Health Center**. In 2007, after being unsatisfied with the unhealthy and overly processed options at Livingston's cafeteria, she launched a farm-to-cafeteria campaign. Today, Livingston Health Center buys from 50 local vendors, and 37% of their food budget is spent on local food. The Center has expanded with a new café, Café Fresh. With themed cuisine days and a mission to get people involved in their food system, Café Fresh has been a huge success in both buying local and getting people to eat local.

Next, the keynote of the session, **Michael McCormick from Livingston Food Resource Center**, took the floor. When McCormick started the job, it was the Livingston Food Pantry, operating under a traditional food bank model. McCormick immediately recognized issues with what he realized was a closed loop model; the pantry wasn't helping anyone get out of poverty. He decided to focus on the root causes of poverty, and how his organization could help combat them. McCormick learned that the majority of the food pantry was buying its food from out of state. He also found out that high blood pressure and diabetes were common among the pantry's clients. To keep more money in the Livingston economy, and to get healthier food to the people, he put a strong focus on buying local, fresh produce. He then incorporated cooking demonstrations and classes to educate people. McCormick implemented ways to connect food and the local economy such as opening a bakery in the Center, where clients can work and earn a living baking fresh bread. In his experience transforming the Livingston Resource center to what it is today, Michael has learned that in order to become successful you need to think like marketer, an economic developer, and an innovator. Michael's keynote wrapped up the first part of the day, and the track then moved on to continue answering the core questions.

STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES AND VISIONS

After the panels, the track participants came together as a large group and the facilitators began to direct the discussion towards tackling those four core questions. Question one, "What innovative approaches are Montanans currently using to connect food, agriculture, health, and local economies?" was addressed within the panels, and now the participants got a chance to

contribute their answers. Participants had been instructed to jot down examples of innovations that were either given during the panels or that participants thought of themselves. The track facilitator instructed participants to organize the examples they wrote down into six categories: organizations/agencies, people, policy, programs, business, and other. Flip chart paper for each category was posted around the room and participants hung their innovation examples under the relevant categories. Everyone then walked around the room and read the posts. This activity produced an extensive list of innovative approaches that Montana already has in terms of connecting food, agriculture and local economies.

The next question was: **“What are the opportunities for further developing local/regional food markets within Montana? Are there particular needs and opportunities in communities not served well currently, such as Eastern Montana, rural areas, tribes, and people of moderate to low income?”** In order to tackle this question, participants divided into small groups to discuss both a vision for local food markets in 2026 and to identify opportunities that exist in reaching that vision. Participants discussed these questions, wrote their answers down on large flipchart paper, and presented them to the group as a whole.

Only one group came up with an actual vision statement, declaring that their vision “is to create a culture that values quality food and that the average Montana family can source the majority of their food from local farmers and ranchers.” Other groups came up with general goals rather than vision statements *per se*, including:



- Make local food available and affordable across all socioeconomic classes
- Establish local food businesses to increase community economic revitalization
- Incorporate local food in institutions such as schools and emergency food suppliers
- Establish a local food curriculum requirement for schools
- Preserve agricultural land
- Promote local food through a Public Service Announcement and statewide marketing campaign
- Implement local food issues in state and federal policies through channels, such as the federal Farm Bill and a state “Good Food Policy”

Small groups then listed opportunities for further developing a local/regional food market within Montana. Because the vision statements activity actually produced some opportunities as opposed to vision statements, there was some overlap. Some new ideas were generated, however. Common opportunities that the small groups came up with included:

- Identify and replicate existing successful models that promote local food such as double SNAP dollars and cooperatives
- Create education and training opportunities to teach people how to grow and cook food
- Get more local food in schools
- Create business partnerships that promote local food such as value based supply chains
- Get local food into food banks and resource centers
- Increase community service opportunities dealing with food such as AmeriCorps
- Create a statewide marketing campaign that shares local food stories
- Increase local food’s presence in government through ideas such as a Good Food Policy or elected official involvement
- Create a food budget in city and state government
- Form a food and land coalition
- Integrate sliding-scale price models for local foods in grocery stores and other food businesses
- Create programs to protect agricultural land

CHALLENGES

After these ideas were shared, the group moved onto question three, “What are the barriers to further developing local/regional food markets and other provisioning systems in Montana?” For this question, a similar approach was taken. Participants broke out into small groups, discussed the question, and wrote their answers on flipchart paper. The groups identified challenges such as:

- Secure funding for projects
- Connect buyers to producers
- Create a cohesive local food trademark (too many exist currently)
- Raise minimum wage
- Create space with low income and competing life priorities
- Break down established culture on cheap processed food, as well as the stigma on local food as expensive and only for the elite
- Increase wages for farmers
- Fulfill large demands, consistently, with limited capacity
- Increase access to public information on local/regional food
- Access land
- Resist pressure from developers to sell land
- Secure adequate distribution and processing methods
- Prioritize local food in politics
- Increase number of local food political advocates
- Attain buying power in small communities
- Cope with general effects of climate change
- Navigate the large geography and small population of Montana

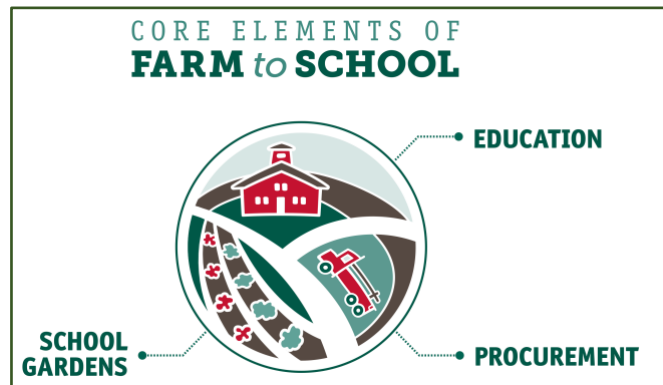
INITIATIVES

The last question asks, **“What projects, programs, or policies (strategic priorities) can we identify that will help overcome existing barriers? What actions steps need to be taken? By whom and when?”** This was tackled first by establishing a list of key initiatives that address the opportunities and challenges previously discussed. Facilitators went through the opportunities presented the previous day, and, with the help of participants, pulled out which opportunities can be implemented as initiatives.

After participants established this list of initiatives, they voted on **the top five** to be turned into action plans. Track members had three votes to select the initiatives they believed to have the most potential to help shift the food system toward their desired future. From the ranking, participants then worked in small groups of their choosing, and developed specific action plans for the following goals. Full plans can be found in a separate report on the Summit website.



1. **Hold both a Regional and a Statewide Montana Food Access Summit.** Create a statewide working forum that connects local food access leaders, physically and digitally, to improve food access in their communities.
2. **Establish a Montana Good Food Policy Council (tribal, regional, local).** Form a Montana Good Food Policy Council and produce a Good Food Policy, informed by a network of local and regional food councils mandated by the Governor.
3. **Hold a Local Food-Purchasing Audit for all Montana’s Public and Private Institutions.** Have a consumer benefit score system similar to restaurant health code ratings, create materials and information to act as a source of understanding for vendors to evaluate themselves, have collected and analyzed data, use data in a study evaluating economic impact of money spent on local food staying in Montana, and use that information to inform public policy.
4. **Launch a Statewide Local Food Marketing Campaign** to inform Montanans that local food is essential to health and wellness, food security, and a vibrant local economy.
5. **Integrate Farm to School into Montana’s Required Core Curriculum.** Form an advisory committee to work with Montana State University to integrate Farm to School into teacher Education and educational leadership programs.



OBSERVATIONS

Overall, the Farm to Folk Track exemplified the effectiveness of citizen participation and democracy when searching for solutions to systemic problems. The encouragement for participation and structure of the track allowed the discussions to be highly participatory. The small group dynamic created opportunities for individuals to be heard, and the facilitators created a space where collaboration seemed to come easy. Participants seemed to feel empowered to share their opinions and be creative.

Possible improvements in the track would include a clearer message on how action plans would be followed up on. The meeting would have benefitted, too, from a more diverse group of people being present. Although a few tribal members were present and engaged in this track, more diversity and attention to tribal concerns specifically would have made the meetings

more inclusive of varying perspectives.

All in all, this style of open, democratic facilitation seemed to lead to a sense of efficacy among participants –food citizens—who show their willingness to develop ideas with others, and hopefully, will take responsibility for their Action Plans, which reflected a wide range of dynamic solutions to the problems in our food system.

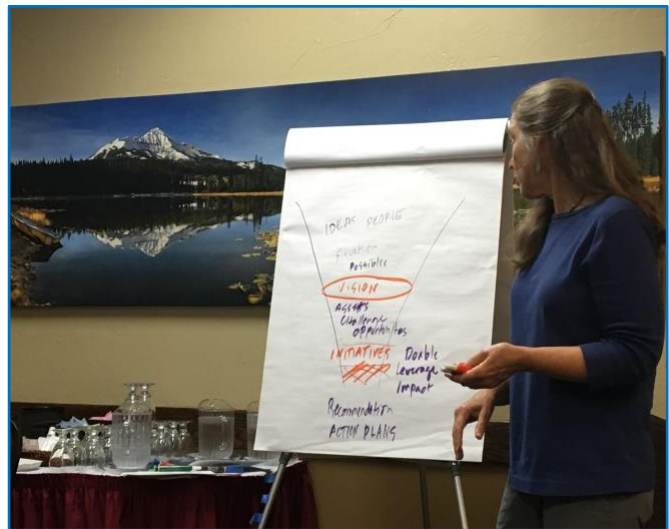
CHAPTER FOUR SUPPORTING A NEW GENERATION OF FARMERS AND RANCHERS

Brittany Palmer*

INTRODUCTION

I attended the 2016 Governor’s Summit on Local Food and Agriculture in Bozeman, Montana in order to follow track three, “Supporting a New Generation of Farmers.” The focus of track three was to contemplate “how [to] assist farmers and ranchers in gaining access to land, capital, markets, mentors, networks, and production education to be the most successful they can be” (NCAT, National Center for Appropriate Technology 2016). Research methodology included participant observation and informal interviews, which took place over the course of the facilitators’ training session, and Friday and Saturday action planning sessions.

Over the course of the two-day Summit, a group of approximately twenty people from across Montana, including two facilitators, came together in this track to discuss the obstacles faced by Montana’s beginning farmers, to consider potential solutions, and to develop plans of action to implement solutions.



The organizational framework for the track was based on five resources that are integral to the success of beginning farmers and ranchers:

1. **Land:** What tools can be created to help beginning farmers find land and be more financially competitive in the land access area?
2. **Capital:** How can we rework or develop new tools to fill financial gaps, including farmers on tribal lands?
3. **Markets:** What infrastructure and/or new market opportunities are needed to allow for the growth of successful, new operations?

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4. **Mentors and Networks:** How can we better connect farmers and service providers across our state to build long-lasting networks?
5. **Production Education:** How can we ensure that beginning farmers are getting sufficient production knowledge before starting farming or planning their operations?

Participants in track three—approximately twenty people—came from a wide variety of backgrounds within the context of the food system, including government agencies such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), AmeriCorps, agricultural extension, the University of Montana, Montana State University, government offices of Steve Daines and Ryan Zinke, and Indian Country Extension. Additionally, representatives from nonprofit organizations, like the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition (CFAC), Gallatin County Food Bank, the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), and private entities, such as healthcare providers, farmers, and ranchers also attended. Facilitators of this track were Annie Heuscher, a program director at the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition (CFAC) who specifically works with beginning farmers and ranchers, and Kristin Blackler, the Sustainability Director at Montana State University.

Over the course of the two-day summit, participants of this track discussed strategies to assist beginning farmers and ranchers during five sessions: a moderated panel; question and discussion; visioning; brainstorming; and action planning. As a result of this track, participants developed four action plans on the topics of: community financing, beginning farmer and rancher training, marketing and recruitment, and policy. These plans were presented to the larger summit audience on the last day of the event. For the remainder of this report, I discuss the process used during the five sessions, then provide outlines of the overall action plan and its four specific goals. Finally, I offer my observations of the decision-making processes within the summit, with specific attention to food democracy, the function of expert knowledge in decision making, and the use of deliberation in democratic decision making.

SESSION 1: MODERATED PANEL

After participants briefly introduced themselves to the larger group, facilitators introduced the five panelists:

- Jim Hafer, a program director and instructor for the Indian Country Extension at Chief Dull Knife College in Lame Deer, MT;
- Dr. Charles Boyer, the Dean of Agriculture at Montana State University;
- Dylan Strike, a beginning farmer and owner of Strike Farms in Bozeman;
- Dr. Anna Jones Crabtree, beginning farmer and co-owner of Villicus Farms near Havre; and
- Annie Heuscher, program director at the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition.

Kristin Blackler, the facilitator leading the moderated panel discussion, asked three questions of the panelists:

1. What key trends are most intriguing to you?
2. What is one big idea we should address, or one big change you would like to see?
3. What are challenges and opportunities we should strategically address?

Four main ideas emerged during the panelists' discussion, and remained integral throughout the duration of the summit.

First, when asked which key trends in beginning farming and ranching seem intriguing, **panelists noted that for the first time, many students of agriculture, along with aspiring and beginning farmers, come from non-agricultural backgrounds.** Historically, the majority of beginning farmers and students of agriculture were young people who grew up on family farms. Because these young people had experienced agriculture first hand, they often attended university to learn business strategies to bring back to the farm. Discussion resulting of the second and third questions elaborated upon this idea. When asked about "one big idea or big change" they would like addressed, panelists suggested that business planning become integrated into current agricultural education, both in formalized university setting and in more informal, nonprofit-hosted workshops, and internships so that beginning farmers and ranchers who do not come from agricultural backgrounds get a well-rounded agri-business education which may enhance their potential for success in the longer term. Professional development, in this sense, was also designated as an important opportunity during the discussion of challenges and opportunities.

The **second key trend discussed during the moderated panel was the challenge of financing opportunities** for beginning farmers and ranchers. Panelists identified access to both land and start-up capital as a roadblock for those who aspire to farm. During the discussion of opportunities, panelists suggested that a community financing model could be adopted to facilitate the creation of beginning farming and ranching businesses.

Deliberation on beginning farmers' difficulty in accessing the land and capital needed to begin their operations in Montana developed into a discussion of **necessary changes in policy.** During conversation on opportunities, panelists discussed the fact that farming, unlike most careers, offers no retirement or insurance plan; yet, at the same time, there is the expectation that the farmer works well over 40 hours per week. Panelists suggested that a change in policy is necessary to support farmers in maintaining basic needs, like access to affordable insurance and retirement plans, so that they may focus on running their businesses successfully.

Finally, panelists discussed that while economic potential in Montana agriculture abounds, established farmers and ranchers around the state find recruiting aspiring farmers to be quite difficult. From this conversation, an opportunity to increase **marketing and recruitment geared towards aspiring farmers and ranchers** emerged.

In addition to these four main points, which remained important topics of discussion throughout the two days, there were other key takeaways from the moderated panel: first, that organic products are becoming more in demand, and therefore farmers in Montana should seize the opportunity to access this market, and second, the importance of developing strategies to assist beginning farmers and ranchers and their operations past the ten-year mark. For example, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a beginning farmer or rancher as someone who has farmed or ranched for ten years; however, in light of this, panelists were interested in what potential resources may be developed to ensure farmers' success for the longer term, such as addressing issues of employee retention or owner burnout.

SESSION 2: QUESTION AND DISCUSSION SESSION

Following the moderated panel was a question and discussion session. During this session, facilitators requested that participants work in small groups to identify topics that were not discussed during the moderated panel. During this session, participants discussed policy in more depth than in the previous session. The resulting conversation involved speculating on how farmers and ranchers, especially those who are considered “beginner” or “new” to the field, gain access to the same benefits that employees in other fields have, such as health insurance and retirement. That this topic was discussed further during this session perhaps ensured its place in the final action planning session.

SESSION 3: VISIONING SESSION

During the visioning session, facilitators asked participants to be creative in answering the question: What will the beginning farmers' and ranchers' scene look like in 2026 if we address the five core questions related to



access to land, capital, markets, mentors and networks, and production education? Participants were asked to think of potential media headlines they would want to see in 2026, indicative of a positive outlook for beginning farmers and ranchers. Responses included: “Processing Returns to Rural Areas of Montana,” “Untapped Markets for Farmers,” and “Montana State University’s School of Agriculture *and* Business Opens.” This exercise functioned as a way for participants to consider the potential impacts of long-term goals, before the brainstorming and action planning sessions which were geared much more closely towards tangible, shorter-term goal-setting. Facilitators wrote down the results of this long-term visioning exercise to be displayed alongside the core questions at the front of the room for reference.

SESSION 4: BRAINSTORMING SESSION

The purpose of the brainstorming session was for participants to begin to narrow down specific topics to address in strategic action planning, keeping in mind the core questions and long-term vision for beginning farmers and ranchers’ success in Montana. For this session, the facilitators asked participants to address the following questions:

1. What are the key leverage points for system change?
2. What strike you as key opportunities?
3. What specific initiatives could be developed to address these key challenges?

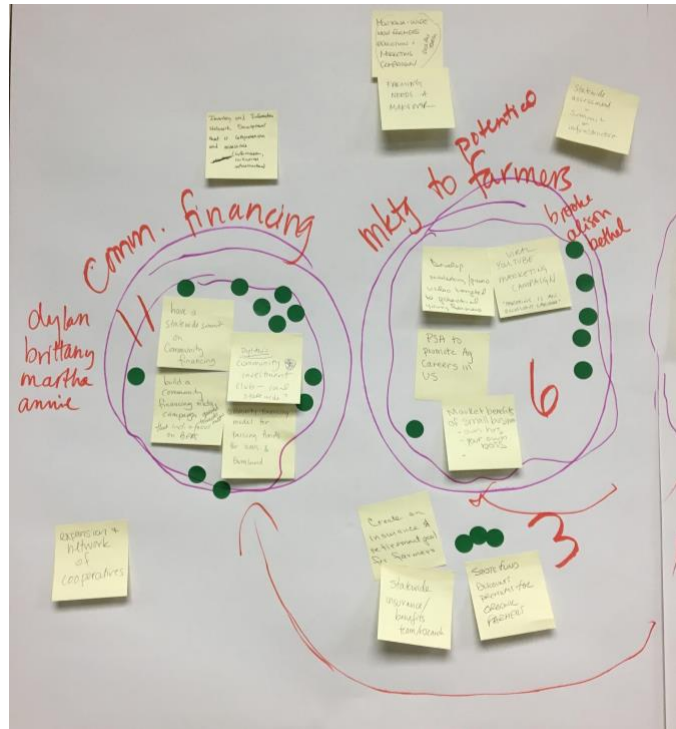
During this highly structured and productive session, participants first worked individually, writing their answers to the facilitators’ three questions on post-it notes. Next, facilitators requested that participants share their answers with the person next to them. Pairs worked together to parse out the most important ideas between themselves. Facilitators then asked that each pair of participants put their post-it notes onto butcher paper hanging at the front of the room. Pairs read their ideas out loud, and facilitators moderated the curation of the butcher paper by grouping and labeling ideas as they were placed on the wall.

Once all suggestions were categorized into concepts, facilitators gave each individual participant three stickers to use as “votes” for the most important concepts related to the core questions of the track. From the “dotmocracy,” three main ideas emerged, which also happened to be concepts that had been brought up to some degree during the moderated panel discussion. The three main ideas with the most votes were: community financing, farmer training, and policy **change**. Facilitators asked the group if they felt comfortable with those three ideas to take into the action planning session, and a couple of people expressed that the marketing and recruiting topic should be included in action planning. Facilitators checked in with the larger group for a consensus, and the group decided it was beneficial to include that

topic in addition to the other three. The four outcomes for action planning, then, became **community financing, farmer training, policy, and marketing and recruiting.**

SESSION 5: ACTION PLANNING

The second day of the summit was dedicated to action planning. Participants organized into groups based upon which of the four outcomes from the brainstorming session she or he wanted to discuss in more depth. Facilitators indicated the framework for discussion, requesting that groups develop goals, strategies, resources, and next steps specific to their outcome. The purpose of the action planning session was



to develop tangible methods and attainable goals to address the overall purpose of track three, and specifically the five core questions driving the track. After groups deliberated for approximately one hour, each group was given 15 minutes to report out to the track, followed by facilitators' call to the larger group for "friendly amendments." This gave the larger participant group a final chance to raise concerns, and offer insight or critique to the action plan before it was to be presented to the broader audience at the summit. Participants developed four action plans, one for each outcome, described as follows:

1. **Community financing.** The main idea developed out of the action planning session on community financing was to identify key players throughout Montana who want to work on this issue, and then organize a statewide summit to be held in 2017. During this specific summit dedicated to community financing, participants would develop investment opportunities specific to agriculture in Montana.
2. **Farmer training.** During this action planning session, participants discussed the need for the integration of business skills into agricultural knowledge-sharing.
3. **Marketing and recruiting potential farmers.** The goal of this action planning session was to find out how to secure more interest in agricultural opportunities in Montana. This group spent time discussing the importance of securing more interest, while aware that they would need to hire a marketing agency to carry out the tangible responsibilities.

4. **Policy.** This group suggested the creation of a policy-based stakeholder group to educate and lobby legislators, while working to find common ground between stakeholders to give active voice to those in the field.

OBSERVATIONS

The facilitators of track three, “Supporting a New Generation of Farmers,” cultivated a participatory atmosphere from the initial moments of the Summit. Immediately after reviewing the purpose of the track, before individual introductions, the facilitators highlighted the expertise in the room. While they surely spoke of the achievements of the panel speakers, they also made a clear statement regarding the expertise and diversity of knowledge within the room, going as far as to declare: “Everyone’s an expert in her own right—we can all learn from one another” (observation, 10/28/16).

Recognizing the unique expertise that each person brings to a decision-making meeting helps to lay the foundation of food democracy. In fact, “the concept of food democracy rests on the belief that every citizen has a contribution to make to the solution of our common problems” (Hassanein 2003: 85). It is especially valuable to discussions of policymaking: “The general public considers and evaluates risks differently than technical experts and regulators, and hence their involvement is critical” (Ankeny 2016:10). Bringing non-experts to the table is especially important in local food planning, as Ankeny (2016: 17) observed:

As with many other types of public events, local food planning often involves facilitation by those who are knowledgeable (about food policy, security, and sovereignty, for instance) but does not privilege them as experts, allowing a levelling effect that can have a positive impact on subsequent exchanges and participation, which in turn could make positive contributions at the macro level.

A key feature of valuing each individual’s expertise involves accepting and appreciating the importance of diversity of knowledge in policymaking. “The idea is that everyone is capable (in principle) of making informed judgements on moral and policy questions, and no one’s opinions can be discounted on irrelevant grounds as they are autonomous moral agents due equal respect” (Ankeny 2016:12). This idea was exhibited in track three through comments from the facilitators, panelists, and participants who expressed gratitude for the various sectors of the food movement represented within the group (observation, 10/28/16). Making efforts to learn from one another while in small groups, participants illustrated food citizenship, demonstrating that “food democracy means that citizens have broad knowledge of the food system and its various facets” (observation, 10/28/16, Hassanein 2008: 290).

Through the acknowledgement of individual expertise and the appreciation of diverse ways of knowing about meaningfully engaging within the food system, participants in this track cultivated a sense of personal agency. This was primarily achieved by reminding people of their own value and knowledge (observation, 10/28/16). “Rather than remain passive consumers, food democracy involves citizens being able to determine their own relationship to food and public work by citizens to address and solve community food problems” (Hassanein 2008: 290). The personal empowerment and sense of agency cultivated through appreciation of individual expertise and diverse ways of knowing about the food system undergird democratic deliberation.

Decision-making throughout the two-day Summit involved group processes that cultivated space for deliberative democracy. For example, during the second day of the Summit, facilitators of track three asked each individual participant to write on a post-it note specific issues he or she would like to address. Individuals then spoke with the person next to them using “talk-centric” deliberation, in order to pull out and synthesize the most valuable questions which would be reported to the group (observation 10/29/16). “Barber describes this idea as ‘common talk,’ which he sees as a key component of ‘strong democracy” (Hassanein 2008: 290). Each group was then asked to post their questions on a large sheet of butcher paper while the facilitators assisted in grouping the questions and issues under common themes (observation 10/29/16). Once all themes were synthesized from the post-it note questions, and recorded on the butcher paper, each individual participant was given three stickers to use to vote on the top three issues most important to them (observation 10/29/16). The top issues were pulled out and recorded by the facilitators. Individuals were then asked to choose which topic they wanted to work on in small groups for the rest of the afternoon.

Although a “dotmocracy” voting process helped narrow down topics for further discussion, talk-centric deliberation was also apparent. For example, after participants voted upon which issues to discuss further, the facilitators asked, “Does everyone feel good about these issues?” and “Does anyone feel that we are missing anything?” (observation, 10/29/16). As it turns out, a participant felt that an issue that did not make the cut for further discussion should be kept on the table, and through talk-centric deliberation, a consensus was reached to include that issue despite it not quite making the cut through the “dotmocracy” vote. In local food planning, “public engagement methodologies are increasingly used by grassroots organizations to produce local food plans that they claim are more reflective of public values” (Ankeny 2016: 16). Techniques such as talk-centric deliberation and the use of “dotmocracy” voting are useful because of their “relative informality” and ability to capture “everyday talk” (Ankeny 2016: 16).

Considering the ways in which food democracy, deliberative democracy, and food citizenship presented themselves in the Governor's Summit on Local Food and Agriculture, one may conclude that the event was quite successful. I would, however, like to address two opportunities that could have strengthened the democratic nature of the decision-making processes at the Summit.

First, although emphasis on individual agency in some ways led to a more democratic food Summit, it may also create a precariousness in following through with action steps. Throughout the Summit, both in the larger group, track three, and individual conversations, participants expressed feelings of nervousness that action steps would not be pursued with proper follow-through (observation 10/29/16). That the responsibility to move action forward falls on the individual, as opposed to the institution, is simultaneously empowering and worrisome. It is empowering because of its potential to allow individuals the agency to effect change; however, it is worrisome in that this responsibility could become burdensome, creating a precariousness in the plan of action. In positivity, Kathy Hadley, the Executive Director of NCAT, declared towards the end of the Summit: "This is all of our plan, your plan, my plan....it belongs to us. This plan belongs to everyone. Raise your hand in the areas that you have passion. You own the plan. It's yours but we have to implement it together" (observation 10/29/16).

Second, while the demographic makeup of the Summit attendees was seemingly diverse and inclusive—people came from many different backgrounds *within* the food system, and from many different parts of the state—there did not seem to be an effort to bring in more marginalized perspectives. "It has been frequently noted that democratic engagement is often limited by socioeconomic status and education level" (Ankeny 2016: 19). People who were not in attendance were potentially spoken for without their permission. Because everyone is a food citizen to some degree (Ankeny 2016: 20), more diversity in perspectives would have been appropriate if the Summit envisions truly democratic decision-making in the local food system. This could be achieved through web broadcasting of the event, a scholarship program, broader marketing for the event, collaboration with groups representing marginalized communities, providing transportation so that more people may attend, providing childcare, and other efforts to be inclusive. More deliberate attempts to be inclusive lead to more democratic decision-making in food policy, empowering citizens to take ownership over their local food system. "This 'local' type of approach—where those who are affected join in debate, deliberation, and decision making at the community level—also fulfills one of Iris Marion Young's (2000) five key elements which contribute to what she terms a 'deep' democracy—one that is inclusive and allows diverse voices to be heard" (Ankeny 2016:16-17).

CONCLUSION

In the form of food democracy, incremental change could result in transformative change (Hassanein 2002: 85). Whether resulting policy and social change is big or small, the food Summit was productive in that it gathered (many of) those interested in food and agriculture in Montana in the same room to discuss important issues in a fairly participatory and deliberative manner. In doing so, participants were able to more deeply express their food citizenship while building important relationships with one another.

The Governor's Summit on Local Food and Agriculture was, in some ways successful in employing deliberative democracy, food democracy, and food citizenship. I have outlined the structure and takeaways from the event, discussed the functions of expertise in the context of food citizenship, highlighting emphasis placed on diversity of knowledge and individual agency, and examined the ways in which elements of deliberative democracy and food democracy were illuminated through decision-making processes during the Summit, specifically through mechanisms of voting and "talk-centric" deliberation. Finally, I offered two critiques of the Summit, illuminating space in which broader efforts could have been made to create more democratic process.

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CHAPTER FIVE
FOOD DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: HARNESSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
RESILIENCE IN AGRICULTURE AND BEYOND

Catie DeMets*

INTRODUCTION

Track Four of the Governor’s Summit, called “Resilience in Agriculture: Diversifying, Adapting, and Planning for a Changing Environment,” holistically examined problems that Montana’s agriculture sector faces in light of climate change. I was fortunate to observe, record, refine, and analyze the inspiring and productive, solution-focused process that unfolded throughout the sessions. More specifically, this process entailed two primary steps: first, the thirty-two participants systematically located weaknesses in the agriculture sector’s current capacity for climate change resilience, then created potential solutions to those weaknesses, while transforming challenges into opportunities for reimagining Montana’s food system. The five specific action plans created from this process, related to policy, knowledge sharing, local investment, producer practices, and food waste, highlight our track’s sense of urgency and eagerness to pursue solutions that support resilience. This sentiment, unwavering throughout our sessions, was a key element in creating action plans that were ambitious yet attainable.

CORE QUESTIONS

In order to understand critical climate change-related problems in Montana’s agriculture sector, facilitators organized our track around five core questions:

1. How can Montana agencies, the university system, and others work together to meet the resource needs for producers in the state?
2. How can we help producers effectively prepare for and respond to drought?
3. How can we increase producers’ awareness and efforts to build resilience?
4. How can we help smaller operations get capital and resources to be a part of the shift to healthier, more productive soils?
5. Are there policy opportunities that can help more producers access more resources to build diversity and resilience?

TRACK PROCESS

Presentations. The core questions formed an effective initial framework for learning about agricultural resilience to climate change. To build a common foundation of knowledge for all

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participants, our track's first session opened with four speakers who were well versed in specific topics related to climate change and agricultural resilience. The first was **Ron DeYong, Director of Montana's Department of Agriculture**. He spoke broadly about the current state of Montana agriculture, measures the agriculture sector has taken to become more resilient, and opportunities for building resilience in the future. He emphasized agricultural diversification, from crop rotation to production scale and methods, as a guiding principle for building environmental, economic, and social resilience for the future. **Mitch Auer, a fourth-generation farmer from eastern Montana**, spoke about the challenges and successes of switching from a conventional monocrop system to a diversified, rotational system. Following this, **Susan Tallman, area agronomist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service**, presented challenges and points of progress made by producers across Montana in their soil- and resilience-building efforts. The presentations concluded with a talk by **Shaun McGrath, Region 8 EPA administrator and former mayor of Boulder, CO**, who underscored the need for a comprehensive, holistic approach to addressing climate change. He discussed the importance of broad stakeholder involvement, then identified opportunities for the agriculture sector to participate in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. He framed his talk primarily through a political lens, stressing the importance of collaborative approaches that engaged stakeholders on both individual and policy levels.

Panel and Discussion. Following these individual presentations, the speakers formed a panel that sought to collaboratively answer questions and engage participants in discussion. Many participants returned to the core questions during this conversation. The range of questions indicated that participants were collectively identifying predominant problematic areas and working towards a deeper understanding of these problems. Simultaneously, they were framing questions in such a way that showed enthusiasm for creating new solutions by synthesizing their preexisting knowledge and new knowledge from presentations.

In one case, for instance, a participant posed two questions to Tallman and the group: "How are NRCS and other organizations gearing up to measure a baseline for agricultural carbon sequestration before farmers begin soil building practices? What can we do to help you move forward with this measurement?" This inquiry illustrates a level of participant engagement that 1) moves beyond polite questioning to a desire for holistic understanding of the larger context of Tallman's talk and 2) indicates interest and willingness to learn enough about the topic to become a change agent. Tallman, expressing a similar level of desire for collective knowledge and engagement, replied that "building carbon in dryland soils takes a long time, so it's a big challenge and a long-term solution, but it's important for us to have more metrics in order to compare to our baseline...let's talk about this together later on." This is an invitational yet cautionary response, illustrating Tallman's desire for fellow participants to understand the full

implications, both positive and negative, of the topic. It also demonstrates her openness to others' contributions, marking an interesting moment: Tallman expressing willingness to share her knowledge and simultaneously to learn new knowledge from other participants. As a result of this exchange, participants gained not only greater understanding of climate resilience, but also an understanding of a weakness in the food system that they later translated into an opportunity. This sense of efficacy carried our track's process seamlessly from knowledge building through presentations to knowledge sharing in work groups.

Challenges and Opportunities. In each of these groups, which ranged from three to ten people, participants focused on one of five core questions, brainstorming challenges and opportunities within the scope of that question. During presentations of the outcomes of these brainstorms to the full group, participants provided feedback and additional ideas, collaborating to achieve complete, specific responses that were satisfactory to the full group. As our conversations coalesced around the specific challenges that needed most urgently to be addressed, we began to organize our discussion around predominant challenges and their correspondent opportunities rather than the core questions. The wide range of responses naturally fell into areas for action that became more distinct following our visioning activity.

Envisioning the Future State of Agriculture in Montana. The first step in pivoting from challenges and opportunities to solutions occurred in a visioning activity that we did as a full group. In essence, this captured the momentum of efficacy and enthusiasm in our track by asking participants to envision the ideal state of Montana agriculture in ten years (in terms of resilience, broadly defined) and identify specific outcomes that would lead to this vision. During this activity, distinct areas for action began to form. Our track's facilitators worked together following the activity to group responses into these various areas and characterize them according to their commonalities. This later helped organize our conversations, ensuring that all opinions were valued and represented throughout the preliminary steps. By articulating our visions and outcomes *before* distilling



these outcomes into individual categories, though, our track’s participants were more effectively positioned to create and discuss specific, focused solutions and action plans that worked toward a collectively expressed and understood vision—without trying to force their responses into a predetermined category.

ACTION PLANNING

The five distinct key areas for action, categorized by facilitators based on participants’ ideas, were represented as: *policy, knowledge sharing, local investment, farming practices and technology, and food waste*. These key areas for action were so named because they were broad enough to incorporate all participant ideas, yet specific and actionable. After participants reviewed and gave feedback on these key areas, ensuring accurate illustration of all opinions, our track adopted them as the organizational scaffolding for generating our action plans. Each of these distinct areas functioned as an umbrella for a diverse range of interests, many (but not all) of which participants eventually incorporated into action plans. The “knowledge sharing” area, for instance, included all ideas that participants discussed in relation to building knowledge during the visioning activity:

- Agency/university/community collaboration
- Farm Club demonstrations
- Recognition for innovation
- Community building/networking
- Bottom-up collaboration
- Collaboration with extension, NCAT, and NRCS
- Social media sharing
- Individual gardening

While not all ideas were ultimately reflected in the final knowledge sharing action plan, they were nonetheless considered by that action planning group. This is similarly the case for each of the other key areas for action.

Action Planning Group Process. Based on the five key areas for moving from visions to action plans, participants divided into five groups to develop clearly outlined, step-by-step solutions. Each group answered the same set of questions to create achievable steps that addressed each concern that fell within their key area. First, each group articulated a specific outcome for their key area. They identified strategies for achieving that outcome, then listed resources that already exist in addition to new resources that are required for achieving the outcome. They listed a lead person, set of people, or group who would be a critical actor in moving toward the outcome, as well as an ideal deadline or target date for achieving the outcome. Finally, they

detailed a set of next steps towards the outcome. Once they completed this, groups presented their action plans to all participants. This gave all participants the chance to weigh in, suggest and discuss refinements or changes to the action plan, and see the final outcome of the full group's collective efforts. Through this process, participants could actively participate, regardless of their background knowledge on the track's topic, voice their questions and opinions in accessible and meaningful small and large group conversations, and effectively collaborate to create a suite of tangible action plans to increase resilience in Montana agriculture.

Notable Themes. Throughout the presentation of the five action plans, a few ideas rose to the top of the list as keys to collective progress. Participants consistently agreed upon the necessity of these items, and mentioned them frequently enough to merit highlighting them here. Participants

repeatedly cited the need to agree upon and adopt a common definition for the word "resilience" in efforts that involved resilience. The group defined some qualities of resilience, however, characterizing a resilient system as one that quickly returns to or maintains the desired stable state, and as one that could handle perturbations without collapsing. Also, they discussed resilience not only in relation to ecosystems, but also economic and social systems. Though they did not feel that our track was the venue for coming to an agreed-upon definition, they suggested that policymaking or community work around resilience without a shared understanding of the term could lead to conflict and diluted efforts. Participants commonly voiced another measure for streamlining efforts and building a sense of efficacy towards resilience: the development of measurement tools for establishing baselines against which progress in resilience could be assessed. Among others, soil carbon and food waste appeared frequently in relation to this idea.

Additionally, participants emphasized the need for a "bottom-up approach" to creating resilience in Montana's agricultural system. In other words, they called for a diverse range of producers, communities, policymakers, extension services, and organizations to create a multi-directional flow of knowledge, where stakeholders closer to the "top," such as policymakers and extension services, actively responded to the specific needs of stakeholders at the



“bottom,” such as producers and other community members. Further underscoring this idea, participants widely cited the importance of using and strengthening Montana’s existing organizations, social networks, and agricultural knowledge by increasing collaboration among stakeholders.

While participants considered the above social, voluntary initiatives to be essential to progress in resilient agriculture, they also generally agreed that policy was central to the achievement, support, and enforcement of their goals. They saw the creation of a new, state-level pilot “Farm Bill” as a pivotal element of this policymaking. In response to many participants’ concern that a Farm Bill had the potential to become a diluted, top-down measure, our track spent a significant amount of time discussing ways to address this. Their solution was to create a Food Policy Council that “represents a wide and diverse range of Montanans.” This Food Policy Council would be central to the creation of the new Farm Bill. Participants returned frequently to this pair of ideas in discussing implementation of their action plans.

The full action plans can be found in a separate report on the Summit website. Here are the primary outcomes envisioned from the plans:

1. Create a state-level “Farm Bill” that supports sustainable agricultural practices, with strong Nutrition title, Conservation title, and safety net for farmers to implement diversified practices.
2. Strengthen knowledge-sharing networks to promote resilient agricultural practices; define agricultural resilience in Montana context.
3. Establish stable funding for Food and Agriculture Development Center network.
4. Achieve 100% producer participation in resilient agricultural practices by 2026.
5. Decrease food waste by a specific, achievable percentage of volume or weight over time.

OBSERVATIONS

In addition to action plans, our track’s notable themes demonstrate broad participant engagement in the process of creating meaningful ways forward during the Governor’s Summit. Again, these themes are: 1) defining resilience, 2) creating measurement tools for baselines, 3) establishing “bottom-up” as the necessary approach to knowledge sharing and policy creation, 4) strengthening collaboration between existing organizations and social networks, and 5)

creating a new, state-level pilot Farm Bill overseen by a diverse Food Policy Council. Through their active involvement, participants took the first step towards creating a more equitable and resilient food system for Montana. In pointing out the lack of a common understanding of the term **resilience**, participants located a critical gap in current knowledge that dilutes efforts towards resilience and prevents real progress. It was only in sharing their individual understandings of resilience—and then engaging in deep discursive deliberation on these discrepancies—that could they have located this problem. In itself, this process demonstrates democratic engagement while leaving room for balanced decision-making among other parties not represented at the Summit.

Similarly, participants' call for extensive implementation of "bottom-up" approaches in organizations and government expresses a widespread desire for more democratic decision making throughout the food system. Throughout conversations about bottom-up approaches, it became clear that to many, the Governor's Summit represented one such approach; as such, participants strongly felt a sense of efficacy and value in the decision-making process. These conversations also underscored the common hope that a more strongly democratic approach to decision making within the food system could be a catalyst for broadening and strengthening knowledge about the food system by including the voices of a more broadly defined cross-section of "experts." In the policy arena, the Food Policy Council represented one such way of increasing the scope and range of stakeholders involved in decision-making, specifically about the Farm Bill. More generally, many participants cited the bottom-up approach as the best way to ensure a multi-directional flow of knowledge. Beyond the most obvious merit of this (namely, increasing and strengthening stakeholders' knowledge about agricultural resilience), it emerged as the most effective path to achieving many of our track's goals related to collaboration and stronger social and organizational networks in the food system.

CONCLUSION

Each of the key areas for action and their resultant action plans contained elements that, when viewed holistically, effectively answer our track's five core questions. Participants used the idea of "resilience" as a springboard for considering economically and socially oriented investments such as Food and Agriculture Development Centers, which they felt were as important to achieving holistic resilience as agriculture-focused solutions. By independently and collaboratively discovering and articulating the areas that participants felt needed most urgent attention, our track's process took on a distinctly democratic quality, ensuring that all voices were heard and solutions reflected these voices. In so doing, participants responded to the heart of the core questions without simply taking these questions at face value. Perhaps *more* significantly, this process enabled an even richer and broader understanding of the issue of climate resilience in Montana agriculture than would have emerged from solely answering the

key questions. For instance, participants identified an entire key area and action plan that were entirely beyond the scope of our core questions, though certainly related: food waste. In our discussion of food waste, participants emphasized the need for an entire track devoted to this issue at the next Summit. This is significant in that it reflected a sincere sense of efficacy and positive influence in this summit and future summits.

While this sentiment particularly defined conversations about food waste, I also noticed the same hope, positivity, and sense of efficacy in our track's four other action plans. The specificity and immediacy encapsulated in the "next steps" for the action plans, as well as the magnitude of large group feedback during small group presentations of action plans, evidenced a substantial level of engagement and desire to carry out our action plans swiftly and meaningfully. Participants worked together to strike a balance between *ambitious* and *attainable* in our action plans, which ultimately was the goal of our core questions. In doing so, our group identified myriad opportunities and action plans for increasing Montana agricultural resilience in the realms of policy, knowledge sharing, local investment, farming practices and technology, and food waste. With an approach that kept us simultaneously grounded in the present state of agriculture and returning to our collective vision for a more resilient and environmentally sound future, our group's efforts filled a critical gap in the broader conversation about the future of local food and agriculture in Montana.

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CHAPTER SIX

MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION IN A BIG-SMALL STATE

Naomi Neal*

INTRODUCTION

Track Five, “Marketing Montana Products: Growing Businesses and Distribution,” focused on marketing and distribution, issues that present challenges to developing strong local food networks in our large yet sparsely-populated state. Goals for this track were: to develop strategies to assist and empower Montana producers and food businesses as they grow to serve larger markets, and to improve all Montanans’ access to food produced in-state. Discussions circled around a few key concepts, some of which emerged organically from conversation, while others were introduced by the facilitation team and embraced by the participants. Key concepts making repeat appearances in discussion were:

- Building value chains
- Cooperative models
- Branding and trademarking Montana products

I chose to participate in this track of the Summit because I was, initially, unfamiliar with food distribution systems in general and with Montana’s in particular. I correctly anticipated that joining this conversation would provide a crash course in both the basic principles of distribution, and the unique problems of Montana’s system. I present this report based on my direct observations of track proceedings.

Track participants proceeded from introductions to action planning over the course of five work sessions. In the first session, the participants and facilitators introduced themselves. A total of twenty-seven people participated in the track, including panelists, facilitators, and note-takers. Of that number, eight people represented distributors or industry distribution groups, seven represented governmental agencies or nonprofit organizations, four were food producers, and the rest were students, buyers, and other interested parties.

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In addition to a two-person facilitation team, the course of discussion was framed and guided by the keynote speaker and other panelists:

- **Jamie Ryan Lockman**, North American Regional Developer, Kamut International, Ltd. – Lockman manages the international use of the KAMUT trademark as a tool for protecting and promoting Montana products around the world.
- **Seth Bostick**, Executive Chef, Kalispell Regional Medical Center – Bostick designs menus and supervises buying and vendor relationships at the medical center, and in these roles he champions the use of local produce for its superior health benefits and flavor.
- **Angie DeYoung**, International Trade Manager, Montana Department of Commerce’s Export Montana Program – DeYoung and her team work to help Montana producers break into or expand within the export market; before beginning her work with Export Montana in 2014, she worked as the Montana Department of Agriculture’s Marketing Officer for fourteen years.
- **Joseph Janzen**, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, Montana State University – Janzen’s economic research concerns commodity market dynamics, particularly wheat and pulse pricing factors.
- **Randy Lindberg**, Quality Foods Distributing (QFD) – Lindberg founded Bozeman-based QFD with his wife in 2010 after a lengthy career in natural foods distributing in California. Lindberg specializes in locally- and regionally-sourced natural, organic, and specialty foods and frequently works with producers to prepare their businesses for wider distribution.

The track’s keynote speaker, Jamie Ryan Lockman, kicked off track events with her speech describing the development of the Kamut(R) brand and its expansion to compete in widespread international markets. In the second work session, facilitators led participants through an exercise in which the group discussed what “local food” means to them, and identified potential challenges for business growth that being “local” might entail. After this exercise, the panel convened. Panelists represented different sectors of the food system, including purchasing, distribution, marketing, and production. The panel helped to focus discussion on key areas for improvement in Montana local food networks, and participants took their suggestions forward into the third and last work session on Friday afternoon, during which they identified initiatives that could promote both business growth and food access. During the fourth and fifth work sessions, on Saturday, participants voted on which initiatives to pursue and divided into four working groups, each of which developed an action plan for making their chosen initiative happen.

Track Five’s core questions were:

1. How will local food businesses maintain their local food ethics (e.g., transparency in food systems, shared values, etc.) as they grow? What models should we develop to successfully build local food value chains?
2. What tools and strategies should Montana growers, distributors, buyers, and marketers use to facilitate communication and distribution systems that coordinate local food demand with local food supply?
3. What resources are needed to help Montana producers and food businesses to access and succeed in new markets?
4. How do we effectively market local food across Montana?

The facilitation team structured some conversations and activities explicitly around the core questions for the track, and they also arose organically through the panelists’ insights and other activities.

Core Question 1: How will local food businesses maintain their local food ethics (e.g., transparency in food systems, shared values, etc.) as they grow? What models should we develop to successfully build local food value chains?

Participants were, on the whole, very positive about the prospect of retaining local integrity while scaling up to serve larger markets, and uncomfortable with the idea that local businesses might lose something vital when they grow. Perhaps they were influenced by panelist Randy Lindberg (Quality Foods Distributing), a distributor who described the strategies he uses to help other small local businesses scale up and reach larger markets.

Lindberg’s vision for assisting small businesses with budgeting, marketing, distribution planning, and getting their products out to rural Montana communities was inspiring to many track participants, perhaps because he fills a gap in the preexisting system. Lindberg advocates for cooperation between growing businesses and helps many to increase their market share and business savvy. It may then come as no surprise that participants, when asked “What is lost when local businesses scale up?” argued that nothing necessarily need be lost if proper planning steps are taken.

What does this proper, precautionary planning entail? Participants agreed that preserving established partnerships is vital to maintaining local food ethics while expanding to serve larger

markets. Continuing to provide expected levels of quality and service to the smaller clients and other partners who have supported one's enterprise from the beginning is key both to

maintaining access to quality products for the local community, and to reducing risks associated with scaling up to larger markets. In this kind of values-based supply chain, businesses seek to cooperate rather than compete.

Participants also responded positively to the concept of branding as a strategy for smart growth. Jamie Ryan Lockman, in her address to track participants, detailed how Kamut International uses trademarking as a means of distinguishing its product's features and level of quality from other Montana wheat products. This distinctive brand identity has allowed the company to expand rapidly to serve markets around the USA and internationally.

Lindberg discussed the importance of product branding from a distribution approach: identifying a product as local to Montana can be an incentive for many purchasers to try something new, so businesses should plan to scale up with a consistent and coherent brand strategy. In light of these considerations, participants discussed the Montana Made and Montana Grown labels currently in use, and expressed some frustrations that these labels are insufficiently regulated and advertised. Bolstering these labels' reach and efficacy was discussed as a potential initiative proposal, but ultimately not selected for action planning.

Participants enthusiastically embraced cooperative models for building local food value chains. Shared stake and shared profits seemed an exciting, viable approach to expand for processors, distributors, and purchasers as well as distributors (see "Action Plans").

Core Question 2: What tools and strategies should Montana growers, distributors, buyers, and marketers use to facilitate communication and distribution systems that coordinate local food demand with local food supply?

A number of strategies for coordinating supply and demand were suggested for initiative planning, such as:



- Resource guide development

This initiative, selected for one of the final four working groups' action plan, entailed compiling resource guides and business directories from around the state to create a statewide food & agriculture resource directory, a means of enabling communities, buyers, producers, processors, and distributors to identify locally-sourced products and services (see "Action Plans").

- Development centers: incubator kitchens & packing centers

Another initiative which made it to the action planning stage was the plan to establish a network of local food business development centers, including incubator kitchens and shared order fulfillment services, to enable the growth of small businesses and the expansion of their markets through shipping services (see "Action Plans").

- Cooperative buying

One of the cooperative models considered by one working group was cooperative buying, a strategy for optimizing food transportation and increasing the availability of local food to small Montana communities. This entails community purchase planning and smart distribution systems designed to prevent the waste and lost opportunity of "dead-head" or empty trucks on the highways (see "Action Plans").

- Lobbying

It didn't make it to the action planning stage, but most track participants agreed that Montana needs a local food lobby. Advocates at the state government level working to get pro-local policies passed and funding dispensed could ease the way for all the other initiatives proposed. As this proposal never became an action plan, the source of funding for such a lobby remains unclear.

Core Question 3: What resources are needed to help Montana producers and food businesses to access and succeed in new markets?

Participants primarily identified processing resources to be insufficient for Montana growers who wish to access new markets. For example, Lockman lamented in her presentation that Kamut International is forced to send some grain to California for milling because facilities for the processing within Montana are insufficient, and this extra travel means that Montanans buying Kamut, a Montana-grown product, are often paying for something that has been shipped most recently from several states away.

One proposed initiative which did not make it to the action-planning stage was a packing and shipping center for fledgling businesses. Allowing small, growing businesses to share these costs would be one way of reducing the burden on each individually to pay for such processing facilities and equipment.

Another resource that many Montana food businesses seemed to lack was strategic coaching and savvy. Panelist Randy Lindberg of Quality Foods Distributing discussed his practice of mentoring small Montana businesses before he takes them on as suppliers. He stated that many small Montana food businesses fail to adequately plan for growth, setting their product prices too low to absorb the eventual costs of marketing and distribution which are inevitably associated with larger markets. Lindberg explained that he often works with businesses to develop projections and budgets for growth, but that in an ideal world resources would exist to help businesses make these plans before they reach the stage at which a distributor comes into the picture.

Finally, it became clear over the course of the Summit that there was little general awareness of exactly what resources already exist for food and agriculture businesses in the state. Several times over the course of the work sessions, participants proposed projects only to have other participants inform them that such resources already existed. One of the action plans discussed, as a result of this lack of common footing, was a resource guide for businesses to all of the different potential partners, suppliers, clients, and organizations in the state that they might call upon in growing their businesses within a local network.

Core Question 4: How do we effectively market local food across Montana?

This was one of the least-discussed core questions in Track Five. Some issues with the way Montana products are marketed within the state were discussed, but no solutions to the issues made it to the action planning stages.

The keynote, Jamie Ryan Lockman, spoke at length during her speech about the use of the Kamut trademark as a marketing tool. Trademarking their product, khorasan wheat, in this manner allows the Kamut company to protect the standard of quality of their product and control how it is grown and perceived both domestically and abroad.



Most of the participants in the room agreed that the Montana Made and Montana Grown labels are under-utilized and underappreciated by buyers. Potential solutions to address problems with these labels include the creation of a local food lobby, or groups dedicated to promoting and publicizing local food. Again, however, none of these suggestions made it to the action planning stage.

ACTION PLANS

During the final work sessions of the Summit, on Saturday, the participants in Track 5 narrowed down their long list of suggested initiatives to four, and split into working groups to create action plans for each of the four initiative proposals. The four action plans developed by these working groups were as follows:

1. Create a coordinated, virtually-accessible system of business development accelerators.

This working group discussed ways to establish incubators for business planning and business development across the state. Services such incubators would be called on to provide would include facilitating investment and funding. The group sketched out a rough timeline of one year to offer these services, under the direction of a steering committee to be formed within three months of the Summit.

2. Expand food education and local food presence in Montana schools.

This action plan began as a proposal to expand FoodCorps presence in public schools, but that approach was scrapped when the working group acknowledged that they would likely have



little control or influence over FoodCorps. Instead, the group developed a plan to build volunteer networks associated with individual public schools or school districts tasked with coordinating local food access and education within schools. Members of such volunteer groups would be local farmers, chefs, and small business owners. The group anticipated that initial volunteer networks could be operational within a twelve-month timeframe.

3. Compile and maintain a state food and agriculture industry directory.

The smallest of the four working groups discussed a plan to put together a statewide industry directory for food and agriculture, including listings for Montana businesses as well as organizations, agencies, and other potential resources. The reasoning behind this action plan was that such a directory would enable businesses to forge in-state partnerships and thus strengthen local food networks, and also that these strengthened local networks would prompt greater knowledge sharing among local growers and businesses. The initial publication of such a guide was slated for the end of the twelve-month time period.

4. Develop cooperative models for different industry sectors to support small businesses.

The final group discussed how the cooperative model might be expanded to different sectors of the food system, beyond growers. Buyers' cooperatives, processing cooperatives, and distribution cooperatives were all under consideration. The project of this group being somewhat diffuse, the aims for the coming year included the formation of an investigatory body to look into potential models and determine the best next steps for implementing them within the state.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the participants in Track 5 successfully interacted democratically, engaging with issues as a group, deliberating, and arriving at consensus with assistance from the facilitation team. Each of the track's core questions both emerged organically in conversation and played a role in the facilitation team's program of activities. Participants produced a variety of initiative ideas that never made it to the planning stages due to the lack of time, which indicates that players in our food system have a lot of creativity to offer to Montana's unique distributive challenges. The track gave key players the opportunity to network and brainstorm together, planting the seeds for collaborative projects both within formal track planning activities and in productive side-conversations.

APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Exported from Qualtrics – Not Original Formatting

Q1 The purpose of this short survey is to better understand the perspectives of Montanans, like you, who are shaping the future of local food and agriculture. Researchers from the University of Montana would greatly appreciate your taking a few minutes to offer your ideas. The term “local” is somewhat vague and subject to various interpretations. For purposes of this survey, please think of “local” as referring to Montana-based food and agricultural systems. We will share the results with the public later this year via the Grow Montana website and the Montana Food_Ag listserve. To take the survey online, go to: www.umt.edu/mtfood

Q2 My roles in the food system are: (Check all that apply)

- Concerned consumer (1)
- Researcher (2)
- MSU Extension (3)
- Farmer (6)
- Rancher (15)
- Food processor (4)
- Food distributor (5)
- Local government (7)
- Montana state government (8)
- Federal government (9)
- Educator (10)
- Non-profit staff (11)
- Student (13)
- Other: (12) _____

Q3 Over the course of the last year, how often have you participated, on average, in civic, political, or service activities? (Select one)

- Once a week or more (3)
- 2-3 times a month (4)
- Once a month (5)
- Several times a Year (6)
- Once a year (7)
- Never (8)

Q4 Why did you choose to participate in the Governor's Summit?

Q5 When you think about Montana's local food and agricultural system today, do you think it is thriving, doing well, doing just OK, or struggling?

- Thriving (1)
- Doing well (2)
- Doing just OK (3)
- Struggling (4)
- Don't know (5)

	Not true (1)	Somewhat true (2)	Very true (3)	Don't know (4)
I often communicate my opinions on food and agricultural issues to government officials. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to pay more for food produced in Montana. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider food and agricultural concerns when I vote. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One reason I enjoy working on food system issues is because of the relationships I build with others. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe safe and nutritious food should be considered a basic human right guaranteed to all people. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am concerned about consolidation and lack of competition in the dominant food system. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a strong sense of responsibility for addressing hunger and food insecurity in my community. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I devote time to talking with friends and family about the need to improve Montana's food system. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tend to have more trust in the safety of food grown by Montana farmers. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel government should be doing more to protect agricultural land in the face of rapid development. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think Montana's food and agricultural system is at serious risk from the impacts of climate change. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6. Recall some of the changes that have been made in Montana's local food and agricultural system over the last decade. Do you think the state has made substantial progress, some progress, stayed the same, worsened, or don't know?

- Substantial progress (1)
- Some progress (2)
- Stayed the same (3)
- Worsened some (4)
- Worsened considerably (5)
- Don't know (6)

Q7 Overall, how much impact do you think people like yourself can have in improving Montana's local food and agricultural system? (Select one)

- Big impact (1)
- Moderate impact (2)
- Small impact (3)
- No impact at all (4)
- Don't know (5)

Q9 What three words or phrases best describe your vision for Montana's local food and agricultural system in 2025?

1. (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)

Q12 Please indicate the degree to which each of the following is true for you.

Q11 What do you think is the most valuable strength that Montana's local food and agricultural system has going for it?

Q10 What do you think is the most significant challenge that Montana's local food and agricultural system faces?

Q13 What county do you live in?

Q14 Are you:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)

Q15 What is your year of birth?

Q16 How many years have you lived in Montana?

Q18 Thank you very much! If you have questions or concerns, please contact Neva Hassanein at: neva.hassanein@umontana.edu