Food Hubs in Georgia:

A Potential Market for Small-Scale and Midscale Farms

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA EXTENSION

Carrie Furman, Julia Gaskin, Faidra Papavasiliou, Kate Munden-Dixon, Hilda Kurtz, and Lurleen Walters

Agriculture is a key component of Georgia's economy. The state's agricultural heritage, unique climate, and resources offer the ability to produce a wide variety of fruit, vegetable, and animal products. Similar to other regions of the United States, production is concentrated at opposite ends of the agricultural scale. At one end are the large-scale farms geared to national and international wholesale production. At the other end are the rapidly growing number of small-scale farms, usually less than 10 acres, that typically target direct markets. Missing in the equation of Georgia's food system are midscale, family-owned farms that many have argued are needed to expand the economic sustainability of rural communities.

ACCORDING TO THE USDA:

- Small-scale farms are defined as having less than 10 acres, and 83% have sales under $10,000.
- Midscale farms are defined by sales, not acres, and midscale farms sell between $350K and $1M. About 50% of U.S. farms are less than 45 acres.
- Large farms have sales greater than $1M. In this publication, large farms refer to those with more than 45 acres.

Food hubs have the potential to build needed infrastructure to help grow the number of midscale farms. In this bulletin, we outline food hub characteristics to orient farmers to the food hub landscape and suggest points to consider when working with food hubs. Our research in Georgia indicates that when viewed as integral parts of an interconnected system, these businesses can provide a pathway for farmers to incrementally grow their businesses and expand production.

In Georgia, there are many small-scale producers that primarily use ecological production practices. Many are designated as either "Certified Organic" or "Certified Naturally Grown." Most sell in farmers markets or other direct marketing channels, such as community-supported agriculture (CSA) models. The future of local food production, however, may require expansion beyond direct markets, meaning that farmers may need to begin catering to wholesale or institutional markets.

THE GROWTH OF LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION IS CURRENTLY CONSTRAINED BY:

- Limited numbers of midscale producers
- Limited market diversification
- Lack of wholesale infrastructure

The number of both farmers markets and CSAs in Georgia has exploded over the past ten years. For example, there were 27 farmers markets in 2006, and that number grew to 151 in 2016. In many places, established farmers markets now have waiting lists. It appears that some of the direct markets may be close to saturation, while demand for local, certified organic produce is growing in wholesale markets. Institutional clients (schools, hospitals, etc.) and other food service businesses (restaurants, community groceries, meal kits[1], etc.) are expressing a great interest in local and sustainable foods but have few avenues to easily purchase these products. These potential buyers, while willing to work with smaller local producers, need higher volumes of product and wholesale services such as delivery, packaging, and food safety documentation. Finally, studies have shown that many farmers find direct marketing (taking the food to farmers markets every week, contacting restaurants, and/or growing for and managing a CSA) to be time intensive, reducing their ability to focus on production and business management. These problems can effectively limit the growth and scope of local food systems, denying farmers significant sources of income and support. Food hubs are emerging as a promising solution to these constraints.

[1] Meal kits are meal distribution businesses that deliver fresh, premeasured ingredients to the doorsteps of their consumers. In Georgia, many (but not all) of these businesses source product from local producers directly or through food hubs and other distributors.

Food hubs and other similar aggregation businesses emerging in the state have the potential to help grow midscale farms. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) working definition of a food hub is "a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand." In other words, food hubs are centralized businesses that buy local produce directly from farmers, consolidate, and then sell that product to consumers and wholesale markets (schools, universities, hospitals, restaurants, and grocery stores) (Figure 1). What distinguishes food hubs from other food distributors

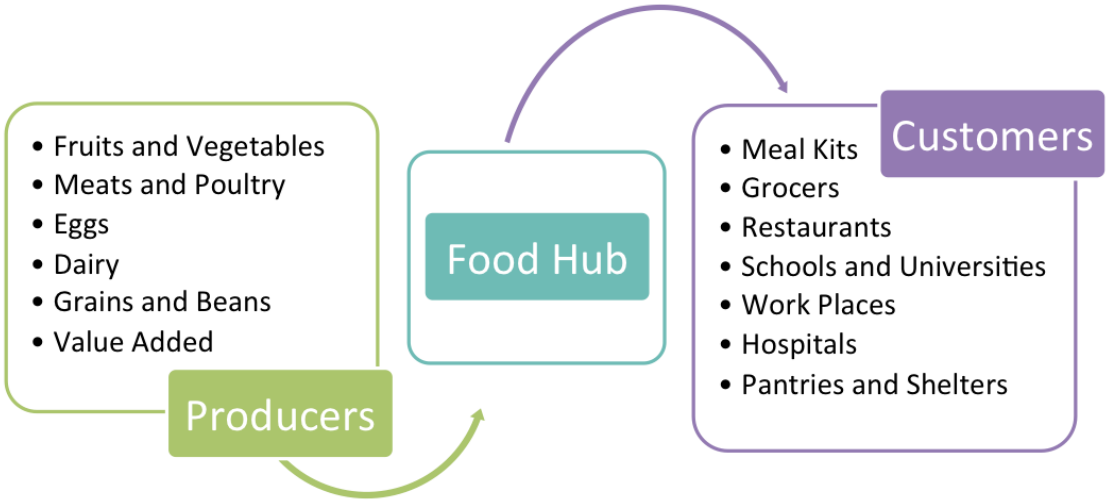


Figure 1. According to the USDA, a food hub is a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

is their attention to social and economic issues within their community's food system, and the use of the food hub as an intermediary to form a values-based supply chain structure to address these issues. For the farmers, "values-based" means that there is an explicit intent by food hubs to help support the economic sustainability of farmers and local farming communities by seeking fair prices, maintaining farmer autonomy, and fostering transparent relationships between farmers, distributors, and consumers.

Food hubs have the potential to help farmers navigate the risky process of scaling up, increase their market diversification, and focus more attention on growing instead of marketing their products. The benefit of food hubs lies in their focus on empowering farmers. Food hubs may assist in crop planning, smooth market fluctuations, increase access to markets, and reduce farmers' time off-farm. Many food hubs work in partnership with farmers to match forecasted demand for products with a farmer's available or potential supply. Also, many of the food hubs in Georgia buy at higher-than-market prices. This allows farmers to plan their production with less risk of unforeseen drops in crop prices. Finally, the capacity of a food hub to aggregate produce from multiple farms allows them access to larger retailers. This may also allow farmers to focus their time and attention on production, instead of marketing and distributing their produce.

Because there are many different types of food hubs that offer different business structures and services, it is helpful to think of them in three overlapping categories: multifarm CSAs, small food hubs, and large-scale, wholesale food hubs. While the food hubs within each category share some common characteristics in terms of their business structures and requirements for the farmers that work with them, these businesses may also have different customers, flexibility in how they purchase produce, and varying services. The farmers that work with hubs are also equally diverse, differing in experience, scale, and production systems. Figure 2 illustrates the points where farms and food hubs overlap their sales. This diversity in scales and business models of food hubs in Georgia has the potential to help farmers more efficiently navigate these complex marketing relationships.

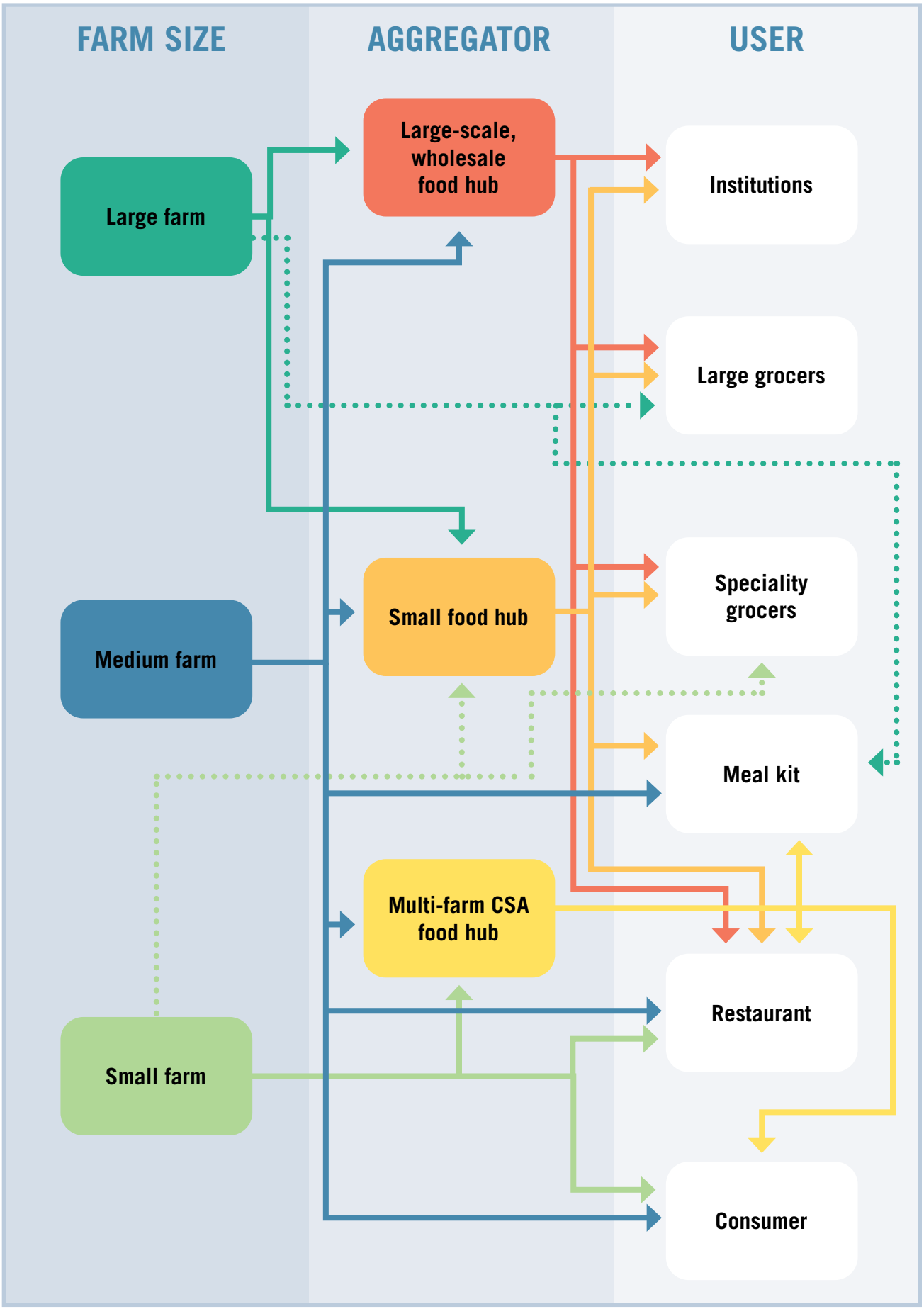


Figure 2. The markets connected to both food hubs and farms in Georgia.

MULTIFARM CSA FOOD HUBS

Multifarm CSAs are businesses that focus primarily on direct-to-consumer sales. These food hubs are diverse in terms of size, consumers targeted, subscription options, and the services provided to the participating farms. Individuals often purchase a share or subscription that provides a weekly box of seasonal, local produce. In some cases, multifarm CSAs will offer shareholders the ability to modify all or part of their box so that the products fit specific needs and tastes. While shareholders are the primary customers of multifarm CSAs, these businesses often have a wholesale component in the restaurant market. Multifarm CSAs range in size from small farmer-owned businesses that bring in a few fellow farmers—ensuring that shares maintain a variety of items—to businesses that buy from 5 to 30 farms and may include other distributors—to sell product in larger geographic regions and/or customer bases.

MULTIFARM CSA FOOD HUBS:

- Work with small-scale producers as well as some midscale producers
- Do not have extensive wholesale requirements
- Have flexible purchasing
- Pay farmers upon delivery
- Often provide training in farm and business management
- Often do not require liability insurance or specific food safety certification
- Often pick-up product or meet the farmer halfway

Typical multifarm CSA farmer: The multifarm CSA food hub model is most similar to direct marketing, and therefore, these CSAs can be somewhat flexible with their purchases. Flexible purchases refer to the hub's ability to substitute items based on a farm's supply. This type of food hub may be a good first step for farmers wanting to work with others to aggregate product and reach new markets. It is particularly well matched for small producers who are beginning to explore working with an aggregator and medium-scale farmers with excess product, looking to diversify their markets, or exploring the idea of specializing in fewer crops. Based on our research in Georgia, most multifarm CSAs specialize in providing produce from certified organic or other ecologically-based production systems; however, organic certification is usually not required. To participate, a farmer needs to be able to or have an interest in learning to use organic or sustainable growing practices, know what it costs to grow the product they want to sell, be willing to communicate regularly with the multifarm CSA manager, and deliver on promised product. Although developing a culture of food safety is important at any level, at this time, these food hubs are not required to have liability insurance or GAP/food safety certification. While each multifarm CSA hub may have a slightly different requirement for postharvest handling and food safety, most will inspect a farmer's operation before deciding to purchase product.

Services to support their farmers: To help farmers navigate this entry-level, wholesale marketing, a multifarm CSA food hub often offers a range of services and farmer training to ensure the success of CSA box products. Multifarm CSA food hub businesses in Georgia reported that they help farmers obtain boxes and other packaging items, help with sorting and grading of local product, provide a reliable place for product storage, and often either pick-up product from the farm or meet the farmer halfway. Many also train farmers on common issues like pricing, production planning, and business planning, when needed. Finally, multifarm CSAs buy product upon delivery instead of waiting until the product sells.

SMALL FOOD HUBS

The next step towards a greater focus on the wholesale market is the small food hub model. These businesses are owned and managed primarily by nonfarmers and serve a variety of clients. Small food hubs act as middlemen between farmers and mid-sized, wholesale markets such as restaurants and private schools. They may also help CSAs or meal kit companies fill their purchase orders or have a direct-to-consumer aspect. Compared to the multifarm CSA food hubs, there are not as many small food hubs operating in the state and most are located in urban regions. In terms of purchasing, small food hubs have the widest variety of markets and can accommodate a wide range of farmers. Their direct-to-consumer and restaurant sales tend to be more flexible, meaning that they have the ability to purchase smaller amounts of specialized items. These customers understand the limitations of the seasonal, local produce market and can adjust their meals and menus to use specialized or seasonal products. For example, restaurant sales can be somewhat flexible since chefs often order from an inventory list provided weekly by the food hub. Georgia chefs reported that the inventory lists from small food hubs set the tone for their weekly menu. For sales to larger institutions, small food hubs will connect with farmers that can provide specific volumes of a particular product over time. Small food hubs can also link with larger distributors or purchase product at the State Farmers Market to provide these larger volumes.

SMALL FOOD HUBS:

- Work with small-scale to midscale producers
- Prefer some level of wholesale experience
- Can be flexible with purchases but also need consistency of product
- Have flexible drop-off times
- Want to see a food safety plan
- Prefer some liability insurance
- Provide payment at drop-off
- Offer some training specific to customer needs

Typical small food hub farmer: Hubs at this level can be particularly well-matched for small-scale and midscale farmers with some aggregation experience who are looking to scale up their operations and develop their capacity for wholesale. These hubs are best matched with small-scale farmers that have some level of wholesale production (e.g., an interesting squash or eggplant variety) that can be sold to an artisanal restaurant. Midscale farmers tend to provide the nonartisanal, larger bulk items such as tomatoes or lettuces. All farmers in this category need to have experience providing weekly availability lists, determining product prices, communicating growing practices or demonstrating certifications, delivering product to the hub on fixed days, and doing the initial washing, sorting, and packaging of product for storage. They also need to have liability insurance (the amount will vary between hubs) and demonstrate knowledge of food safety plans, if not a pathway toward food safety certification. Finally, this category of food hub seeks farmers that are interested in production planning to help match supply and demand for the food hub markets.

Food Hubs in Georgia are offering a wide variety of locally produced, value added products like this Gouda and Jack cheese.

Services to support their farmers: Even though their growers are often more experienced, small food hubs do provide important farmer services. Like the multifarm CSA food hubs, many of these businesses purchase product directly from the grower and pay at drop-off or soon after. While they don't always have the time to pick up directly from the farm, they try to be flexible with drop-off times and also offer a space for product to be stored. In terms of training, they provide advice that will gear the farmer to the needs of their specific customers, such as production planning and tips on the sorting and grading of produce. Finally, they help farmers find pathways for training in postharvest handling and food safety, and if needed, can help them navigate the complexities of liability insurance.

LARGE-SCALE, WHOLESALE FOOD HUB

These hubs are solely focused on wholesale markets. Businesses in this category range from those that have a regional distribution base to those that are linked to national markets. In addition, due to the growing interest in local food, some traditional broker/distributor businesses have developed local food subdivisions that act like food hubs. What differentiates these different businesses as food hubs from a traditional distributor model is scale and a clear mission to address social goals in their community food system. "Social goals" in this case refers to values-based supply chains. Large-scale food hubs have a customer base that necessitates a larger volume per farm order, as they sell to large groceries or grocery chains, food service companies, and school systems.

LARGE-SCALE, WHOLESALE HUBS:

- Work with mid to large-scale growers
- Have wholesale requirements
- Require food safety certifications
- Require organic certification for higher price
- May provide training specific to institutional needs
- May be contained within a traditional large-scale wholesale distributor that does not practice values-based purchasing

Typical large-scale, wholesale food hub farmer: Hubs at this level tend to work with mid- to large-scale farmers. These farmers have a great deal of wholesale experience and can meet wholesale requirements. Wholesale requirements entail having liability insurance, reliable (usually USDA No. 1 grade) product they can sell weekly at high volume, consistent packaging in cardboard boxes, and food safety certifications. If a farmer is interested in obtaining the higher organic sales price for their product, they have to be USDA-certified organic. Some large-scale food hubs will work with farmers with less wholesale experience as long as they can follow good food safety practices and are willing to get necessary certifications in the future.

Services to support their farmers: As with other food hubs, businesses in this category often have a commitment to support and guide farmers through this process. They often buy product directly and pay within the week, assist in pickups, provide storage, sometimes help the farmers procure boxes and other packaging materials, and can coordinate postharvest labor crews. They also help connect farmers with information about production planning, business management decisions, and assist in or refer farmers to training services for food safety and postharvest handling.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

Each of the food hub categories differ in terms of production scale, customer base, logistical capabilities, and product needed from farmers. However, there are a number of general concepts to consider when thinking about working with a food hub.

Food safety and handling:

Every farm and food hub should have a food safety plan or program that considers ways for preventing food contamination. However, not all farms and hubs are subject to the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The extent to which farms and hubs are subject to either the Produce Rule or the Preventive Controls Rule depends on the average amount of produce sold, the type of facility, and the type of customer. Smaller aggregation businesses are less likely to work with farmers subject to the full Produce Rule. However, it is imperative for both farmers and the food hub to discuss processes and procedures before starting a business relationship. The following are some general guidelines based on the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website's FSMA flow chart.

Examples of different food hub deliveries from farmers. Note the post-harvest handling of produce like the use of consistent cardboard boxes and separate bagging of produce.

The Produce Rule:

- Farms that average less than $25,000 in sales are likely ***not affected.***
- Farms and hubs that sell cooked produce (e.g., canned) are likely ***not affected.***
- Farms that sell more than 50% of produce to end user (e.g., individual, retail food within 275 miles of business) and average less than $50,000 in sales are likely ***not affected*** due to the Direct Marketing Modified Requirements.

Preventive Controls Rule:

- Any business (excluding grocery stores, restaurants, farm stands, etc.) that packs or holds food ***may need to comply*** with this rule.
- A farm that packs and holds produce off-farm, in a facility that is not owned by farmers, ***may need to comply*** with this rule.

A detailed discussion of FSMA is beyond the scope of this publication. Resources for the details on these rules can be found at the end of the publication.

Farmer-hub relationships and knowing the values:

Having a secure outlet to sell product is a valuable resource and food hubs are looking for farmers that have an interest in long-term relationship building. Values-based hubs view their businesses as serving not only customers, but farmers as well. They want to connect farmers with markets in a way that saves the farmer time and money, and they will work especially hard for farmers that demonstrate that they will value and preserve the relationship. However, when entering into wholesale channels, farmers must be aware that not all food hubs fit their specific needs and values. Knowing how a food hub works with existing farmers, who the hub sells to, and what its values are can help farmers determine if that business is a good match.

Urban farm with a strong mission to grow local farms, that specializes in lettuces geared to small and institutional distributors.

Consider:

- Food hub mission statements, testimonials, and sample customer lists.
- The production standards the food hub requires (e.g., organic, certified, local), its commitment to farmers and local food, and what types of training or services it provides.

- Payment schedules, expectations, the opinions others that have worked with them, and whether the hub has the necessary business permits.
- How the hub fits into a farmer's long-term marketing relationships.

What are the farmer's long-term marketing goals? Is there a great deal of overlap between the farmer's customer base and that of the food hub?

Farm scale and wholesale experience: Farmers need to be realistic about the scale of production and their level of experience with wholesale. While there is some room for flexibility, these businesses are constrained by their markets. Multifarm CSAs and small food hubs may be able to take specialty items or USDA No. 2 graded product, while large-scale food hubs are often restricted to USDA No. 1. In most cases, the hub has the right to refuse product that does not meet their standards.

Farmers need to be able to:

- Fill the orders they promised to the hub on time.
- Initiate communication if orders cannot be met.
- Fill orders based on the hub's specific standards, such as food safety and postharvest handling requirements.

Farm labeling: During our research in Georgia, we encountered a range of farmers' and customers' preferences concerning farm labeling. Most hubs have a tracking component to ensure food safety, but that does not mean the customer is interested in knowing from which farm a product comes.

- ***Institutional markets*** are often not concerned with who the farmer is apart from the food safety issues.
- ***Restaurants, meal kits, etc.*** are very interested in knowing the farmers and want the hub to facilitate that connection.

Branding and labeling can be powerful marketing tools for a farm, but they do not always fit with hub logistics. Therefore, farmers must first decide the importance of the farm brand to their own business model and then consider and discuss how that brand placement intersects with the food hub or aggregation business model.

> *We include [farm names] in the [CSA] basket. [One farmer] told me about the time that she actually gained a regular farmers' market supporter because of a basket [from us]. She got [the farmer's] kohlrabi in her basket, didn't know what to do with it. […] Then she saw [the farmer] at the farmer's market, and said 'hey, I think I got some of your kohlrabi what do I do with it?' The connection came from our basket, which is what we want. But the connection was direct […] a face-to-face experience.*
>
> (Multifarm CSA)

Product pricing: Pricing is one of the most complicated aspects of farmer-food hub negotiations. While all hubs differ, on average, a hub will take 20-35% off the top of the sale for overhead. Actual price negotiation also varies either due to hub category or whether they follow values-based pricing, which means they try to take farmers costs into consideration when negotiating prices.

- ***Smaller food hubs:*** Small hubs are more open to price negotiation and offer advice on how product should be priced. They also tend to buy and sell product locally and are not as concerned with nationally determined prices. Therefore, these prices are often closer to those of the direct market.
- ***Large-scale food hubs:*** Large wholesale hubs have a broader geographic customer base and are more constrained by national, conventional market pricing and may have less flexibility for negotiation. Due to their larger customer base, they can buy a greater volume of product at a given time.

It is really important to us that our farms charge us what they need to charge for the produce. And we kind of give a baseline […] tell them what we have paid in the past… We want them to know how much it is going to cost them to produce it. […] We talk to them about their costs, feed costs, fertilizer costs and so on. […] It's a learning curve.

(Multifarm CSA)

The way you would set that price is to go to the USDA and see what the mid-mostly price is. […] If there isn't one, then you would have to negotiate with the farmer based upon what we could sell it for. [For example], Easter Egg Radishes are grown in California and that's where most of them come from. So, if you have a guy with ten cases of Easter Egg Radishes, he may feel that these are like gold. He may want to get fifty dollars for them. But we think… well, they are coming into Georgia from California for twenty dollars. We can't get fifty dollars for them. We may be able to get twenty-four dollars for them.

(Multifarm CSA)

Competition and market diversification: As local, ecologically produced food becomes more popular, further growth in the number of food hubs is anticipated, especially in urban areas. Competition between farms and food hubs, primarily over restaurants, is likely to become more prevalent. While it is important to maintain face-to-face relationships between farmers and chefs, farmers may unknowingly compete with the hub they sell to and thereby also compete with themselves. As with direct market customers, a farmer's relationship with their food hub is key to farm success. Selling around the food hub, even when initiated by the customer, greatly diminishes the hub's ability to sell product and assist other farmers in the region.

Sometimes, we get something on the delivery [from a restaurant] returned because [the same] farmer brought some by earlier. And it could have cost four times more, but [the chef] was willing to pay more because if came from the farmer… Yes the big part of the value equation is the relationship between the farmer and the chef and you can't disconnect that…and we want everyone to be successful, but at the same time, we want to be able to sell [our farmers'] stuff too.

(Small food hub)

I'll sell it to [the hub] for 30 dollars. So he can sell it for 35. I don't wanna compete against myself. I don't–I wanna go out and […] be at the same pay. Ya know? I don't wanna charge them 35 and then he has to charge 40 when [the chefs] know that I sell it directly for 35.

(Farmer)

Farmers can help by:

- Knowing who their food hub sells to and avoid crossing sales.
- Adjusting prices so they don't undercut the food hub's ability to sell to restaurants.
- Communicating with both the food hub and restaurant to reduce impact.

GROWING THE FARM BUSINESS

Recent reports have shown that farmers who focus on direct-to-consumer sales have a higher likelihood of staying in business compared to those that use more traditional channels to sell their products. While these farms do stay in business longer, they tend to grow their businesses at a much slower rate. Food hubs provide farmers with an important marketing middle ground that can alleviate the pressures that slow growth. National research, as well as our studies conducted in Georgia, have found that food hubs offer an array of farm services and training, help a farmer diversity their markets, smooth market fluctuations, and reduce farmers' time off of the farm. As such, they provide an avenue for farm growth outside of traditional channels and beyond direct marketing.

Especially with vegetables […] it helped because they were another place to unload tonnage, instead of trying to sell it all at the markets. […] It's easier to go "Hey [food hub manager]! Looks like I got a […] ton of sweet corn how many bushels do you want?

(Mid-scale farmer)

Farmers can move up through different food hub categories to incrementally expand production (Figure 3). For example, a small-scale farmer with limited wholesale experience would benefit from working with a multifarm CSA food hub that has flexible consumer demands and provides introductory farmer services. As the farmer becomes more confident with the logistics associated with wholesale markets, he or she can expand into other markets of this size or even begin working with more demanding wholesale-oriented businesses, including small- and large-scale food hubs or other broker/distributors. In this scheme, the wholesale learning curve is transformed into incremental steps that a farmer interested in scaling up can navigate. And, more significantly, farmers entering local food sales who have wholesale marketing as part of their long-term business plan can envision a pathway to growth.

> *We're [now] really looking to expand. We bought new equipment. We started out with just a tractor and a plow and just two little gardens around back […] In the middle of the season we started another little field. And now we bought a new tractor, a couple chickens. We're lookin' at some lambs. [The hub] said they can't get enough of it.*
>
> (Small-scale farmer)

A flow chart in Appendix A allows an interested farmer to step through and determine the type of hub that may best suit their farm. This flow chart is not prescriptive and should be used only as a guideline to help farmers begin thinking about the type of food hub to contact.

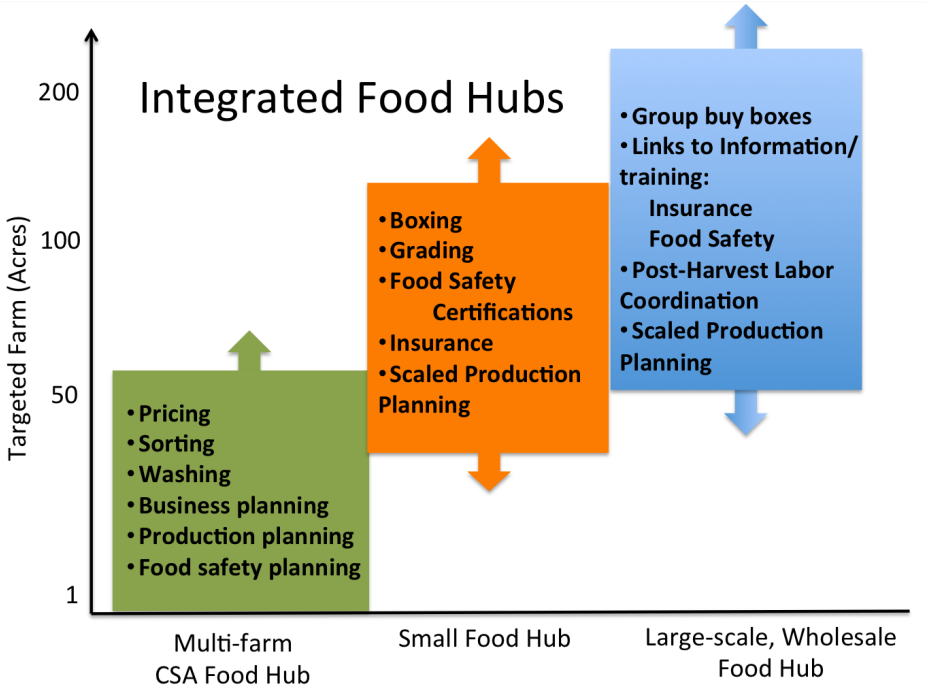


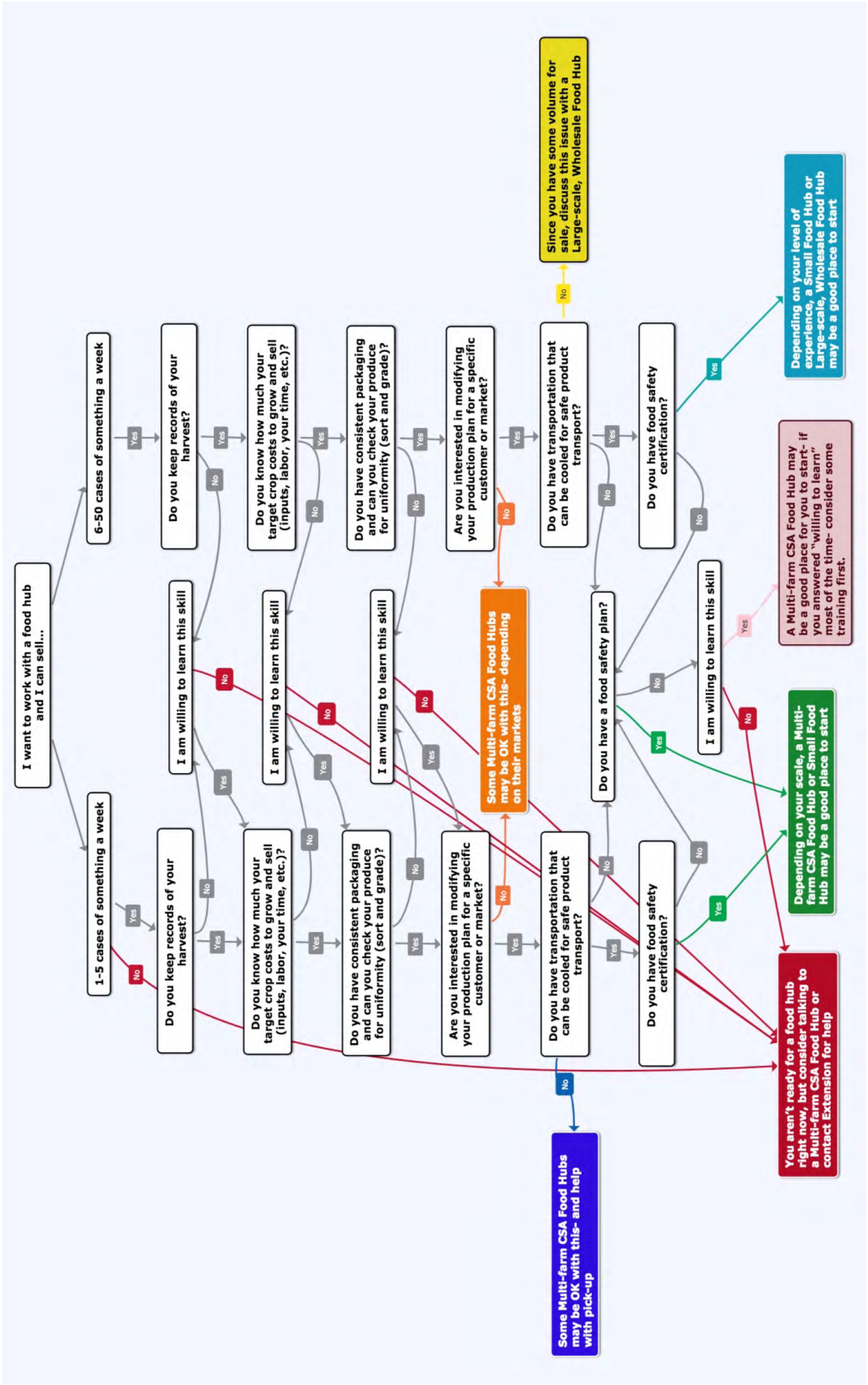
Figure 3. Food hub category and farmer services provided compared to size farms within their buying range. As farmers enter wholesale markets, they can incrementally expand production by working through these different food hub models.

SUMMARY

Farmers markets and other direct markets provide beginning farmers and small farms with a great opportunity for income. However, small-scale or midscale farms that wish to grow their acreage, focus more of their time on production, or want to specialize in specific products may want to access more wholesale markets. Food hubs can provide small-scale and midscale farms an opportunity to access the growing demand in wholesale markets. Because food hubs are a relatively new twist on aggregation for wholesale, there are many different types of food hub businesses. This variety of food hubs may provide an opportunity for small-scale and midscale farmers who want to diversify their market and for some farmers it could provide a pathway for expanding their farms. Many food hubs provide services to help farmers transition to a wholesale market. Farmers should carefully consider their capacity to produce product, their desire to comply with various food safety and postharvest handling requirements, as well as their cost of production to determine if and what type of food hub might work best for them to accomplish their goals.

APPENDIX A

The flow chart below is designed to help an interested farmer determine the type of hub that may best suit their farm. Results are not meant to be prescriptive and should be used only as a guideline to help a farmer begin thinking about the type of food hub to contact.



Resources

Agricultural Marketing Service. (n.d.). *Local food research and development*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional

Barham, J., Tropp, D., Enterline, K., Farbman, J., Fisk, J., & Kiraly, S. (2012). *Regional food hub resource guide*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/MS046.04-2012

Diamond, A., Tropp, D., Barham, J., Muldoon, M. F., Kiraly, S., & Cantrell, P. (2014). *Food value chains: Creating shared value to enhance marketing success*. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. https://www.ams.usda.gov/reports/food-value-chains-creating-shared-value-enhance-marketing-success

Furman, C., & Papavasiliou, F. (2018). Scale and affect in the local food movement. *Food, Culture and Society, 21*(4), 1–16. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2018.1427926

Gaskin, J. (2011). *Food hubs: Sustainable food systems for Georgia's agrarian future*. University of Georgia; Georgia Sustainable Agriculture Consortium. https://www.sare.org/wp-content/uploads/Sustainable-Food-Systems-for-Georgias-Agrarian-Future.pdf

Low, S., Adalja, A., Beaulieu, E., Key, N., Martinez, S., Melton, A., Perez, A., Ralston, K., Stewart, H., Suttles, S., Vogel, S., & Jablonski, B. (2015, January). *Trends in U.S. local and regional food systems: A report to Congress* (Publication No. AP-068). USDA, Economic Research Service. https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=42807

Munden-Dixon, K., Furman, C., Gaskin, J., & Samples, K. (2015). Assisting Small and Mid-Size Farmers to Increase Their Access to Markets: A Case Study of an Extension Program to Facilitate Food Hubs in Georgia. *Journal of Extension, 53*(4). https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.53.04.17

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. (n.d.). *Who is affected?* [Food Safety Modernization Act]. https://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/who-is-affected/

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. (2018, July). *Am I affected by new food safety rules under the Food Safety Modernization Act? A Flowchart for Farmers and Food Businesses*. https://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016_2-FSMA-Final-Rule-Flowchart-V3.pdf

Pressman, A., & Lent, C. (2013). *ATTRA food hub guide*. https://attra.ncat.org/publication/food-hubs-a-producer-guide/

Slama, J., & Diffley, A. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Wholesale success*. https://goodfoodfarmertraining.org/buy-manuals/

Wallace Center. https://www.wallacecenter.org/

Acknowledgement: We would like to acknowledge all of the farmers, chefs, and food hub managers that contributed their time and knowledge to this study. The Appendix A flow chart was developed with the help of Global Growers. We would also like to acknowledge Southern SARE for funding this project.

The permalink for this UGA Extension publication is extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1488

Bulletin 1488 **Reviewed March 2025**

Published by the University of Georgia in cooperation with Fort Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and counties of the state. For more information, contact your local UGA Cooperative Extension office.