

# February 2019 Summit Report

## Nebraska Extension Food System Initiative





## Thank You from the Food Systems Facilitator Team

On February 4th, 2019, 125 people convened to have conversations about Nebraska's food system; most of the attendees are already actively working in this arena. Our goal in holding this summit was to identify resources needed to successfully guide collaborative food system projects, support the coordination of efforts and to tap into current expertise. Your voices were heard, and Nebraska Extension is considering how we can continue to facilitate conversations and build bridges across all food system sectors as well as other key next steps discussed. This report is a summary of the afternoon. Please contact us for more details and to get more involved.

Thank you for being a part of the conversation and helping Nebraska Extension as together we seek to impact and support Nebraska's food system.

*Lisa Franzen-Castle, Katie Kreuser, Ben McShane-Jewell, Rex Nelson, John Porter, and Vanessa Wielenga.*

Visit us at [go.unl.edu/nefsi](http://go.unl.edu/nefsi).

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Extension will create space to gather people because we know we are better together, and we believe healthy food systems lead to healthy, viable communities.

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## Sector Reports

The following reports highlight important conversations held at the summit identifying needs of the represented sectors and areas for future work.

### PRODUCTION

Participants of the production sector at the Nebraska Food Systems Summit attended with goals to connect and collaborate with other producers and sectors of the Nebraska Food System; to gain a greater understanding of consumer needs for both production and educational purposes; to connect food production and soil health; and to learn more about farm diversification.

A major goal from an Extension perspective for the February Summit was to learn the gaps to focus future efforts. Specific needs identified for the production sector include:

- Farm start up training
- Fruit and vegetable variety trials
- Farm succession planning engaging youth, college students, and young adults
- High tunnel and other season extension research
- Development of specialty crop enterprise budgets
- Address producer labor challenges

To further connect with the production sector, please reach out to Katie Kreuser at [katie.kreuser@unl.edu](mailto:katie.kreuser@unl.edu) or (402) 267-2205.

## PROCESSING

The processing sector is often overlooked in the development of a robust food system. Its impact and scope could be an afterthought as so much energy is focused on developing a strong fresh market approach to providing food for regional consumers, but as the Nebraska Food System is developed, it would be a disservice to the industry to ignore the needs and benefits of a strong processing sector. Processing is simply: any collection of steps to preserve a food for future consumption and/or add value to food to enhance profitability. Producers may be able to reach local and regional markets with little to no processing, but the vast majority of producers will benefit from a great set of tools to enhance their products. Through Nebraska Extension, the UNL's Food Processing Center, and other entities, the Nebraska food system can be strongly supported in these efforts. The Food Systems Summit exposed many ways for the processing sector to grow to enhance food quality and availability in the region.

### Expose producers to services that are currently available

- Nebraska Extension offers courses targeting food producers in good manufacturing practices, hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) systems, preventive controls for human foods regulations, and foreign supplier verification programs regulations.
- The Food Processing Center has a long-running National Food Entrepreneur Program to provide coaching and tools to start-up processors. The FPC also offers several workshops that enhance the safety and value of the food supply.

### Discover needs of local food producers

- There are many needs of current producers related to processing of their food. Those available to help are not fully aware of these needs. The Nebraska food system team could be a conduit to share the needs with those able to support the needs.

### Lack of co-packing and small processing facilities

- The Nebraska food system would benefit by the investment/development of small processing facilities located nearer to production centers.
- A proposed UNL “producer space” could provide local producers a chance to build value-added food businesses.

If you are interested in being involved with, or have questions for, the processing sector please contact Terry Howell at [terry.howell@unl.edu](mailto:terry.howell@unl.edu).

*Right:  
Throughout the Summit, attendees were encouraged to share feedback from the facilitated table discussions with the larger group to spur further engagement and connecting.*



## DISTRIBUTION & MARKETING

We received clear feedback from summit attendees that there is a need for coordinated marketing efforts to increase consumer awareness and preference for local foods. Many producers struggle to effectively market their products, due to time constraints and lack of experience with marketing tools. In addition, there is a perceived gap in distribution networks that would facilitate connections between rural producers with consumers across the state.

The following items will be priorities for the marketing and distribution sector group:

- Identify gaps in distribution network and improve connections between producers and consumers (i.e. connect urban to rural)
- Statewide marketing campaign to raise awareness and increase consumer preference for local/regional foods
- Marketing plans and support for producers
- Developing robust farm to institution program to generate stable demand and stimulate production

To further connect with the Marketing and Distribution sector, please reach out to Ben McShane-Jewell at [bmcshane-jewell2@unl.edu](mailto:bmcshane-jewell2@unl.edu) or (402) 426-9455.

## EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & EVENTS

### Education and Training:

While education and training were not the subject of direct questions at the summit there were at least a few indicators that people saw this as an appropriate and needed role for Extension to play. Subject matter is potentially broad as the industry is complex and multi-faceted. Nutrition, SNAP-Education, horticulture, entomology, alternative agriculture relating to both crops and livestock, cover crops, marketing and business planning are just a few of potential educational topics. No producers signed up for this working circle so some type of survey work will be needed to better understand the needs. Educational products based on this knowledge and on best practices from the industry will be primary outcomes.

#### Next Steps:

- Convene a working circle meeting that includes both service providers and producers for input on needed educational resources.
- Develop programming plans accordingly.

### Events:

Convening, networking and facilitation were common themes in the discussions at the summit, and were indicated as a needed role for Extension to play in the Nebraska Food System. This aligns with best practices from other states as well. Learnings from all the working circles, as to the specific nature of this need, should be combined in order to focus our planning efforts future engagements.

#### Next Steps:

- Put the issue of convening on the agenda of future Food System facilitation team discussions to get consensus on what types of events have been indicated in our interactions with folks so far.
- Get next events on the calendar to assure a long planning horizon.

To further connect with the education and events sector, please reach out to Rex Nelson at [rnelson46@unl.edu](mailto:rnelson46@unl.edu) or (402) 873-3166.

*Right:  
Many connections  
and partnerships were  
represented at the Summit  
as shown in the mapping  
activity on the right.*



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Draw line Between  
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Market

## CONSUMPTION

The consumption sector describes the opportunities for individuals to gain equitable access to nutritious foods that are safe, financially viable, and culturally appropriate. The area of consumption encompasses individuals that consume food and the entities that source food: institutions, retail, restaurants, food banks, etc.

Consumption's areas of focus and needs identified at the Nebraska Food Systems Summit include:

### Education:

- Nutrition coaching and education for consumers
- Education around seasonality
- Support and offer farm to table curriculum
- How to select, prepare, store, and preserve local foods
- Increase education for youth audiences (nutrition; growing/gardening education)
- Educate around local versus regional food definitions and applications
- Promote how eating local foods will contribute to good health
- Value of growing and buying local foods
- Current, relevant nutrition research resources
- Accessible recipes available pertaining to seasonal produce and cooking "in season"

### Gardening:

- Increase urban, home gardening
- Provide gardening/home food production education
- Increase number of community gardens
  - "Empower communities to grow

in food & connectedness"

- Drive consumers to existing community gardens
- Create more greenways, orchards, etc.

### Evaluation:

- Community needs assessments
- Focus groups
- Surveys to assess communities' practices, attitudes, abilities, and willingness in regards to local foods

### Outreach and Promotion:

- Market the local-regional foods efforts in the media, within local organizations, etc.
- Determine how to reach "new" customers using marketing
- Market the importance of eating and buying local
- Create a more open method of communication about food that is available
- Build trust and loyal customer base to local producers-farmers
- Connect producers to consumers
- Connect consumers to producers
- Producer trainings
- Schools want produce in August on. Encourage farmers to plant some crops later

To further connect with the consumption sector, please reach out to Carrie Schneider-Miller at [clsmler@unl.edu](mailto:clsmler@unl.edu) or (402) 444-7873.



Above:

*Facilitated activities encouraged ideas to be shared aloud for further discussion of Extension's next steps of work in the food system.*

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resource management deals with the inherent problem that it is a member of the five food systems sectors that are also concurrently found in the other four sectors in some form or another. Therefore when we met at the summit it was clear prior to the start of the conference that the six individuals who had registered as Resource Management focused would have to be absorbed by other sectors where their service provision might be found or an area of secondary interest lie. Even with this change in plans there were some outcomes from the Summit that did help to create a plan moving forward with Resource Management.

- The need to clarify the RM sectors mission, content and goals in regards to regional food systems.
- Increased effort to educate and provide resources for all sectors in regards to how RM fits into their activities and how some aspects of our sector might support their efforts within the food systems network.
- Reach out to the other sectors to recruit members of their sectors to represent their interest in the RM sector meeting and work with RM on issues that impact them which we might be able to help.
- Start researching best practices and existing information to educate the general public on the aspects of RM that impact their daily lives and consumption habits, the future of food systems and the future of the state's economy and physical environment.

If you are interested in either being a direct member of the Resource Management sector or a representative from another sector to the RM group please contact Mike Shambaugh-Miller at [mshambaughmiller2@unl.edu](mailto:mshambaughmiller2@unl.edu).

## 2019 Summit Feedback: Online Hub Questions Survey

The development of a digital hub to facilitate collaboration and access to resources is an important aspect of the Nebraska Food System Initiative as shown in the following survey completed by attendees of the Summit on February 4th.

### Response rate was as follows: 75/129 (58.14%)

- Audience size = 129 (16 completed online; 59 completed hard copy surveys at the summit and were entered online post-summit)

### Source Link Question Summary

SourceLink is a platform that allows users to access a searchable database of “sources” of information such as organizations and businesses. Searches can include location, information on the specific need, and keywords. Example: Grow North MN Local Food Ecosystem Platform, [www.grownorthmn.com](http://www.grownorthmn.com).

- 69% said this feature would be helpful to very helpful for users
- How often would they use this feature? Majority of responses fell into these categories.
  - Less than once a month – 25%
  - Once a month – 29%
  - 2-3 times a month – 26%
- 70% agreed to strongly agreed that this feature would help improve food systems in Nebraska.



## Go Entrepid Question Summary

The GoEntrepid platform allows users to connect with resources and each other through searches and through push notifications. Each individual or organization creates a profile, indicating which information they are interested in and will receive a notification when new information, opportunities, events, or other entries that match their preferences are added. Example: Wallace Center Food System Leadership Network, [foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.goentrepid.com](http://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.goentrepid.com).

- 72% said this feature would be helpful to very helpful for users.
- How often would they use this feature? Majority of responses fell into these categories.
  - Less than once a month - 22%
  - Once a month - 29%
  - 2-3 times a month - 29%
- 72% agreed to strongly agree that this feature would help improve food systems in Nebraska.

## Landlink Question Summary

A map platform that allows users to connect with each other based on needs and wants. Users are able to add what they offer or are seeking (ex: farm land, internships, mentorships). Users manage their own listings and profiles and are notified when their want or need is matched with another. Example: Montana FarmLink, [www.farmlinkmontana.org](http://www.farmlinkmontana.org).

- 71% said this feature would be somewhat helpful to helpful for users.
- How often would they use this feature? Majority of responses fell into these categories.
  - Never - 31%
  - Less than once a month - 41%
- 70% agreed to strongly agree that this feature would help improve food systems in Nebraska.

## Overall Online Collaborative Hub Question Summary

- 73% said this feature would be helpful to very helpful for users.
- How often would they use this feature? Majority of responses fell into these categories.
  - Once a month - 31%
  - 2-3 times a month - 24%
  - Once a week - 21%
- 89% agreed to strongly agree that this feature would help improve food systems in Nebraska.

Left:

*The Summit provided opportunities for networking, in addition to facilitated discussions, with the goal of developing new and impactful connections.*

## Dreaming up the Future: What can Nebraska Extension do for the Nebraska food system?

This activity encouraged attendees to silently brainstorm what a successful food system looks like and how Nebraska Extension can help attendees by leveraging their strengths to better the food system. Ideas were shared aloud, and groups were encouraged to build on the ideas. The results, included in this graph, demonstrate how Nebraska Extension can facilitate and convene conversations and food system sector representatives so that all angles and perspectives are considered; describe potential routes and venues that Extension can take or develop to help keep everyone informed, increase awareness, and foster connections; defines short-, medium- and long-term goals of this group and what action steps we can take to achieve these goals.

### Summit Poster Data

	Funding	Research	Education & Training
Production	Seek grants; connect producers with external funding opportunities	Food production resiliency in face of climate change; on farm research network; fruit and vegetable production trials across NE	Soil regeneration; consuming locally, in season; climate change awareness; urban food production (community gardens, orchards, greenways); develop programming for youth on food production in public schools - bridge FFA & 4H on food system education; develop relationships with and provide technical assistance to producers; hold field days with researchers; land practices that take all living things into consideration; beginning farmer programs
Educational Development & Events	Seek grants		Citizen Science program; business management strategies for small and large producers; enterprise budget development
Processing	Seek grants		
Online Resources	Seek grants	Create platform with a repository of relevant research	
Distribution & Marketing	Farm to school; seek grants; incentives for buying local; connect producers to value added producer grant, and other outside funding opportunities	Research and Education around value added public-private partnerships	Educate producers about what it takes to supply supermarkets; marketing workshops; education on 'the real cost of food'; education for restaurant industry on sourcing locally; utilize commercial kitchen space for community trainings; cost effective ways to develop organic/non-GMO food production/distribution
Evaluation	Seek grants	Determine gaps in food system	
Consumption	Seek grants	Develop working models to pilot	Nutritional coaching; cooking and value added production
Partner Engagement			
Resource Management	Seek grants		

	Connecting	Collaboration/Network Building	Engagement
Production	Connect consumers with producers to understand the 'why'; provide/partner on grant opportunities or connect with financial opportunities for tools, equipment, or lending; develop strategy for to work with different size/types of growers	Create and lead focus groups; create repository for consumer education, research, and resources available; create west branch of Practical Farmers; land access programs for beginning/small farmers	
Educational Development & Events			
Processing	Commercial kitchens in communities		
Online Resources	Resource for Local Public Health Departments to access and connect partners who want to increase access to healthy foods; online hub using text alerts of what's available; create resources connecting indigenous, POC, women and other minority groups to production and farming	Create ag driven technology for producers; online hub with information, research, resources, and platform for communication (one stop shop); share agrotourism opportunities; create listserv	
Distribution & Marketing	Develop/enhance/improve programs that will increase farm profits; develop strategy for connecting different size/types of producers; connect rural and urban markets; Shipping/logistics help; engage more value added processing/ food transformation sectors with producers	Create 'Nebraska' brand; create marketing hub for producers; define different markets and provide advice on how to access; promote development of institutional markets; creation of or support development of more coops and food hubs	
Evaluation			
Consumption			
Partner Engagement	Provide connections for use of excess/waste		Provide information/data and engage elected officials, governmental organizations, non-profits, media
Resource Management		Process for organizing & deploying teams for produce rescue; process for glean matching - pick up and transport gleaned product to organizations	

# Attendees

## Alphabetical by Last Name

### A

#### Ajai Ammachathram

NE Extension - UNL Hospitality,  
Restaurant, Tourism Management

#### Tracy Anderson

NE Extension – 4-H

#### Pat Anderson-Sifuentez

Neighborworks Lincoln

#### Caitlyn Andrews

Nebraska Department of Agriculture

### B

#### Yolanda Bailey

Fox Run Farms

#### Melissa Baker

GC Resolve

#### Michael Bergland-Riese

NE Extension

#### Andreia Bianchini

NE Extension - UNL Food  
Science and Technology

#### Kris Bousquet

Midwest Dairy Association

#### Cindy Brison

NE Extension – Food,  
Nutrition and Health

#### Joseph Brugger

Upstream Farms and Innovations

#### Tom Bruning

Metropolitan Community College

#### Janet Buck

Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach

### C

#### Cait Caughey

The Big Garden

#### Byron Chaves

NE Extension - UNL Food  
Science and Technology

#### Kimberly Clark

NE Extension – Dairy Systems

#### Taylor Cooper

Omaha Bryan High School

#### Tom Cowan

National Resources  
Conservation Services

#### Kathleen Cue

NE Extension - Dodge County

#### Anna Curry

Whispering Roots

#### Cathy Curtis

Metropolitan Community College  
Institute for the Culinary Arts

### D

#### Rick Dageforde

Dageforde Farms

#### Grant Daily

Neighborworks Lincoln

#### Michelle Dill

Big Green Tomato

#### Holly Dingman

Children's Hospital & Medical Center

#### Roxanne Draper

City Sprouts

#### Travis Dunekacke

TD Niche Pork

#### Tara Dunker

NE Extension – Food,  
Nutrition and Health

### E

#### Pam Edwards

UNL University Dining/  
University Housing

#### Larry Elias

Larry Elias Consulting

#### Vicky Espinoza

Center For Rural Affairs

### F

#### Jean Ann Fischer

NE Extension – SNAP-  
Ed & EFNEP Director

#### Stuart Fischer

LPTC Extension

#### Casey Foster

Nebraska Department Of Agriculture

#### Tami Frank

Health Partners Initiative Dba  
Partnership for Healthy Linc

#### Lisa Franzen-Castle

NE Extension - UNL Nutrition  
and Health Sciences

#### Aaron French

City Sprouts

#### Brie Frickestein

NE Extension – SNAP-  
Ed Lancaster County

#### Gregory Fripp

Whispering Roots

### G

#### Jill Gifford

UNL Food Processing Center

#### David Grabarkewitz

Community Crops

#### Emily Gratopp

NE Extension – Food,  
Nutrition and Health

#### Hannah Guenther

NE Extension – Food,  
Nutrition and Health

### H

#### Jen Hansen

Public Health Solutions

#### John Hansen

Nebraska Farmers Union

#### Mariel Harding

United Way Of The Midlands

#### Jamie Healy

Dietetic Intern with Nebraska Extension

#### Kristen Houska

NE Extension – SNAP-Ed Supervisor

#### Craig Howell

Together

#### Terry Howell

UNL Food Processing Center

### J

#### Luke Jacobsen

Range West LLC

#### Terri James

NE Extension – Master  
Gardeners Director

#### Jessica Jones

NE Extension - Johnson County

### K

#### Will Keech

Alliance for the Future  
of Ag in Nebraska

#### Nazim Khan

Bryan Health

#### Katie Kreuser

NE Extension – Community  
Environment

### L

#### Gary Lesoing

NE Extension – SARE

#### Courtney Long

Iowa State University

#### Brent Lubbert

Big Muddy Urban Farm

**M****Kurt Mantonya**

NE Extension – Community  
Vitality Initiative

**Steve Martin**

Alliance For The Future Of Agriculture

**Pat Mccarthy**

Associated Wholesale Grocers

**Megan Mcguffey**

Graduate Student

**Alex Mckiernan**

Robinette Farms

**Ben Mcshane-Jewell**

NE Extension – Community  
Vitality Initiative

**Margaret Milligan**

Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska

**N****Rex Nelson**

NE Extension – Community  
Vitality Initiative

**O****Brian O'Malley**

Metropolitan Community College

**Cindy Ossino**

Consulting Dietitian

**Beth Ostdiek Smith**

Saving Grace Perishable  
Food Rescue, Inc.

**P****Courtney Parks**

Gretchen Swanson Center For Nutrition

**Ryan Pekarek**

Pekarek's Produce

**Cheryl Powers**

Jord Producers

**R****Lauren Rathman**

Grand Island Public Schools

**Sandra Renner**

Center for Rural Affairs

**Erik Rickard**

Metropolitan Community College

**Tim Rinne**

Nebraskans for Peace

**Mitch Rippe**

Nebraska Beef Council

**Jacob Robison**

Nebraska Hop Growers Association

**Angie Rushman**

NE Extension

**S****Betsy Samuelson**

Southeast Nebraska  
Development District

**Michelle Sause**

Food Bank for the Heartland

**Tyler Schindler**

Omaha Public Schools

**Carrie Schneider-Miller**

NE Extension – Food,  
Nutrition and Health

**Erin Schoenberg**

Lone Tree Foods

**Tammie Scholz**

NE Dept. of Health & Human Services,  
Chronic Disease Prevention

**Sarah Schram**

Sarpy/Cass Health Department

**Steve Schulz**

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**Natalie Sehi**

NE Extension – Food,  
Nutrition and Health

**Mike Shambaugh-Miller**

Produce From The Heart

**Kathy Siefken**

Nebraska Grocery Industry Association

**Lisa Smith**

City Of Omaha

**Sarah Smith**

Nebraska Department of Education

**Ericka Smrcka**

Food Bank for the Heartland

**Jeff Spiels**

Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro  
Area Planning Agency

**Olga Stuchlik**

Nebraska Farmers Union

**T****Anne Thompson**

Omaha Permaculture/Earthomaha.com

**Ronald Todd-Meyer**

Nebraskans for Peace

**V****Gus Von Roenn**

Omaha Permaculture

**W****Peter Walsh**

Metropolitan Community College

**Jason Weigle**

NE Extension – Community  
Vitality Initiative

**Alan Weiss**

Papio Valley Nursery

**Alyssa Wessling**

NE Extension - SNAP-  
Ed Douglas County

**John Westra**

NE Extension - ENREC

**Susan Whitfield**

No More Empty Pots

**Steven Whitla**

Doc's Holiday Healthy Farms

**Vanessa Wielenga**

NE Extension – Food,  
Nutrition and Health

**Jill Wieneke**

UNL – Graduate Student

**Audrey Woita**

No More Empty Pots

**Janyce Woodard**

Little Priest Tribal College

**Sam Wortman**

UNL Agronomy

**Donna Woudenberg**

Joslyn Institute for  
Sustainable Communities

**Rhett Wurst**

Bryan High School

**Y****Tammy Yarmon**

Omaha Public Schools

**Z****Edith Zumwalt**

Lincoln Public Schools

## The Nebraska Extension Food System team is committed to...

Inclusivity	Shared Ownership	Trustworthy Sources	Iterative Process	Accessible Information
Creating spaces that are inviting to all, and proactively seeking and engaging non-traditional partners.	Fostering shared responsibility, collaborative decision making, and participation so all voices have impact.	Evidence-based sources of information and fact-driven decision making.	A constant cycle of experimenting, learning, and adapting in order to respond to emerging needs.	Clear, accessible language and data shared openly for public use.

“

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.

”

*John Muir*

## Special thanks to our sponsors

