

# NGFN FOOD HUB COLLABORATION

## Spring 2012 FOOD HUB CONFERENCE

CONNECTING THE SPOKES OF THE NEW FOOD HUB NETWORK  
APRIL 19-20 | CHICAGO

### AGENDA

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 19

**7:00 AM – 1:30 PM**

#### REGISTRATION

**Location: Outside of O'Hare III Ballroom**

**8:00 AM – 1:30 PM**

#### FOOD HUB TOURS: TWO TOUR OPTIONS AVAILABLE

Tours are optional and space is limited, includes lunch. Buses leave at 8:00 AM sharp. Registered participants will check in for the tours in the hotel's back parking lot. Please stop by the registration table first to pick up your conference materials.

##### Tour One: Food Hubs & Farm to Consumer/Farm to School Models

#### Irv & Shelly's Fresh Picks®

Irv & Shelly's Fresh Picks, a privately held business established in 2006, offers year-round home delivery of local and organic produce, meat, dairy and eggs in the Chicago area. Consumers can order online a la carte anytime or opt for a Fresh Picks Box with weekly or bi-weekly delivery. With over 17,000 customer accounts, they make over 45,000 deliveries a year. Irv & Shelly's Fresh Picks is committed to working with local sustainable farms they personally know and trust and has developed tracking systems to identify products by farmer and farmer practices. They work with 60–100 farmers and have put over \$800,000 into farmers pockets in the past year.

#### Gourmet Gorilla™

Gourmet Gorilla is a privately held business that provides over 80 preschools, elementary and high schools, and other institutions, with local and organic breakfasts, lunches and snacks delivered daily. Building alliances between local farms, urban agriculturalists, dietitians, nutritionists, chefs, and organic food manufacturers, they are able to provide quality ingredients as well as links to educational resources on healthy food curricula, the value of organic foods, garden projects, and ecological awareness. Working with around 21 farmers and distributors, Gourmet Gorilla obtains 60–70% of its ingredients from local, sustainable, and certified organic purveyors within the Midwest. Gourmet Gorilla is also beginning a CSA box program in June 2012 using 300 schools as hubs to deliver fresh produce to underserved communities.

#### Tour Description:

At the first stop, participants will have the opportunity to tour the organization's cold and dry warehouse storage facilities; get a glimpse into how orders are filled and packed; and gain insight into Fresh Picks' role as a buyer, including how they work with farms to aggregate and distribute local and regional products. The innovative inner workings of Gourmet Gorilla's kitchen will be the focus of the second stop on this tour. In addition to learning about the company's equipment and processes for receiving, processing and preserving food, participants will also have the opportunity to learn about how they work with schools to provide cost-effective, healthy meals, and to hear about their new CSA box program.

## Tour Two: Wholesale Models

### Testa Produce, Inc.

Established in 1912, this family business began with founder Dominick Testa selling stalks of celery door to door from a basket. Today, Testa Produce is a family owned and operated wholesale produce distributor selling to hotels, restaurants, hospitals, and corporate dining establishments in the Chicagoland area. Testa offers both domestic and international products. They specialize in local, seasonal, specialty and organic programs, and offer expanded product lines including dairy, appetizers, desserts, grocery and canned items. Their 91,300 square foot facility features the most state of the art green technologies, achieving LEED® Platinum Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, and making them the first LEED Platinum Foodservice Facility in the United States. Building innovations include a design with a minimum carbon footprint, utilizing numerous renewable energy sources.

### Goodness Greeness

Goodness Greeness is the midwest's leading source for fresh, organic produce and the largest privately held organic distributor in the country. Founded in 1991 by CEO Robert Scaman and his brothers, Rodney and Rick, Goodness Greeness employs over 60 people at their warehouse in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago. The company directly supplies over 300 stores, including the region's largest supermarkets and independent retailers. Goodness Greeness is committed to supplying its customers with the finest organic food from around the world, while at the same time increasing its purchasing from the midwest's small-scale organic farmers. Goodness Greeness has developed a private label brand of regional organic food, including a new Fresh Cut product line, being distributed throughout the Midwest.

### Tour Description:

This two-part tour will provide the opportunity for an in-depth look at two of the most successful wholesale produce distributors in the Midwest committed to regional and local sourcing. At Testa Produce, participants will explore the company's cutting edge facilities and technologies, including a free standing wind turbine; external retention ponds; rainwater harvesting; green roofing; several individually temperature-controlled areas; a 60+ strong fleet of biodiesel fuel delivery trucks; energy efficient lighting; and solar energy. At Goodness Greeness, participants will learn about the nuts and bolts of their work by touring the warehouse, where they'll observe and discuss key processes including value added repacking; retail packing; sales inventory tracking; distribution logistics; dairy, deli, produce and meat integration; and quality control.

**1:30 PM–2:25 PM**

## **OPENING & WELCOME WITH INTRODUCTION OF THE NGFN FOOD HUB COLLABORATION**

**Location:** O'Hare III

**Facilitator:** Shanna Ratner (Yellow Wood Associates, Inc.)

**Panelists:** John Fisk (Wallace Center at Winrock International) and Jim Barham (USDA AMS)

**2:35 PM–4:00 PM**

## **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**Note:** Panels repeat on Friday but with new panelists and a modified focus.

### Topic #1 Nuts and Bolts of Food Hub Operations: **Farm to Consumer Models**

**Location:** LaGuardia

**Moderator:** Warren King (WellSpring, Ltd.)

**Panelists:** Laura Theis (Idaho's Bounty), Jeff Randol (Farm to Family Naturally), Noah Fulmer (Farm Fresh Rhode Island)

In this session, experienced food hub managers will provide detailed insight into key operational aspects of their work, such as managing staff and volunteers; profitability and financing; business models; management of logistics (including technology and software-based options); and facilities and infrastructure management. **This session will feature primarily hub-to-consumer models, while Friday's session will feature primarily hub-to-wholesale models.**

## Topic #2 Supply Side Success: Logistics for Quality and Consistency

**Location:** Kennedy

**Moderator:** Shanna Ratner (Yellow Wood Associates, Inc.)

**Anchor Panelists:** Jennifer Curtis (Farmhand Foods), Susan Futrell (Red Tomato), Tony Serrano (ALBA), Steve Warshawer (Wallace Center / NGFN and Beneficial Farm CSA)

This facilitated discussion is designed to bring experience and expertise to the fore by engaging participants and in discussion on key aspects of supply side logistics, such as: producer coordination; network and cooperative structures; production planning; food safety; and building farmer capacity. Discussion topics will vary depending on the interests and expertise of participants.

## Topic #3 The Buyers' Perspective: The Demand Side of the Equation for Regional Food for **Farm to Business/Institution Models**

**Location:** Dulles

**Moderator:** Jim Slama (FamilyFarmed.org)

**Panelists:** Ron Cropper (Goodness Greenness), Irv Cernauskas (Irv & Shelly's Fresh Picks), Jason Weedon (Gourmet Gorilla), Denis Jennisch (US Foods)

Managers of hubs with a Farm to Business/Institution focus and wholesale buyers will share the various lessons, challenges and successes on meeting the needs of the buyers as well as the hub. The session will address topics such as how to build and maintain relationships with buyers, the importance of increasing transparency, how to effectively share farmer stories and manage source verification of products, creative pricing strategies for different markets and products, meeting buyers needs and requirements such as food safety and quality standards, and expanding your customer base. Each group will present their own innovative models and connect with participant experiences through interactive Q&A, where participants are encouraged to share their own wisdom. **This session will feature primarily farm to business/institution models, while Friday's session will feature primarily farm to consumer models.**

## Topic #4: Financing Food Hubs: Insights from Investors – Finance 101

**Location:** Haneda

**Moderator:** Malini Ram Moraghan (Wholesome Wave)

**Panelists:** Jim Epstein (Blue Ridge Produce), Johnice Cross (Grown Locally), Gary Matteson (Farm Credit Council), Ellen McGeeney (Grasshoppers Distribution)

Our aim in this session is to bring you to a better understanding of the basics of financing options. Through short presentations, case studies, and a significant interactive question and answer section we will cover topics such as debt capital and equity capital (and a sense of why one would choose one or the other, or both), producer cooperatives, creating a financing plan, and more.

## Topic #5: Determining Your Software Needs (note: only offered Thursday)

**Location:** O'Hare III

**Moderator:** Erica Block (Local Orbit)

**Panelists:** Benzi Ronen (Farmigo), Amanda Osborne (FoodHub), Julie Arkenbrandt (Local Orbit)

Experts in software options and uses will cover topics such as open source, cloud computing, data sharing options, and the implications of software decisions for business management and growth.

**4:10 PM – 5:30 PM**

## CONCURRENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND NETWORKING SESSIONS

### Curbside Consulting

**Location:** Kennedy, Dulles, Haneda, La Guardia. (**Rooms are adjacent.** See page 9 for information on TAs and rooms.)

During curbside consulting sessions, take advantage of one-on-one TA sessions with consultants specializing in food hub business, marketing, and logistics, including selected panel speakers, food hub managers and others. Sign up for a session at <http://bitly.com/J6Rrri> or during registration at the conference.

## Food Hub Management Software

**Location: O'Hare III**

Software tools can help manage product inventory and projections; product traceability; customer accounts; orders and sales; and a variety of other food hub logistics. Take the opportunity to test out a number of food hub software packages currently on the market, and consult with on-site representatives about your software questions and needs. **See page 12 for more information on the software to be demonstrated.**

## Independent Networking

**Location: O'Hare III**

Take advantage of this open time to meet new people, visit with friends, or track down those you have wanted to engage. Or use the conference site/contact list to contact people in advance.

## ASU Food Hub Survey

**Location: O'Hare III**

Arizona State University is conducting survey research on food hubs and their operations. Chris Wharton will be at a table in O'Hare III administering the survey. It will take only about 10 minutes to complete, it's completely anonymous, and you'll be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon.com gift card!

**6:00 PM–7:00 PM**

## MIXER

**Location: Garden Patio (weather permitting) or Balmoral Ballroom Foyer**

**7:00 PM–8:30 PM**

## DINNER

**Location: Balmoral Ballroom**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 20**

**7:00 AM–8:30 AM**

## OPEN SPACE BREAKFAST

**Location: O'Hare II**

Open Space is a place for you to lead or join a conversation about your passions, identifying and convening new communities and partners with shared interests, concerns, or experiences. Each breakfast table will have a discussion topic—join an existing one if you'd like. To start your own topic table, drop by the "conversation starter" table.

**8:30 AM–11:45 AM**

## PLENARY SESSION: FOOD HUBS AS DRIVERS FOR HEALTHIER FOOD SYSTEMS

**Location: O'Hare III**

**Moderator:** Deborah Kane (National Director, USDA Farm to School Program)

**Panelists:** Kymm Mutch (School Food FOCUS), Haile Johnston (Common Market), Noah Fulmer (Farm Fresh Rhode Island)

In this session we will consider the critical links between the health of our food system and the health of communities, focusing on limited access to healthy food and its relationship to food-related disease. A brief overview of these connections will be followed by a facilitated conversation with a panel of experienced food systems advocates who are actively working to change the food environment around those it most impacts. They will consider the role that food hubs play, current challenges, and opportunities on the horizon. Finally, conference participants will work in region-based groups to imagine a regional food system that improves health outcomes, consider how food hubs can play a greater role in community health in their region, discuss partners necessary to achieve success, determine knowledge and tools already at hand, and identify resources and assistance needed.

**12:00 PM – 1:10 PM**

**LUNCH WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

**KATHLEEN MERRIGAN, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF USDA**

**Location: O'Hare II**

**1:10 PM – 1:45 PM**

**NEXT STEPS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE NGFN FOOD HUB COLLABORATION**

**Location: O'Hare II**

**Presenters: John Fisk (Wallace Center), Jeff Farbman (Wallace Center), Marty Gerencer (Morse Marketing Connections)**

The Food Hub Collaboration and Community of Practice offer an opportunity for continued learning and partnership beyond the convening. We will present more details on our ideas about developing this community, and invite participants to share their interests in the next steps of the community of practice.

**1:55 PM – 3:25 PM**

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**Note: Panels repeat from Thursday but with new panelists and a modified focus.**

**Topic #1 Nuts and Bolts of Food Hub Operations: Farm to Business/Institution Models**

**Location: LaGuardia**

**Moderator:** Nicole Mason (Veritable Vegetable)

**Panelists:** Jim Crawford (Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative), Bob Scaman (Goodness Greeness), and Bu Nygrens (Veritable Vegetable)

In this panel discussion and Q&A session, experienced food hub managers will provide detailed insight into key operational aspects of their work, such as managing staff and volunteers; profitability and financing; business models; management of logistics (including technology and software-based options); and facilities and infrastructure management for food hubs that deliver directly to consumers. **This session will feature primarily hub to wholesale models, while Thursday's session will feature primarily hub-to-consumer models.**

**Topic #2: Supply Side Success: Logistics for Quality and Consistency**

**Location: Kennedy**

**Moderator:** Shanna Ratner (Yellow Wood Associates, Inc.)

**Anchor Panelists:** Steve Warshawer (Beneficial Farm CSA, Wallace Center / NGFN), Diana Endicott (Good Natured Family Farms), Alan Moore (Local Food Hub), Ellen McGeeney (Grasshoppers Distribution)

This facilitated discussion is designed to bring that experience and expertise to the fore by engaging participants and facilitators in discussion on key aspects of supply chain logistics, such as: producer coordination; network and cooperative structures; production planning; food safety; and building farmer capacity. Topics will vary depending on the interests and expertise of participants.

**Topic #3 The Buyers' Perspective: The Demand Side of the Equation for Farm to Consumer Models**

**Location: Dulles**

**Moderator:** Kathy Nyquist (New Venture Advisors)

**Panelists:** Sona Desai (Intervale), Dan Carmody (Eastern Market), Dr. Jifunza Wright Carter (Black Oaks/Healthy Food Hub)

Managers with a consumer focus will talk about how to build a consumer market, including effective education and marketing programs, particularly in underserved markets. They will share their innovative market making techniques, such as partnerships with employers, mobile markets, and using city facilities to increase access. They'll present their own innovative models and connect with participant experiences through interactive Q&A, where participants are encouraged to share their own wisdom. **This session will feature primarily farm to consumer models, while Thursday's session will feature primarily farm to business/institution models.**

## Topic #4: Financing Food Hubs: Insight from Investors

**Location:** Haneda

**Moderator:** Malini Ram Moraghan (Wholesome Wave)

**Panelists:** Mike Gabriel (RSF Social Finance), Larry Fisher (ACEnet), Jim Barham (USDA AMS), Brad Leibov (Liberty Prairie Foundation), Sam Earle (Local Food Systems), Patty Cantrell (Regional Food Solutions LLC), Denis Jennisch (US Food Service)

**Presenting Hubs:** Western MA Food Processing Center, MA—a non-profit, small scale processor with a farm to institution model; GROWN Locally, IA—a producer cooperative serving the wholesale market considering purchasing a distribution center; Corbin Hill Road Farm, NYC—an LLC selling produce boxes to inner-city residents planning significant growth

During this fast paced consulting session, three participants will present their food hub financing needs. A range of social enterprise investors, lenders, and experts on debt and equity investment will share advice on how to go about addressing the needs as presented. They'll cover a variety of financing options, from traditional to innovative, available to food hubs, as well as engage on topics of specific interest to participants through Q&A.

**3:45 PM–4:00 PM**

## CLOSING SESSION

**Location:** O'Hare II