Finding Common Measures for the Nation’s Food Hubs

Update on a Preliminary Exploration

Presented at:
National Good Food Network Food Hub Collaboration
Spring 2014 Conference
Presented by:
Shanna Ratner and Jackie LeBlanc
Presentation Overview

Methodology
- Summary of Exploration Methodology

Findings
- Summary of Findings for 4 Common Measures

Discussion
- Questions
Discussion Questions

• What is the value of common measures to the food hub community?
• Are these the right themes?
• How do we move from measuring activities to outcomes?
• What is the value of stronger framing measures?
• What is the role of the Wallace Center in this?
National Good Food Network Food Hub Collaboration

- 9 “study hubs”
- Develop strategies and measure progress toward goals
- Lessons learned to share with larger food hub community
## Methodology

**Wallace Center**
Identified 4 common measures, focusing on market access, food access, health-related outcomes, and investment

**Yellow Wood**
- Reviewed National Food Hub Survey to shape questions relevant to each measure
- Reviewed measures from 9 study hubs and developed case studies
- Reviewed literature and secondary data related to common measures
- Prepared report
Study Hubs
## Study Hub Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Hub</th>
<th>Operational Structure / Prime Motivation</th>
<th>Years in Operation</th>
<th>Stage of Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALBA</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Capital Foods</td>
<td>Consumer Cooperative</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Market</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Fresh Rhode Island</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firsthand Foods</td>
<td>For-profit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nascent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasshoppers Distribution</td>
<td>For-profit</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho's Bounty Co-op</td>
<td>For-profit</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack &amp; Jake's</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nascent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Food Hub</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual Measures vs. Common Measures

Individual measures
• Developed in the context of specific food hubs to help guide their actions

Common measures
• Developed in the context of the food hub movement as a whole to illustrate collective impact

Common measures, as conceived here, rely on measurement at the level of individual food hubs
Purpose of Common Measures
Exploration

How do we know what impact food hubs are actually having?

• To what extent are food hubs already measuring their impacts?
• Would common measures help illustrate the impacts food hubs are having?
• Is it possible to use existing data to build a compelling framework around food hubs impacts?
# Common Measure Themes Explored

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased economic activity and market-access for small- and mid-sized producers.</td>
<td>• Greater food access to underserved communities.</td>
<td>• Increased articulation and understanding of the impact of food hubs in achieving health-related outcomes.</td>
<td>• Investment by federal and private sources into food hub development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Common Measure Themes & Mission Statements of Study Hubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Hubs</th>
<th>Food Access</th>
<th>Supporting Farmers</th>
<th>Human Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALBA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Capital Foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
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<td>Common Market</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Food Hub</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Common Measure Themes & Mission Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Food Access</th>
<th>Supporting Farmers</th>
<th>Human Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Study Hubs</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Food Hubs *</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* National Food Hub Survey data
Mission Statement Examples
Theme: Market Access & Food Access

Firsthand Foods' mission is to help build a sustainable food system that allows small and mid-sized livestock producers to thrive.

Our mission is to strengthen regional farms while making the local bounty accessible to communities and the institutions that serve them.
Mission Statement Examples
Theme: Health (and Ecology)

Farm Fresh Rhode Island is growing a local food system that values the environment, health and quality of life of RI farmers and eaters.

Our mission is to advance economic viability, social equity and ecological land management among limited-resource and aspiring farmers.
Common Measure Theme #1

Increased Market Access and Economic Activity for Small and Mid-Sized Producers
Common Measure Theme: Market Access

Data Available: What proportion of food producers are small or mid-sized?

**Food Hubs**
- 76% of food hubs indicated that **most** of their producers were small or mid-sized
- 32% reporting **all** of their producers as small or mid-size

**Study Hubs**
- 38% Study Hubs indicated that **most** of their producers were small or mid-sized
- 50% Study Hubs indicated that **all** of their producers were small or mid-sized
Common Measure Theme: Market Access

Data available: What percentage of Food Hub gross sales come from small and mid-size producers?

60% of food hubs’ total gross sales came from small and mid-sized producers.

6 Study Hubs reported a total of $34 million in purchases from small and mid-sized producers with average purchases of more than $570,000 per study hub.
Telling the Story

• 2012 Purchases of over $335,000
• Small Producers
  – 37 Producers from $20,000 - $150,000 annually
• Tripled the number of producers in past 3 years
Telling the Story

“We develop new marks and relieve them of the responsibility of marketing.”

-Firsthand Foods co-CEO Jennifer Curtis.
Telling the Story

**Goal**
- Vibrant & Sustainable Regional Food System in North Carolina

**Indicator**
- More consumers demonstrate commitment by putting their food dollars toward local food.

**Measure**
- How much is customer’s total spending on local meat?
Telling the Story

Baseline Data:

• average of 70% of meat purchases being made from local producers across 12 customers

• 16 restaurants spent more than $500,000 on local foods

✓ 71% of that went to FHF and their producers
### Framing the Data

#### Small & Mid-Size Farms in Study Hub States*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total small and mid-size (up to $500k)</th>
<th>small and mid-size farms as % of all farms</th>
<th>market value of products from small and mid size (1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>72,384</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>$3,315,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>23,658</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>$854,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>83,613</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>$1,751,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>28,580</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>$639,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>53,538</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>$1,795,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>60,889</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>$2,458,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>$29,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>45,958</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>$979,585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from 2007 Agricultural Census.

Data Available: What services do Food Hubs provide?

- Help producers find new markets?
- Mark and promote services?
- Brand or label products?
- Demonstration/Incubator farm?
- Provide production & post-harvest handling training?
- Provide business management services?
- Provide food safety or GAP Training?
- Provide liability insurance?
- Provide transportation services?

Study Hubs provide an average of 5.75 services.

All study hubs:
- Help producers find new markets
- Provide branding or labeling to indicate origin
# Questions about Food Hub Impact on Market Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: Profit</th>
<th>2: Production</th>
<th>3: Access</th>
<th>4: Reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are more farmers profitable because of food hubs?</td>
<td>• Does the farm product coming through food hubs represent net increases in production or is it just a redistribution of a set level of production?</td>
<td>• Do the services offered by food hubs actually result in increased access to market for farmers?</td>
<td>• How many farmers, as a proportion of all farmers in a market region, are impacted by food hubs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Possible Common Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Producer Engagement</strong></td>
<td>- The proportion of all small and mid-sized producers in a selected region selling products through food hubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volume and Value of Products</strong></td>
<td>- The proportion of the volume and value of products from small and mid-sized producers handled by food hubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Access</strong></td>
<td>- The level of investment by food hubs in improving market access for small and mid-sized producers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Penetration</strong></td>
<td>- The market penetration of food hubs by market type in a given region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment in Farm Operations</strong></td>
<td>- The level of investment farmers make in their operations as a result of their involvement with food hubs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common Measure Theme #2

Greater food access to underserved communities.
Current Practices: Improving Food Access

Data Available: How do Food Hubs support Food Access?

- Accept SNAP, WIC or FMNP benefits?
- Provide matching for SNAP benefits?
- Provide transportation services for consumers?
- Operate a mobile market?
- Subsidize farm shares?
- Donate food to local food pantries/banks?

38% of Study Hubs accept WIC, SNAP or FMNP benefits

88% of Study Hubs donate food
Telling the Story

- Non-profit with dual mission:
  1. Support the viability of sustainable family farms
  2. Increase access to fresh and healthy food for all people
- Served 212 customers
- Purchased products from 75 local farmers and producers
Telling the Story

How are we impacting vulnerable populations?

1. Identify institutional and retail customers serving these communities

2. Track food going to these customers
   • Uses sophisticated inventory system that tracks each item in pounds, cases and $ for each producer and customer
Telling the Story

Data: Customers serving Vulnerable Populations

- 25 Schools: 10,310 Meal Equiv.
- 6 Hospitals: 52,476 Meal Equiv.
- 3 Retail: 32,962 Meal Equiv.
Question about Food Hub Impact on Access for Underserved

Increased Access

• How many additional consumers in underserved communities have the choice to consume fresh, healthy food as a direct result of food hub activities?
## Framing the Data

Food Deserts, Food Insecure Population and SNAP participation in Study Hub States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Population - Low-Income, Low Access (Food Desert)&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>% of Population - food insecure&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>% of Population participated in SNAP&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> ERS Data by Census Tract; <sup>2</sup>ERS; <sup>3</sup> USDA SNAP participation data and 2012 census data
Possible Common Measures

- Feeding Underserved Communities
  - The proportion of food going through food hubs that goes to underserved communities.

- Feeding Underserved Populations
  - The proportion of the healthy food needs of underserved populations (in a particular geography) being met by one or more food hubs.

- Improved Food Access
  - The baseline food access conditions in underserved communities and how have these changed because of food hubs.
Common Measure Theme #3

Increased articulation and understanding of the impact of food hubs in achieving health-related outcomes.
Current Practices: Improving Health Outcomes

Data Available: What current practices of food hubs support improved health outcomes?

**Food Hubs**
- 18% of food hubs report **sales to Farmers Markets** (making up 32% of total sales)
- 35% of food hubs reported **sales to K-12 food service** (making up 11% of total sales)

**Study Hubs**
- 1 Study Hub reported **sales to farmers markets**
- 1 Study Hub reported **sales to K-12 food service**
- 5 Study Hubs indicated there was an **opportunity to expand** into this market
Common Measure Theme: Health Outcomes

Data Linking Food Access to Health Outcomes

Wholesome Wave Fruit & Veggie Prescription Program makes direct link between access to healthy food and health outcomes.

- **Increase in Fruit and Vegetable Consumption?**
  - 55% of participants reported increase

- **Farmers Market Attendance?**
  - 53% visited farmers market 8 or more times

- **Body Mass Index (BMI)?**
  - 37.8% of child participants decreased BMI
Common Measure Theme: Health Outcomes

Data Linking Food Access to Health Outcomes

Farmers Markets and Health

- 0.73% decrease in rate of diabetes for each additional farmer’s market per 1,000 people

Farm-to-School and Health

- 1.09% decrease in rate of obesity and 0.27% decrease in diabetes for counties with a farm-to-school program

Source: Obesity and Diabetes, the Built Environment and the ‘Local’ Food Economy; 2010.
Mission to grow a local food system that values the environment, health and quality of life of Rhode Island farmers and eaters.

- Aggregation & Distribution
- Local Food Marketing & Producer Support
- CSAs
- Farmers Market Support & Management
- Food & Nutrition Education
Telling the Story

Healthy Food Healthy Families Program
• Nutrition education for 400 low-income families
• Participants are surveyed at the beginning, middle and end of the season

93% increased fruit & vegetable consumption
Learning from the Data

- Understand who is succeeding, who isn’t, and why?
- Understand participant characteristics associated with desired behaviors
- Develop strategies to address low retention rates at certain markets

“We use it [data] to track our own progress, to make sure we are doing the things we say we are going to do.” - Sheri Griffin, Co-Executive Director.
Questions about Food Hub Impact on Health

1. Linking to Healthy Outcomes
   - What proportion of the food handled by food hubs is targeted in ways that allow it to be linked to positive health-related outcomes?

2. Existing Food Choices
   - In the absence of food hubs, what would the food choices be?
## Framing the Data

### Prevalence of Obesity and Diabetes in Study Hub States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>% of Population that is Obese</th>
<th>% of Adults with Diabetes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 2007 Food Industry Center. State Fact Sheets.
Possible Measures

Outlets that Positively Impact Health

- The proportion of food going through food hubs to outlets that have been proven to positively impact health.
  - Quantity/Proportion of food going to K-12 schools
  - Quantity/Proportion of food going to farmers markets
  - Quantity/Proportion of food being distributed through Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Programs

Healthy food for targeted populations

- The proportion of healthy foods to each targeted population that come through food hubs.
Common Measure #4

Investment by federal and private sources into food hub development.
Understanding Investments
Available Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Hub Revenue Sources as a Percent of Their Total Revenue</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government Funding</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government Funding</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from services provided by the food hub</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Understanding Investments

### Study Hub Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Federal Investment as % of total income</th>
<th>Private Investment as % of total income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALBA</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cherry Capital Foods</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firsthand Foods</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasshoppers Distribution</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho's Bounty</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack &amp; Jake's</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Food Hub</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions About Investment Options for Food Hubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: Economic Self-Sufficiency</th>
<th>2: Funding and Financing</th>
<th>3: Subsidized Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What are the options for creating viable, economically self-sufficient food hubs?</td>
<td>• How can funding and financing be blended most effectively?</td>
<td>• What are the activities of food hubs that may require (and deserve) ongoing subsidy and how can these be accounted for most effectively without undermining the profitability of the core business?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible Measures

Sources of Investment
- Sources of investment a food hub receives in relation to its years in operation and operational structure.

Subsidies (Internal, Cross)
- Measure of internal subsidy or cross subsidy within food hub operations.

Self-sufficiency ratio
- A self-sufficiency ratio equals total earned income divided by total expense.
Discussion

• What is the value of common measures to the food hub community?
• Are these the right themes?
• How do we move from measuring activities to outcomes?
• What is the value of stronger framing measures?
• What is the role of the Wallace Center in this?
For More Information

Contact Presenters

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