

## **A Critical Conversation about Food Hubs**

Created for SAFSF 2013 Forum in Providence, RI

### **HANDOUT ON THE BASICS**

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Speakers: Jean Hamilton (Black River Produce) & Michael Rozyne (Red Tomato)

#### **What is a Food Hub?** (Working definition from the National Food Hub Collaboration)

A regional food hub is a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

**Food Hub Values:** When are we able to leverage these values together? When do they act as competitive cost centers?

- Environmental Sustainability
- Community Development
- Food Justice
- Agricultural Viability
- Economic Development

#### **Functions**<sup>1</sup> (and example operations<sup>2</sup>):

- Market access for local foods (SNAP redemptions, producer TA, etc)
- Information flow and sharing (branding, brokering, education)
- Transportation and distribution (on-farm pick up, end-user delivery)
- Brokerage services/Matchmaker (“Buy Local” campaign, marketing, brokering)
- Increasing market share by bundling (aggregation, branding, selling)
- Increasing market share by extending the season (processing, storage)
- Maintaining the consumer-producer connection (branding, “Buy Local” campaign)
- Technical assistance and producer development (GAP training, farm viability)

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<sup>1</sup> The Role of Food Hubs in Local Food Marketing. USDA Rural Development, January 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Food Hub Resources Guide, USDA AMS April, 2012