

2010 Nutrition Summit

Changing the Food Environment: Making it Happen

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Access to Healthy Foods

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It's a privilege and an honor to be here this morning and to be talking to you about some very exciting things going on at USDA. The USDA is home to a lot of nutrition programs that many of you know about and have been at work for decades now, and we are looking at those and using those as well as new and innovative ideas and strategies and programs across the country to address the issue of food deserts. As you-all know, the U.S. Surgeon General, in a call to action to prevent and decrease overweight and obesity recommended that governments create policies that promote environments in which healthy dietary options are easily accessible. And the proximity of supermarkets, grocery stores, farmers markets and community gardens, the marketing and promotion and costs of healthy food choices, the availability and accessibility of nutrition assistance programs shape access to such options which, in turn, influence food choice and diet quality. Effective obesity policy will change the environment in which those food choices made to help individuals take responsibility for improving their own nutrition. Altogether USDA's food and nutrition services and nutrition assistance programs, they touch the lives of one in four Americans in the course of a given year. The school lunch program serves millions of children. The school breakfast program serves millions of children each and every school day. The SNAP Program is serving millions of low-income people.

The economic research service published a report back in June of assessing the extent of areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food and identifying characteristics and causes of such areas considering how limited access affects populations in outlining recommendations to address the problem and what resulted. One of the things that resulted, in addition to a very comprehensive report, was a food atlas, the ERS Food Atlas, which you can access from our website, which assembles statistics on food environment indicators to stimulate research on the determinants of food choices and diet quality and provides a special overview of a community's ability to access healthy foods. Our report identifies food deserts as communities, particularly low-income areas, in which residents do not live in close proximity to affordable and healthy food retailers. And we all know that millions of people, including children, live in low-income areas that are more than one mile from a supermarket, and that would be in an urban area, and more than 10 miles from a supermarket in a rural area. We have estimated that of this population, about seven million people live in urban areas. So, the objective of the food atlas is to assemble statistics on the food environment indicators and to stimulate research on determinants of food choice and diet quality and

to give you this special overview of the community's ability to access healthy food. It assembles statistics on three broad categories of food environmental factors: One - Food choices, which are indicators of a community's access to acquisition of healthy, affordable foods such as access to a grocery store; number of food stores and restaurants; expenditures on fast foods; food and nutrition assistance programs participation; quantities of foods eaten, food prices; food taxes; and availability of local foods. Two: Health and well-being which are indicators of a community's success in maintaining healthy diets, such as food insecurity, diabetes and obesity rates and physical activity levels. And then, lastly, community characteristics, which are indicators of how a community might influence the food environment, such as demographic composition, income and poverty population loss, metro, non-metro status, natural amenities, recreation and fitness centers. In total, the atlas provides indicators of the food environment. You can go to the website and create a map down to the county level showing variation in a single indicator across the U.S. For example, variation in the prevalence of obesity or access to grocery stores across countries. You can also use an advanced query tool to identify county sharing the same degree of multiple indicators. For example, counties with both high poverty and high obesity rates. These food deserts often have relatively few supermarkets and grocery stores, but an abundance of fast food restaurants and convenient stores that offer few healthy choices. And in a recent multi-state study, we found that low-income census tracts had half as many supermarkets as wealthy tracts. Residents in many urban areas have few transportation options to reach such supermarkets. And as we are beginning to know and understand with greater clarity, residents with greater access to supermarkets or greater abundance of healthy foods and neighborhood food stores consume more fresh produce and more healthful items. So, for every additional supermarket in a Census tract, produce consumption can increase for African/Americans and for whites. And this is based on a multi-state study. In California and New York City, residents living in areas with higher densities of fresh food markets compared to convenience stores and fast food restaurants have lower rates of obesity. In California obesity and diabetes rates are higher for those living in the least healthy food environments controlling for household income, race, ethnicity, age, gender and physical activity levels. The food atlas also allows you to overlay statistics that we have gleaned from the CDC that allow you to look at adult obesity rates as well as childhood obesity rates across the country down to the county level. We are looking at four key environmental elements when it comes to increasing healthy access -- increasing access to healthy foods. We are looking at the actual physical access of retail markets and other varieties of options for sourcing healthy foods. We are looking at prices, making sure they are affordable. We are looking at options, ranges of products available in the marketplace that encourage healthy choices. And we are looking at adequate resources for consumers such as nutrition assistance programs.

I've touched briefly on our nutrition assistance programs that are at work and have been at work for decades. But I want to take a minute to talk a little bit about some of the new things happening at USDA. We have an initiative that was launched by the secretary and the deputy secretary very early on called "Know your farmer, know your food," which is supporting efforts that are going on across the country and

they are supported by a number of USDA grant programs to encourage the growth of regional and local food systems and to create and support a conversation that's going on already across the country between producers and consumers about where their food is grown and how to get access to locally grown foods. Many of the programs that we have in place are supporting neighborhood, county, town and state initiatives to identify ways to support farmers growing markets in urban areas to sell their produce and food, whether it's at a farmers market through community supported agriculture enterprises, through a farm-to-school initiative. The list goes on. It's a very, very exciting time at USDA both in terms of watching where these dollars are going, watching the creative and innovative work that's going on in communities across the country, and in thinking about how it will inform future policy initiatives. A lot of the work we are doing is also part and parcel and very important to a number of broader initiatives going on, such as the Childhood Obesity Task Force, Let's Move, and the Healthy Food Finance Initiative.

This past February, President Obama established the task force on childhood obesity to develop an interagency action plan to solve the problem of obesity among the nations' children within a generation. This is the first ever federal task force to enhance coordination between private sector companies, not-for-profits, government agencies and others to address this issue. The "Let's Move" campaign will combat the epidemic of childhood obesity through a comprehensive approach that builds on effective strategies and mobilizes public and private sector resources. It will engage every sector impacting the health of children to achieve the national goal and will provide schools, families and communities simple tools to help kids be more active, eat better and get healthy. The Obama administration released details of an over \$400 million healthy food finance initiative, which will bring grocery stores and other healthy food retailers to underserved urban and rural communities across America. The initiative is a partnership between U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Treasury, and the Department of Health and Human Services. It's going to be designed to promote a range of interventions that expand access to nutritious foods, including developing and equipping grocery stores as well as other small businesses and retailers selling healthy food in communities that currently lack these options. Through this new initiative and by engaging with the private sector, the administration will work to eliminate across food deserts -- eliminate food deserts across the country within seven years. And within the first year of funding, the administration's initiative will leverage enough investment to begin expanding healthy food options into as many as one-fifth of the nation's food deserts and create thousands of jobs in both urban and rural communities across the nation. Federal funds will support projects ranging from the construction or expansion of a grocery store to smaller scale intervention such as replacing refrigerated units stocked with fresh produce in convenience stores to very local initiatives, "local" being both urban neighborhoods as well as smaller communities in tapping into creative options such as mobile grocery stores that can travel to travel reservations and again farmers markets, community supported agriculture enterprises, and other very creative initiatives that are going on across the country. We believe that by better connecting producers and consumers, we can build a stronger connection between both cities and rural parts of the country and help create new opportunities for farmers

and ranchers. This initiative is part of a broader Obama administration commitment to promoting economic recovery, including support for small businesses and jobs creation. And it is also a part of his administration's efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and communities by employing place-based approaches, strategies that target the prosperity, equity, sustainability and livability of place.

Much of this initiative, the Healthy Food Finance Initiative, has been based on and modeled by the Fresh Food Finance Initiative in Philadelphia, which is a very innovative state program that increases the number of supermarkets or grocery stores in under-served communities across Pennsylvania. And I know you're going to hear more about that initiative in the next few minutes. It has shown that well-targeted financial and technical assistance can create viable businesses that provide healthier options in communities that lack access to healthy foods. USDA has a solid track record of sponsoring successful farmers markets and has also invested in grocery stores and creating agricultural supply chains for those grocery stores. One success story is the Green Market in New York City. Green Market operates farmers markets in New York City which are supplied by local farmers, fishermen and bakers selling what they grow, raise, catch and bake themselves. Since they have worked to conserve farmland and ensure continuing supply of fresh, local produce to New Yorkers. Green Market promotes regional agriculture and ensures a continuing supply of fresh local produce for New Yorkers. It has organized and managed open-air farmers markets in New York City. It preserves farmland and creates an infrastructure for regional and local food systems to grow and thrive. This is a great example of some of the new and innovative things that are happening at USDA, and we have confidence that with those approaches as well as our hard core nutrition assistance programs, we are going to see real progress in the area of food deserts, and we look forward to working with you. Thank you.

Angela Glover Blackwell, JD
Chief Executive Officer, Policy Link

Policy Link is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by lifting up what works. That's our tag line, "lifting up what works," because we believe that you can identify almost any problem and find a place someplace in the country where communities, community-based organizations, government, residents are coming together and finding solutions. And what we try to do is take those solutions, shine a bright light on them, and try to tease out the implications for policy so that we can create a platform that allows those things to flourish. I'm going to talk to you today about how the healthy food -- the Healthy Food Finance Initiative came to be, to tell the story about what happens. And, you know, telling the story about something is always a dangerous activity because you never know quite where to enter the story and where you enter and make such a difference in terms of the listener's understanding of how things happen. And when things have happened over a longer period of time, which this has, there is always the danger of back-dating, you know, what did you know and when did you know it and trying to figure out exactly how much insight did you have at each particular moment. So, I am going to

try to tell the story as faithfully as I can because I think it is an important story. So, I am going to move through some of it very quickly, because that's really often how long it takes to make a difference.

Years ago, I was a practicing public interest lawyer in San Francisco working for a law firm called Public Advocates, and had been working on the issue of infant mortality and trying to do something about the infant mortality gap that exists between -- at that point we were focused on African/American communities and white communities, and that had gotten a lot of media attention. And one day a group of residents from San Francisco came in to see me because they had a problem and they were looking for an advocate. And their problem was that the last grocery store in their community was closing. And since they had seen me talking about advocacy and those kinds of issues, they thought perhaps I could help. So, I took the issue to my law partners, and we sat around the table and we tried to debate to see if there was anything we could do to help this community keep its grocery store. It was an issue close to my heart because I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, in the African/American community. When I first moved there, it had every amenity that you would want. And as I continued to go back home after leaving and visit my community, I noticed the changes that were happening and one of them was that my parents were going farther and farther out into suburban areas to do their grocery shopping. And so I noticed what was happening in terms of the closing of the grocery stores. So I really wanted to help these community groups. Well, we couldn't come up with a legal theory. As a matter of fact, the best legal theory we could come up with was an anti-trust action which was really quite creative. And even if we had been successful with that creative theory, the result would have not have kept the grocery store in the community. And so my law partner and I got together, and we filed an administrative petition; and it was years ago when Jerry Brown was governor. We filed an administrative petition to do something about the exodus of food chains from low-income communities. Got a lot of press attention. Governor Brown formed a commission to look at the issue. We represented community groups throughout the state of California. And in the end, we did get some things: Farmers markets, cooperative buying clubs, but not one grocery store. And I recognized as the years went by -- and I had never quite forgot about that because there was so much excitement in the community that we were going to do something about it and we didn't -- that I realized part of the reason we were unsuccessful is that we did a very good job of documenting the problem, but we didn't really have any solutions to offer. We just hoped they would emerge. Well, over the course of the next few years I did many things. I was at the Rockefeller Foundation, worked in a local group that I started in Oakland called the Urban Strategies Council. And then when I founded Policy Link, I had noticed that I had been to a lot of communities that now had grocery stores that had not had them before. And so shortly thereafter I asked one of our staff people to begin to do some research to see what was happening in terms of bringing grocery stores back to communities, and we put out a report, which has been our most successful of the many reports we put out looking at strategies in communities to get fresh fruits and vegetables into communities that didn't have it, and many of those were grocery store strategies. Just about the time that report was coming out but after it had come out, we discovered something in Pennsylvania, which you will

hear more about, the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Finance Initiative, and we just went crazy with excitement to see this innovative strategy that was effectively harnessing resources and getting communities the access that they needed, including grocery stores, and farmers markets and making corner grocery stores, more able to carry fresh fruits and vegetables. And so we began to lift up that example every place we would go. And we went to Philadelphia, and we saw what had happened right there and we heard about this was in rural communities, not just urban communities. And we just became the cheerleaders for this effort hoping they would be successful and hoping it would inspire someone else.

And then when the new administration came in January of 2009, and even before during that transition period, we started coming to Washington talking about ideas. And one of the ideas we started talking about was how to expand on this Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, because during that period when we were looking for things that could be stimulants and jobs, we recognized that this was win, win, win, win. It was a jobs program. It was access to healthy food. It was dealing with obesity, including childhood obesity, economic development in communities. And when you built grocery stores that were energy efficient, it was dealing with the climate change issue as well. And so there was just not any conversation that you were having where we couldn't say, Fresh Food Financing Initiative was part of the answer.

And so what we did after we opened up that conversation, we went to the people who had been doing this to the Food Trust and the Reinvestment Fund, the two agencies that had been working in Pennsylvania to be able to make sure that this program was the model that it has come to be. And we said to them, suppose we work together to try to take this to the national level. They were reluctant because they were not only doing the work in Pennsylvania, but they were starting to work in other states that now were picking up the idea. And without support, they couldn't divert their staff to work on what we knew would take a lot of effort at the federal level. And so one of the other things that we were doing at Policy Link is that we are staff director for the National Convergence Partnership, which includes a number of foundations: Kellogg, Robert Wood Johnson, Nemours, the California Endowment, Kresky, the Centers for Disease Control -- I don't think -- Kaiser Permanente. Thank you very much. I would hate to ever leave one out. And they had come together because their work was really converging around healthy people and healthy places. And so we turned to them and said, suppose this becomes one of your major projects and you support the efforts of the Food Trust and the Reinvestment Fund to be full partners in helping this to go forward, and they did and it made all the difference in the world. We then began to have really deliberate conversations with the White House, with senators, with congressional representatives, and to do the kind of background research and heavy lifting that you have to do to go from a good idea to something that can actually gain currency in Washington, on the Hill, and within the White House. Multiple memos, scores and scores of meetings, and lots of advocacy, but advocacy in the context of everybody feeling that this was a good idea but how could we make it work. And so as a result of all of that work, both the White House and the Hill have really picked it up, and we have been so excited that the program that you've just heard

described looks like it could well become a reality. And the problem that I witnessed in communities, both as an advocate and just as a person growing up in a community that I saw change, could actually begin to be addressed in ways that are effective. And one of the things that makes me particularly happy about it is that the work that we have done has really demonstrated that while this is a problem in low-income inner-city communities, that's not the only place where it's a problem. It's a problem in lots of rural communities, in smaller, older suburban communities, lots of places across this country.

So, we have not just the ability to describe the problem with great detail, but we have the ability to have a well-supported solution to the problem as well. And before I sit down, I just want to draw your attention to some of the materials that we sent that are outside that one sheet that describes the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative. Another report that looks at healthy food, healthy communities, strategies that are working all across the country. And something that's been very important for us really looking at the data and the research to show both what the problem is and how addressing the problem makes a difference in terms of health, well being, and access to healthy foods. Thank you.

Patrick Burns
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Fresh Grocer

I'm extremely delighted and honored to be part of this nutrition summit. My fresh grocer supermarkets are located within Philadelphia -- greater Philadelphia area starting in Wilmington, Delaware, one store there, and there are nine stores in Philadelphia itself. We specialize in perishable foods more than just a stock canned goods and boxed goods and so forth. We have really tried to specialize in fresh meats and produce from local and across-the-country vendors. We are committed to extremely high quality perishable foods at affordable prices with a great selection. But we also are very -- it's very important to us, the heritage of the neighborhood. So, we try to have a lot of exotic fruits and vegetables also. Now, the Food Trust of Pennsylvania actually put this down as the number one food desert within the city of Philadelphia. To make this type of supermarket possible, being a young entrepreneur, only having independent stores in this day and age to put the financing together to build a million-dollar store, we really had to get a group effort. We turned around and got the La Salle University, which actually owned the property, to lease us the property and to get the Reinvestment Fund involved in new market tax credits as well as the State of Pennsylvania together with some grants and also the fresh food financing. Then at the same time, you had to turn around with the new market tax credits to be able to sell to the banks, because you are still a young company growing. And it's hard to, again, put a million-dollar investment into these neighborhoods. So, we had the CDFI Fund of Pennsylvania actually guaranteed a percent of our loans. So, the effort of myself and the Food Trust, the Reinvestment Fund, the City of Philadelphia, the State of Pennsylvania to put all these programs together, it's a real true effort to be able to develop these stores.

The next store we built was at Progress Plaza. This is a store on North Broad, up near Temple University. There has not been a supermarket here for over ten years. And, again, to develop this store in

the city limits to try to find the real estate and try to find the funds to put this type of store together we utilized a RACP grant from Pennsylvania, the Fresh Food Financing Initiative, the Reinvestment Fund helped us coordinate the efforts of different agencies to come together through new market tax credits with U.S. Bank and the Bank Corp and the Reinvestment Fund to structure the loans. We also utilized the MELF organization -- it's Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture -- to give us equipment loans at a low -- very very interesting interest rate of, like, four percent, but they would also be subordinate to a regular loan, which is a huge help when you are spending millions of dollars just in equipment to put a supermarket in place. We were also very fortunate to have had Michelle Obama, the first lady, stop by our store in Progress Plaza. It was -- It was an amazing honor, and she was truly inspirational of the energy she has for the "Let's Move" campaign. And it actually inspired our whole team to go one step further with this, not just giving access to having supermarkets in these areas with fresh fruits and vegetables and meats, but actually to coordinate our store efforts. We came up with a "Kids' Corner," so there is a whole section in our stores -- actually there's four different sections, but this one section is dedicated just for kids and healthy eating. So, we have very affordable kid-friendly meals. They are very healthy. We have kid-friendly snacks. We make it fun with Crayons and signage there and it's been extremely successful. It's something that she inspired us to do by reading the "Let's Move" materials and so forth. And it's been a pretty amazing thing so far in our store.

The next thing we've been doing, we took it one step further, not just for healthy kids, but healthy alternatives, which is the truth. This is not just about you can't have a soda or you can't have a pizza or something like that. It's about teaching the consumers what they can have. For example, we have brick-oven pizzas in both these new stores. Well, what we do is we actually put out whole-wheat pizza with low part skim mozzarella and tomato sauce. So, it's not just the regular pizza, but it's also the healthy choices, and we are constantly adding signage and having our employees go through training programs to teach people different things they can have. Like, for example, in the beverage aisle where the sodas are and so forth, we kind of put little descriptions of what is going on there. So, you know, maybe you have this once in awhile. Maybe you have sodas once in awhile and have milk more often and water and juice. So, again, it's about the education that we've been trying to put within the supermarkets also.

Another key component we started to do also is getting involved in the community starting with health coordinators within the stores. So, we team up with local organizations and hospitals and clinical dieticians and nutritionists to actually bring customers and walk them through the supermarket and teach them the right foods to eat. And at the same time, not just teach them, let them taste it. See the differences of what -- you know, what they are missing out on because good foods could be a very good to eat. So, this has been very impactful also for the local hospitals and the community groups. The other thing we also try to do is, within the produce aisle and within our whole stores, sometimes consumers, when they don't have access and they have limited dollars, they are a little bit afraid of buying the things per pound. So, we actually put a value produce aisle. So, we will actually bag up fresh fruits and vegetables at a certain price

point. Because some people just only have X amount of dollars in their pocket to spend that day. So, this has been extremely successful also as far as the value produce with a price point, and people can afford and not be embarrassed. When they get up to the checkout counter, they don't have enough money, but they know the exact price point for this. And, lastly, I would like to just say one little story. When I opened the store in Progress Plaza, it was very heart warming when a little old lady came up to me and literally was crying. I am thinking, oh, my God, what did we do wrong, you know. And she was just crying. She goes: I am so happy that you are here. I had to take the subway and then two other buses to get to any supermarket for the last ten years. And it's just amazing, you know, the feeling you get -- obviously you're in business to do well and so forth. But, you know, we have an obligation and now our company's mission is an obligation to do all for the company obviously, but also do well for the community. And that lady inspired me tremendously and I give hats off to everyone here because I think this truly can be a great national program to give access to people everywhere, good fruits and vegetables. Thank you.

Deborah Kane, BA, MS
Vice President, Food and Farm, Ecotrust

I am from Portland, Oregon, and I really have to say that this morning as I was hearing all the opening plenary speakers, I was reminded yet again of the fact that I live in paradise. We passed menu-labeling legislation last year. Two years before, we passed legislation that took junk food out of our schools. The peer pressure to ride one's bike to work is enormous. Show up at a meeting with car keys instead of a bike helmet and tisk, tisk. And so I -- I thought I would mention to those of you on the research end of things that Portland might make for an excellent case study on how good public policy and peer pressure collide to create healthy and fit residents, or citizens. In Portland per se, we don't necessarily have too many food deserts, if you will. In the Northwest, we certainly have food deserts. But in my region, we talk increasingly about what we are calling "food mirages." We can see it. It's right there. We have an embarrassment of riches. We're one of the most productive agricultural regions in the United States, and we're surrounded by prime farmland. But for some reason, we can't always access the food that we know is right there. So, we call them "food mirages" as much as we call them "food deserts."

And I wanted to talk to you today a little bit about a tool that my organization, Ecotrust, has developed to try to create greater transparency within the food system, to try to create greater visibility, and to try to address some of those food mirage issues. So, the new tool is called Food Hub. The web address for Food Hub is food-hub.org. And I am going to give you the quickest of tours. So, let's take a quick look at what Food Hub does. It was basically designed to make it easy and efficient for regional food buyers and sellers to find one another, connect and do business. It is only three months old. It was launched in February, and it's a service that's available in the states of Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. And I do call it "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative" and that funding for this project was provided by USDA through its Specialty Crop Block Grant funding program. So, we are very active in the states of Oregon and Washington because we have Specialty Crop Block Grant money for those two states. And I wanted to play on Food Hub this morning as if I were a school food buyer. So, I wanted to give

you just a really quick sense of the experience that a school food buyer would have or is having literally today on the Food Hub site, which is, again, only three months old. So, I am going to sign in as if I had a membership, which I do. Since I created Food Hub, I thought I would give myself a membership. One of the first things that people do when they come to the Food Hub site is they quick browse. And browse basically gives you an indication of who is in the Food Hub world in any given time. And the members are broken down both by buyers and by sellers. What I really want to see are the school food buyers. I am just going to click into a school district profile. And the profiles within Food Hub are all organized the same way, and it's all self-generated content. So, the school district in this case comes in, talks about who they are. This is Beaverton schools. They are giving producers very good information on "how to do business with us" section about what a farmer or a potential vendor might need or want to think about if they were interested in selling great healthy fresh products into Beaverton. Then they also note that Food Services of America is their distribution partner. Food Hub is a tool that was built both to support direct market sales so farmers delivering, you know, their own products into markets or a tool that provides greater transparency so we can get a better sense of what is on some of those mainline distributor trucks and can start asking for healthier products by name. So, schools come into Food Hub. They create a profile. And one of the best ways that schools have right now within the Food Hub system to find partners is actually through our marketplace section. Marketplace is very much like a Craigslist. I was struck this morning by a few of the posts. Many of them by schools. Beaverton School District is in need of sugar snap peas to be delivered to one site. Or Jarvis School District is seeking sugar snap peas.

Everybody wants peas. Jarvis School District is in need of lettuce mix and radishes ASAP. We need enough for students. So, schools are soliciting bids through Food Hub by using the Craig's list feature or the marketplace feature. The other thing that schools are able to do is search for specific products that they might want. So, you could imagine being a school food buyer and perhaps you would like to bring some broccoli florets onto your salad bar. You can come into the Food Hub system, search by product, and immediately you will receive a search result that tells you not just who the seller are of broccoli, but also who the buyers are. We never presume which way anyone wants to go in their search result. But in our case, we are just looking for farmers who have broccoli. And so I am going to narrow my search just to the farmers who have broccoli. And if I were so inclined, perhaps the mothers and fathers and parents at my school were concerned about organic products or they wanted them to carry certain claims. I could further query by certifications. I can get down to variety. Maybe Mr. Pacman Broccoli is visiting the school today, so they want to make sure it's a certain variety of broccoli. I know I want it fresh. Maybe I can only receive things in a carton or a flat, so I can continue to filter my search results. But we will just go ahead and pop into our profile assuming that Fry Family Farm is someone we might want to work with. Again, we get to read about the operation. And then the seller profiles are organized a little bit differently in that they also list information about their minimum order amounts, whether they deliver. If so, what's their range. And for schools it's very important that they know that producers carry liability insurance. Do they have any

business certifications, good handling practices, GAP certifications, that kind of thing, for food safety and food handling? And then you will see that we are listing distributors. So, while this is a farm that says that they will deliver within a hundred miles, if you were outside of a hundred miles and you wanted to work with this operation, you have all the information you need to figure out which mainline distributor you need to contact to make sure that this great broccoli gets into your school cafeteria. Perhaps you are a school food service director who is planning your menus many months out or perhaps you have just come into the conversation about seasonality. You can auto sort by seasonality to get a sense of what this producer might have in September when the kids come back to school.

So, I just wanted to give you a very brief sense of what Food Hub is and how it's increasingly being used. And, Angela, I love so much your win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win frame because so often -- while I'll say by way of background -- I've spent years of my career working to create more market opportunities for regional farmers. And I am more on the sustainable agriculture side of the conversation but increasingly the public health community and the sustainable ag community are coming together and realizing that on one hand, if we are talking about getting healthier, fresher fruits and vegetables into schools or hospitals or corner grocers, that is, you know, absolutely fantastic and wonderful, but we can also at the same time be talking about job creation and wealth creation in rural communities if we think that we want it to be fresh and healthy and if possible it would be lovely if we knew where it came from. And beyond knowing where it came from, it would be equally wonderful if we could create some partnerships within our own community so that we are actually sourcing from regional food sheds. And, oh, by the way, when we do that, we might actually may be able to minimize the food miles. We might be able to find transportation efficiencies, distribution efficiencies, so that we can also raise our hand, as Angela said, when the conversation changes to climate change or fossil fuels. So, I couldn't agree more that there's no societal ill, no topic that comes up, where food couldn't be the solution or at least a part of the solution. So, I encourage you to check out Food Hub. I congratulate you on the work that you are doing now to make sure that we all have daily access to fantastic foods. Thank you.