

FoodHub in the News



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Ecotrust's New Online Database Connects Food Buyers, Sellers *FoodHub to encourage growth in Northwest food sales*

PORTLAND, OR – A new searchable online database that connects Northwest food producers and food buyers nationwide launched Tuesday after a successful 90-day beta-testing period.

A social venture business of the nonprofit Ecotrust, FoodHub (food-hub.org) is designed to increase food trade in the Pacific Northwest.

Customizable search features allow a buyer to locate the exact product specifications they are seeking.

Conversely, sellers can use FoodHub search features to identify new buyer leads and build targeted customer databases.

All registered users (annual membership costs \$100) can complete an online profile that includes a detailed description of their operation and preferred methods for doing business.

In addition to its search and connect functions, FoodHub can professionalize communications and transactions between parties with its message center, preferred contacts feature, and standardized purchase orders and invoices.

FoodHub supports both direct market relationships and leverages existing distribution channels to encourage growth in regional food sales.

“Food miles, food safety, animal well-being and exceptional quality are important issues that guide my purchasing practices,” said Joe McGarry, an executive chef with Bon Appetit Management Company.

“FoodHub allows me to use these factors to sort through the database and find the best suppliers.”

Ecotrust said it is the only network in of its kind that accommodates food producers and food buyers of every scale and production type in Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho, Montana, and parts of Alaska.

While in beta, 280 Northwest farmers, ranchers, fishers, food producers and wholesale food buyers became registered users of FoodHub.

Northwest food producers promoted the availability of more than 560 products to the buying community; buyers expressed a need for 646 products from local sources.

An analysis of user data during the month of January shows 1,700 visitors and 14,000 page views from major cities in the Northwest, as well as San Francisco, New York and Canada.

FoodHub's development team devoted the beta period to expanding the site's taxonomy, creating product and ingredient categories for the Northwest dairy, beer, wine and spirits sectors, in addition to the categories for fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, herbs, grains, dry beans and nuts already in place.

User feedback and an analysis of usage trends will continue to shape the structure and delivery of new features and improvements to ensure that the site is intuitive and successful for both buyers and sellers.

To ensure its success, partnerships have been formed with organizations active in Northwest food buying and food selling circles, including agri-business councils, food product commissions, distributors, grocery retailers, chefs and restaurants, farm to school programs, the Washington State Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture, among many others.

View the complete list of funders and collaborators at food-hub.org/supporters.

FoodHub officially launched at a luncheon in Portland, Ore., that featured USDA Deputy Undersecretary Ann Wright as the keynote speaker.

Wright heralded FoodHub as an innovative example of the USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative at work; one that embraces new technology to bolster a regional food system, expand market channels, and bridge rural and urban economies.

"FoodHub presents information in a way that hasn't been available before," said David Hoyle, owner of Creative Growers in Noti, Ore. "It's the quickest and easiest way for caterers, chefs and grocers to find growers, learn about what they have and determine if they're a good fit. We do business in a very personal way, but FoodHub is a conversation starter, a door opener, a meeting place."