

# Farm, Fish, & Food Enterprise Viability in New Hampshire

An initiative of the New Hampshire  
Food Alliance 2015



NH FOOD ALLIANCE

The New Hampshire Food Alliance  
envisions a food system that works for all  
in New Hampshire: people, businesses,  
communities, and the environment.



## Goals

People understand that their local food choices support thriving businesses, healthy communities, and vibrant working landscapes.

Policy, regulation, and infrastructure supports long-term local and regional food production, distribution, and marketing.

Everyone has access to healthy, affordable, and culturally diverse food.

The ecosystems and resources that sustain a robust food system are conserved and enhanced.

Local farm, fisheries, and food businesses are profitable and rewarding to all involved.

## Strategy

Our strategy for realizing our vision and goals has four main components.

### Food systems perspective

The food system is a complex and dynamic interrelation of economic, environmental, cultural, and political factors that influence how food is produced, processed, transported, and consumed. A systems perspective recognizes that change in one part of the system may influence many other parts, and seeks to identify and understand these consequences, both positive and negative.

### Network building

Networks consist of diverse organizations, institutions, businesses, and individuals that align their shared interests around common goals. By growing a network of relationships and connections throughout the food system, we can learn from each other, leverage resources, and increase our impact throughout the state and New England region.

### Identifying areas of leverage and opportunity

To determine where to focus our collaborative energy and resources, we listen to and learn from people across the state and region, synthesize research, and together identify areas in the food system where we believe targeted shifts could result in positive impacts throughout the rest of the system. This ongoing and evolving process will ensure that the NH Food Alliance reflects the unique interests and needs of Granite Staters now and in the future.

### Growing one initiative at a time

By focusing our collaborative efforts on specific, critical concerns, we can continue to nurture the growing network, learn and respond to changing conditions, and achieve lasting, meaningful impact. Therefore, we will expand the scope of the NH Food Alliance one initiative at a time. While farm, fish, and food enterprise viability is the focus of our first initiative, we anticipate that the Alliance’s strategic efforts will expand to other initiatives in the future.



The New Hampshire Food Alliance is made possible by hundreds of volunteers across the state and the generous support of The John Merck Fund, The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, The Kendall Foundation, Share our Strength, Jane’s Trust, and the UNH Sustainability Institute. The University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute coordinates the New Hampshire Food Alliance.

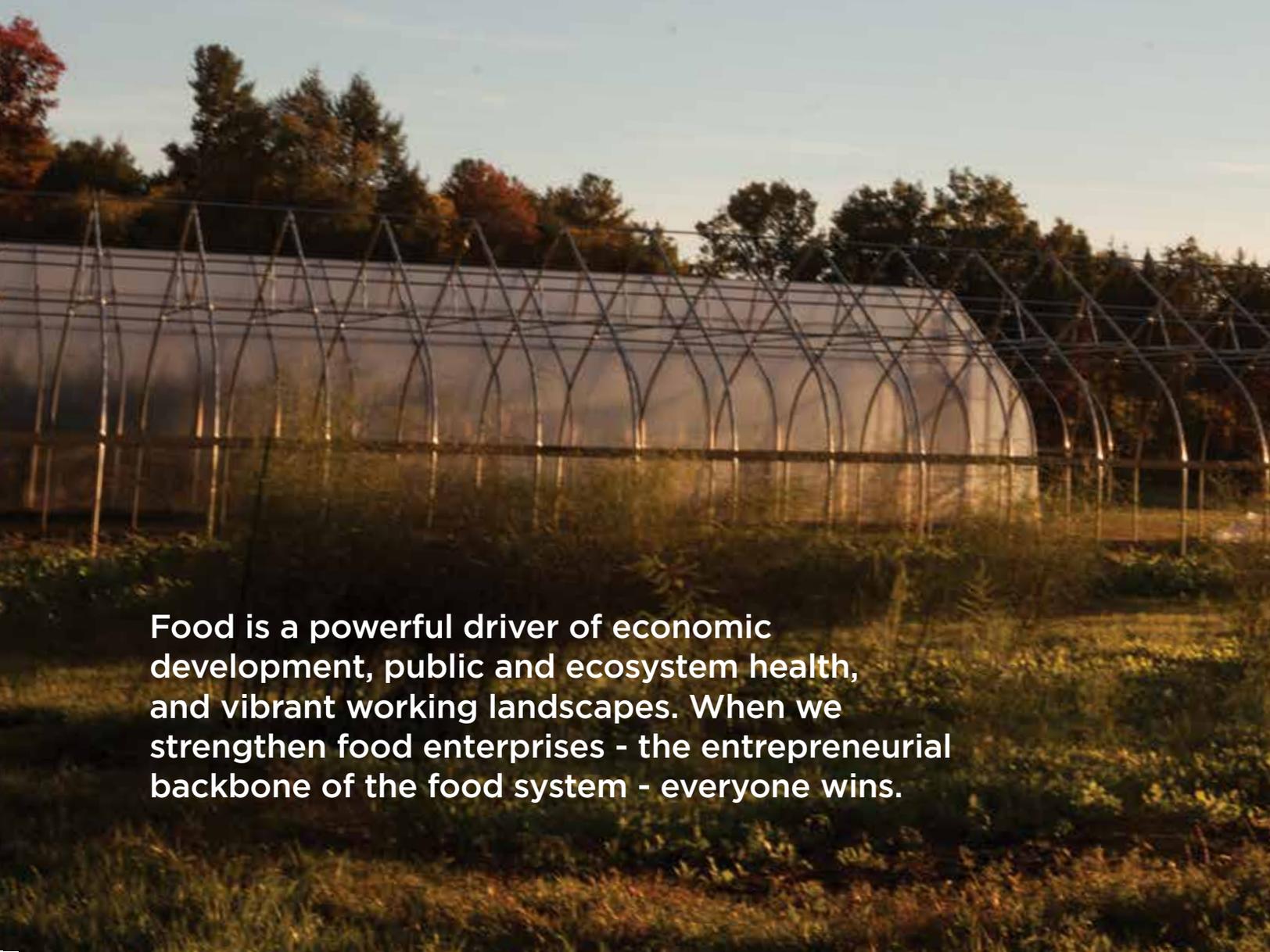
## About the Initiative: Executive Summary

The NH Food Alliance is a growing network of people working together to build a food system that is good for people, businesses, communities, and the environment. *Farm, Fish, and Food Enterprise Viability in New Hampshire: An initiative of the New Hampshire Food Alliance* (“Viability Initiative”), was created to provide a common focus and agenda for the collaborative work of the NH Food Alliance.

As the first strategic effort of the NH Food Alliance, the Viability Initiative is the result of over two years of building our network, listening to the concerns and hopes of hundreds of New Hampshire residents, and synthesizing dozens of food system reports. The common thread emerging from this work was that thriving local businesses are at the heart of our food system and can create cascading benefits for us all. The Viability Initiative outlines challenges

and opportunities for farmers, fishermen, and food entrepreneurs, and describes how the NH Food Alliance will collaborate within a network structure to support food enterprises and promote a growing, healthy food system that benefits all residents in New Hampshire.

For the purposes of this initiative, *we consider an enterprise to be viable when it profitably delivers value to its customers in a way that is sustainable for all of its stakeholders, while contributing to healthy families, communities, and the environment.* Four opportunity areas support this initiative’s food systems approach to strengthening enterprise viability: **education, market development, food accessibility, and land and sea resources.** Within each of these opportunity areas we identify goals, potential approaches, and suggested indicators of progress.



**Food is a powerful driver of economic development, public and ecosystem health, and vibrant working landscapes. When we strengthen food enterprises - the entrepreneurial backbone of the food system - everyone wins.**

## Education

Consumers who understand the impact of their food choices, and business-savvy farmers, fishermen, and other food producers can stimulate business development, as well as increase revenue flowing through the food system and greater economy.

## Market Development

New connections with institutions, wholesalers, and retail buyers will allow local producers to scale up operations and increase profitability.

## Food Accessibility

Improving access to local food for all people in New Hampshire will help grow the overall market, a win-win for healthy consumers and food businesses.

## Land and Sea Resources

Long-term food security is strengthened when farmers have access to and can afford productive farmland, and fishermen can earn a living from their enterprises.

The potential approaches and suggested indicators outlined in this document are designed to inspire larger conversation and action around how we can best support food enterprises and improve New Hampshire's food system. Through the Viability Initiative the NH Food Alliance will identify what is working well, where there are gaps, and how to address those gaps to benefit New Hampshire's people, communities, businesses, and environment. Keep reading to learn more about the NH Food Alliance, the Viability Initiative, and how you can get involved!

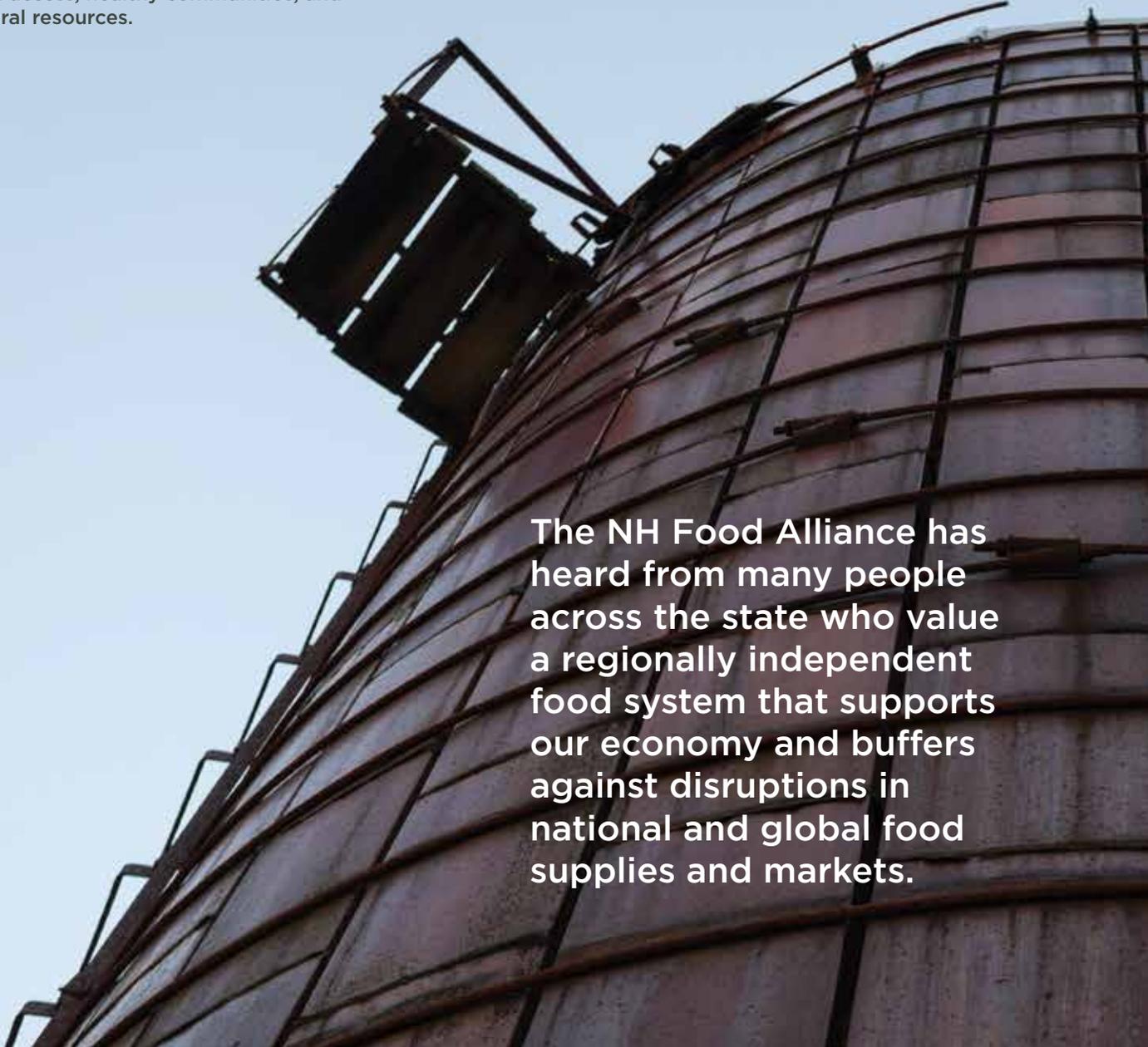


## The Need for a Viability Initiative

Interest in local food is booming in New Hampshire, creating opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship in local and regional food enterprises. And yet, enterprises throughout the food system in New Hampshire face unique obstacles. Our growing season is short, farmland is costly, fish populations are dwindling, and distance can be an obstacle to developing niche markets. In many areas, infrastructure—from cold storage to large animal veterinarians—to support a growing food system is missing. Meanwhile, despite our state's relative wealth compared nationally, nearly one in ten residents struggle to put food on the table.

By focusing our first initiative on farm, fish, and food enterprise viability, we can help support the entrepreneurial backbone of the food system, and at the same time address key issues related to food access, healthy communities, and natural resources.

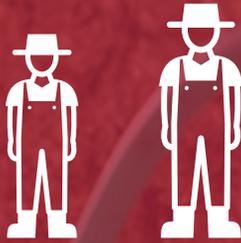
Numerous groups and initiatives exist in New Hampshire to help support farms, fisheries, and food businesses. Collaborating through a network approach to address viability will allow us to aggregate knowledge of the New Hampshire food system, align work and infrastructure across food system sectors, and connect and learn together to speed progress toward our goals. The Food Alliance is building upon the work already being done by connecting individuals, businesses, and organizations across the state. The Viability Initiative offers a common framework to guide our collaborative work, so that we can more successfully address challenges and meet shared goals.



The NH Food Alliance has heard from many people across the state who value a regionally independent food system that supports our economy and buffers against disruptions in national and global food supplies and markets.



### EDUCATION



2002

2012

The number of beginning farmers increased by >15% between 2002 and 2011.<sup>1</sup>

PAGE 10



### MARKET DEVELOPMENT

↑ 35% 

The value of NH agricultural products in NH sold directly to individuals for human consumption increased by over 35% between 2007–2012, and is one of the highest in the country.<sup>2</sup>

PAGE 14



### FOOD ACCESSIBILITY



A WEEK

If every New Hampshire resident spent just \$5 a week on local food, over \$338 million would be added to the state's economy.<sup>3</sup>

PAGE 18



### LAND AND SEA RESOURCES

 38,500

ACRES

Between 1982–2007 38,500 acres of the state's agricultural land was permanently lost to development.<sup>4</sup>

PAGE 22

# Identifying our First Initiative

The Food Alliance spent over two years building strong relationships and developing shared understandings and goals with a broad group of individuals and organizations across the food system. Through listening sessions involving over two hundred people, extensive research of food systems reports and related literature, and conversations with specific stakeholder groups, the NH Food Alliance identified critical opportunities and challenges in the New Hampshire food system. From among these priority concerns, we then identified potential opportunity areas, or parts of the system where a targeted shift can result in positive changes throughout the rest of the system. Farm, fish, and food enterprise viability emerged as the most promising entry point among interconnected opportunity areas to begin our collaborative work.

This resulting Viability Initiative outlines the approaches and recommendations that reflect the voices and unique interests and needs of Granite Staters and as such, are meant to evolve, change and adapt moving forward. A Viability Working Group will use the suggested goals, approaches, and indicators in this document to develop a focused action plan for the Viability Initiative and identify specific partners who will collaborate to implement priority actions. We hope that all NH Food Alliance participants will use this document to guide their work and priorities, ensuring we are all working together to support viable farms, fisheries, and food enterprises in New Hampshire.

As the NH Food Alliance grows, we anticipate developing additional initiatives to address other food system opportunities and concerns. We believe that we can have the greatest impact now by focusing our initial efforts on the complex challenge of viability, while continuing to build and develop the larger network.

The Viability Initiative is organized around four opportunity areas that support farm, fish, and food enterprises: education, market development, food accessibility, and land and sea resources.

Each opportunity area includes:

- A description of how each opportunity area supports viability;
- A description of challenges;
- Suggested goals;
- Suggested short, medium, and long-term approaches to meet goals; and
- Suggested indicators to measure progress.

The success of the NH Food Alliance Viability Initiative ultimately depends on a healthy network that is characterized by strong communication, connectivity, collaboration, learning, research, diversity, equity, and transparency. The Viability Initiative is designed to catalyze conversation and collaboration around viability; it is not a rigid plan to be followed but a first step toward creating positive, lasting change for enterprises, communities, and residents in New Hampshire.

## 2013 DESIGN & CONNECT

Designed a network structure and a process for identifying goals and strategies.

Reviewed existing food system plans, reports, and data.

Built connections and relationships across the New Hampshire food system.

## 2014-2015 ENGAGE & DEVELOP

Engaged 250+ food system stakeholders via listening sessions, focus groups, and workshops.

Developed a shared vision, goals, and strategy for the network.

Synthesized research, identified leverage areas, and defined goals and approaches for a first initiative focused on enterprise viability.

## 2016+ COLLABORATE & ADAPT

Prioritize and revise goals and approaches outlined in Viability Initiative.

Collaborate to implement, monitor, and adapt the Viability Initiative as needed.

Nurture the network and develop additional initiatives as NH Food Alliance grows.

## OUTCOMES

Shared vision and goals for the New Hampshire food system.

Connection and collective action across the state.

A food system that works for all: people, businesses, communities, and the environment.



The NH Food Alliance strives to enhance network health while advancing our first initiative focused on enterprise viability. The same factors that allow us to effectively support the network—connectivity, transparency, diversity, collaboration—will also allow us to successfully meet our viability goals



## EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY AREA



# How education supports viability

With opportunities to improve their business and financial planning skills, food entrepreneurs can improve their long-term profitability, as well as provide job and lifestyle satisfaction for themselves and their employees. In addition, consumers who understand their local food system and the importance of local agriculture to our state's economy, community health, and heritage will be more likely to support and purchase food from local farms and fisheries.



Ben Fisk, maple syrup producer and owner of Ben's Sugar Shack in Temple, NH started tapping trees at age 5. Today, at 27, Ben's Sugar Shack employs 15 people and last year produced 5,100 gallons of maple syrup that was sold in 4,000 stores across the nation. Ben's entrepreneurial success is due both to his passion for his work and because he consistently seeks out new opportunities for learning and growth. Ben was able to increase his inventory and refine his business model by working with a financial consultant provided by the NH Community Loan Fund. Both have set his business up for more growth and financing in the future. "The Loan Fund is tremendous to work with. They will provide whatever assistance you need—financial or business-related—to help guide you towards bigger growth opportunities," says Ben. Today, Ben's Sugar Shack is a diverse operation offering much more than syrup. While 75% of Ben's product is sold to the wholesale market as far afield as California, he has also expanded his retail offerings at his sugar shack in Temple, with tours, a host of maple related products, and seasonal produce.



## Challenges to Education

Growing urban and suburban populations increase the number of consumers who are disconnected from agriculture and fisheries, and don't understand how food gets from farm (or sea) to table.

Some New Hampshire consumers do not have the skills necessary to prepare fresh food, and still others believe that preparing fresh food is too time consuming.

Many New Hampshire farms are currently not profitable.

Food entrepreneurs may have a difficult time acquiring the funds or financial planning assistance necessary for getting started or scaling up.

### Goal

Develop and support programs and campaigns to help consumers understand how eating locally strengthens our economy, improves our well-being, and protects our rural landscapes and unique New Hampshire heritage.

### Approaches

#### Short-term

Gather information to better understand New Hampshire residents and their perception of, and attitudes toward, the food system; identify existing efforts geared toward consumer education in the state.

#### Mid-term

Support, enhance, and coordinate efforts to educate consumers, food buyers, and retailers about food production and fisheries in New Hampshire; support education efforts focused on raising community awareness of the values and needs of farming and fishing businesses to reduce conflicts and over-regulation at the municipal level; promote educational strategies that enhance fresh food preparation skills and nutrition understanding.

#### Long-term

Create a culture that values local food through a statewide creative communications and education campaign that includes storytelling, music, art, and celebration, while making New Hampshire food system data easily accessible and understandable.

### Goal

Make business and financial planning assistance readily available and accessible to all New Hampshire producers, fishermen, and food entrepreneurs.

### Approaches

#### Short-term

Gather information to improve our understanding of the factors that affect long-term profitability of farms and food businesses and identify gaps in support services to entrepreneurs.

#### Mid-term

Enhance coordination of, and expand resources for, business and financial education providers and programs that support farm and fishing operators.

#### Long-term

Create a business and economic development climate that recognizes farm, fish, and food enterprises as key components of New Hampshire's overall community and economic development objectives.



“By developing a network and building collaborations and education around available services, the Food Alliance will allow a wider population to be aware of the organizations I work with and increase utilization of those services.”

- Cara Cargill, Land for Good, NHAMP



MARKET DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY AREA



# How market development supports viability

Developing and fostering markets is essential for maintaining the economic viability of any enterprise. New and strategic connections between producers and buyers, including innovative approaches to aggregation and distribution, will allow producers and food entrepreneurs to improve profitability.



Three River Farmers Alliance (Three River) is a collaborative effort among several farms that is meeting the growing demand for local food by connecting farmers to farmers, and farmers to markets. The farms formed a food distribution company to provide a one-stop shop for ordering everything from vegetables to meats. Three River is “the first stepping stone toward a reliable local food distribution network,” says Andre Cantelmo, one of the founding farmers. “It’s the connection between farmers and consumers that has been missing.” This new marketplace lowers the cost of distribution for producers, making it economical to offer even small amounts of food to local communities. Both farmers and retailers benefit. “Having a weekly delivery system between multiple farms is very efficient and makes so much sense,” says Gary Kim, owner of Anju restaurant in Kittery, Maine. “I wish all farms were involved.”



## Challenges to Market Development

Many New Hampshire farmers and fishermen are not of scale to meet the demands of wholesale markets.

Most New Hampshire consumers (as well as chefs and food buyers) are not familiar with the types of local fish now harvested to replace dwindling populations of fish traditionally caught in this area.

Producers struggle to move food during times of abundance due to a lack of infrastructure for local food sales and limitations in distribution.

State and federal regulations can be cumbersome and costly to address.

### Goal

Develop and expand diverse, reliable, and profitable market channels for farmers, fishermen, and food entrepreneurs.

### Goal

Assist producers and food entrepreneurs in meeting the production and distribution demands of diverse market channels.

### Approaches

#### Short-term

Create and facilitate new and strategic connections with institutional and retail markets.

#### Mid-term

Promote and support existing efforts to brand local products (e.g., NH Made, NH Seafood); coordinate information about producers and products around the state to make it easier for institutions and retailers to readily find and procure local food options; facilitate and support development of food aggregation and distribution enterprises to conveniently and efficiently connect local food producers and buyers.

#### Long-term

Seek legislation to establish a “buy local” policy for the purchase of New Hampshire or New England grown products by state institutions and agencies. Dedicating some food purchases towards local and regionally produced foods would promote job growth and ensure that money spent by New Englanders is promoting the regional economy.

### Approaches

#### Short-term

Enhance the capacity of UNH Cooperative Extension and other entities to provide technical assistance to new and experienced farmers and fishermen related to production, value-added processing, and meeting regulatory demands of wholesale markets.

#### Mid-term

Support efforts by food system entrepreneurs to form and operate cooperatives or other innovative approaches to aggregating products, to facilitate sales in the face of growing food industry consolidation.

#### Long-term

Improve the distribution infrastructure for local foods. Support efforts by food system entrepreneurs to create and form innovative approaches to distribution infrastructure for local food.



“The first Community Supported Fishery in New Hampshire provides a whole new concept to buying seafood. We’re in more restaurants in the Seacoast than ever before. We’re selling through health food stores and have recently been asked to introduce fish into our local hospitals.”

- Andrea Tomlinson manager, NH Community Seafood



## FOOD ACCESSIBILITY OPPORTUNITY AREA



# How food accessibility supports viability

One way of increasing market opportunities is to increase the number of people who consume local food. Linking public food support spending such as SNAP to local food benefits both low-income residents and producers who have new customers for their products; New Hampshire Farm to School, Farm to College, and Farm to Hospital provide other avenues for institutions to support the New Hampshire economy, while residents access and enjoy locally grown and harvested products. By making local food more accessible to all, we create a win-win-win for producers, businesses, and consumers.



Thanks to a partnership between the New Hampshire Food Bank and Wholesome Wave, New Hampshire Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) recipients can now receive extra funds for the purchase of fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets. Called Granite State Market Match, the program matches SNAP dollar for dollar (up to a \$10 cap in some locations) at participating markets. As one participating farmer describes it, "we benefit financially, the customers benefit financially, and we all are happier and healthier." The NH Food Bank, through a USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant, will distribute \$130,000 (over 3 years) to New Hampshire SNAP recipients, which with the match, could add up to over \$300,000 for farmers as income.<sup>5</sup>



## Challenges to Food Accessibility

New Hampshire has seen escalating rates of food poverty and food insecurity over the past ten years.

Locally produced foods often have a higher production cost and can be more expensive than food from outside the New England region.

Lack of retailers and poor transportation infrastructure in some rural areas limits access and distribution of locally produced food.

Policy and reimbursement rates for school breakfast and lunch often make it difficult to shift funding for purchasing from local farmers and fisherman.

### Goal

Consumers of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels will have convenient access to, and can afford, locally produced foods.

### Approaches

#### Short-term

Increase the number of low-income families who purchase and prepare local food from retail and direct markets by supporting and expanding programs such as Granite State Market Match and Cooking Matters.

#### Mid-term

Work with institutions and businesses to develop contract language about the purchase of local foods through their requests for proposals.

#### Long-term

Collaborate with business and community economic development planners to develop new delivery models that will address transportation and distribution infrastructure and the lack of retail options that hinder access to purchasing local food. Support policies and innovation that result in economic opportunities for New Hampshire residents that build consumer capacity to purchase healthy foods.

**“The Food Alliance supports our organization by offering connections outside our own organization. It allows us to network and receive feedback from others working on similar initiatives, projects, and goals.”**

- Alicia Chevoor, Seacoast Family Food Pantry



## Federal Programs

Cash payments from federal food programs including school lunch, school breakfast, child/adult day care, and summer feeding totaled over \$33 million in 2014. By using some of this money for local food purchasing, we can get more local food to state residents, and increase farmer income.<sup>6</sup>

## SNAP Benefits

For each year since 2010, New Hampshire residents have been eligible for between \$140 million to \$166 million in SNAP benefits.<sup>6a</sup>

According to the USDA, SNAP benefits multiply beyond the direct cash benefits to recipients: for each \$1 in SNAP benefits, \$1.80 of economic activity is generated, as grocers and farmers pay their employees and suppliers, who in turn shop, create jobs, and pay their bills.<sup>7,8</sup>



LAND AND SEA RESOURCES OPPORTUNITY AREA



# How land and sea resources support viability

There are several ways to ensure that farming and fishing are viable for this and future generations: make agricultural land, healthy soils, and marine resources available and accessible to farmers and fishermen; support and create local and state policies that make owning, managing, and investing in farmland affordable; and advocate for policies and regulations that ensure our local fishing and aquaculture industries will have opportunities for sustainable seafood harvest and production.



Wingate Farm—a 5th generation family farm in Hinsdale, NH—is now permanently protected through an innovative conservation program. “What was most gratifying to me was the way that our local towns, Winchester and Hinsdale, stepped up and budgeted money to help fund the Conservation Easement at Wingate. I think they recognize that this kind of program benefits not just our family but the entire community. It’s a long range viewpoint that this will enhance the overall quality of life in both towns,” says Peter Pettengill of Wingate Farm.

In addition to the 60-acre farm being permanently conserved, provisions were made to ensure that the land remains accessible and affordable to farmers into the future. “Through innovative conservation we can help our current and future farmers get on and stay on the land—this in turn helps towns protect their community heritage, increase food access, and strengthen rural economies,” says Jamie Pottern of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, which led the conservation effort.



## Challenges to Land and Sea Resources

Prime agricultural land in New Hampshire is lost to permanent development at alarming rates.

High land prices, zoning regulations, and taxes can make it difficult for many farmers to purchase land and/or invest in infrastructure necessary for their farming operation.

Neighbors and public officials unfamiliar with the operations of a working farm and the state's Right to Farm law, can create challenges for New Hampshire farmers.

Strict catch limits, a limited capacity to fish healthy stocks due to management, and ecological and fishing gear constraints, can challenge the ability of fisherman to harvest a sufficient amount of fish to remain economically viable.

### Goal

Support, create, and implement uniform policies and programs that conserve and maintain the agricultural use of prime and locally important agricultural land and soil, as well as marine resources, throughout the state.

### Approaches

#### Short-term

Improve coordination and connection between land trusts, producer, harvester, and conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies as a way to develop innovative strategies for maintaining farmland and sea access, while enhancing soil, water, and marine ecosystem health.

#### Mid-term

Support and expand policies and strategies that maintain or expand the availability of prime agricultural land and soils (e.g., Current Use assessment, Right to Farm, Agricultural Commissions, Agricultural Lands Program); advocate for policies that support our local fishing and aquaculture industries.

#### Long-term

Make more money available to maintain farmland, improve soil health, and sustainably manage and monitor our local fishing and aquaculture industries.

### Goal

Support, create, and implement policies and programs that help new and existing farm businesses gain secure access to, and afford, farmland.

### Approaches

#### Short-term

Support and create farm seeker and land transfer programs that integrate land, business, and human resources support to assist farmers in accessing secure tenure and/or acquiring farmland.

#### Mid-term

Promote state policy that increases land available to farmers through support of state funding for farmland conservation, and advocating for tax incentives that encourage landowners to lease/rent their land to farmers; educate state authorities about the contributions of sustainable aquaculture production and techniques to prevent over-regulation that reduces viability by raising costs.

#### Long-term

Support changes to property tax structures to make owning and investing in farmland and agricultural enterprises affordable.

“The Food Alliance catalyzes a broad voice for the need to address land requirements of farm businesses.”

- Ian McSweeney, Russell Farm and Forest Conservation Foundation



## Stonyfield: A New England Story

Stonyfield is committed to helping the organic dairy industry not just survive, but thrive. Through custom technical assistance for all producers who contract directly with Stonyfield, farmers receive access to personalized support from industry professionals, which allows farmers to optimize and grow their business. According to Kristi Sayer, from Rocky Ridge Farm LLC in Canton, ME, “Stonyfield’s technical assistance program has allowed us to move our business forward with tailored support for our family’s unique needs. Our farm is in a better place and we look forward to building on the progress that’s been made.” Britt Lundgren, director of organic and sustainable agriculture for Stonyfield notes that by helping farmers, Stonyfield also benefits. Britt recognizes the importance of the dairy industry to New England’s agricultural economy. “A healthy dairy sector is still a vital part of the health of our agricultural economy in New England, and we believe it is possible to grow that sector and demonstrate to a new generation of farmers that this is a viable and desirable career path.”



**“Our hope is that the technical assistance program will help producers improve their bottom line and thus their long term viability and sustainability. In the long run, this means a higher quality and more stable supply of milk for us.”**

- Britt Lundgren, director of organic and sustainable agriculture for Stonyfield



## New England region connections that support viability

Citizens across New England have developed a vision for producing half of the region's food needs by 2060. This vision sees growth in the food system as the basis for a strong, resilient regional economy that collaborates effectively with other industries. It also sees a future where people can make a viable living through satisfying and meaningful employment growing, processing, and distributing food while contributing to the vitality and health of their communities. By joining in this broader conversation, there is opportunity to expand New Hampshire's role within the regional food system, allowing each state to build on its strengths.

At the Food Solutions New England regional summit in June 2015, NH Food Alliance participants identified three opportunities for regional collaboration that would also support farm, fish, and food enterprise viability in New Hampshire.

### 1. Reciprocal Licensing

Identify barriers that make selling agricultural products across state lines unnecessarily difficult, and adopt reciprocal licensing that would allow producers in New England to more easily sell products throughout the region.

### 2. Leveraging Federal Funds

Identify and take advantage of underutilized federal and matching funds that can be used to protect farmland and support local food sales in the region.

### 3. Buy New England Campaign

Branding New England produced and processed products is one way to increase local sales, keeping money circulating within the regional economy. This would ultimately increase revenue and support local businesses, and allow consumers to see themselves as stewards within their communities.

The NH Food Alliance will continue to work with Food Solutions New England to build connections across the region. Additionally, we will work together to develop and track shared indicators of food system health, and to advocate for state and federal policies that support farm, fish, and food enterprise viability in New England.

## We can do it together!

No single institution, organization, or entity can effectively address the complex and dynamic issue of farm, fish, and food enterprise viability in New Hampshire. Collaboration between organizations, institutions, businesses, communities, and individuals is critical to achieve lasting, meaningful results. The NH Food Alliance combines a food systems perspective, a network approach, and a collective impact framework to promote long-term collaboration that adapts and responds to changing conditions and new ideas.

## A Network Approach

Network collaboration means working with others toward larger shared goals. Whether you are engaged in food system work in a neighborhood school, on a farm or a fishing boat, at a local food pantry, or in one of a thousand other settings, your individual efforts can be purposefully connected to those of others. The NH Food Alliance connects people and resources across the New Hampshire food system to achieve greater impact than an individual or organization can achieve on its own.

In a network, leadership and action are distributed across many groups; a robust, well-connected NH Food Alliance will ensure that the goals and approaches identified in the Viability Initiative are enacted, monitored, evaluated, and adapted on an ongoing basis. Network participants will continue to build and nurture the network, collaborate on strategic goals, and learn from successes and challenges.

Harnessing the power of networked collaboration and collective impact models to address complex food system challenges is a growing strategy at the national, regional, state, and community levels.<sup>9</sup> Working in a networked way involves new approaches to solving problems and embracing opportunities. The Monitor Institute recognizes five key ways that networks can benefit their participants and impact society: weaving social ties, accessing new and diverse perspectives, openly building and sharing knowledge, creating infrastructure for widespread engagement, and coordinating resources and action.<sup>10</sup> The Food Alliance helps to catalyze these benefits by making it possible for groups addressing farm, fish, and food enterprise viability to communicate, connect, and collaborate more effectively.



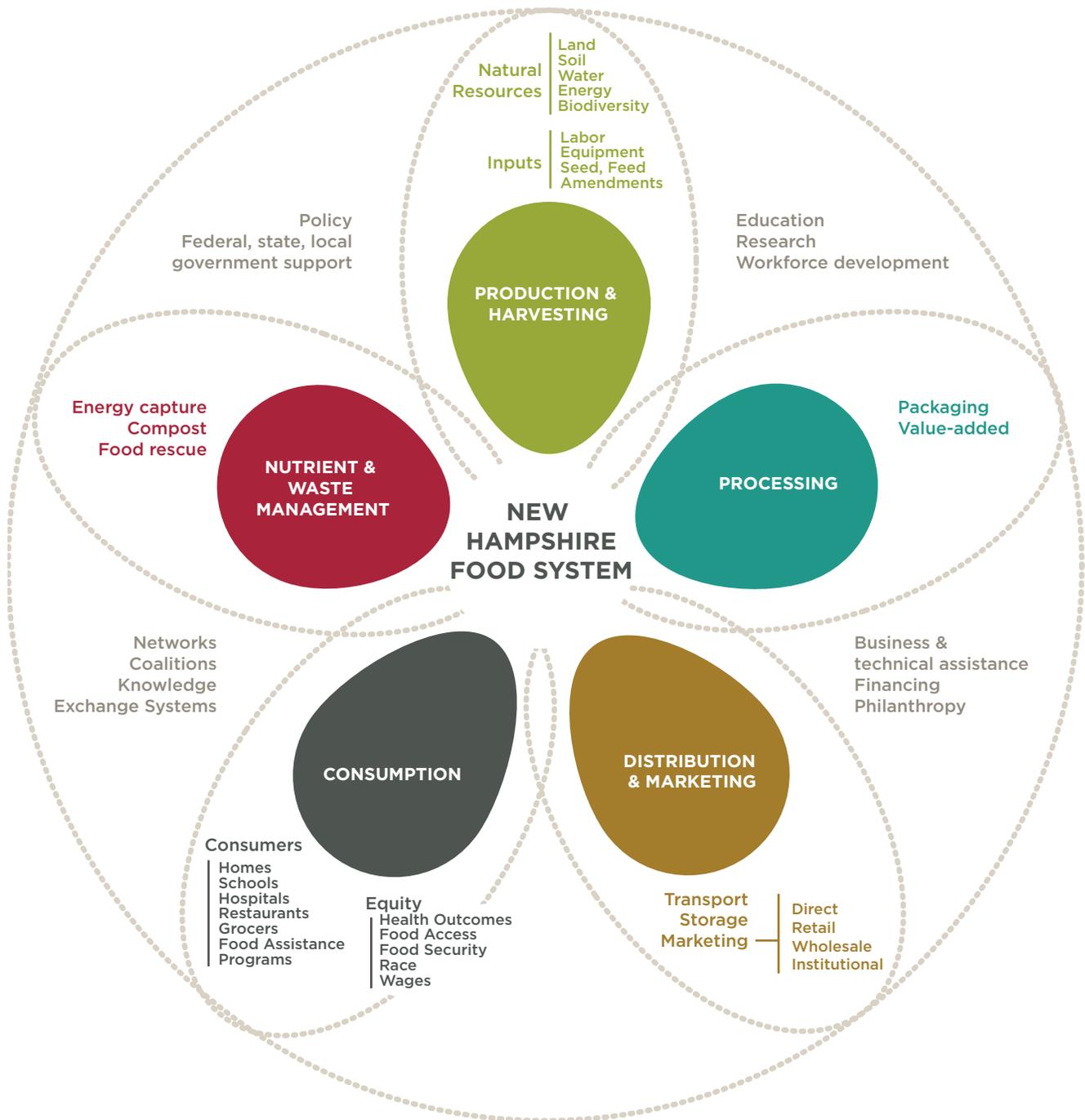
## Explore the Food System

Search the NH Food Alliance Partner Database. This tool will allow you to connect with potential partners, see a snapshot of the work going on in different regions, and learn more about the various organizations doing important food system work in the state of New Hampshire.

[nhfoodalliance.com/explore](https://nhfoodalliance.com/explore)

# Food Systems Perspective

The Viability Initiative is based on a “food systems perspective.” Food is a powerful driver of economic development, public and community health, and vibrant working landscapes. When we strengthen food enterprise viability everyone wins. With this shared understanding, we can engage other sectors and organizations not traditionally focused on viability to join the effort and strengthen their own as well as our shared work.



The simple diagram above illustrates basic food system activities from farm to table to compost; the producers, entrepreneurs, institutions, people, initiatives, and agencies that support these processes make up the food system network.

# Collective Impact

The NH Food Alliance embraces the concept of collective impact, or the idea that greater connectivity and goal alignment between stakeholders (in any complex system) ultimately leads to more effective action and lasting change.<sup>11</sup> As diverse groups and individuals build relationships and learn from one another, they share resources, create common goals, and collaborate more effectively. The NH Food Alliance incorporates the five conditions necessary to achieve meaningful and lasting collective impact: a common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, shared measurement, and backbone support.

## Common agenda

The Viability Initiative articulates a shared vision and identifies approaches to strengthening the New Hampshire food system by addressing farm, fish, and food enterprise viability over the short, medium, and long-term.

## Mutually reinforcing activities

The NH Food Alliance supports new and existing programs, projects, and organizations; advances new ideas; and coordinates actions among participants.

## Continuous communication

Network participants communicate, share resources, learn from one another, and coordinate initiatives through easily accessible communication channels such as a website, social media, newsletters, and a Listserv.

## Shared measurement

The Viability Initiative includes a set of indicators consistent with others in New England, for measuring progress towards goals and monitoring Viability Initiative effectiveness.

## Backbone support

The University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute (UNHSI), provides logistical and administrative support to coordinate continued network building and collaboration.

We hope the Viability Initiative will encourage greater participation in the NH Food Alliance, and that more groups will use this document as a tool to guide and prioritize their work in the food system. The more we work together toward shared goals, the more likely we are to succeed!

# Make the New Hampshire Food Alliance work for you!

The NH Food Alliance connects people, ideas, and resources to enhance the good work already underway in the Granite State. Whether you are part of a business or organization, or a concerned consumer and community member, engaging with the NH Food Alliance can benefit you, your work, and your community.



**LEARN** about what's happening throughout the state and get inspired to create success stories of your own! Visit our website, join the Listserv and Facebook group, follow NH Food Alliance on Twitter, and visit NH Food Alliance staff at various food system events around the state. You can also invite the NH Food Alliance to join events that you or your organization host. Our website has a searchable database, resources page, and events calendar, making it easy to learn about who is doing what, and what is working where. Go to [www.nhfoodalliance.com](http://www.nhfoodalliance.com) for a copy of the Viability Initiative and share widely with others!



**CONNECT** with others at a NH Food Alliance statewide gathering or other sponsored events and activities. Seek out regional partners on our website to find out what is going on in your area of the state and meet others working on food system issues in your community. Get listed on our database of regional organizations and initiatives so that others can find you! Tell us about your work so that we can feature it on our blog and in our newsletters. Visit [www.nhfoodalliance.com](http://www.nhfoodalliance.com) to learn about all the ways to get connected.



**TAKE ACTION** in your community and workplace. Share the Viability Initiative with co-workers, neighbors, and local leaders. Align goals and strategies for your organization, business, or community with those featured in this document to achieve maximum impact. Monitor NH Food Alliance communications to learn about specific calls to action - harnessing the power of the network to influence policy and debates about the future of our food system.

See yourself as part of the Alliance! **ENGAGE** with the NH FOOD ALLIANCE!

# Viability Initiative Indicator Chart

OPPORTUNITY AREA	SUGGESTED APPROACH
<b>EDUCATION</b>	
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Develop and support programs and campaigns to help consumers understand how eating locally strengthens our economy, improves our well-being, and protects our rural landscapes and unique New Hampshire heritage.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Gather information to better understand New Hampshire residents and their perception of, and attitudes toward, the food system; identify existing efforts geared toward consumer education in the state.  <b>Mid-term:</b> Support, enhance, and coordinate efforts to educate consumers, food buyers, and retailers about food production and fisheries in New Hampshire; support education efforts focused on raising community awareness of the values and needs of farming and fishing businesses to reduce conflicts and over-regulation at the municipal level; promote educational strategies that enhance fresh food preparation skills and nutrition understanding.  <b>Long-term:</b> Create a culture that values local food through a statewide creative communications and education campaign that includes storytelling, music, art, and celebration, while making New Hampshire food system data easily accessible and understandable.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Make business and financial planning assistance readily available and accessible to all New Hampshire producers, fishermen, and food entrepreneurs.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Gather information to improve our understanding of the factors that affect long-term profitability of farms and food businesses and identify gaps in support services to entrepreneurs.  <b>Mid-term:</b> Enhance coordination of and expand resources for business and financial education providers and programs that support farm and fishing operators.  <b>Long-term:</b> Create a business and economic development climate that recognizes farm, fish, and food enterprises as key components of New Hampshire's overall community and economic development objectives.</p>
<b>MARKET DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Develop and expand diverse, reliable, and profitable market channels for farmers, fishermen, and food entrepreneurs.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Create and facilitate new and strategic connections with institutional and retail markets.  <b>Mid-term:</b> Promote and support existing efforts to brand local products (e.g., NH Made, NH Seafood); coordinate information about producers and products around the state to make it easier for institutions and retailers to readily find and procure local food options; facilitate and support development of food aggregation and distribution enterprises to conveniently and efficiently connect local food producers and buyers.  <b>Long-term:</b> Seek legislation to establish a “buy local” policy for the purchase of New Hampshire or New England grown products by state institutions and agencies. Dedicating some food purchases towards local and regionally produced foods would promote job growth and ensure that money spent by New Englanders is promoting the regional economy.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Assist producers and food entrepreneurs in meeting the production and distribution demands of diverse market channels.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Enhance the capacity of UNH Cooperative Extension and other entities to provide technical assistance to new and experienced farmers and fishermen related to production, value-added processing, and meeting regulatory demands of wholesale markets.  <b>Mid-term:</b> Support efforts by food system entrepreneurs to form and operate cooperatives or other innovative approaches to aggregating products, to facilitate sales in the face of growing food industry consolidation.  <b>Long-term:</b> Improve the distribution infrastructure for local foods. Support efforts by food system entrepreneurs to create and form innovative approaches to distribution infrastructure for local food.</p>
<b>FOOD ACCESSIBILITY</b>	
<p><b>Goal:</b> Consumers of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels will have convenient access to, and can afford, locally produced foods.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Increase the number of low-income families who purchase and prepare local food from retail and direct markets by supporting and expanding programs such as Granite State Market Match and Cooking Matters.  <b>Mid-term:</b> Work with institutions and businesses to develop contract language about the purchase of local foods through their requests for proposals.  <b>Long-term:</b> Collaborate with business and community economic development planners to develop new delivery models that will address transportation and distribution infrastructure and the lack of retail options that hinder access to purchasing local food. Support policies and innovation that result in economic opportunities for New Hampshire residents that build consumer capacity to purchase healthy foods.</p>
<b>LAND AND SEA RESOURCES</b>	
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Support, create, and implement uniform policies and programs that conserve and maintain the agricultural use of prime and locally important agricultural land and soil, as well as marine resources, throughout the state.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Improve coordination and connection between land trusts, producer, harvester, and conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies as a way to develop innovative strategies for maintaining farmland and sea access, while enhancing soil, water, and marine ecosystem health.  <b>Mid-term:</b> Support and expand policies and strategies that maintain or expand the availability of prime agricultural land and soils (e.g., Current Use assessment, Right to Farm, Agricultural Commissions, Agricultural Lands Program); advocate for policies that support our local fishing and aquaculture industries.  <b>Long-term:</b> Make more money available to maintain farmland, improve soil health, and sustainably manage and monitor our local fishing and aquaculture industries.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Support, create, and implement policies and programs that help new and existing farm businesses gain secure access to, and afford, farmland.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Support and create farm seeker and land transfer programs that integrate land, business, and human resources support to assist farmers in accessing secure tenure and/or acquiring farmland.  <b>Mid-term:</b> Promote state policy that increases land available to farmers through support of state funding for farmland conservation and advocating for tax incentives that encourage landowners to lease/rent their land to farmers; educate state authorities about the contributions of sustainable aquaculture production and techniques to prevent over-regulation that reduces viability by raising costs.  <b>Long-term:</b> Support changes to property tax structures to make owning and investing in farmland and agricultural enterprises affordable.</p>



## SUGGESTED INDICATORS

## DATA SOURCE

1. Trends in enrollment v. eligibility of NH Food Stamp programs
2. Number of participants reached via SNAP and related federal food assistance education programs
3. Number and populations reached of via culinary training programs
4. Number of FTS programs
5. Number of grocery stores/participants reached via direct education programs (e.g., in store tours)
6. Number of programs and participants reached via fisheries specific consumer education programs

1. Department of Health and Human Services and UNHCE
2. UNHCE, and NH Food Bank
3. UNHCE, NH Food Bank, and Educational institutions
4. NHFTS
5. NH Grocers Association
6. SeaGrant

1. Number of food enterprise business programs
2. Number of individuals participating in programs
3. Number of years in business after participating in support program
4. Net Farm Income

- 1-3. UNHCE various courses, UNHCE Ag, NR Business Institute, and interviews with grantors and grantees
4. USDA Economic Research Service

1. Direct-to-consumer sales
2. Food expenditures for households by quintile of income
3. FTS demand
4. Institutional demand
5. Estimated \$ spent on local food at schools
6. Number of farms selling to grocery stores and restaurants
7. Number of grocery stores and restaurants purchasing foods from NH farms

1. USDA NASS data
2. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Consumer expenditure survey
3. FTS annual survey
4. FINE survey
5. USDA FTS census
6. NH Restaurant and Lodging Association
7. NH Farm to Restaurant Connection and NH Grocers Association

1. Inventory of infrastructural assets in the state
2. Number of Technical Assistance programs & participants (e.g. food safety, financial planning, market development, etc.)
3. Number of cooperatives/food hubs in the state
4. Number of individuals and organizations reached through banks, loan funds, and credit unions

1. Asset mapping
2. UNHCE
3. Asset mapping
4. Banks, Community Loan Fund, and others

1. SNAP (WIC, EBT, Granite State Market Match) participation & number of farmers markets that provide these services
2. Food insecurity rates (by county)
3. Percent and number of schools that regularly offer local food (number of schools participating in NH FTS, number of schools promoting school breakfast participation)
4. Percent and number of hospitals that regularly offer fresh, local food
5. Percent of eligible children and families accessing WIC; food stamps; and, school lunch, breakfast and summer food programs
6. Number and location of retail outlets that provide local food options

1. USDA-ERS SNAP data system, NH Food Bank
2. USDA-ERS Food Environment Atlas
3. Feeding America: Map the Meal Gap
4. USDA-ERS
5. NH Hunger Solutions Roadmap to End Childhood Hunger
6. NH WIC, NH Grocers, and USDA ERS

1. Land in agriculture
2. Agricultural soils
3. Changes in land use/cover
4. Natural resources inventory
5. Current use program in NH
6. Farmland conserved in NH

1. USDA Ag. Census
2. NRCS
3. Farmland information center
4. Natural resources inventory
5. NH Dept. of Taxes
6. Farmland conservation organizations

1. Farmland sale prices in NH
2. Average value per acre in NH
3. Changes in policy and legislation

1. NH property transfer tax system
2. USDA NASS data
3. Track changes to existing and development of new policy

## Acknowledgements

Celina Adams, Thomas W. Haas Foundation  
Erin Allgood, NH Food Alliance  
Charlene Andersen, NH Community Loan Fund  
Deborah Anthony, Seacoast Family Food Pantry  
Karen Balnis, Keene State College  
Heidi Barker, UNH Cooperative Extension, Youth & Family/ Nutrition Connections  
Karen Barker, Lakes Region Food Network, Minglewood Farm  
Kate Bishop-Hamel, Community Matters  
Melissa Blindow, Benedikt Dairy  
Jessica Boynton, Consultant, Local Foods Plymouth and NH Farms Network  
Gabby Bradt, UNH Cooperative Extension, Marine Fisheries  
Sandra Brocaar, North Country Farmers' Co-op  
Helen Brody, NH Farms Network  
Rebecca Brown, Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, State Representative  
Lynda Brushett, Cooperative Development Institute  
Heather Bryant, UNH Cooperative Extension, Food and Agriculture; Grafton County  
Joanne Burke, UNH Sustainability Institute  
Charlie Burke, NH Farm to Restaurant  
Amy Carrington, Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS)  
Erik Chapman, NH SeaGrant  
Alicia Chevoor, Seacoast Family Food Pantry  
Ray Conner, NOFA NH, Beginning Organic Farmer Program  
Helen Costello, NH Food Bank  
Christophe Courchesne, Conservation Law Foundation  
Stephen Crawford, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food  
Ken Daggett, HOPE for NH Recovery  
Jeremy Delisle, UNH Cooperative Extension, Education Center  
Rick DeMark, North Country Resource Conservation and Development Area Council

Carole Dennis, NH Department of Education, Bureau of Nutrition Programs and Services  
Donna Doel-Bascom, USDA NRCS  
Michael Durfor, Northeast Resource Recovery Association  
Sasha Eisele, Sasha Eisele and Associates, Coos Networks  
Deb Erb, Agrimark, Landaff Creamery  
Regina Flynn, NH Department of Health and Human Services  
Charlie French, UNH Cooperative Extension, Community and Economic Development  
Martha Fuller Clark, NH Senate  
Anna Ghosh, Community Health Institute  
Bob Haefner, Agriculture and Environment Committee, NH House  
Erin Hale, NH Food Alliance  
John Hamilton, NH Community Loan Fund  
Charlene Higgins, Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS)  
Jaime Hoebeke, Chronic Disease Prevention and Neighborhood Health, City of Manchester  
Matt Houghton, North Country Farmers' Co-op  
Terry Johnson, Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)  
Rob Johnson, NH Farm Bureau Federation  
John Keegan, Boscawen Agricultural Commission  
Tom Kelly, UNH Sustainability Institute  
Cheryl King Fischer, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund  
Lea Ayers LaFave, Community Health Institute  
Amanda Littleton, Cheshire Conservation District  
Mark Longley, Sandwich Agricultural Commission  
Debbie Luppold, UNH Cooperative Extension Nutrition Connections  
Rachelle Lyons, Center for Rural Partnerships, Plymouth State University  
Margaret McCabe, UNH School of Law  
Elizabeth McCann, Antioch University New England, Environmental Studies  
Ian McSweeney, Russell Farm and Forest Conservation Foundation  
Lorraine Merrill, NH Commissioner of Agriculture, Markets, and Food  
Julie Moran, North Country Farmers' Co-op

Roger Noonan, New England Farmers' Union; NH Association of Conservation Districts  
Curtis Ogden, Interaction Institute for Social Change  
Amy O'Hara, Federal Surplus Manager, Surplus Distribution Section  
Hilde Ojibway, Vital Communities  
Amy Ouelette, UNH Cooperative Extension  
Sara Zoe Patterson, Seacoast Eat Local  
Jean Pauly, Seacoast Eat Local  
Brent Powell, Derryfield School  
Stacey Purslow, NH Farm to School  
Natalie Reid, Farmer  
Katelyn Robinson, Northern Community Investment Corporation  
Linda Rubin, Healthy Monadnock  
Olivia Saunders, UNH Cooperative Extension, Fruit and Veggie Production  
Wendy Stevens, Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success; NH Farmer's Market Association  
Andrea Tomlinson, NH Community Seafood  
Elaine VanDyke, NH Children's Alliance  
Janet Ward, NH Farms Network  
Becka Warren, Vital Communities  
Beverly White, North Country Marketplace and Salvage  
Cheri White, NH Dept of Education, Bureau of Nutrition Programs and Services  
Jennifer Wilhelm, NH Food Alliance  
Sharon Wogaman, NH Division of Public Health Services

### Writing and Editing

Erin Allgood, Rebecca Brown, Lynda Brushett, Joanne Burke, Erin Hale, John Hamilton, Rob Johnson, Terry Johnson, Tom Kelly, and Jennifer Wilhelm

### Communications and Design Support

Brown & Company (brown.design.com) staff Mary Jo Brown, Jack Earl, and David Markovsky; John Benford Photography (johnbenfordphoto.com)

### Special Thanks to UNH Sustainability

Institute staff, El Farrell, Jackie Cullen, and Colleen Flaherty; participants of the regional gatherings; Jessica Boynton; and Katie Carbonara and Jessica Newnan, Food Alliance fellows.

## References

- 1, 2 United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2012. Available at: <http://www.nass.usda.gov>
- 3 Child Nutrition Tables, 2014. Available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>
- 4 Farmland Information Center, New Hampshire Statistics from the Natural Resources Inventory, 2007. Available at: <http://www.farmlandinfo.org/statistics/new%20hampshire>
- 5 New Hampshire Food Bank
- 6 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program State Activity Report, 2014. Available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/FY14%20State%20Activity%20Report.pdf>
- 6a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program State Activity Report, 2014. Available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/FY14%20State%20Activity%20Report.pdf>
- 7 Hanson, K. 2010. The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP ERR-103, United States Department of Agriculture Economics Research Service. Available at: [http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/134117/err103\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/134117/err103_1_.pdf)
- 8 Thurow, R. and Martin, T.W., 2009. Boost in Food-Stamp Funding Percolates Through Economy, Wall Street Journal. Available at: <http://www.wsj.com/news/articles/SB124691958931402479>
- 9 Shapiro, L., Hoey, L., Colasanti, K., and S.A. Savas. 2015. You can't rush the process: Collective impact models of food systems change. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. Available at: [http://foodsystms.msu.edu/resources/collective\\_impact\\_models\\_of\\_food\\_systems\\_change](http://foodsystms.msu.edu/resources/collective_impact_models_of_food_systems_change).
- 10 Searce, D. 2011. Catalyzing Networks for Social Change: A Funder's Guide. Grantmakers for Effective Organizations and Monitor Institute. Available at: <http://www.geofunders.org/resource-library/all/record/a0660000008GpukAAC>
- 11 Kania, J. and Kramer, M. 2011. Collective Impact, Stanford Social Innovation Review. Winter: 36-41.



Suggested Citation:

New Hampshire Food Alliance, 2015.

*Farm, Fish, & Food Enterprise Viability in New Hampshire:*

*A Roadmap for the NH Food Alliance 2015.*

Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire

Sustainability Institute.

[www.NHFoodAlliance.com](http://www.NHFoodAlliance.com)



**NH FOOD ALLIANCE**

New Hampshire Food Alliance  
Sustainability Institute  
University of New Hampshire  
107 Nesmith Hall  
131 Main Street  
Durham, NH 03824  
Phone: 603.862.4088  
[www.NHFoodAlliance.com](http://www.NHFoodAlliance.com)