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FORAGING JUST GOT FASTER

Next-Generation FoodHub Launches Today, Offering Improved Search and Connect Features, Display Ads, A Knowledge Base Resource Library and Free Membership

PORTLAND, Ore. - *July 12, 2011* - Today, [Ecotrust](#) released an expanded suite of features and improved functionality on [FoodHub](#), the online directory and marketplace that makes it easy and efficient for wholesale food buyers and sellers in the Western US to find each other, connect and do business. The extensive site upgrades make using FoodHub faster and easier for busy chefs, grocers and foodservice professionals to communicate with and source from local farmers and food producers who are often far afield.

The next-generation FoodHub is dramatically new in both design and function, and is reflective of usage trends and feedback received from an engaged community of 2,300 active members using the network to localize their supply chain. Members will now have the ability to more aggressively promote and market their food products, services and organizations on FoodHub with display advertising, seller-sponsored search terms, sponsored content and enhanced profile listings.

“FoodHub has grown into a network of thousands of qualified professional food buyers and savvy food sellers, plus the service providers, certifiers, processors, distributors and organizations integral to a sustainable, regional food marketplace,” said Deborah Kane, Founder of FoodHub and Vice President of Ecotrust’s Food and Farms program. “The latest version has been engineered to benefit users of all sizes and types, from food carts to corporations, and ensure that navigation, making connections and doing business is faster and more intuitive – it’s what everyone has been asking for!”

Here’s what’s new in the latest FoodHub upgrade:

- **Improved Marketplace**– FoodHub’s dynamic online trading floor for foods and services has evolved well beyond a “Craig’s List” style bulletin board; it can now be sorted and filtered by product type, distance or custom criteria with a single click. It also now accommodates posts related to transportation, services, and events and announcements to encompass the full breadth of the regional food trade.
- **Advanced Search** - foraging gets faster and more efficient with advanced search tools that allow users to search multiple variables at once and make finding local producers a snap.

- **Step-by-Step Tutorial Videos**, available online 24-7, and a Help Desk staffed with live agents 8am-6pm weekdays, help members take full advantage of FoodHub’s cutting-edge technology to build their businesses, free of charge.
- **The FoodHub Knowledge Base**, an online library of tools, resources and thought leadership on local food sourcing and supply chain challenges and solutions, is now available to the public.
- All **Member Profiles have been enhanced** with ratings and recommendations, clickable maps, links to social media pages and more.
- **Three levels of Membership** help users to stand out from the crowd. “FastStart” accommodates a basic user profile, provides access to the Member Directory and Marketplace and is free of charge. For greater visibility, members can upgrade to a monthly “Advantage” or annual “All-Access” account.

FoodHub’s [success to-date](#) can be measured in more than membership stats. Thanks to FoodHub, Sound Food in Bainbridge Island, Washington helped a retailer on the island source USDA-certified local pork from *Flying Dog Farm* in nearby Grapeview. Because of FoodHub, *Our Family Farm* in Eugene, Oregon now supplies pastured chicken to the 350 families who do their food shopping through buying club *Know Thy Food* in Portland, Oregon. And the Wahluke School District in Mattawa, Washington connected to *Bella Terra Gardens* in Zillah and is planning regular deliveries of tomatoes and cucumbers for the school’s salad bar this fall.

“We’re not planting more crops. We’re planting more of the crops that grow better here,” said Phil Greifs of PD Farms in Eastern Oregon. “Before FoodHub we were raising 30 different varieties of crops to take to the farmers market and sell to consumers. Now, I grow 16 crops that do really well in my region and I can sell everything because of the connections I’ve made on FoodHub. I just moved my entire potato crop through Grand Central Bakery and Besaws restaurant in Portland.”

About FoodHub

Launched in beta in winter 2010, FoodHub was developed with private foundation, nonprofit and government resources, and intended for broad use throughout the food and agricultural communities. Also in 2010, FoodHub Founder Deborah Kane was named one of the “10 Most Inspiring People in Sustainable Food” by *Fast Company* Magazine for her innovative work with FoodHub. In early July (2011), Kane was called to The White House to explain FoodHub’s power to bolster rural farm economies at a Rural Champions of Change event, hosted by the Obama Administration.

About Ecotrust’s Food and Farms Program

Ecotrust’s mission is to inspire fresh thinking that creates social equity, economic opportunity, and environmental well-being. With regard to our Food & Farms program, we improve public understanding of agriculture and the challenges it faces and increase the market share of locally grown, processed, and manufactured foods. Whether by introducing a farmer to a chef or a food processor to an institutional buyer, Ecotrust is a trusted “benevolent broker” that has been making connections between food buyers and sellers in the Pacific Northwest for more than a decade. Learn more at ecotrust.org.

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