Integrating Wholesale Foods into Local Markets of Rosemount, MN

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The Topic and Research

We searched out a variety of wholesale markets in Rosemount to access the state of these markets as well as their roadblocks and potentials.
Local wholesale opportunities have benefits for:

- Rosemount producer community
- Rosemount wholesale businesses
- Reduced transportation and reliance on imported food
- Awareness and education for consumers
- Creating trustworthy community-level relationships centered around a medium we all can enjoy: fresh food!
Questions We Asked

- What are the existing and potential wholesale markets for locally produced food in Rosemount?
- What are wholesaler buyers’ interest and ability levels to purchase food from local growers?
- What challenges do they experience in doing so?
- What have other similar cities done to encourage the development of wholesale markets for local food?
Our Process

1. **Research** other cities and practices already implemented
2. **Investigate** a variety of available markets in Rosemount
3. **Interview** individuals who are in these markets
4. **Summarize** our findings and analyze the system as a whole
Existing Markets Researched

- Institutions
- Schools
- Locally owned restaurants
- Large scale sellers & buyers
Institutions: Flint Hills Resources

- Local Biofuel Refinery Company
- Large scale of food distribution
  - Cafeteria & Cafe serve 500+ employees a day
  - Aramark, a multinational company provides food services
- What issues and best practices does a large scale food system like this have?
Institutions: Flint Hills Resources

- Issues:
  - Need “super-distributors” - Sysco
  - Health and safety regulations in place restrict local producers from pairing with Flint Hills.
  - No control over where produce comes from
  - Cost
    - Required preparation
    - Quantities of food
Institutions: Flint Hills Resources

● Best Practices
  ○ Most produce comes from MN and WI farms
  ■ Bix Produce-St. Paul based produce distribution
    ● Bulk pre-washed & cut fruits and vegetables.
    ● Sustainably minded company
    ● Support local farmers through Supplier Approval Program
      ○ Need to comply to FDA guidelines
Schools

- bringing local foods to be served in the cafeterias of School district 196
  - support local farmers and producers
  - healthy foods to children
- interviewed Coordinator of Food and Nutrition Services
  - vendor Upper Lakes Foods in Cloquet, MN
  - strict budget
    - additional utensils and training of staff
  - certain local foods during in-season months
    - corn and potatoes
Next Steps for Schools...

- Vermont Farm to School, “Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools”
- Begin slowly incorporating local foods into school lunch
  - identify top 5 to 10 food products use most in volume
  - commit to buying one of these each month from local farm
  - gradually increase amount bought and introduced in menu
Locally Owned Restaurants Findings

Interest levels are high
Marketing events + Social Networking

Specific Needs from Owners:
- A list of sellers, their produce + pricing
- Delivery schedules
- Clearer laws
Restaurant Roadblocks

- No easily accessible information
- Legal “grey area” for owners
- Seasonal impacts
- Lack of consumer knowledge
Large Scale Sellers/Buyers: Fluegel’s

“Fluegel's carries a little bit of everything from frozen pizzas to premium pet food.”
Large Scale Sellers/Buyers: Fluegel’s

- High interest in selling locally produced product
- Tried farmers market in the past
- Future expansion
Dealing With a Growing City

- Rosemount’s population expected to double in the next 25 years.
  - Losing agricultural land to development
  - Need to keep local food prominent in a city with a history with agriculture
Recommendations

- Farm Direct program - Sustainable Food Center in central Texas
- Food processing facility - Root Cellar Foods in Montana
Recommendations

● Food Hub
  ○ farmer collectives that aggregates, markets and distributes local foods to the community
  ○ Online market for easy access
Citations

http://www.intervale.org/what-we-do/intervale-food-hub/
http://www.bixproduce.com/about
https://www.meridium.com/customers/flint-hills-resources