



# FoodHub in the News

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By Christina Williams

### **FoodHub offers free trial membership**

**PORTLAND, OR** – The FoodHub, an online matchmaking service for food buyers and food producers, celebrated its first birthday Wednesday by offering to waive the \$100 annual membership fee for anyone who wants to try the service for the next three months.

A project of Ecotrust that aims to make local sourcing of food an easier task, FoodHub registered nearly 800 farmers, ranchers, food buyers and chefs in its first year.

A survey of FoodHub users conducted by Ecotrust last fall found that 85 percent of the buyers in the system joined FoodHub to source more products locally and they have become aware of local suppliers they did not know existed before using the service. According to the same survey, sellers who made connections to new buyers estimated the total dollar value generated from new FoodHub connections to as much as \$10,000.

By launching a free-trial program, FoodHub officials hope to sign up even more participants.

"We've refined and improved the FoodHub business model and service offerings," said Deborah Kane, vice president of Ecotrust's Food and Farms program in a press release. "Most importantly, we learned that the annual registration fee was a barrier."

FoodHub is also launching a new category of FoodHub membership. New "associate" members will include Northwest commodity commissions, trade associations, seed producers, farmers markets, extension offices, nonprofits and service suppliers.

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