



FoodHub in the News

USDA Blog

July 12, 2011

By Arthur Neal

Online Resource Helps Producers Get Products to Market, Bolster Local and Regional Economies

Just because a producer works at a smaller operation doesn't mean he or she can't sell on a bigger scale. And the size of a farm shouldn't limit a producer's ability to feed local foods to local people. But how can such an operation connect the dots to successfully market its products?

One answer lies in a new kind of business model known as food hubs, which are emerging as critical pillars for building stronger regional and local food systems. A food hub centralizes the business management structure to facilitate the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.

Small and mid-size producers often don't have access to their own processing, aggregation, distribution, or storage facilities. They might not be able to develop relationships with critical buyers or have the resources to develop strong marketing campaigns. This sort of infrastructure is necessary to growing businesses, not to mention the ability for regional food systems to thrive.

That's why the USDA is investing in food hubs and food hub research. The new online food hub resource, part of the Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) website, contains the USDA's latest findings, funding opportunities, a list of operational food hubs, and a library of other relevant resources, articles and materials about food hub development. USDA is also preparing a comprehensive Resource Guide for Food Hubs to be released in the fall. It will serve as a useful online tool for anyone interested in food hub development—whether they are producers, buyers, consumers, researchers, academics, or policy makers.

URL: <http://blogs.usda.gov/2011/07/12/online-resource-helps-producers-get-products-to-market-bolster-local-and-regional-economies/>