

Leveraging Tech in the Food System

MARESSA: Hello, everyone.

We're going to take a couple minutes and when just tip to let folks filter in.

If you haven't already done so, would love to ask you to rename yourself with your name, your business or organization name, and your pronouns if you like.

You can do that by clicking over your own video and you will see the three dots up in the upper right corner.

If you click on that, you can select rename and change your name so that we can all see who you are and what your business or organization is.

MARESSA: Free to use the chat to post questions.

There is also the ability for you to ask a question.

And we might be able to bring that up to the panelists at the end.

Feel free to do that as well.

I want everyone to know this session is being recorded.

The chat and the participants are not recorded.

Just the panelists so we will be able to share this out later with folks.

Thanks everyone for being here.

And people joining still.

Great.

Mariah do you think we're ready to start with introductions?

All right my name is Maressa the food and farming marketing coordinator at Sustainable Connections.

I am honored to be part of the Farm-to-Table Trade Meeting.

This is my first year at the Farm-to-Table Trade Meeting.

I miss all of you immensely.

A.

I'm really being able to get together.

I am really honored you have taken time to join us in this way today.

I would like to welcome you to the leveraging technology in the food system it session.

We are going to be exploring things that have emerged out of this period of pandemic and also just this time and place and how our food system is evolving.

I would like to introduce our panel.

Mariah DeLeo is the Good Food Economy program manager at Seattle Good Business Network which she helped to establish in 2020 with a goal toward connecting regional food system stakeholders to create a sustainable, resilient, and just food local XHICHLT programs and initiatives she could he created include Good Food Forum an online platform connecting the Sound can community and Good Food Kitchens a fund that provide meals to community members in need while supporting local farms and producers.

Micha Ide is a farmer and owner of Bright Ide Acres in Orting, Washington ask also manages PF P a buy local regional marketing program designed to increase consumer awareness ask consumption of Pierce County agricultural products.

In 2020 Pierce County Fresh became a member of the Eat Local First Collaborative.

Sheryl Wiser is the director of outreach at Tilth Alliance and an established communicator and narrative storyteller, Sheryl is recognized as a build of of strategic partnerships with career experience in the local food system.

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Sorry my screen is glitching here.

Elliott Smith, lucky to have him here today.

Launched Kitchen Sync Strategies in 2019 to foster connections and align the values of many siloed food systems efforts, working across public, private, and philanthropic sectors.

Focused new on developing value chains that build population health, community wealth, and environmental resilience.

Kitchen Sync Strategies supports institutions seeking to make impacts with their procurement as well as regional food hubs and producer seeking to enter the institutional food market channel.

That was a lot.

I am so honored to have all of you here today.

I will turn it over to it start our conversation off MAFRMENT thank you.

I will note I am co-facilitating this with Maressa today.

As I am a panelist we thought it would be more appropriate to have her do the work.

I will let her sit back and focus on tech support so you can reach out to her if you need anything.

I will help facilitate the conversation from here.

We will start with the portion of the panel I will be discussing, the Good Food Forum.

Start the slides.

Thank you.

As Maressa mentioned I run the Good Food Economy program at Seattle Good Business Network which we established last April.

Great timing obviously.

With a grant from King Conservation District.

It had been in the works for a couple of years.

It was connecting and strengthening the local food pipeline which is we had planned to do in three part: Multiple events and conferences and the OONL communities.

online communities.

Some of that got delayed.

We had the opportunity to take the focus of online connection to really build this.

In May we launched Good Food Forum.

The purpose is to connect stakeholders who are suffering within and serving the Sound region.

As we know, region food systems and food ways don't follow political boundaries.

This is a fairly loose region really talking about where food is coming from, marginally regional area and coming in and supporting the folks here in UB Puget Sound.

This goes as far as Washington state, Alaska for the fisheries and Oregon as well.

The purpose of this community was address some gaps we saw in the marketplace.

Connect buyers, providers and suppliers to find new market opportunities. That is to make the just base sales connections.

The overt infrastructure like commercial kitchens and soft infrastructure like marketing and other opportunities the other was share REMS, best practices, events, and information.

At this time Maressa I will share my screen.

I will show a quick demo of the forum and how it works.

So you can get an idea from that way.

Let me know when that is available.

Great thank you.

I jumped ahead.

This is essentially Good Food Forum.

It works similarly to most social platforms.

There is an area where you can start a discussion and then below, a feed where you can find what's happening there.

There's a great search option because as you can imagine you will probably be looking for something that's allegation more focused.

For instance if I looked up farmers you could see some of the opportunities from volunteers to farmers market with booth space, H Markong association of Washington was looking for restaurant to partner with flower farmers.

More resource.

Here's an example of a market opportunity where we had a local food manufacturer firefly kitchens who was looking to.

This is an opportunity where people could offer their services or recommendations.

What's unique about this platform and sub octets it apart from others is its ANLT to connect directly with men.

Unlike a Facebook group or listserv, here you have the able to find and connect directly with everybody who is involved.

For instance you could come to the filters, select producer.

See who is all here.

I find Elliott.

Hi, Elliott.

I can read through his profile, what he offers.

I can message him through the app.

This will go to your inbox.

If you prefer to stay there in terms of the way you would like to interact witht you can do that as well.

That's the majority.

Maressa, I will stop sharing.

Go back to the slides.

I want to give an example of some of the use cases and successes that we have seen, to give you an idea about how it works.

One of the first -- next slide, Maressa.

The more popular posts was a restaurant chef that found three knew picture various and a marketing platform through a single post.

We connected a restaurant to a co- packer.

We connected local farms with a new market channel through the King County farmers share program funded by the CARES Act last year.

Some additional examples.

We connected a nonprofit that was delivering food to families in need with a new local farm supplier.

We have seen multiple grants especially with what we experienced last year and are continuing to experience.

We know at least one member received two awards from some of those applications.

We had multiple job openings forwarded or applied for.

Those are just some of the few examples I wanted to highlight.

Next slide.

This gives you an idea of how those posts work on the mobile app.

What's really great about using it on mobile is for people who can not be tied to a desktop.

If you are a farmer using mobile apps you can use it on a farm to connect with people directly to post what you need so you are not having to go back to the computer.

You can also use -- an option where you can choose instantaneous delivery of the posts and interact with people almost exclusively through email so if you prefer that.

Here's a great testimonial from one of our members about the KESHGZ and networking available.

Grant opportunities, partnerships, and program that they have gotten through the Forum.

It's growing.

As you may have seen, we have about 218 members.

And there is really a lot of potential for future growth here.

We are looking for a lot of feedback to help continue because this is really meant to be in service to the Sound food community.

Some of the ideas we had are around sustainability, so making circular connections like gleaning opportunities, so people with excess could find potential buyers or users.

Marketing: Promoting seasonal offerings or coordinating marketing campaigns across sellers in an area.

If that's groceries and restaurants promoting large berry crop that happened.

That kind of thing.

And subgroups.

The opportunity here is for as the group grows larger to have more sector specific or purpose specific organizations.

We could see something like a food assistance coordination group

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who comes together around the specific purpose,

those things you don't want to go to the entire group and just keep that conversation.

And next slide.

What we want more than anything

is for this to be a community-led kind of growth.

Next slide.

As we continue to develop we are looking for feedback constantly.

We have a survey we will put in the chat either now or at the end of the session.

This is going to be for all of the panelists today.

I would love to hear your feedback based off of what you heard and your experience using the forum about additional uses and features you can see for potential subgroups you would like to see, what barriers to use in you participating specifically.

We will explore the JD of advisory committee which is volunteers providing more of their time to develop this in to something that can be used more broadly community wide.

I will look for questions in the chat.

We will have opportunity for questions and answers afterwards as well.

And with that I want to turn over to Micha.

Micha?

Sheryl together will talk about the Eat Local First Collaborative and the Washington food and farm finder.

Over to you, Micha MIFRMENT thanks Mariah.

Can everybody hear me okay?

I will assume that's yes.

My name is Micha Ide.

I am with Pierce County Fresh and also a farmer at bride I'd Asian in Orting, southeast of Tacoma.

I am here with Sheryl Wiser from the Tilth Alliance.

We are both members of the Eat Local First Collaborative along with Maressa at Sustainable Connections.

Together we have built a tool called the Washington food and farm finder.

The idea is we are getting more local food to more local people.

One of our colleagues has suggested our slowing grand should be STWRIEP right for local food.

The Eat Local First Collaborative is comprised of _ local food trust on the Olympic Peninsula, Tilth Alliance which has a statewide reach, WS % and the CLAM county extension.

Pierce County Fresh and Sustainable Connections which represents a lot of Northwest Washington.

In 2020 we launched the Washington food and farm finder.

A lot of our organizations had our own very regional directories.

Tilth Alliance had the farm guide, more of a statewide resource.

Pierce County Fresh had our own Pierce County version of the online farm divide.

Sustainable Connections had the food Atlas.

We got together in late 2019 and realized a lot of us were kind of doing similar work but hyper local.

We thought if we got together and come BIND our resources we would have a stronger platform the Washington food and farm finder has a statewide appealment all of our organizations still exist and work within our regions.

Pierce County farmers have me as a liaison but having a statewide resource we have more leverage.

We have more eyes on our site through media and attention because we have mover people working on the same project.

We have 17 listing in 37 counties across the state.

We are continuing to grow.

Currently we are more of a consumer focused website.

The goal is drive consumers to food and farm businesses across the state.

We have had almost a hundred thousand visits since we launched E.

We have an ability for farmers and businesses to list BHOELS offerings.

Sustainable Connections has had wholesale information for buyers to get information from primarily farmers and fisheries.

So we have that option on the website that farmers and businesses did list the BHOELS offerings.

Hopefully it will be a resource that restaurants and purchasing companies are using as well.

We have a lot of media attention on us.

We have done pretty big consumer campaigns including a buy local campaign for the hol dis which generated 445,000 views.

We created a holiday food and farm finder.

It's a specific finder for businesses that had holiday specific gifts.

And Sheryl put together a beautiful pdf of a gift guide that called out specific vendors and products.

That's part of the benefit of what we are doing.

We have people around the state that intimately know our farm and food businesses.

When we are getting together to plan we have people in mind that have products that will work.

We developed a CSA finder tool.

You can search for farms or fisheries that offer CSAs.

They can drill down to speculate things. M

aybe they want meat, eggs or vegetables.

What SGRIP code? What

season? It will

populate a list of FAFRMS.

farms .

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In March we will have a meet your CSA farmer video series.

We have close to a dozen farmers that have submitted videos.

The promotional campaign will include media stories and paid advertising and we have an enter to win contest.

You

So folks can enter though win \$1 hundred off the CSA of their choice or a box of moods over in Spokane.

may be wanting to list your businesses.

Farms or fisheries can create listings if they are lowly owned in Washington they sell products they have grown or produced on their farms or waters of Washington Canada or Alaskament we want to make sure we are supporting real local businesses.

Need to be locally owned and operated, purchase from a at least two Washington producer on a monthly basis and pledge to shift 10% of the food budget to more local products.

We ask honor code system.

Because there are many of us around the state working together we have our neat on the ground and kind of know who is who.

We do have to approve every listing.

We verify and make sure folks are who they say they are.

We want to make sure our website is not promoting chains or taking advantage of green washing.

Organizations can join as well so nonprofits based in Washington who have a mission to contributing to a sustainable food system.

And those will link thought Washington food and farm finder on their own website.

Broad list of resources available on the website.

Consumers can look for farms, seafood, markets and groceriers, locally made.

At my farm I make soap with lard.

I would put that on locally made as a product, not food item.

Eat and drink, STRAUPTS.

There is a spot for wineries.

Farmers can indicate if they have a CSA, a farm stand, a farm stay.

Open to the public.

Lots of opportunities for folks to drill down to find what they are looking for, including delivery and food access.

Does it take EBT.

There are lots of different ways the consumers can drill down.

We provide free listings through this year.

Some of you may have been listed on the partner sites like Tilth Alliance or Pierce County Fresh.

You have been imported in to the food and farm finder.

If you need help creating a listing, let us know.

We are happy to help.

While we don't know if we will have to charge nor listings in the future we are committed though make it a valuable tool for the businesses.

We hope you consider joining us to generate buzz and activity.

We are excited about the project.

MARIAH: Thank you.

Did Sheryl want to add?

SH

MIFRMENT I was presenting but Sheryl can add.

ERYL: Hi, everyone I am glad you are here.

You covered pretty much everything.

I want to just add that growing back to what Mariah said about food doesn't really respect county outlines sometimes, so when Micha had mentioned foods in spoke can even though -- most of the moods are in Western Washington, WSU food systems is also statewide we are mindful and engaging and in conversation and in partnership work with folks around the state.

One of the most notable ones would be Spokane.

We havite a bit of site traffic from there.

Any time you build something like this, anything you do around technology, always grows back to being not only centered in good technology that works for people and gets them what they are looking for but something like this is based on relationships and to really make the tool robust.

And so we continue to strengthen the relationships.

In Spokane we are starting to do work, in Walla Walla.

We have conversations heaping with Mattel grown, GOEFRJ grown. The

group is focused on strengthening relationships rather than identifying as being the keeper of all things.

And I think for all of us COVID really accelerated that last year.

We are very slowly and carefully and cautiously

but clearly working on continuing to evolve the website and the tools. I

think also part of those relationships that we have are also really bringing in media because we want to be able to help connect with consumers and educate them because the kinds of questions now that media is asking around local food is very different than what they might have been asking a year and a half ago.

It's far more nuanced.

Also feel consumers are asking some of the same questions.

So we have a real opportunity here.

MARIAH: That's exciting to see people catching up a little bit and really deepening the conversation.

Great. I

definitely want us to leave opportunity to again ask questions about all of these programs.

We will ZICH though Elliott to talk about the Northwest food hub network.

And open it up after that.

ELLIOTT: Thanks everybody for being here.

It's exciting.

Sheryl you cued me up well.

I will use a lot of the things you just noted in talking about this exciting program.

My name is Elliott Smith.

I WROSHD for Kitchen Sync Strategies is the group.

I will talk today about the north food hub network targeting institutional sales in the broader region.

Before I dig in to the components of the work it's MOFRNT to set tone.

monitor to set tone.

important the components of the work it's monitor to set tone.

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I have touch points before we look at the network.

We are like the black sheep on this panel in our focus is institutions not customers in an individual way.

Part of what informs that is for years, especially in the region broadly, institutions have been seen as a potentially wonderful source of purchasing for local food.

There have been a lot of difficulties to do that.

Anybody who is here who has tried to sell to institutions

or have been in an institution trying to perfect local food probably has their own saga.

There are anchor institutions across the state and region who purchase a lot of food.

Point, full stop.

That's an opportunity forever anybody who is going food to tap in to.

We are targeting that market channel because it's ripe for change.

Next slide.

There is also a lot of KRIENDZ of institutions. Kinds

kinds of institutions.

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When I say that these are the market settings.

Part of the reason is precedent there.

The health care no, have championed sustainable food.

With colleges and higher ed institutions, local and sustainable food is not a new concept.

There is room it push the envelope a bit.

Washington state benefits from a fantastic farm to school program.

In Montana they have more agency to make choices.

Our goal is set them up for success.

We setting them up for success are these sort of four stool legs, let's say.

The food hubs that are the literally bread and butter are link foods, Sound food hub.

And western Montana growers co-op.

This is a panel about technology.

We lean heavily.

On a software platform.

Value chain coordination and sales is what Kitchen Sync Strategies is providing to the network.

There is a black bone structure provided by mission west in western Montana that gives us critical infrastructure.

They create a reservoir for us to bucket this nebulous and hard work.

Next slide.

I feel like I am indulge a little bit.

Technology does a funny they think.

What we think of when that word comes up but the root word technology is something that's just as important which is weaving as in fabric, and craft.

There is no point in technology if it doesn't leverage relationships.

Very, very core to our work is keeping a focus on weaving does leveraging what we think of as Tech to help us achieve the goal of developing the institutional food market channel for over small regional producers.

Networks are nets that work.

That's what we are weaving here.

A group of folks GRAEFRTed at the national Good Food network in New Orleans and came together and shared cooperative principles, the value of collaboration, an interest in developing this market channel and also

a commitment to sharing the hard library infrastructure.

The food hubs have great and logistics.

The software platform farm fair brings hard infrastructure thought table.

This network has grown to add to those pieces of infrastructure, the soft infrastructure.

On one end of the seesaw we have connections to sales outlets the actual customers in each of the regions who are interested in buying food.

On the other hand we have relationships with farms and farm every owners of the businesses.

In the middle of that see saw is trust.

The network doesn't function unless we can distribute trust evenly across the buyers and suppliers.

We hold both ends of that sling and we stay rooted in our work and norm the my steelia to out myself as using the mushrooms on slides, the underground central points.

What allows us to do that operationally is the software platform.

Farm Fair is represented on the slide.

I don't know nearly as much about this software platform as Ton and Kulin do.

It's an enterprise resource planning ZAER to help food hubs collaborate.

The software is built on an economy of collaboration.

The idea of course being collaboration is important to develop the values--based economy.

That is threaded through the software.

It's a software that helps us solve a lot of problems.

At once.

Logistics and great are accomplished in the software tool.

It creates one point of sale for multiple hubs.

In looking really innovatively not future it helps think about production planning and helps farmers maximize their FIBZ and the price and variety and reach of this network in terms of of its sales.

We can spend an hour talking about the software.

I encourage anybody though spend an hour doingt talking with Culin there.

To give a picture of it, it allows us to create, hold the relationship, threading the fact that sharing and collaboration is central.

It allows us to receive one purchase order from an institution and source from multiple food hubs seamlessly.

Brown eggs maybe available in all 3 networks.

If an order is too large for a food hub it second-year allows us to meet the order.

It handles all the transactional components of the relational work of building the network.

We know this is important because we see the change.

2020 was an utter dumpster fire of the year.

Terrible for opinions plans.

Good nor local food.

We have people saying things.

There is an awareness of the value that this work and food provides though our communities, our kids, our patients if we are in health care.

And we see continued growth.

This is just two years for our network but we believe 2021 will continue this development as more and more people are asking where does my food come from?

What does it mean for me to purchase this food.

We will continue scaling the sails that these markets?

Hubs offer because we are sharing.

These hubs each bring their families and networks were them and we leverage the infrastructure like I-90?

and Farm Fair.

It helps us diversify the products we can offer.

Core challenges: This is an -- nor anybody GRAEJD in this.

47% of hospitals and health care networks across the country are serviced by 3 companies.

If we want to compete with them it would be very, very hard because we have grown accustomed to an artificially low price.

Instead we have to keep ourselves honest and keep the integrity of the values we bring and move forward as quickly as we can keep the trust being built.

That's another challenge.

It takes time.

This is a work body of work that requires an investment.

Because it also needs capacity.

I just wanted to note nor those of you who are politically or advocacy inclined Governor Inslee's putting includes are 10 million dollar rider, money specifically to help signal farms Hoff had to pivot and sell to new markets continually adapting to change to the markets that won't stop when we get in to the summer.

When it comes to building that soft software and weaving those networks how are we paying for in?

I will stop there.

>> I have opened it up to Q&A.

We have not got questions yet.

As everyone's pointed out so faster there is obviously a lot of really similar themes that come flew all of your work.

Even though yours is not consumer focused, there are elements of education that has to be done and infrastructure.

There is kind of an interesting question between what's necessary -- I would argue it's both but what are

your arguments to the fact that what people

need to purchase local food is education versus access.

Access is how they can buy it at the store.

Can they afford to buy it at the store or CSA or farmers market.

I would love to hear your thoughts, all, about the approach growing forward to moving the entire system to a stronger local food system.

I think all of you are doing a little bit of both of that work.

>>

But I want to get your intuition and thoughts, where the priorities need to lie nor all of us moving forward to help serve essentially serve producers and serve the consumers who are eating.

SHERYL: Progress moves at the speed of trust Elliott said.

I think that's a big piece of it right now.

Is any time you are, know, like for us where we have launched a relatively new platform

and we are in the process of building that out in multiple communities

we are sort of balancing the needs of the back end and for the data to be represented accurately and clearly.

And also on the front end of how we can continue to bring in not only new eyes but returning eyes and kind of building out this conversation in to museum communities.

And so there is a hard work that's being done on the data.

Some of the data that we have is from folks like yourselves who are here today

who are farmers, farmers markets, small businesses or organizations involved in food systems work in other ways.

There is a symbiotic relationship based on how that data is updated and kept current.

There is also kind of the content work, the curated content work we are doing on our end and also how we are going forth in building the tool in different communities.

But that's just my take.

MICHA: I think one of the other things that the neat about our platform is farmers and businesses can self-identify.

So we have indicators so they can identify if they are woman owned or LGBT Y or BIPOC owned.

That can help consumers put their dollars towards organizations they want to support based on those identities.

Also various like certified organic, animal welfare approved.

That part of our platform is constantly evolving and trying to stay current so we can make sure though amplify the voices of people who are looking for that or need that support.

As a farmer, I think this pandemic has been really interesting in a lot of ways .

we have received a lot of government assistance for the first time ever.

It's been really amazing because that has led to tus know, I raise pass sure rides meats which are fairly expensive.

Because of the government subsidies and government programs thod were the pandemic fallout we were able to get our meat in to the hands of folks that would normally not be able to afford it are lot of us are thinking of how do we sustain to this in the long run.

We want to contribute to our community.

Trying to build those things in our business models is something I think will stick.

CSAs are offering folks can buy an extra box to be donated though a family in need.

Like the inclination to support local food I think there will be a trend that continues.

I don't think it's a flash in the pan EFRNLT I am with you Micha.

I will believe you are right.

There are questions in the chat I want though how much on.

I think it's always both-and for me.

One of the hardest parts about the institutional food market channel is the understanding about what's in that channel is less than what is in the consumer consciousness.

If you knew you would probably be blown away.

Not just because of the chron- solid indication and skewed things.

It's the race to the bottom, the cheap low est bid.

The extension of the food economy that was PRIERDZed in the forties, fifties, sixties.

We built this.

My work is to convey are carrot with the stick.

We have to be honest before that we are doing to our people and the planet.

Not to shame folks but to show there is an alternative.

There are farmers in your community who will provide your carrots.

It will cost you more.

A colleague of mine, interrupted me when I said that last time.

I said I am sick of people saying I can't afford F.

It's too expensive.

He said stop saying it's too expensive.

It's more valuable.

If we cannot all own that story we will never go.

I am insistent on saying it's a question of values.

That record is about strength.

Being able to prove how your products strengthen your community, your land, your soil, are things that the massive broad liners simply KRANT do. Can't
can't do.

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They don't have the capacity to identify the source.

That's an opening for me.

MARIAH:

Our network is leveraging the burgeoning awareness that this is part of a system.

We have lots of questions in the chat.

Make sure though follow-up with folks in Slack afterwards.

You mentioned using this tool as a way to convey transparency and to connect.

So in addition to the institutions that this specific project you are working on is needing in to, how does it function with kind of smaller businesses nor growing in to restaurants and things like that, to help them find the same resources?

—

ELLIOTT:

Currently we are squarely focused on institutions.

That's the seed money we have received to launch this work.

It's myopic about that part.

There's a lot of opportunity.

The template we want to build mostly establishes there is a viable alternative.

Let's find ways to collaborate with the food and farm finder.

Let's make it so nobody really has to wonder: What am I doing when I buy this product?

We are starting on the big accounts.

I want people to stop saying it can't be done.

Culin you can paint a bigger picture for those interested in the restaurant decide.

The food hub network is participated in the farm metrics.

It's specified to be an easy way to measure complicated things like what's the impact on the farm.

Really what's the impact thought local economy.

MARIAH:

We will be capturing the metrics, making it in the end a little bit easier to tell the story.

Cullen do you want to come on video and respond to that as well?

ELLIOTT: You are muted.

She has got a baby on her lap.

>> Can everyone hear me?

ELLIOTT: We got it.

>> Apologize for the local food colleague who WLOEK up a little early.

He is excited to be here that.

When we talk about food hub network and Elliott did a good job trust is so essential outside of traditional technology.

From a restaurant perspective how we think about food hubs is institutions and those accounts are really supported through someone like Elliott, someone who has the ability to really focus and land and convert the institutional accounts.

However, the importance of restaurant scales are not lost.

The hubs have tremendous relationships with restaurant and their regions and the hubs are really largely focused on maintaining those restaurants and even independent grocery accounts while the Elliott serves as the higher entity, institution.

The software allows you to manage both of those types of sales.

MARIAH:

The software manages those nuances.

Thank you.

Thank you for the baby cameo.

That made the panel for me.

But that's really helpful.

It's great to have something that integrates to help signal farmers really scale themselves to smaller though large every institution through a single second-year.

That's the efficiency I feel so many producers are looking for.

(Single software.)

>>

ELLIOTT: You are muted Cullen.

Any BRER now?

we are now?

>> When we think about regional food systems we really think about how do we empower signal family farmers to achieve FIBZs similar to those gained at scale but now through strategic collaboration.

One thing we know we need TFTH better at is regional strategic production planning.

I know there is a panel later today about that as well.

That's what we have been focused on building to enable that piece of the puzzle to come more easily together.

MARIAH: Great thank you.

That's a good segue.

I want to highlight some events coming back.

They all feed back in to this conversation.

There is one market trends in response to COVID which talks about the race that everyone from producers all the way to consumers onsumers have responded over the last year and how they see there growing forward.

I think one of the gaps we identified which has come through in multiple conversations is are things like processing, things like the hard infrastructure that we have talked about aggregation and distribution and really the collaborative work that allows the small producers to join forces and meet the needs that in way.

I definitely invite you all to that session later on I believe is at 12:30.

MARIAH:

MARESSA: You muted yourself.

Sorry.

I want to look through.

We had a lot of questions.

Anyone want to pop in really quickly and ask any questions they had that have not been addressed yet?

I think asked Elliott: If there was a cope plative ownership structure between the hubs.

Open operative ownership structure between the hubs and how they are governed.

That's an interesting question in terms of collaboration.

How does collaboration work between disparate kind of entities.

ELLIOTT: You get in the weeds especially how to operationize it there is no formal network wide structure.

Each of the hubs Kitchen Sync Strategies and Farm Fair is not but we he is spouse the principles of collaboration and cope plative work.

We sign an MOU.

That's how we get started.

Once you start reading about us on the front page of the New York Times.

Maybe we will have a 501(c)(6) or something (laughter).

The challenges of cooperation and competition in the marketplace we exist in arise quickly and sharply.

This group is committed though sharing the resources we eachv to leveraging each other's connections for the betterment of this network.

We know that will be a requirement to meet the scale of the demand.

And we will still be able to hold very firmly to the principles of sharing and cooperation in a way that other groups that are distributing food aren't. If

I am in the public sector I am listening and thinking this is worth my time and attention.

This is a systems wide benefit.

SHE

We will keep moving down that path, sharing, being transparent and trying to prove the case.

RYL: I really like what you just said Elliott.

I think that's true nor all of the three groups that have presented today.

This theme that has and reality that has emerged in this work is the power of collaboration and the power of expanding beyond kind of what our own BROURNS of thinking. Boundaries

boundaries of thinking.

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We are the Eat Local First Collaborative for a reason.

MARIAH: Thank you Sheryl.

That was the keyword that came up from everything today.

It's definitely feels like it's been a little bit absent in the regional food community nor a while.

It's exciting to see everything exploding in this way.

At least I get to see it happening from so many members.

We have one minute left.

I will close this up.

I want to ask really quickly if Micha or Sheryl you had anything additional you wanted to add.

We would love to continue the conversation on Slack.

We have a survey we would love to have you fill out.

We would love your feedback.

We are all continuing though develop this work.

We appreciate the community helping to shape that.

Maressa, can you pop the survey link in the chat.

It's this one.

It's specifically for the tech survey.

And then we are going to take a longer lunch break.

Sessions resume at 12:30.

Links are found in the chat, the program website, and Slack.

We hope though continue the conversation with all of you there.

Thanks so much for coming out today.

MARESSA: Thanks everyone.

TT: Thanks, y'all.