

# Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – April – June 2019

As a condition of its USDA Rural Development grant, the cooperating universities comprising AgMRC were tasked to prepare four reports a year and submit them to USDA. These reports summarize the activities completed during each quarter, including website development and functions, value-added business and economic analysis tools and outreach activities (workshops, seminars, newsletters and WebMail inquiries).



# Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – April – June 2019

Iowa State University

## *AgMRC Website Statistics*

This quarter, the total number of page views 282,949 with an average of 3,109 per day.

The Commodities and Products section attracts the most visits, at 204,174 this quarter total. Within Commodities and Products, Fruits is the top section at 63,147 visits. Vegetables follows at 35,108 visits. Livestock has the next highest visits at 23,664.

Within the website, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Industrial Hemp – 17,582 pageviews
2. Avocado – 11,913 pageviews
3. Watermelon – 5,717 pageviews

## AgMRC



The mission of AgMRC is to continue to provide independent producers and processors with critical information needed to build successful value-added agricultural enterprises through the [www.agmrc.org](http://www.agmrc.org) electronic resource information website.

AgMRC continues to serve a national value-added agriculture audience, with more than 3,000 unique visits per day.



2019	Pageviews	Page Views Per Day
January	96,029	3,098
February	98,746	3,527
March	104,426	3,369
April	114,066	3,802
May	96,592	3,116
June	72,291	2,410
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

### Major Content Sections

The major content sections of the AgMRC website visits:

1. Commodities and Products – 204,174 pageviews
2. Business Development – 37,008 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 15,553 pageviews
4. Markets and Industries – 5,658 pageviews
5. Directories and State Resources – 2,128 pageviews

Within the Commodities and Products section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Fruits – 63,147 pageviews
2. Vegetables – 35,108 pageviews
3. Livestock – 23,664 pageviews

Within the Business Development Section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Getting Prepared – 14,297 pageviews
2. Operating a Business – 8,898 pageviews
3. Starting a Business – 8,543 pageviews

Within the Renewable Energy Section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Ethanol – 4,397 pageviews
2. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Report – 4,007 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 2,144 pageviews



*AgMRC Website Updates:*

**Profiles and Pages updated this quarter (25):**

Agritourism	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism</a>
Asparagus	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/asparagus">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/asparagus</a>
Blueberries	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/blueberries">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/blueberries</a>
Budgeting Tools	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/business-worksheets-and-calculators/budgeting-tools">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/business-worksheets-and-calculators/budgeting-tools</a>
Business Expansion	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/business-expansion">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/business-expansion</a>
Business Strategy	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/business-strategy">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/business-strategy</a>
Case Studies of Value Added Producer Grant Recipients	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/analysis/case-studies-of-value-added-producer-grant-recipients">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/analysis/case-studies-of-value-added-producer-grant-recipients</a>
Cash Budgeting	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/operating-a-business/budgeting/cash-budgeting">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/operating-a-business/budgeting/cash-budgeting</a>
Cash Flow Budgeting Tools	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/business-worksheets-and-calculators/cash-flow-budgeting-tools">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/business-worksheets-and-calculators/cash-flow-budgeting-tools</a>
Cauliflower	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/cauliflower">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/cauliflower</a>
Competition	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/competition">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/competition</a>
Debt Payment Tools	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/debt-payment-tools">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/debt-payment-tools</a>
Farmers' Markets	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/markets-industries/food/farmers-markets">https://www.agmrc.org/markets-industries/food/farmers-markets</a>
Financial Performance Analysis Tools	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/financial-performance-analysis-tools">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/financial-performance-analysis-tools</a>

FoodSearcher Tool	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/foodsearcher-tool">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/foodsearcher-tool</a>
Industry Analysis	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/analysis/industry-analysis">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/analysis/industry-analysis</a>
National Commodity and Agricultural Organization Sites	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/directories-state-resources/related-directories/national-commodity-and-agricultural-organization-sites">https://www.agmrc.org/directories-state-resources/related-directories/national-commodity-and-agricultural-organization-sites</a>
Net Worth Tools	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/net-worth-tools">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/net-worth-tools</a>
Other Analysis Tools	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/other-analysis-tools">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/business-workbench/analysis-worksheets-and-calculators/other-analysis-tools</a>
Pumpkins	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/pumpkins">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/pumpkins</a>
Squash	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/squash">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/squash</a>
Sweet Corn Profile	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/corn-grain/sweet-corn-profile">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/corn-grain/sweet-corn-profile</a>
Value-Added Agricultural Consultants and Service Providers	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/value-added-agricultural-consultants-and-service-providers">https://www.agmrc.org/value-added-agricultural-consultants-and-service-providers</a>
Value-Added Farm Business Strategy	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/value-added-farm-business-strategy">https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/value-added-farm-business-strategy</a>
Watermelon	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/watermelon">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/watermelon</a>
Wine	<a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/wine">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/wine</a>

Commodities and products profiles are updated based on client inquiries to AgMRC Match participants and AgMRC office staff. This quarter we streamlined commodity pages on our website and eliminated commodity pages that were not being utilized according to our analytics.

Value-Added Case studies added this quarter include **BEEpothecary** <https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/analysis/case-studies-of-value-added-producer-grant-recipients/beepothecary> and **Page Springs Cellars** <https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/analysis/case-studies-of-value-added-producer-grant-recipients/page-springs-cellars> .



## Email

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 109 e-mailed questions pertaining to mangos, leafy greens, garlic, blueberries, and feasibility to name a few.

## Phone Calls

As of June 30, AgMRC staff reported having 52 toll-free phone inquiries from 19 different states.

## Facebook

AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had 29 posts, which were seen by more than 3,111 people.

## AgMRC Subcontracts

### Progress Report on AgMRC MarketMaker Collaboration

#### Goal 1

**Build Exportable Maps and Reports-** *Develop a series of maps and customizable marketing studies that provide Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) applicants with market intelligence that can easily be incorporated into feasibility studies and business plans that support the VAPG application process.*

The MM team is refreshing all secondary data sources that will be available as part of the exportable maps and reports tools.

The MM team acquired a more expanded version of Consumer Preference Data which will double the number of categories for food related purchasing behavior. These categories are being refreshed in the current mapping tool and the related increase search options are being added to the search feature.

#### Build Exportable Maps and Reports

- Acquired new secondary data from ESRI.
- Added American Community Survey to MarketMaker secondary data sources.
- Updated 2010 census data from estimates to final.
- Built new display layers for ESRI data.
- Build tool to capture current map view and data legends.
- Build tool to export tabular census and food preference data from current view.

Sample pdf printout attached.

#### Goal 2

**Integrate Educational Content from AgMRC site into MarketMaker Platform-** *Develop additional MarketMaker search tools targeting the AgMRC site educational content, building on the progress made in the first round of funding,*

### Integrate Educational Content from AgMRC site into MarketMaker Platform

- Built general-purpose tool to create FoodSearcher embeds for non-product searches, such as wineries, farmers markets and agri-tourism.

### Goal 3

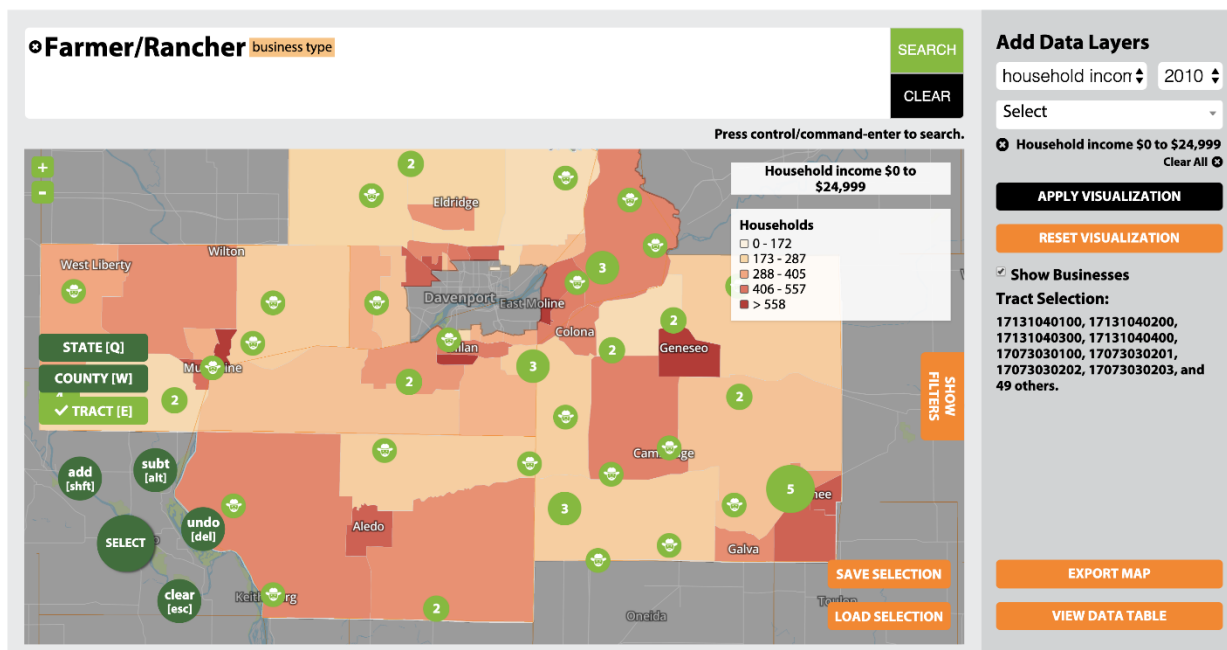
**Enhance MarketMaker Advanced Mapping Tools-** Expand the secondary data sources from USDA that can be incorporated into the MarketMaker interactive mapping platform. Develop a more intuitive interface that will make the resource more user friendly to the non-technical user. Develop new functionality that will allow VAPG grant applicants to identify market trends.

#### Enhance MarketMaker Advanced Mapping Tools

- Built mobile-friendly user interface to create custom map selection areas using drag-select gestures.
- Allow complex, cross-state map selections built at state, county, and/or tract level.
- Display only businesses within custom map selection areas.
- Display map data layers (census, etc.) only within custom selection areas.
- Save and load user searches by storing data in browser.
- Added many new data layers from American Community Survey.
- Accommodate census tract geometry from multiple census years.

Example Map A: This map shows farmers and density of low-income households in the Quad City (IL/IA) region, excluding urban census tract regions.

### Search Markets



#### **Goal 4**

**Build Metrics and Impacts** - Develop tracking tools that will allow AgMRC and MarketMaker staff to collect data that can be used for evaluation purposes and ultimately the long term economic impact of the resources being developed.

**Food Searcher-** The current 26 products averaged 1,669 product searches per week during the 2nd quarter of 2019.

**Most searched Food Searcher products include:**

Watermelon: 501 searches per week  
Strawberries: 371 searches per week  
Cherries: 338 searches per week  
Lettuce: 272 searches per week  
Carrots: 240 searches per week

**Profile Views** - There were 10,740 farms and businesses whose profiles were visited for a total of 38,510 profile views (some profiles were visited multiple times)

**Connecting Farmers to Markets** - 270 entities received 322 online connections facilitated through the AgMRC and MarketMaker collaboration.

**Buy/ Sell Forum Ad Views:** During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2019 119 MarketMaker ads experienced 1,655 views from MarketMaker users.

## **Outreach and Engagement**

**Conferences and Trade shows-** The MarketMaker team promoted the AgMRC/ MarketMaker collaboration at the following events in the first quarter of 2019

- United Fresh Trade Show, June 2019 Chicago, IL
- Meet with USDA – AMS, Farm Bureau, and Farm Credit concerning AgMRC and MarketMaker’s role in LAMP. June

### **Partner Effort to Refresh MarketMaker Business Profiles**

One of the biggest challenges in a platform like MarketMaker is to keep farmers and other registered businesses engaged and keep their information current. We have an ongoing effort with our





partners to encourage members to update their information. Involved members (this quarter) include: Illinois Farm Bureau, Virginia Tech, Virginia Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapters, LSU Extension, Colorado Department of Ag., University of Arkansas Extension (Risk Management Center). Second quarter profiles refreshed: 2,059.

**Food Searcher-** The MarketMaker tech team added an additional 4 products to the AgMRC Food Searcher Tool, plus 3 Business type searches: Agri-tourism, Farmers Markets, and Wineries.

## University of Vermont

The primary objective is to provide tools and resources to support agritourism and value-added agriculture enterprises. Funding is being used to develop materials and deliver trainings and technical assistance for producers and for agricultural service providers. Specific deliverables include:

1. A guide on best practices for agritourism and value-added enterprises.

Publications: Three Value Added Producer Grant profiles in Oregon and Washington. Revised drafts.

Publication: Revised and finalized: Agritourism Community Engagement Series: How to Create an Inventory of Agritourism Operations in an Area, County or Multi-County Region.

Publication: Chapter on Farm and Culinary Trails for inclusion in the proceedings of the First Agritourism World Congress in Bolzano, Italy. Completed all requirements for publication. Submitted.

Case Study: How Oregon State University Programming Supports the Development of Farm Direct Sales and Other Agritourism Activities in Oregon. Draft.

Case Study: The Size and Scope of the Marion County Agritourism Industry. Revised the data and worked with state Extension communications specialist to interpret the data in an interactive map of the industry. Draft.

The Extension publication and videos will be integrated into existing resource hubs, including the Vermont Agritourism webpage [www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism](http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism), a valuable tool used by service providers and farmers alike. They will also be available for posting on the AgMRC website.

2. Workshops on agritourism and value-added enterprises.

Training and Awareness--Public speaking with power point presentations entitled "Live the Farm" to Canby Rotary Club, Canby, Oregon. April 19, 2019. 47 attended including several farmers, and gave a



revised presentation, to localize the content, to Wilsonville Rotary Club, Wilsonville Oregon on May 2, 2019. 28 attended.

Vermont Farm to Plate Agritourism Task Force Meeting. June 25, 2019. Philo Ridge Farm, Charlotte, Vermont. 20 attendees. Discussed best practices guide and planned for a marketing webinar on July 9.

Central Oregon Planners Network Meeting. June 26, 2019. Madras, Oregon. Some 25 attendees including city and county staff, planners, elected officials and planning commissioners. Spoke on topic: Agritourism—best practices, impacts and trends.

3. Presentations at national conferences to share the best practices guide and VAPG program with producers and with agricultural service providers.

We presented on agritourism best practices at the Agriculture, Food, & Human Values Society and Association for the Study of Food and Society Joint Annual Conference, Anchorage, Alaska, June 26-29, 2019.

Our proposals were accepted to present at the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association meeting in Atlanta in July and the National Extension Tourism Conference in October in Oregon.

4. Technical assistance to support farmers with agritourism and value-added enterprises including farms applying for Value-Added Producer Grants.

We provided direct technical assistance through farm visits and one-on-one consultations to twelve farms in the Northeast. In Oregon, we made visits to 20 agritourism farms and value-added operations in the mid- to upper-Willamette Valley. We also held informal conversations about agritourism on their farms. For some of the newer agritourism operations, we provided tips for their success when developing new features for visitors.

## **University of Minnesota Food Industry Center**

### **Goal #2**

*Provide value-added business and economic analysis tools, including information on business principles, legal, financial and logistical issues (information contained in the Business Development section of the Web site).*



We are developing a spreadsheet tool to use for the developing of linking farm enterprise budget with investment in a value-added business. This is an update of an earlier AgMRC product done about ten years ago but will include information from the recent tax bill changes. A draft is completed and being circulated for peer review among economists at Oklahoma State and Iowa State.

### **Goal #3**

*Conduct research and analysis on economic issues facing producers involved in value-added business ventures (this includes research activities on all topics included at the Web site).*

We created a digital file for the website of the work done by Edward Blevins in his update of the VAPG program and a written summary was created. We are still finalizing a database with contacts of VAPG recipients on social media such as Facebook and Twitter and will be contacting them to learn more about what they are doing. It is going a little slower but we expect to have it completed this summer.

## **University of Arkansas Extension**

For the periods, I led a team that includes a graphic designer, summer communications intern and communication's faculty to develop a value added success story template (see attached) and several infographics to promote the VAPG program. I have spent the past quarter developing success stories from across the Southern region. To date, we have a success story from every state across the South and are still attempting to get something from the territories. The success stories include an infographic to highlight value added activity and details USDA VAPG definitions. The stories promote Southern Risk Management Education Center and AgMRC and includes a quote from the grantee. A "VAPG Success Story" landing page is featured on the SRMEC website

<https://srmec.uaex.edu/News/vapg-success-stories.aspx>

Social media strategies will promote the program's successes across the region. Additionally, an interactive PowerPoint and VAPG video are in process with hopes to have both finalized in the coming weeks. The PowerPoint will detail programmatic outcomes in term of projects funded and funds invested across the region. Once the PowerPoint which will include the infographics is completed the success stories will be loaded on the feature page.

### **Community Food Systems, Iowa State University**

April-June



Throughout the last three months the team has focused on evaluating the Local Food Leader and Community Food Systems workshops, as well as the online modules for Local Food Leader. Below are some highlights from the evaluation.

#### Local Food Leader Workshops:

Usefulness Statements Total Percentages by Agree			
<b>Agree</b>	Neither	Disagree	
70%	23%	7%	Equity: A Foundation to our Work
69%	26%	4%	Evaluation
69%	26%	5%	Facilitation and Capacity Building
69%	25%	6%	Working in Food Systems
64%	28%	9%	Professional Development and Leadership
Usefulness Statements   Time Total Percentages by More			
<b>More</b>	Less		
90%	10%	Equity: A Foundation to our Work	
88%	12%	Working in Food Systems	
76%	24%	Facilitation and Capacity Building	
69%	31%	Professional Development and Leadership	
60%	40%	Evaluation	

<b>Professional Development Statements Total Percentages by Agree</b>			
<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	
89%	8%	2%	I learned something new today
75%	20%	5%	I would recommend this program to others
67%	28%	5%	The workshop was helpful for my professional development goals
66%	25%	6%	I feel confident about how to work with community in regards to food systems development
63%	25%	11%	I have a better understanding of what working in food systems involve
60%	28%	12%	I have a new understanding of engaging new partners in food systems development
60%	25%	9%	I have new ideas of how to engage with new stakeholders

#### Community Food Systems Workshop- Pilot 1:

<b>Usefulness Statements Total Percentages</b>					
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	
46%	39%	15%	0%	0%	CFS Framework
39%	44%	17%	0%	0%	Collective Strategies
43%	45%	12%	0%	0%	Creative Methods



29%	31%	29%	12%	0%	Assessment, Mapping, Reports
58%	35%	7%	0%	0%	Priority Projects
43%	48%	5%	5%	0%	Project Management
38%	52%	7%	2%	0%	Dynamic Teams
33%	45%	17%	5%	0%	Design Thinking
36%	49%	13%	0%	3%	Evaluation

Professional Development Statements Total Percentages					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
64%	33%	0%	2%	0%	I have a better understanding of what the ISU CFS Process is
49%	36%	13%	2%	0%	I have a new understanding of creative ways to engage new partners in food systems development
72%	20%	7%	2%	0%	I learned something new today
57%	37%	4%	0%	2%	The workshop was helpful for my professional development goals
48%	33%	20%	0%	0%	I obtained new ideas for partnership development and community engagement
47%	36%	11%	7%	0%	I obtained new skills for finding data relevant to decision making in communities
30%	43%	23%	2%	2%	I have new ideas of how to engage with new stakeholders



52%	33%	11%	2%	2%	I would recommend this program to others
30%	52%	15%	2%	0%	I feel confident about how to work with community in regards to food systems development
36%	56%	2%	2%	4%	I have new skills for project management
39%	43%	15%	2%	0%	I have new understanding of where design fits in food systems work
30%	50%	20%	0%	0%	I understand how to utilize maps in food systems work

#### Community Food Systems Workshop- Pilot 2:

Usefulness Statements Total Percentages					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
41%	42%	17%	0%	0%	CFS Framework
43%	42%	15%	0%	0%	Q1 Visioning
43%	43%	14%	0%	0%	Q2 Research
40%	43%	17%	0%	0%	Q3 Compilation
36%	43%	21%	0%	0%	Transition to Strategic Doing
54%	42%	4%	0%	0%	Q4 Priority Projects
50%	40%	10%	0%	0%	Project Meeting 1
42%	37%	17%	4%	0%	Design Thinking
41%	47%	12%	0%	0%	Project Meeting 2

Professional Development Statements Total Percentages			
Combined Values			
Agree	Neither	Disagree	
98%	2%	0%	I have a better understanding of what the ISU Community Food Systems Process is.
95%	4%	1%	I have a better understanding of what working in food systems involves
86%	13%	1%	I have new creative ways for engaging with partners
89%	11%	0%	I learned new tools for developing community food systems assessments
87%	13%	0%	The workshop was helpful for my professional development goals
100%	0%	0%	I learned something new today
87%	13%	0%	I obtained new skills for finding data relevant to decision making in communities
91%	9%	0%	I would recommend this program to others
82%	15%	3%	I feel confident about how to work with community in regards to food systems development
80%	14%	6%	I have a new understanding of where design fits within food systems work
86%	14%	0%	I understand how to utilize maps in food systems work

Local Food Leader Online Modules:

Based on this evaluation, revised workshop materials will be created during the summer and will be used in 3 new workshop location between August and September (Iowa/ Nebraska/ Oregon). These





workshops will also allow for multiple state partners to attend the workshop, rather than the initial local-based program. This is to evaluate the impact of a "hub" (multi-state) training vs. a local-based training.

In addition, the Community Food Systems (CFS) online modules launched in late May, and we currently have 26 participants total; this includes 21 in the Full certification, 6 in Facilitator, 1 in Economic Impact, 2 in Design Thinking, and 1 in Feasibility studies.

We also have an online only curriculum for Mapping 101 with 28 participants currently enrolled.

We have conducted cohort calls with 7 different state trainers regarding the next steps for hosting of Local Food Leader curriculum. There will be a marketing and branding package developed in August that all trainers will be able to use to market the program. Attached is an update trainer document that details the different roles and responsibilities of respective institutions.