



JACKSON COUNTY

# Community Food Assessment 2013





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EASY VALLEY FARM

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# Acknowledgements

We would like to convey our sincere gratitude to the people of Jackson County for opening up your homes, grocery stores, restaurants, food pantries, churches, and granges to tell your stories that invaluable informed this assessment.

Thank you to the Food System Steering Committee and other stakeholders who generously contributed time and insight to provide the leadership needed to make this a truly comprehensive and inclusive process.



# Foreword

When the first European settlers came to Oregon they were amazed by the rich soil, abundant water supply and even the islands of productivity in Oregon's deserts. They were thrilled with the crops, fruits and berries they were able to raise, the rich pastureland as well as the streams teeming with fish and the bounty of wild game available to feed a growing population. It would have been impossible for them to believe that anyone could be hungry or food insecure in this land of plenty. It is incredible that hunger and food insecurity abound in Oregon nearly two centuries later. In fact, many of the areas that seemed so bountiful to those early settlers have the least access to food today.

Five years ago Oregon Food Bank in partnership with University of Oregon RARE program began to conduct community food assessments in rural Oregon. Meyer Memorial Trust joined that effort in 2011 providing the funding that made the staffing for this assessment possible. Very few community food assessment efforts have been undertaken in Rural America with a county by county approach. Community food assessments have now been completed for over half of Oregon's rural counties. The report you are about to read is a result of conversations with the people who make Oregon's rural communities and their food systems so very unique. It is also a gift from a small group of dedicated local people who have spent the last year listening, learning and organizing. It is our sincere hope, that these reports and organizing efforts will help Oregonians renew their vision and promise of the bountiful food system that amazed those early settlers.

Sharon Thornberry  
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# Table of Contents

The Assessment Team.....	i	<b>Growing Our Own – Community Gardening and Garden Education .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Acknowledgements .....	ii	Profile: Anderson Vista Apartments.....	30
Foreword.....	iii	Profile: Medford Gospel Mission .....	31
Table of Contents.....	iv	<b>Consumption .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Background & Methodology .....	1	Food Insecurity in Jackson County.....	32
Introduction.....	3	Other Federal Food Sources Improving Food Security .....	33
<b>Agriculture in Jackson County.....</b>	<b>5</b>	Local Food Sources Improving Food Security .....	33
Agricultural History.....	5	Profile: The Farming Fish.....	35
Agriculture in Jackson County Today .....	5	Plant a Row for the Hungry.....	35
Profile: Runnymede Farm.....	6	Profile: ACCESS Food Share Gardens.....	35
Profile: Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative.....	7	Profile: The Gleaning Network Food Pantry, Inc.....	36
Land-use Planning.....	8	Profile: Neighborhood Food Project .....	36
Farmer Training.....	10	Strengthening Food Assistance.....	37
Access to Capital .....	12	Profile: ACCESS Mobile Outreach Services.....	37
Grain Production.....	12	Community Food Access .....	38
Agritourism.....	13	Profile: Peach Street Market.....	38
Small Scale Farm Equipment.....	13	Affordability of Healthy Food .....	40
Youth Involvement.....	14	Assistance for Buying Fresh Healthy Food .....	40
<b>Processing &amp; Storage.....</b>	<b>14</b>	U-pick Opportunities .....	41
Value-added Food Processing Facility Space .....	15	Consumer Education.....	42
Profile: Rent-A-Kitchen, Talent, OR .....	15	Profile: Rogue Valley Farm to School .....	42
Meat Processing.....	16	Nutrition Education Symposium.....	43
Profile: Boulton & Son.....	17	<b>Bi-Products of Our Food System.....</b>	<b>45</b>
Profile: The Butcher Shop, Eagle Point.....	18	<b>Connecting Our Food System .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Distribution.....</b>	<b>19</b>	Granges.....	47
Profile: Organic Produce Warehouse – Rogue Nation Foods .....	20	Food System Council .....	48
Profile: Organically Grown Company.....	21	Recommendations.....	50
Local Market Development .....	21	Works Cited .....	53
Profile: Online Farmers Market.....	23	Appendix A – Producer Questionnaire Results .....	56
Profile: Rogue Flavor Guide .....	23	Appendix B – Food Desert Survey Results.....	57
Profile: Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Markets .....	23	Appendix C – Food Education Survey Results.....	59
Retail.....	24	Appendix D – Rogue Valley Consumer Survey Results.....	61
Independent Grocery Stores.....	26		
Profile: Wimer Market.....	26		
Serving Local Food – Restaurants & Caterers.....	27		
Profile: Standing Stone.....	28		
Profile: Fulcrum Dining.....	28		

# Background & Methodology

Since 2006, Rogue Valley farmers, businesses, and organizations have come together to address various aspects of our community's food system. In 2006 there was a Community Food Assessment Training led by the Oregon Food Bank. In 2009 there were two Hunger Forums organized by local foundations to better understand the complexity of hunger and food issues in Jackson County. In 2010 the Leightman Maxey Foundation coordinated a group interested in nutrition education in the Rogue Valley that has become Great Start, Eat Smart, and in 2011 ACCESS and Thrive received funding from the Meyer Memorial Trust to conduct the Rogue Valley Food System Planning Process. The main purpose of the planning process has been to comprehensively assess the regional food system to inform a community based strategic plan for improving food security and local self reliance. In March of 2012, a Steering Committee was formed to provide guidance over the assessment and planning process. The Steering Committee met monthly throughout this process to direct and give feedback.

The Rogue Valley is a term used by many and in this document to mean the region that is both Josephine and Jackson Counties. The Jackson County Community Food Assessment is the result of the year long Rogue Valley Community Food System Planning Process. The Josephine County Community Food Assessment was also completed in by the Josephine County Food Bank with support for a RARE AmeriCorps position from the Oregon Food Bank in 2012. The planning process focused on engaging the community from all sectors of the food system to have a truly community driven food system assessment

and plan. The focus of this assessment was to gather qualitative information through hearing the experiences of the people of our region. The process began by holding a series of community gatherings know as FEAST workshops and Community Food Conversations. FEAST (Food Education Agriculture Solutions Together) is a community organizing workshop developed by the Oregon Food Bank that allows participants to engage in an informed discussion about food, education and agriculture in their community. Participants then begin to work toward solutions together to help build a healthier, more equitable and more resilient local food system. The FEAST workshops were held in the Applegate Valley, Phoenix/ Talent, Eagle Point, and Ashland. A Community Food Conversation is a shorter community gathering around a meal where the community identifies their food resources and the opportunities that they see will strengthen their food system. These gatherings were held in Jacksonville, Rogue River, East Medford, West Medford, Central Point, with the Jackson County Public Health Department, with the Hispanic Inter-agency Committee, and in Spanish at the Anderson Vista Housing Complex in Talent. Attendees at the FEAST workshops and Community Food Conversations totaled over 380 people.

From these events, community groups started working on projects, contacts were made, opportunities realized, and areas were identified to gather more information. Topic-specific meetings were organized to pursue ideas such as value-added food processing, nutrition education, healthy solutions for our food deserts, community gardening, and more.

Stakeholders from all sectors of the food system



TALENT FEAST, COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP

were interviewed to find out from about the key issues and solutions from their perspective. These individuals included: farmers, ranchers, community garden coordinators, food businesses, grocery store owners, chefs, food pantry volunteers, food pantry clients, food educators, compost specialists, land-use planners, and government officials. The profiles in this document are the result of some of the interviews conducted and provide a snapshot representing the challenges, success, and opportunities that exist on a larger scale than just the one example given.

It was important to gather quantitative information about some issues to better understand how many people share certain experiences.

To dig deeper, four surveys were created:

- The Producer Questionnaire of farmers and ranchers.
- The Food Desert Survey conducted at the Peach Street Market in West Medford, a neighborhood with limited access to healthy food.
- The Food Education Survey conducted at food pantries and the WIC office.
- The Rogue Valley Consumer Survey conducted at grocery stores, community events, and online.

Results of the surveys can be found in the appendix of this document.



SOUTHERN OREGON FRUIT TRAIN DOCK — COURTESY OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Introduction

Nestled between the Cascade, Siskiyou and Coastal mountain ranges of Southern Oregon, Jackson County consists of 2,784 square miles and 204,822 people.<sup>i</sup> This location and varied elevations provides for a climate that can vary from one extreme to another. The temperature ranges from many consecutive days over 90° F in the summer to the average lowest temperature being around 18° F in the winter. Farmers and gardeners talk often about the varying micro-climates that exist across the region. The lowest part of the county near Medford receives an average annual rainfall of 18 inches. The region is fed throughout the year with a water supply from snowpack from the surrounding mountains that can be significant. Cloud coverage is mostly during the winter months leaving mostly clear skies during the growing months.<sup>ii</sup>

The life experiences of Jackson County residents

vary greatly from urban to rural, affluent to low-income neighborhoods, and ethnic backgrounds. Roughly 11% of the population is Hispanic.<sup>iii</sup> Medford is the largest population center and county seat of Jackson County with 75,501 people, followed by Ashland with 20,232 people.<sup>iv</sup> Jackson County consists of both this urban center and some very rural communities in outlying areas. The median household income in the county is \$44,142. The major economic sectors employing residents include: health care, agriculture, lumber, transportation, food service, food manufacturing, local government, and tourism.<sup>v</sup> Jackson County is home to internationally known specialty food companies such as Harry & David, a premier fruit and specialty food mail order company, Amy's Kitchen, maker of organic vegetarian meals, and the Rogue Creamery, known for their award winning blue cheeses.

There are 1374 small farms (farms with under 50 acres) in the region.<sup>vi</sup>

Even with the abundance of local food production in the area only a small portion of the community is connected to the sources of where their food is produced and about 16.9% of the community experiences food insecurity and is not sure when their next meal will be.<sup>vii</sup> For those living on little income, healthy, fresh foods are not often a luxury that they cannot afford. The average cost of a meal in Jackson County is \$2.47 per person, or a total of \$7.41 per person per day.<sup>viii</sup> This is far larger than the amount that many low-income families can put towards food. For many residents there is an added cost of transportation to their food budget given that there are both rural and urban areas alike that have limited access food.

There are many strong efforts to improve the local food system in Jackson County. Even compared with other communities in Oregon, a state known to be at the forefront of the local food system movement, the Rogue Valley is in many ways a leader in innovation for breaking down barriers and making use of our local resources to

strengthen the overall security of our community food system.

The community food assessment has taken a comprehensive look at our food system in Jackson County including: farming and ranching, food processing, food distribution, food consumption, and food waste. Through this process we have engaged farmers, community gardeners, food businesses, grocery store owners, food pantry volunteers, nutrition educators, consumers of all socio-economic backgrounds, composting experts, land-use specialists, government officials, and many more to learn about ways to strengthen our food system as a whole. We have asked the community: what do you see as assets in our food system? What are the barriers or unmet needs? Where are there opportunities to make our food system healthier, more socially equitable, environmentally sustainable, and economically vibrant? This document provides a synthesis of the information gathered, partnerships fostered, and energy generated to develop a food system wide plan for Jackson County.

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PEAR HARVEST – COURTESY OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# Agriculture in Jackson County

## Agricultural history

Jackson County was established in 1852 and the population rapidly increased with the discovery of gold near Jacksonville. Prior to the railroad being built through Jackson County the majority of the food that was eaten here was grown here and most of what was grown here was sold here.<sup>ix</sup> After the railroad was built in 1884 the market opened up for import and export to the north and south.<sup>x</sup> With access to larger markets some products, such as grain, could not compete with the larger scale producers in the Willamette Valley and it was more economical to import such products rather than produce them here. The producers of Jackson County also now had access to sell their products to larger markets. This resulted in growth within the orchard industry. The first orchard companies began to only ship their best quality fruit and they started wrapping the fruit in paper to protect it during shipping which has become a signature of Rogue Valley fruit. In the early 1900s some of the first agricultural associations were formed to collectively build the needed infrastructure, such as cold storage, to support this growing industry.<sup>xi</sup> The fruit industry survived the Great Depression and in the 1930s there were about 12,000 acres of orchards in the area compared to the less than 7,000 currently.<sup>xii</sup> Much of this orchard land was sold for housing development under the pressure of decreasing fruit prices and a growing need for more housing. In 2011, Jackson County produced 32,375 tons of pears making it second in pear production to Hood River County, which produces 149,980 tons.<sup>xiii</sup> Regardless of this lesser production volume, the region continues to be a world leader for quality Bosc and Comice pears.<sup>xiv</sup>

The construction of the railroad also provided opportunity for the cattle industry as described by Carol Barrett in her *As It Was* series. "It was a boon to the cattle ranchers in the area. Before the railroad came through, there was a glut of cattle on the market and it was not unusual for them to be sold only for their tallow and hides. The meat was not used. As soon as cattle could be transported profitably, they were sent to other parts of the country where beef was in high demand."<sup>xv</sup> Today livestock sales are about 35% of the total value of agricultural products sold from the county.

## Agriculture in Jackson County Today

There are a significant number of first-time farmers in the area. These young farmers are bringing innovation to farming in the region and they are often finding support from the older farmers in the community who have years of experience. Of the 20 producers who responded to the Producer Questionnaire, 70% indicated that their farm or ranch is their sole source of income.

According to USDA Agricultural Census data in 2007, there were 1,424 farms in Jackson County producing crops typically sold as local foods, such as vegetables, fruits, potatoes, eggs, poultry, dairy and livestock.<sup>xvi</sup> This is not to say that all of these farms are selling locally, in fact, the majority of livestock is sold outside of the area partly due to the lack of a slaughter facility here. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2010 data, Jackson County residents spend \$564,332,091 on food annually.<sup>xvii</sup> According to the 2007 USDA Agricultural Census data, \$13,920,000 of sales were made directly from farmers to consumers.<sup>xviii</sup> This would mean that about 2.5% of the food bought in Jackson County is produced in



RUNNYMEDE FARM, ROGUE RIVER

Jackson County. This does not necessarily account for local food bought through non-direct avenues such as grocery stores. For comparison, Lane County in the Willamette Valley reportedly spends \$976,762,800 on food annually and only \$5,103,000 is spent on direct food sales from farm to consumer, about 0.5%.<sup>xix</sup> These farm-direct sale numbers have most certainly increased since 2007 with the increase in efforts to bring local food to consumers across the state. The 2012 census data, that will be available in 2014, will likely show a significant increase in this percentage.

Southern Oregon is also becoming more and more known for its wine production. With four different American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) and more than 60 wineries the region is fast becoming a premier wine destination. In 2011 there were 4,047 tons of wine grapes produced in Jackson County.<sup>xx</sup> Hay production is also a main agricultural use of land here. According to 2007 USDA census data, 23,759 acres of land was used for forage and hay production.<sup>xxi</sup> Forage for livestock as well as wine grapes are uses for land that does not have the soil to support row crop production.

As of 2007, there were 62 certified organic farms in Jackson County.<sup>xxii</sup> The long hot summers are particularly suited to seed production as well, and many small farms produce seed for contract or for themselves. In 2012, organic farmers, seed farmers, and concerned citizens organized a GMO Free Jackson County group after learning that genetically engineered sugar beet seeds were being tested by national seed companies in Jackson County. The GMO Free Jackson County group has successfully qualified an initiative for the May 2014 ballot to “make it unlawful for any person to propagate, cultivate, raise, or grow genetically engineered plants in Jackson County.”<sup>xxiii</sup> Organizers of GMO Free Jackson County explain, “We must act to create this GMO-Free zone because otherwise we face losing our sustainability and losing the freedom to grow plants from our own saved seed.”

#### Profile: Runnymede Farm

While every small farm is different, Runnymede Farm provides a snapshot into the workings of a small diversified farm in Jackson County. Teri and Art White have owned Runnymede Farm along Evans Creek, just north of the town of

Rogue River, for 15 years. They started out growing for themselves and then transitioned to farming commercially 12 years ago. They sell fruits, vegetables, plant starts, and eggs at three growers markets a week in Medford and Ashland. They also have a small CSA with about twelve members and sell raw milk from their farm stand. Aside from Teri and Art, for whom the farm is their sole source of income, they have one full time employee and three seasonal interns. They have also had success with hosting volunteers through WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms).

The Whites are set up with several greenhouses that provide them the ability to have early season tomatoes and other vegetables. They have found that having produce early allows them access to a market that makes up a significant portion of their sales. Their original wood and glass greenhouse with radiant floor heating is now used to dry tomatoes in large quantities that they can sell directly to consumers through either their CSA or at growers markets thanks to the new Oregon Farm Direct Law that was effective as of January 2012.

Teri and Art own their farm and lease additional land from their neighbors as their production has grown. Like most farmers in the Evans Valley area, the Whites have rights to irrigate out of Evans Creek. They use micro sprinklers above the plants to water, which allows them to make use of weed cloth, an important resource in their otherwise very weedy field. Their goats are helpful partners in keeping the invasive blackberries at bay by eating all of the leaves of the plants when allowed to graze an area. Their chickens also play a role on the farm when let into the field where they find bugs to eat. Teri said, “The chickens took care of the cucumber beetles this year, which are one of the primary pests that cause major problems for organic farmers in the Rogue Valley.”

### Profile: Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative

Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative is a collective of 12 certified organic farms mostly located in the Applegate Valley. During the 2012 season, the Cooperative produced for a 175 member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. This is the largest membership that they have had in the nine years that they have been incorporated. With nine farms producing for the CSA, they are able to provide customers with a variety of products and customers enjoy having the opportunity to support multiple farms. CSA coordinator, Maud Powell, says that “the CSA has been very marketable for these reasons.” Their target market is the “conscious consumer.” They have many drop sites around the region to make it convenient for customers. During the 2012 season they expanded their delivery into California in order to reach a larger consumer base and now have drop sites located in: Ashland, Medford, Central Point, Eagle Point, Talent, Applegate, Ruch, Jacksonville, Grants Pass, Yreka, Weed, and Mt. Shasta.

They started accepting the Oregon Trail Card, also known as SNAP or food stamps four years ago in order to expand their customer base and make their healthier food available to more people. In 2012, the customers using the Oregon Trail Card made up about 10% of their total members. With support from a Farmers Market Promotional Program Grant the cooperative was able to do more outreach in 2012 to let low-income families know about the opportunity to use their benefits with the CSA. For some families it was a challenge participating in the program on a food stamp budget given that they were paying organic prices and they did not get as much volume as they were expecting. They were however getting nutritionally dense food and more organic produce than they would be able to buy for the same price through the store. Maud says that, “families were excited to be able

to have the opportunity to participate by using their Oregon Trail Card whereas they would not have been able to otherwise.”

The cooperative is only selling through the CSA. They have sold CSA shares to restaurants, but that is just at the regular CSA share rate. They do not sell through retail avenues because getting the direct market value for their products is important to being able to support the overhead administration of the cooperative. Maud estimates that, “a co-op would have to be very large to afford the wholesale price and sell to retailers.” However, all of the farms are selling outside the cooperative as well, some to retail markets.

They have two to four growers per crop to ensure that they will not have overall crop failure. For the most part farmers grow what they want and what their land can support. They spend time during the winter planning what they will grow as a group. Some farmers grow five crops some grow twenty. They have standards as a cooperative of quality assurance for each crop. They check the quality during the pack out for the CSA share.

Maud sees many benefits to their cooperative model, including their ability to apply for grants that are available to cooperatives and not individual farms. However, Maud says that, “one of the biggest benefits is the social capital. There is a very supportive relationship between our farmers. We do the pack out together, share info, share equipment. We are like a family.”

## Land-use Planning

The Rogue Valley has micro-climates that support a wide range of food production and some very excellent soil upon which to farm. However, there is a limited amount of prime agricultural land in the valley. The river and creek bottom lands have soils to support row crop production. The orchards that are prominent in the Rogue Valley can be grown on a wider range

of soils and the wine grapes that are making a name for themselves in this region can be grown in even more locations. Outside of these agricultural uses, much of the shallow, low-nutrient soils in the region are best used for pasture land and meat production. The land available to produce a complete diet of foods is finite in the Rogue Valley.

There is tremendous pressure to urbanize the high quality agricultural lands which are found directly adjacent to many of our urban areas. This is due to the increasing population of the region as well as the decline in prices for crops on the international wholesale market. The region recently completed a land use plan to accommodate a doubling of the population over the next 50 years. This Regional Problem Solving (RPS) plan calls for the urbanization of 7,000 acres of farmland, 1,200 acres of this is prime agricultural land.<sup>xxiv</sup> As part of the RPS plan the county will create an “Agricultural Task Force” in order to address concerns over the impact this may have on the future of agriculture. The mandate given this group is to “assess the impacts on the agricultural economy of Jackson County arising from the loss of agricultural land and/or the ability to irrigate agricultural land” that may arise from future urbanization.<sup>xxv</sup> This task force is in the process of being established.

Plans for future land-use were looked at more deeply by the Rogue Advocates during their Envision the Rogue Valley assessment. Rogue Advocates is a non-profit dedicated to cultivating livable and sustainable communities in southern Oregon’s Rogue Valley region. Through advocacy, education and outreach around local land use issues, they work to preserve productive rural lands and to promote vibrant urban centers.<sup>xxvi</sup> During the Envision the Rogue Valley process, Rogue Advocates held a series of community forums to hear from the community about what is important to them. The report compiled by the



HENSEL FAMILY FARM/ BRADFORD FAMILY FARM, ROGUE RIVER

Rogue Advocates makes several recommendations about ways to protect farmland. The report can be found at <http://rogueadvocates.org/home>.

It is a common perception that there is a significant amount of prime agricultural land that is underutilized in the area. Tom Humphrey, the Central Point Community Development Director, says that, “Farmland is an important part of our community’s future. Land owners also need to use land more wisely, such as utilizing crop rotation and not letting good ag land lay fallow indefinitely. We need to try new crops and farming practices need to be improved. If the cities are making an effort to be more land efficient, so should land owners. Even land that is not prime soil can be used for some crops.”

Land access has been identified as a challenge for 17% of the agricultural producers surveyed in the Producer Questionnaire (see survey results in appendix A). Land access was also identified as a challenge for small farmers in the Josephine County Food Assessment.<sup>xxvii</sup> The high cost of land is due to the fact that rural lands are often valued for rural home value and not for agricultural production. “Land is not affordable for people who want to make a living off of producing food on the land. The value of the land is not currently related to what you can grow on it,” says Angie Boudro a local farmer and former Soil & Water District Senior Planner.

Hensel Family Farm, a first year farm, is leasing land and production facilities from Bradford Family Farm as a result of being connected through iFarm Oregon. A project of Friends of Family Farmers, iFarm Oregon connects beginning farmers with resources to assist with challenges such as limited access to land. The searchable website lists land holders and those seeking land by geographic area, lease or sale. Ian Hensel, of Hensel Family Farm, believes that any program designed to foster a strong local food system must focus on connecting farmers to agricultural land, and improving the availability of on-site infrastructure necessary for processing agricultural goods. Many agricultural landlords are reluctant to invest in farm infrastructure for short-term tenants, because the length of the landlord-tenant relationship is uncertain. However, by building a trusting, mutually-beneficial relationship, an agricultural landlord can gain the confidence to invest in long-term improvements to their property that would benefit the beginning farmer.

There is a potentially significant issue on the horizon that may exacerbate the land access issue. Through Executive Order 12-07, Jackson County is authorized to work with Josephine and Douglas counties to attempt to develop a “regional” definition of farm land that differs from the definition that has been used statewide since the early 1970s. If successful, the counties are then authorized to re-zone farmland that does not fit the new definition, and potentially to allow non-farm development such as rural housing. Depending on how much land is re-designated, and where it is, this could result in the withdrawal of a significant amount of land from production and from the farm assessment tax status. As of this writing the effort is only just beginning to get organized. It will be some time before potential results are known.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Producers have also expressed that they experience challenges in trying to grow their business

with current county land-use planning laws. The permitting process is a challenge for producers who are attempting to use their land in multiple ways, such as establishing a farm stand or offering agritourism opportunities. Similarly, there have been challenges for businesses that have been interested in developing value-added food processing facilities to preserve locally produced food for retail. This may largely be an issue of educating producers about what is allowed and providing support through the appropriate process.

As a result of the large array of land-use issues that affect agricultural producers in our area, Thrive held a Land Connection Conference on November 10, 2012 to explore these issues and to give farmers and land owners the tools to work together. Topics covered during the full-day conference included land leases (how to find land, enter a lease, protect both parties in the lease contract, and maintain a strong landlord/tenant relationship); zoning, water rights and tax rates; financing agricultural businesses; land succession planning; conservation easements; exploring the small farm dream; and policy tools for the preservation of farm land. Keynote speakers included State Rep. Peter Buckley, Dennis Canty of the American Farmland Trust, and Greg Holmes of 1000 Friends of Oregon. The 63 attendees of the conference were also given structured time to meet and network with each other. Several sessions were recorded and are available for viewing through Thrive.

### Opportunities:

1) The Agricultural Task Force mandated by the Regional Problem Solving plan will examine the economic impacts of land-use changes on the agricultural sector. Rogue Advocates makes a recommendation that this Task Force also take on the role of coordinating efforts to ensure the viability of agricultural businesses in the Rogue

Valley.<sup>xxix</sup> This additional role of the Task Force that Rogue Advocates recommends would be valuable in addressing many of issues around farm viability identified in this assessment. Whether this task is added to the Task Force's work or not, it will be important for food system participants to participate in and understand the outcomes of the group's work.

2) It will be critical for farmers and food system advocates to participate in the effort to re-define farmland in Jackson County and to make sure that the agricultural community's interests are represented. Through this process there will be significant opportunities to educate decision-makers and the public on the benefits of agriculture to the region, as well as to the challenges faced by food producers.

3) Educate producers about what they are allowed to do with their lands, and then help policy-makers understand what changes might need to be made to bring land use laws into line with the needs of modern farmers.

## Farmer Training

The average age of the American farmer is steadily rising. As of 2007, the agricultural census showed that the average age of farmers in Jackson County was 59 years of age.<sup>xxx</sup> However, there has been a recent wave of young farmers entering this sector. Young and aspiring farmers are finding more and more opportunities to learn what it takes to be successful through beginning

### OSU EXTENSION DEMONSTRATION FARM, CENTRAL POINT



farmer training programs like the Rogue Farm Corps here in Jackson and Josephine Counties. Rogue Farm Corps is a non-profit organization founded in 2003. Their Farms Next program is a full season of hands-on training and skills-based education in sustainable agriculture for aspiring farmers and ranchers. Student interns are placed on member host farms where they receive up to 1500 hours of field training with a mentor farmer, 75 hours of classroom learning with agricultural professionals and expert farmers, tours of local farms, and opportunities for farm-based independent study. The goal of Farms Next is to prepare aspiring farmers with the fundamental skills and concepts necessary to begin operating a successful commercial farm. The student interns can also earn college credit for the experience given the program's relationship with Rogue Community College (RCC). Rogue Farm Corps has played a key role in establishing the legal structure for on-farm internships in Oregon making such education experiences possible. Rogue Farm Corps is in communication with a number of organizers and farmers around the state to expand Farms Next to new communities.

Once farmers are in the business they can find a variety of resources and support through the Small Farms program at the Oregon State University Southern Oregon Research and Extension Service (SOREC). The OSU Extension Service of Southern Oregon has one of the strongest Small Farms Programs in the state. It was formed in 2005 and offers services for small acreage land owners, beginning farmers, and commercial farmers in both Josephine and Jackson Counties. Many of these services are geared toward offering tools for farms to be more economically and environmentally sustainable. This includes an introductory three-session class called Exploring the Small Farm Dream to help explore the feasibility of an individual's farm dream; a six-session series called Growing Farms that helps farmers in

their first five years of business develop a whole farm plan. Finally, the Growing Agripreneurs Program is a season-long hands-on training program that builds technical skills such as irrigation and tractor use on a 1/2 acre teaching plot at the Extension Center. The Small Farms program also offers networking opportunities for farmers such as Farmer to Farmer Field Days and League of Women Farmers workshops. The programs that Small Farms offers focus on the creation and enhancement of local and regional food systems and farm direct marketing channels and encourages the development of specialty and niche products.

Rogue Farm Corps, OSU Small Farms, Thrive and Friends of Family Farmers have been collaborating for the past five years to coordinate their educational offerings, reduce duplication, and provide a more complete package of services to aspiring farmers and ranchers. The goal of this collaborative effort is to design and implement a continuum of programming to serve the education, training, and business development support that aspiring farmers need to launch successful farm businesses. Calling this effort the Southern Oregon Farmer Incubator (SOFI), the collaborative partners are working to flush out the necessary components to fully develop and implement this vision.

Making sure that education is available for those who wish to make a living at farming is crucial to ensuring that we will have future farmers. There has been a large need expressed by current farmers in Jackson County to provide additional support service for existing farmers and to develop a market for the local food that is already being produced. The existing farmers in the area are happy to see a younger generation getting excited about farming, but they also see a fairly saturated market in the region and current farmers struggling to make a viable living. This is where many local farmers see a need for local

market development and marketing support. Refer to later section on market development.

### Opportunities:

1) Support the development and implementation of SOFI goals and vision to create a comprehensive education, training, and business development support program for aspiring farmers and ranchers in the Rogue Valley. Specifically, offer more training on skills related to post-harvest handling and marketing of products to ensure that producers can meet the quality standards of retail stores. Provide assistance to support producers in exploring retail sales avenues.

2) Focus on training to help farmers to scale up to a size that could market to wholesale avenues of sale and identify other niche markets.

## Access to Capital

On the Producer Questionnaire 30% of producers named access to capital as a challenge. Beginning farmers like Hensel Family Farm and HappyDirt Veggie Patch are trying to avoid borrowing a significant amount of funds. They would rather slowly build their business within their means than accrue debt. They do however often need small funds to bridge the gap of seasonal investment before their sales can fill in. This is where a micro loan would be helpful. For many small farmers this is the role that the CSA (Community Support Agriculture) has filled to provide cash at the beginning of the season when the farm needs to make investments to produce crops. Farmers who have been in the business for a while have shared that they experience a lack

HappyDirt Veggie Patch, Phoenix



of access to capital to grow their farm. Many do not qualify for the funding available through the USDA.

Friends of Family Farmers, a statewide organization, is coordinating an effort to establish an “Aggie Bonds” program in Oregon. In response to most commercial financing rates being out of reach for small farmers the Aggie Bond program is intended to reduce the interest rate of financing for qualifying farmers. There are currently 16 other states that use the Federal Aggie Bond program.<sup>xxx</sup>

### Opportunity:

Make local micro loans more available and affordable to small and beginning farmers and other food businesses.

## Grain Production

At both community gatherings and during interviews the need has been expressed by producers to have access to local grain for animal feed. Organic producers find it especially difficult to source affordable organic animal feed. Many local meat producers would like to be able to buy local feed that they know has not been sprayed. The challenge is that the grains that are high in protein which livestock producers need are not being grown locally. Interest has also been expressed in exploring more local grain production intended for human consumption to provide more of the staples for a locally sourced diet. However, there are not the wide tracts of land here that are generally used to produce grains at the volume often needed to make it economical.

### Opportunity:

There is a significant amount of grain being sustainably produced in the Southern Willamette Valley as a result of the Southern Willamette Valley Grain and Bean Project that could be a source for regional grains.<sup>xxxii</sup>

## Agritourism

Agritourism is loosely defined as activities or events that attract people to visit working farms or other agribusinesses for product sales, entertainment, or education. For some agricultural businesses, agritourism has become a way to supplement their on-farm income to support their traditional farm production. For others it offers an opportunity to educate the public about farming.

Agritourism can also be a double-edged sword. Some of the activities and events that might be considered part of agritourism create conflicts that make it harder for farmers to do their work. For example, weddings or other gatherings on farmland may conflict with spraying or creating dust in adjacent fields. Events that attract many people create traffic problems on rural roads. Water and sanitation issues sometimes arise. In order to minimize these conflicts and the negative impacts they may have on legitimate farming operations, care must be taken to ensure that agritourism activities are legitimately related to and in promotion of agricultural uses, and not simply businesses run in a rural setting.

On the Producer Survey, 81% of farmers and ranchers said that they would be interested in being a part of an agritourism network. Farmers and other community members in the Rogue River area and in Jacksonville see a potential benefit in having a map with agricultural sites, farm tours, classes on farm, and farm stays. One farm that is offering farm stays currently is Pholia Farm in Wimer. They have an airstream trailer that they have made into cozy accommodations for travelers who are interested in getting off the beaten path and experiencing a short stay on a farm. Pholia Farm has received promotional support from Travel Oregon with a video of their farm stay on the Travel Oregon website at no cost. Travel Oregon has several programs that could support a regional agritourism network for the Rogue Valley.

In Josephine County, there is a project to put together an “Ag2Arts” brochure featuring local farms and other attractions. This economic development project is lead by the Grants Pass Tourism Bureau. The brochure is intended to encourage self guided tours of various resources around Josephine County.

### Opportunities:

- 1) Develop a regional agritourism network to highlight our agricultural resources, provide additional income for farms, and to connect consumers, both local residents and tourists with the places that their food comes from. Explore adding agritourism information in a more prominent way to Thrive’s Rogue Flavor guide.
- 2) Pass legislative changes that support farm stays in a way that is economically feasible for agricultural businesses, while also protecting the viability of the land and adjacent businesses.

## Small Scale Farm Equipment

Interest has been expressed throughout the farming community in having a network for sharing small scale farming and food production equipment. This idea has been looked into by a few different people in a few different ways. Farmers who have looked into the idea would recommend that the sharing take place on a neighborhood scale. Moving farming equipment too far puts a lot of wear and tear on the equipment. There would need to be some organization that could coordinate the use of the equipment and could collect funds from each user that would be used to repair equipment as needed. The Granges around the county might be an appropriate network to organize such a program on a local level. The Soil & Water Conservation District is currently coordinating a manure exchange and might be another possible option for coordination. Some farmers who do have needs for equipment that they don’t have would rather

have an established way of finding someone with the equipment to hire to complete the job for them. This is similar to hiring someone to complete a custom hay job.

#### Opportunity:

Develop a list of people with equipment interested in completing custom jobs or develop localized farm equipment sharing.

## Youth Involvement

While the Rogue farm Corps is providing a great opportunity for post high school adults and Rogue Valley Farm to School is working to educate young children it has been observed that there is a gap in food and farming education for middle school and high school aged youth. Youth engagement in the agricultural field is a huge opportunity to provide employment opportunities for young people, build skills in farming and food processing, and to connect youth with where their food comes from. This is a gap that has in the past been filled by FFA (Fu-

ture Farmers of America) and 4H. Both of these programs are significantly reduced from what they used to be.

Maslow Project is a resource center located in Medford supporting homeless youth to meet their basic needs as well as educational and employment goals. There is potential through the Maslow Project to provide education and job opportunities to the youth around food and farming. There are several challenges in this, including a cultural barrier for kids who live in Medford and do not think of themselves as “farmers” and therefore are not interested. “All the more reason to engage kids in where their food comes from,” says Jacob Stecher of the Maslow Project.

#### Opportunity:

There are several groups working to engage youth around the community that could be avenues for involving youth in activities related to food and farming such as, Central Medford High School, Rogue River High School, FFA programs, 4H, Maslow Project, and the Job Council.

# Processing & Storage

A common need for food producers is a greater capacity to store their crops or food products and to have access to a certified facility to process into a value-added product to sell. For storage, the needs are for dry, cold, and freezer space that is conveniently located near the farm, a processing facility or near a market to sell the product to. There are a variety of food businesses in the area that have indicated a need for a processing facility for activities from drying, canning, pickling, cooking, milling, blending, freezing, and packaging.

#### Results from the Producer Survey

Question: what are your needs for infrastructure?

- 41% responded that they need a packing facility
- 35% responded that they need dry storage
- 65% responded that they need cold / freezer storage
- 41% responded that they need a value-added processing facility (non-meat)



SPACE LLC, MEDFORD

Several local food producers are making use of cold, freezer, and ambient storage space available at a storage facility called Space LLC located in Medford. Space LLC is USDA and ODA inspected to ensure food safe conditions. Space LLC has 345,000 square feet of total storage space of which 60,000 is refrigerated. They can accommodate producers of varying sizes, storing one pallet or up to 30 truckloads, and can provide a wide range of temperature storage. Businesses have regular access to their product. The general manager, Stan Schlosser, says that, “we are happy to work with local producers and try to find a solution that will work for them.”

Another option for dry, cold, and freezer storage is Central Point Cold Storage owned by Rogue Creamery. They have about 100,000 square feet of space and are willing to accommodate even just one pallet for small producers and charging by the number of pallets on the ground. They are not able to store fresh produce or fish for human consumption due to ODA regulations and compatibility with other products stored in the facility. Matt at Central Point Cold Storage is very flexible and willing to work with a variety of producers.

## Value-added Food Processing Facility Space

The Oregon Farm Direct Law, effective January 2012, has enabled many small farms to process low-risk foods such as jams, pickles, and dried products without a certified kitchen. These products must be sold directly to the consumer, such as at a farmers market or at a farm stand. This provides an option for farmers to use their products that they don't sell fresh which can now be preserved and then sold as a value-added product. This farm direct allowance is a good starting place for small producers who may want to test out the market for a product before investing in the infrastructure needed to produce on a larger scale or be certified to sell through retail.

Some local food producers would like to see the development of a certified shared use processing kitchen in the Rogue Valley. There are a number of certified kitchens available for use in Jackson County. These facilities could be further pursued to find out if they might meet the needs of local food producers. By utilizing existing facilities local food businesses could produce enough of their product to assess the market and whether or not it would be feasible to develop additional, larger facilities or facilities with specialized equipment.

### Profile: Rent-A-Kitchen, Talent

Marcia Gulley and her husband own the Rent-A-Kitchen in Talent. They have been running the kitchen ever since they bought it four years ago when it was already operating as a shared-use commercial kitchen. This kitchen is a resource for food businesses that want to get started. They have seen three businesses that have started there and then out grew the space. Marcia says, “It has been a lot of fun. I love watching the businesses grow.”

This small facility is divided into four spaces available to use at various times during the day and evening. The kitchen is certified for catering and food processing. They have a variety of food businesses making use of the facility including: bakers, jam makers, businesses making specialty items, and some that just need to store food in a certified space. The facility is equipped with a walk in cooler, freezer and dry storage. Each business has to bring in their own equipment and is responsible for obtaining their own license from the state or county depending on what sort of processing they are doing. Marcia explained that on average it costs about \$2000 for a business to get set up with license and equipment. Space is available for rent by the month at \$300 per month for about 20 hours per week or \$10 per hour.

Marcia says that she has people driving from Eagle Point and Sam's Valley to use the kitchen, which is farther than is truly feasible for startup businesses. There have even been inquiries from Grants Pass. She sees a huge need for more commercial kitchen space. The Rent-A-Kitchen is almost full and she has a minimum of ten people that are on a waiting list at all times.

The Gulleys looked into developing a new facility in White City, but to build a new facility was cost prohibitive. They also ran into challenges with zoning through the County Planning Department. They would be interested in putting together another kitchen and operating it, but would need financial help and community support to get it going.

#### Opportunity:

Church kitchens may be a great way to have certified kitchens in each community. Churches would first have to have their kitchens certified and then could rent out the kitchen to have a small source of income. The model that the Gulleys are using for Rent-A-Kitchen places the responsibility on

the businesses using the facility. Each business is responsible for maintenance and clean up thus reducing the amount of time required from the facility owner.

## Meat Processing

The lack of a local USDA inspected meat slaughter and processing facility is a key concern to consumers and ranchers alike. All of the meat producers who responded to the Producer Questionnaire indicated that one of their infrastructure needs is a USDA meat processing facility (see appendix A for survey results). For smaller producers like Little Sprouts Farm in Sam's Valley that produce a few heritage breed pigs, USDA slaughter would mean that they could reach more local customers than the few who are currently able to buy a whole or half pig. Similarly, while there are now two private state-certified on-farm poultry processing facilities, there are none that are open to other producers.

Most ranchers in the area sell their live animals to a broker who then in turn sells through the conventional market chain. Others sell their animals directly to the consumer, friends and family and have the animals processed in a state custom exempt facility. This requires buyers to purchase a whole or half animal and requires them to have more freezer space than the household refrigerator. A growing number of ranchers are selling USDA meat by the pound at the growers markets, through Thrive's online market, through a meat CSA or on their own farm website.

The ability to buy and sell meat by the pound is appealing to consumers and producers for the flexibility. Most families are accustomed to purchasing meat in this way and producers see this as a security net to know that they have an additional avenue of sale. Little Sprouts Farm would like to continue to sell their meat off the farm, but it would be very helpful to be able to

sell by the cut.

In 2009 OSU Research Associate and Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network Co-Coordinator Lauren Gwin conducted a survey of the potential use of a USDA facility. Results indicated that there was not enough demand at that time to justify the construction of a new facility. Since then the Roseburg and Klamath Falls plants have closed down.

Angie Boudro, farmer and former Soil & Water District Senior Planner, sees local meat production as key to a complete local food system in our region. “Based on the soil that we have, meat is one of the crops that we can produce a lot of locally.” Aside from establishing a processing facility in the valley, Angie sees that it would be extremely helpful to have a meat locker facility that is energy efficient in order to make it feasible for more people to have the storage space to buy a whole, half, or even quarter of an animal locally.

There are several groups at various stages of development of a USDA slaughter and cut & wrap facility. The community group Jackson County Local Action Coalition (JCLAC) organized a few community meetings in 2012 to discuss the possibility of developing a USDA Processing Facility in Jackson County. While there was significant interest by ranchers in these meetings, a feasible strategy to move the project forward was not developed. These results were similar to those in 2006 when Thrive, OSU Small Farms and the Jackson Soil & Water District held a series of meetings.

Standing Stone restaurant in Ashland has expressed interest in constructing a facility for their use as well as the broader community. There is also a larger facility currently under construction in Northern California. The plant manager indicates there may be some extra capacity that could be used by Rogue Valley ranchers. Finally,

Boulton & Son in Ashland and the Butcher Shop in Eagle Point are at the forefront of procuring, processing and selling local meat at the retail level.

### Profile: Boulton & Son

Boulton & Son is a family owned butcher shop that was opened in September of 2012 in Ashland. The Boulton Family was raising pork prior to opening the shop and saw a need for a retail location to provide the community with local and sustainably raised meats. Since the D&B USDA processing facility closed in Roseburg, Jonathan has been taking livestock all the way to Mount Angel Meat Company, located outside of Woodburn. Mount Angel Meat Company is known for their humane treatment of the animals and therefore the Boulton’s feel that it is worth the 260 mile trip to ensure this quality. The Mohawk Valley Meats facility in Springfield has been operating at capacity since the close of the Roseburg facility. A business such as Boulton & Son that is based on locally sourced meats would benefit greatly from being able to process locally sourced livestock in the Rogue Valley. This would reduce the miles the meat travels to the end consumer and would reduce the investment of time and money spent to haul the meat to and from processing.

#### BOULTON & SON BUTCHERS, ASHLAND





THE BUTCHER SHOP, EAGLE POINT

### Profile: The Butcher Shop, Eagle Point

The Butcher Shop in Eagle Point is currently a custom processing butcher shop and local food retail store. Owners Cameron Callahan and Brian Stofflet are working toward becoming a USDA-certified cut & wrap facility and adding a USDA inspected mobile slaughter unit to their operation. They have completed most of the physical requirements to become a USDA certified cut & wrap facility. They have added cooler and freezer space, putting in new floors with proper drains, and expanding the dry aging space. The current demands of their business have prevented them from finalizing the USDA certification process.

The owners of the store, along with two other investors, have ordered a mobile unit with the intention of having it certified by USDA as a slaughter facility. They need to find a location where the mobile unit will operate since slaughter is prohibited in the city of Eagle Point where their store is located. This will also require going through the Jackson County planning process to have the mobile site approved.

Once they are set up they will be able to process ten to twelve head of cattle per day on farm. They are open to working with any of the ranches in the region that need processing. They have relationships established with ranchers that they

currently work with who are already on board for when the unit is ready. It will be challenging to meet all of the need when their capacity will only be ten to twelve heads per day. Cameron says “this is a really great start, but there is still a huge need for more processing.” Cameron also sees a need for poultry processing, which he estimates would cost about \$50,000 to develop. This is something that they would like to look into down the road, but currently are focusing on this unit for cattle.

The need for USDA inspected meat processing in the region is increasing, especially with the closing of the D&B facility in Roseburg. The Roseburg facility closed because they were out of compliance with current USDA standards and could not afford the amount of money needed to make the improvements. They were given so many years to make the improvements, but could not afford to. The Mohawk Valley Meats facility in Springfield is overwhelmed with the amount of demand.

When asked if with all of the expenses that they are accruing to develop the facility and what their end processing capacity will be, will it pencil out? Cameron said their business model is based on retailing meats through their store, not making money on the processing side of the business. “The mobile unit itself is going to be hard to get it to pencil out, but the end product is more valuable. What it will mean for the farmers in this area and what we can make up for on the retail end, yes it will be worth it.”

### Opportunities:

- 1) Support local meat marketing efforts to create the additional demand needed to justify local processing improvements.
- 2) Develop an energy-efficient meat locker facility in order to make it more feasible for more people to have the storage space to buy a whole, half, or even quarter of an animal locally.

# Distribution

The need has been identified by farmers, ranchers, grocery stores, restaurants, and consumers to develop a system to more efficiently get food from farms to the end consumer. Increased efficiency of local food distribution would decrease waste of product, time, money, fuel, and increase potential avenues of sale. Consumers are interested in having local products more available in stores where they are already shopping. Grocery stores and restaurants would like to be able to offer more locally produced products to their customers, but need a more efficient system through which to obtain the local products. Currently, farmers are making many individual trips to town to sell their product. Some farmers have also expressed that there would be a benefit to having a more reliable place to sell their product than just relying on direct sales such as the growers markets. The challenge for farmers is that they do not make as much selling their product through retail avenues as they do directly. Retail and wholesale is proving to be a successful route for the larger producers in the valley who can sell product on a large scale. This is often where the idea of a producer Cooperative model comes up if there were enough farms in the area with the capacity to make this model work.

There are several distribution companies in the valley that are very willing to work with local producers and buy their product. Fresh Express is a distributor of both organic and conventional produce in the valley. Miles Stuart of Fresh Express in Medford says that Fresh Express is very interested in supporting local farmers and finding a solution that is within their means and the producer's. As a distributor, they can play the role of taking on the responsibility for knowing where the food comes from and the producer does not need to

carry liability insurance, which is often required to sell to larger stores. "Our commitment is to small farmers. We don't want to see the small farms go away, however on the off seasons it is good to be able to buy from the larger food system." Fresh Express first builds a relationship with the farmers that they work with and plan what they would buy for the season. They have the ability to move a large amount of product locally and through their larger distribution system. They can market products as local and often they can compensate the farmer at a higher price because people will pay more for a local product. They do need farmers to be able to provide a consistent volume of product that they can depend on; however, they are relatively flexible about the volume size.

When asked if they still source from outside the area when there is a glut of certain products Miles explained that, "yes, we are buying tomatoes for example from elsewhere for buyers who want a less ripe tomato." This is a common reason that larger buyers say local produce does not work for them as they need a product that has a longer shelf life. Local tomatoes, for example are picked at the height of ripeness. While, having produce that has been able to mature on the plant and develop more nutritional value is often the reason that most people like buying local produce, it becomes susceptible to spoilage in the retail setting.

Fresh Express will sell to stores of all sizes. They do have a \$200 minimum order requirement to be able to deliver to a store. For smaller stores they offer a walk in service and give them a discount for not having to deliver. They want to be able to provide fresh food to any store regardless of size. They can provide some consulting

to stores for free about how to care for fresh produce.

### Profile: Organic Produce Warehouse – Rogue Nation Foods

Organic Produce Warehouse (OPW) has been distributing organic produce around the Rogue Valley since 2004 and currently reaches as far as Eugene and Portland. The warehouse is located in Ashland. Within the Rogue Valley, OPW distributes to the food cooperatives, natural food stores, and some restaurants. During the growing season in the Rogue Valley, OPW distributes a large amount of local produce. Currently, most of what they distribute, especially during the winter, comes from California and Mexico. Of locally sourced foods, owner Tom Marks finds that a lot

of the same product is being produced and there is not enough variety to meet the local demand.

As a distributor of locally produced foods, Organic Produce Warehouse would like to fill more of the role of physically moving local food from the farm to the market and also of connecting local food to a market where there is a demand for it. To help fill this role and focus on local foods first OPW is working on developing a Rogue Valley label, called Rogue Nation Foods. A main purpose of having one label to identify local foods is to brand foods produced in the Rogue Valley as something that more residents of the area will recognize and support. The goal is to increase the percentage of food eaten in the Rogue Valley that is grown in the Rogue Valley from the roughly 2.5% it is now.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Under the Rogue Nation Foods label it would be possible to track which farm the product came from for many products. This would be beneficial

to inform the consumer about where their food comes from and encouraging them to seek out local foods that they can identify as being from a farm that they are familiar with.

The focus of Rogue Nation Foods is on local food and not just for certified organic products. Potentially this label could include locally processed foods made from local ingredients in addition to fresh foods. With OPW's route to Cave Junction they could potentially pick up product from farms in the Applegate Valley on their way through and bring the product back to the warehouse in Ashland to be distributed to various markets in the valley. Organic Produce Warehouse has a need for a map of where all of the farms are located around the valley and what they are producing as well as other resources that are important to distribution such as grocery stores, farmers market, packing houses.

Tom sees that as a distributor one has to be able to consistently supply customers, such as grocery stores and restaurants, year round. His goal is to identify and utilize direct food paths so as to be able to provide the most locally produced products as possible all times of the year. If Rogue Nation Foods can source and sell within the Rogue Valley then that is what they will do first. When the product is not available in Southern Oregon then Organic Produce Warehouse can still supply the market by finding the most direct way to get the product from the next closest source. This would cut down on product coming from California going through Portland before coming back to Southern Oregon. Organic Produce Warehouse plans on distributing local produce to the Ray's Food Place stores in the Rogue Valley. OPW can play an important role as the middle man between grocery stores and producers by cutting down the amount of time that either party has to spend on making the sale.

As far as exporting product from the area under the Rogue Nation Foods label, Tom says that it



is challenging to sell the relatively low volume of product produced in the Rogue Valley out of this area. This is especially true when most of what is being produced here is also being produced elsewhere on a larger, more efficient scale. However, he has seen that we do have a window of production that is unique to Southern Oregon. Some of the fruits that we produce locally come on earlier here than they do anywhere else in the State. This time period is our window to export to larger markets that want an Oregon product and can't yet get it anywhere else. One current challenge to taking advantage of these export markets is that there is nowhere to pack the midsized scale of product for export here in the valley. Some midsized fruit producers are currently sending their fruit to Hood River to be packed for wholesale.

Organic Produce Warehouse has relationships with larger distributors that are looking to have contracts filled. This could give local farmers the opportunity to grow for a guaranteed price and market. Given that the farmers in the Rogue Valley are smaller than farmers filling these large contracts elsewhere, it would be possible for a few local farmers to grow to fill one contract.

#### Profile: Organically Grown Company

Organically Grown Company (OGC) is the largest organic produce wholesaler in the Pacific Northwest and they have a presence buying and selling produce within the Rogue Valley. OGC focuses on buying directly from farmers and over 30% of the products they sell come from farms in the Northwest. OGC has developed a trademark brand known as LADYBUG that represents about 42 family-owned farms located in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Through their LADYBUG brand OGC offers growers coordinated production and marketing of their product. The marketing of the LADYBUG brand focuses on the fresh quality of directly sourced produce. OGC

also offers producers the infrastructure that they may not have on their own such as cooler space, trucks, or staff needed to get product to stores. OGC has had success in working with farmers to coordinate production so that farmers are growing crops best suited to their specific climate and to avoid having a glut of certain crops.

OGC currently sells to about 10 stores in the Rogue Valley and they buy from about seven growers in the area. Through working with retailers OGC has found that it is much more feasible for the stores to receive one delivery of produce rather than several small producers stopping by with smaller amounts of product. OGC is also able to provide stores with a consistent supply of a variety of products given that they are sourcing from multiple growers.

#### Opportunities:

- 1) Market more locally produced foods through distributors making it feasible for more stores and restaurants to purchase locally produced foods.
- 2) Assist local growers in scaling up to meet wholesale demand.
- 3) Small, independently owned grocery stores could source fresh produce through Fresh Express by picking up at their Medford distribution facility without having to meet minimum purchasing requirements.

## Local Market Development

Farmers interviewed said that in many ways they are confident in their ability to produce food and what they need is an expanded local customer base to sell to. On the Rogue Valley Consumer Survey 95% of people surveyed said that they buy some food produced in Southern Oregon. However we know that a small portion, about 2.5% in Jackson County, of consumer's overall food budget is spent on locally produced foods.<sup>xxxiv</sup> While this percentage offers

an overall average of local food purchased, the reality is that many families purchase little or no locally produced foods and a small number of families are loyal customers of farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs. Of consumers surveyed around the valley 96% said that they would buy more locally produced food if it was available at the locations that they are already shopping. Several consumers in interviews and at community gatherings commented that they do not have time to get to the farmers market and that they would be interested in buying local food if it was available in the grocery store. See the below chart on the next page for results from the Consumer Survey showing where people are getting their

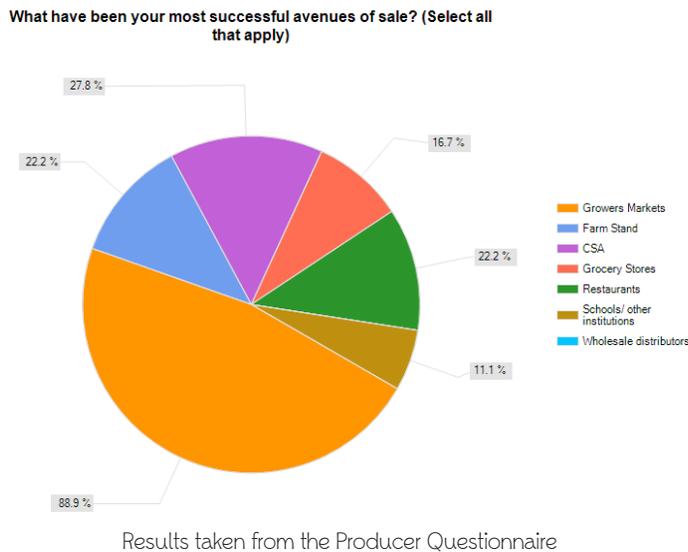
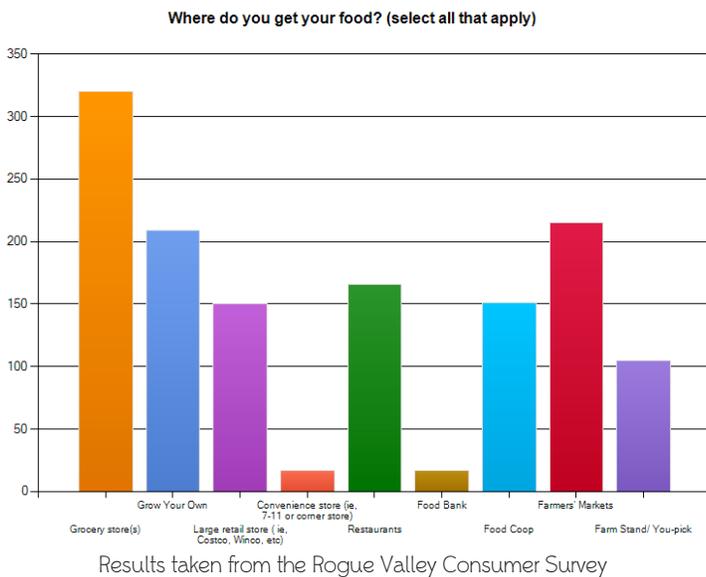
food.

The Josephine County Community Food Assessment also identified the need for avenues for farmers to be able to sell their product to grocery stores.<sup>xxxv</sup> Many of the small farms in Jackson County are operating as diversified market farms and have not considered or do not see a wholesale market as a feasible focus for their business. See Retail section for information on selling local food to grocery stores.

Farmers have expressed a need for information and support in developing niche products and how to market their products so that they are not one many farms producing the same product

and trying to sell it in the same way. Farmers have expressed that they have a limited amount of time to spend on marketing and could use more support in this area. “We are farmers, we don’t really want to be spending a lot of time marketing, we want to be farming” says farmer Matt Suhr of HappyDirt Dirt Veggie Patch.

Many producers currently say that selling at the Growers Markets is one of their most successful avenues of sale. However at the same time they express that it is a challenge to staff the market when there is no guarantee that sales will be good. Many producers feel that the markets are saturated with vendors and that they are reaching the same customers at each market. It is simply easier now for those same people to get to the market with more locations and times. Producers and consumers are appreciative of the numerous growers markets in the Valley, however many people have expressed that they do not feel that more farmers markets will increase sales for producers.



## Profile: Online Farmers Market

Thrive, The Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy, coordinates an online farmers market called Rogue Valley Local Foods, which is open year round to connect producers and consumers in both Josephine and Jackson Counties. The online farmers market is a solution that came out of the Southern Oregon Farmer Incubator (SOFI) to offer a flexible marketplace for new growers, while also trying to get local food into areas of the Valley that were underserved. Every week producers update their supply of locally produced foods on the website. This provides consumers with a variety of goods to choose from every week and they place an order of the products that they want. Customers can pay with credit, debit, or Oregon Trail Card (SNAP). The orders are delivered every Thursday to six locations around the Rogue Valley. Customers can even pay a little extra to have their order delivered to their home. The online market provides consumers with the flexibility of ordering when and what they want. On the producer side, the farmer simply has to get their product to the drop point near them and there is very little overhead cost or time required of the producer besides for posting their products on the website and harvesting what sells. The online market has been grant funded to support the administrative costs. The sales for the market have been the highest in the winter, when the outdoor markets are closed. While the online market was created with the intention of increasing customers of local food in the Medford area as well as restaurants, the market has seen low sales in these areas. This suggests that this avenue is still reaching the same customer base rather than expanding the number of households

that are buying local foods. For more information visit: <http://www.roguevalleylocalfoods.org>.

## Opportunity:

Producers and consumers in Rogue River express that they could use a drop off spot for online farmers market near them. Expand number of online market pickup sites, including health care facilities, and approach restaurant buyers to expand market sales.

## Profile: Rogue Flavor Guide

Every year Thrive produces the Rogue Flavor Guide [www.buy-localrogue.org/where-to-buy-local/rogue-flavor-food-guide.html](http://www.buy-localrogue.org/where-to-buy-local/rogue-flavor-food-guide.html). Moving into its ninth year, the Rogue Flavor Guide is full of information about the different ways that consumers can connect with local food. Even complete with information about cooking classes and events it truly is a sort of operator's manual to eating locally. It is available both in the printed version distributed around the community and online. The Rogue Flavor label can even be found highlighting local foods in some grocery stores around the Rogue Valley.



## Profile: Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Markets

The Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Markets started as one market in Medford in 1987. They have recently added Saturday markets in Med-

## ROGUE VALLEY GROWERS & CRAFTERS MARKET



ford and Ashland. Their four weekly-markets provide avenues for direct sales to consumers for over 150 vendors about 60% of whom are selling agricultural products. The market continues to receive applications for new vendors every year. Market vendors have experienced rising competition as the markets have grown in size. The market board plays an active role in selecting vendors to ensure quality of products sold at market; however, they do allow for a competitive market and do not want to regulate sales. They are interested in educating vendors about ways to sell a competitive product. They support vendors finding a specialized product to sell. They also encourage vendors to have signs to provide customers with as much information as possible about their product, such as their growing practices. The growers markets do find it challenging to market to a new consumer base. They would like to do more outreach in the community. At the markets there are educational opportunities for customers such as chef demonstrations to encourage people to purchase items that they might not be sure how to cook. The chefs are buying ingredients at the market and demonstrating some basic knife, preparation, and cooking skills to customers.

#### Opportunities:

- 1) To increase outreach in the community to expand the consumer base that shops at the growers markets by sharing marketing efforts between organizations in the community.
- 2) Continue to do SNAP outreach and community food demos.

## Retail

Grocery stores serve as the main source of food for much of the community, they create jobs, and ideally are avenues to distribute locally produced food to consumers. Jackson County is fortunate to have several independently owned

grocery stores that are willing to source locally and are focused on serving the community's needs. Both the Medford and Ashland Food Cooperatives are available avenues for local food. There are a few larger stores that are also independently owned such as Food 4 Less and Sherm's Thunderbird Market in Medford and Shop'n Kart in Ashland, all of which source some food locally. There are certainly challenges on both the side of the store and the farmer, but in most cases there is enough passion behind both sides to find ways around the challenges.

Shop'n Kart of Ashland tries to sell some locally produced foods, however Produce Manager Jary Kapus says, "The market is flooded for local products. What is available locally is a small amount of what people consume; they don't just eat kale. We don't grow bananas here. We sell a lot of bananas. We need more diversity of what is produced locally." This demonstrates a need to be able to offer buyers more variety of products. This variety is and can be produced here. Shop'n Kart is mostly buying from the largest of the producers in the region, because they are looking to buy products in quantity. This challenge of quantity production has been met in other places with the formation of producer cooperatives to combine what each farmer can produce individually to then fill some of the larger accounts. On the producer side, they do have to be producing enough to be able to afford selling at wholesale prices. Matt Suhr of HappyDirt Veggie Patch says, "A wholesale selling cooperative is the missing link around here for small farms, it would be worth it to always have a place to sell to even if the price is lower."

Currently the Medford Food Co-op is sourcing locally produced foods from some of the larger farms in the region, all of which are certified organic. The Co-op is working on a system to be able to buy from farms that are not certified organic for which farmers agree to following certain

growing practices and the Co-op will visit the farm to know more about where the food is coming from, negating the need for a third party certifier. If products are available locally the Medford Food Co-op does try to prioritize them, even if the price is higher. Produce manager Steve Swader says, "People are willing to pay a little more for a local product, and we do cut a little out of our margin to sell local products at an affordable price." Currently they are only labeling local products with the geographic location that they come from. They would like to start identifying the farm that the products come from to build the relationship that consumers can have with the sources of their food. Steve sees that there is a need for more education among consumers about seasonality and what is grown here so that they are not expecting local tomatoes in the winter. Steve does feel that there is a good variety of foods that can be produced here. However he sees a lot of the small farmers producing the same thing and would like to buy more specialized products locally.

A large portion of the community's consumers are served by the large chain stores that are scattered throughout the community: Albertson's, Safeway, Fred Meyer, Wal-Mart, Grocery Outlet, Winco, and Trader Joe's. Some of the smaller more rural communities are served by a Ray's Food Place. These larger chain stores are set up to operate within the larger, industrialized food system. They generally stock their shelves through large distributors that can supply large quantities at fairly low prices. These are very challenging avenues of sale for local, smaller scale farmers.

Albertson's stores say that they do try to feature a few local items from within the region of each store. The company requires producers to go through the process laid out by their corporate office and carry an insurance policy. Some of their customers do ask for locally produced items. The stores do label the items that are local

so that people know which farms they come from. The manager of the Central Point store says that local items are picked at the height of ripeness and they don't last long in the store. Customers don't want peaches that already have bruises. He has put out local peaches for \$ .79 per pound and warehouse peaches at \$ 1.39 per pound and the warehouse peaches sell faster. He thinks that it is because the local peaches are over ripe and people are buying produce to last several days. They also face the challenge that the amount of product that they can get locally is small and often inconsistent. The manager says that, "it is certainly still worth it to support local farmers." They also carry local chocolate, wines, Rogue Creamery cheeses, local pears, Tea Room Breads, Good Bean Coffee. The manager says that, "some of these products are more expensive, but they are good quality and are worth it."

In rural areas, small stores often face challenges sourcing fresh produce through distributors because they cannot meet minimum buying requirements. Some of these small stores don't source fresh produce locally, because there is an all too common misconception that produce needs to be "certified" in order to be sold in stores. Some store owners are very concerned about liability and will not sell local produce out of fear of being held liable. Apprehension has also been expressed about the safety of organic produce. There is a lack of information about organic growing practices.

#### Opportunity:

Provide resources and information to both store owners and producers about the realities around selling local produce through retail and provide assistance to remove the barriers often preventing this sale. Educate producers in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification as a possible way to reassure retail buyers.

## Independent Grocery Stores

Aside from carrying locally produced foods, small independently owned stores play an important role in providing food to city neighborhoods and small rural communities where larger chain stores often do not find the market they are looking for. Given the important role that independent grocery stores play in providing food for our communities, it is important to identify the challenges and successes that these stores have in trying to keep affordable food on their shelves and their doors open. Through the Rural Grocery Store Survey developed by the Oregon Food Bank we asked some rural and independent grocery store owners what their experience is of challenges and successes in their store.

Of the seven stores surveyed, five expressed that they face challenges getting distributors to deliver product to them due to their location or store size. Many of these stores explained that it is more economical for them to drive to Medford to shop at the large outlet stores, such as Food 4 Less, Grocery Outlet, and Costco to stock their shelves. Even for the stores that can get most of the goods that they carry delivered, almost all are unable to get bread delivered. Distributors often charge more for smaller or more remote purchases thus increasing the price that small stores have to charge for the items on their shelves. Six of the seven stores surveyed do not feel that they are getting a fair price through their suppliers compared to chain stores.

Most of the rural stores rely on summer tourist traffic to make a profit and get them through the slower winter months. They explain that it would be hard to stay in business based on sales from local customers alone. All of the independently owned stores survey in the outlying communities surrounding Eagle Point saw a significant decrease in their sales when the Wal-Mart opened in Eagle Point.



Almost all of the small stores surveyed do not accept Women, Infants, and Child (WIC) benefits because they do not carry the range of products required of a store to accept WIC. This can be a challenge for low-income consumers in outlying communities who are eligible for WIC as well as a potential source of revenue for markets that they can not access. Several of the stores expressed an interest in trying to offer healthier foods in their store and would be interested in ways to encourage people to make healthier choices instead of the “junk food” that they see so many people buying.

The need for affordable financing is a common challenge for small stores that wish to make improvements to their store. In order to be able to offer fresh, healthier foods such as produce, they often need more efficient equipment.

### Profile: Wimer Market

The Wimer Market is located eight miles north of Rogue River where the next larger grocery store is located. The majority of Wimer area residents are not doing their major grocery shopping at the Wimer Market, but owner Rick Nichols and his son Travis do stock the store so that residents of this outlying community can build a meal from the items in the store. The store's inventory consists of over 8000 items. Rick says that some people

#### WIMER MARKET



do use the store this way. There are quite a few people who don't go into town much. For those who are looking to build a healthy meal from the Wimer Market will find a fresh produce case, frozen meat and fish, pasta, rice, other grains, and many other staples.

However, as Rick points out, "the Wimer Market is a convenience store and you do have to charge more to stay in business." He is paying more for the product than stores that can buy in a larger volume and most of his sales are based on convenience items such as chips, soda, and beer. Rick has observed that the majority of purchases in his store are not healthy choices. The Wimer Market accepts SNAP benefits, which is important in making food affordable for low-income community members and providing a wider customer base for the market.

They recently added the produce case one year ago. Now that they have added produce this completes the list of staple items required to be able to accept WIC benefits. The Wimer Market is sourcing their produce from the distributor, Fresh Express, in addition to a few local farmers from the Evans Valley area. Rick says that farmers come into the store with produce and he generally buys it. During the growing season they carry and sell a large volume of local tomatoes and corn. This fall (2012) he was able to get local apples for a very low price.

They currently are not producing very much food waste, because their volume of fresh product is so low. The little bit that they are producing they could give to a farmer if the farmer wanted to come pick it up.

They are able to get all of the products that they need delivered except for bread. They are paying a little more for products because they are buying in lower volume than a larger store would. They do not have much storage space so they order product as they need it. The bread distributor will not deliver to

their location. Rick buys bread in Medford to stock their shelves. Bread is a challenge because it has a shorter shelf life than other items. Rick says that it would be very helpful to have bread delivered.

Rick has many years in the grocery business running a Thriftway prior to owning the Wimer Market. His experience is a huge advantage to be able to work through the challenges that many small, independent and especially rural stores face.

Even stores that are not rurally located have a hard time sourcing their product if they are small enough. The Peach Street Market in West Medford sources most of the product for their shelves from outlet grocery stores, because that is less expensive than buying from the distributor. For more information about the Peach Street Market see the Community Food Access section.

#### Opportunities:

- 1) Provide affordable financing to independent grocery stores to make infrastructure improvements.
- 2) Work with smaller distributors to see if these markets could be served.

## Serving Local Food - Restaurants & Caterers

There are several restaurants around the area that regularly feature locally produced foods on their menu. Restaurants have slightly more flexibility than grocery stores given that they do not have the challenge of keeping fresh products as long as grocery stores. Restaurants do however need consistent supply and quality. There are price challenges for restaurants in buying farm direct given that they operate on tight margins and often cannot afford farm direct prices.

## Profile: Standing Stone

Under the leadership of owners Alex and Danielle Amarotico, Standing Stone Brewing Company has made efforts to source their ingredients as close to home as possible. Chef Eric Bell has been involved with and very passionate about the Slow Food Movement and is very willing to work with farmers. Chef Bell can often be found shopping for that evening's menu at the Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market that sets up on the street right outside Standing Stone. He will often swing through the market as it is closing to buy up remaining items, which is very helpful to vendors. The special board at Standing Stone is a chalk board that can change by the hour if need be allowing Chef Bell to buy ingredients in small quantities and if they run out they can just be erased or changed. Farmer Aluna Michelle of HappyDirt Veggie Patch says, "We need more chefs like Eric Bell that are willing to be this flexible."

Standing Stone has also been proactive about the items that they source from out of the Valley. For example, they now buy Klamath potatoes from a distributor that delivers them directly rather than routing them through Portland first. They use about 100,000 lbs of potatoes annually. In 2011, Standing Stone took one more step to increase the intimacy of where their food comes from by starting their own farm only one mile from the restaurant in

Ashland. They are currently producing beef, eggs, and chicken on their farm. All of the eggs and beef that they use at the restaurant are currently coming from the farm. The farm is also serving as an educational resource for the community, demonstrating sustainable growing practices, such as rotational grazing.

They have been able to reduce the waste from their kitchen and brewery from two dumpsters down to one household size garbage can per week by taking their food scraps, both pre and post-consumer, to their farm to be composted.

## Profile: Fulcrum Dining

Chefs Gabrielle Rysula and Chad Hahn chose the Applegate Valley as the base for their catering business, Fulcrum Dining, in order to cook as directly from local food sources as possible. With their mobile kitchen they are able to offer onsite catering. During the spring, summer, and fall they park at the Wooldridge Creek Winery in the Applegate Valley and serve locally sourced culinary creations to those who are there wine tasting. By serving mostly local foods, they are filling their mission to bridge the gap between the wineries and the farms in the area.

During the market season, Fulcrum Dining can be found at the Grants Pass Saturday Growers Market and the Ashland Tuesday Market serving dishes often prepared from foods sourced right at the market. They have regular customers at the markets who are happy to have good prepared food available. They also find that there are a lot of people who do not understand the reasons for higher prices compared to what they are used to with non-local foods.

Even for the meals that they cater, they have found that customers are not familiar with local food pricing and how to base a meal from locally available foods. "People often want to focus on the meat," Gabrielle explains. "Local meat is very expensive and people want large portions. For meals with local meat we find that we need to plate the meal in order to control

STANDING STONE



portions, we can't do buffet style. It is all about education." Educating people about what goes into food production, seasonality, and good quality food is another large part of Fulcrum Dining's mission. Fulcrum Dining often prepares on farm meals to bring consumers to the farm where their food is being grown.

Fulcrum Dining uses local fruits, vegetables, meat, and some grains such as quinoa. They have found that it is expensive to source the flour and dairy that they use locally. They have found that there is a need for more local sources for Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) licensed eggs in the area. Producers must have an ODA egg handler's license in order to sell eggs to retailers or restaurants. The local, licensed eggs available now are not pasture raised, which is what Fulcrum Dining is looking for. "Pasture raised results a brighter yoke and better nutrition," says Chad.

Flexibility and relationships are important components to sourcing local foods. Fulcrum Dining buys chickens from Bradford Family Farms. Bradford sells a lot of chicken breasts and not a lot of thighs. So Fulcrum is able to buy the thighs. It works out for everyone. They could buy from them in bulk, reducing the price, but they do not have the storage or the cash flow.

Gabrielle and Chad see opportunities in the food

system for entrepreneurs to take advantage of niche markets. They have been very successful with the small amounts of bacon that they have been able to make. Gabrielle wonders, "There are so many wineries, why isn't someone making vinegar?" They also see a need for culinary education as they have had a hard time finding skilled employees.

Gabrielle and Chad built their custom mobile kitchen in April 2011 because there was no approved kitchen in the area where they could produce a meal on a regular basis. Even now that they have the kitchen, having a certified water source on site is a challenge. It is not sufficient to use water sources that are approved by ODA they have to be approved by the County health department. They are very interested in having a midsized, cooperatively owned kitchen facility in the community. They are mostly interested in producing cured meats.

#### Opportunities:

- 1) There is an opportunity for additional ODA-licensed egg producers in the region, including a pastured egg producer. Many of the eggs sold to restaurants and retailers are produced outside of the area.
- 2) There is an opportunity to have a midsized, cooperatively owned certified kitchen facility in the community for food processing.



# Growing Our Own

## Community Gardening and Garden Education

There are several organizations around the region working to make garden space available to the community. Of residents surveyed across the Rogue Valley, 58% said that they are currently growing some of their own food. There is an expressed interest by residents to have increased access to garden space. Of the consumers surveyed by all three consumer surveys, 65% indicated that they would like to have access to garden space. It is hard to know how many people would realistically make use of garden space if it was within their neighborhood. Gardening does take more time than people often realize and may sound like a good idea, but it is harder for some people to fit into their lives. However, the large interest among low-income families to have the ability to grow their own healthy food suggests that it would be a valuable effort to try to make more garden space available. Of low-income families surveyed at food pantries and at the WIC office 25% said that they are currently growing their own food and 58% families surveyed said that they would like access to garden space (see appendix C). This demonstrates that some families experiencing difficult economic times do attempt to grow food themselves.

The Jackson County Master Gardener Association through OSU Extension is a resource to provide education to community members to assist them in growing more bounty for their families. They provide low-cost gardening classes, offer technical assistance through the “Plant Clinic,” and maintain demonstration gardens at the Extension office. The Master Gardener Association has not traditionally played an active role in supporting community gardens, but there is new

interest among Master Gardeners to be out in the community helping to provide some of the stewardship that is often missing from community gardens. With a large pool of volunteers, the association has the capacity to provide significant support to community projects.

Opportunities: A garden network to support basic gardening skills education out in the community as well as support for community gardens.

### Profile: Anderson Vista Apartments

The Anderson Vista Apartments, a housing complex owned by the Housing Authority of Jackson County, is located in the community of Talent, population around 7,000.<sup>xxxvi</sup> About two years ago, the Housing Authority supported the development of a few garden plots on the premises to be used by residents. There are 36 families living at Anderson Vista, about half of whom

#### ANDERSON VISTA APARTMENTS



are Hispanic. There has been so much interest in gardening at Anderson Vista that the garden space has continued to expand, replacing more and more of the lawn with tomatillos, tomatoes, peppers, and more. There are nine families that officially claim the various garden beds the resident manager Alejandro says that, “a lot of the food being grown in the garden is shared by everyone. The garden really feeds everyone.” There is a strong desire among the residents at Anderson Vista to have more room to grow their own food. Alejandro indicated that, “If they were allowed they would probably tear up the whole lawn and the neighbor’s.” The group of Anderson Vista residents who attended the Spanish Language Community Food Conversation said that the garden plots that they have access to there at the apartments are not enough space. They said that they would like to have ¼ to ½ acre plots to grow food for their families near where they are living.

The Housing Authority of Jackson County has established garden spaces for residents to grow their own food at many of their properties around the county. Dave Ruckman, who coordinates the garden development for the Housing Authority, is happy to consider developing garden space wherever there is an interest by residents. In addition to providing people with garden space, Dave sees that there is still a large need to educate the community about healthy food choices.

#### Opportunity:

Locate and develop additional garden space near Anderson Vista, possibly at a neighboring church.

#### Profile: Medford Gospel Mission

In December of 2011 the Medford Gospel Mission turned what was a paved parking lot back into paradise by developing a series of raised garden beds to be used by the neighborhood



MEDFORD GOSPEL MISSION

and to produce food for their community meal. The garden was a project initiated by the Medford Chamber of Commerce leadership group. There are about nine community members who utilize the garden beds at no cost and live in the surrounding neighborhood. Only two of these families had ever gardened before.

The Gospel Mission hosts a free community meal called The Main Ingredient every night of the week. The cooks are young men who are staying at the Mission and they are learning to utilize the produce from the garden for the meal as a part of their assigned tasks at the Mission. The residents also take on the task of watering the garden. This program was started in July of 2011 with the goal of providing a unique experience for community members who do not have the ability to have a nice sit down meal at a restaurant. It's set up like a restaurant with a host, servers, and a choice of what they want to order. Providing personal interaction and choice of foods improves the diners' experience. The goal is for it to truly be a meal for the whole community, where people with all sorts of life experiences are sharing a meal. Toward this end, they would like to attract more diversity from the neighborhood.

The staff are volunteers from the community who generally have one night every week that they are

scheduled for. They ask the volunteers to commit to once a week for six months. It takes about 12 volunteers every night to serve an average of 120 people a night. They have a total of over 100 volunteers and receive donations of food for the meal from a variety of sources including the Medford Food Project.

The meals at the Main Ingredient are made with the intention of providing a healthy, balanced diet and they make use of the USDA plate guide to do so. They use salad greens and vegetables from the garden to get some fresh vegetables into the meal. The Medford Food Co-op also contributes salad greens five days a week. The idea is to role model healthy eating. They would love to offer cooking classes as part of the meal.

Their target population is the community that lives within walking distance from the Mission, about one mile radius. The Mission serves a lot of people in the immediate neighborhood. There is a lot of need in that part of the city. Associate Director Jason Bull says, “Having the garden beds on such a visible corner of this neighborhood has really had an effect on revitalizing the community.”

**Opportunity:**

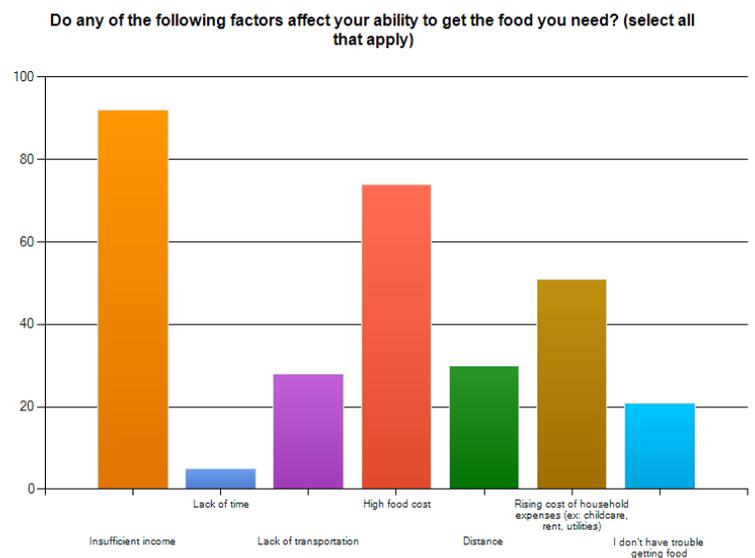
Cooking classes could be held in the Mission’s kitchen on Saturdays. The kitchen and ingredients would be available they just need instructors and a way to get people to attend. To attract people from the neighborhood door hangers could be distributed door to door in the neighborhood.

# Consumption

## Food Insecurity in Jackson County

The US Department of Agriculture introduced a new language of “food insecurity” in 2006 to better describe the wide range of experiences around hunger. Low food security is defined as reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake. Very low food security is defined as reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.<sup>xxxvii</sup> According to 2010 statistics published by Feeding America, 16.9% of the Jackson County community is food insecure.<sup>xxxviii</sup> As of September 2012 the unemployment rate was 10.6%.<sup>xxxix</sup> Officially, 14% of Jackson County lives below federal poverty level and at 185% of the federal poverty level 58,160 people, or 28% of the total population, were eligible

for SNAP in 2010. Jackson County has a fairly high rate of people who are eligible for the SNAP program who are actually participating in the program at 75% participation.<sup>xli</sup> The chart below shows the factors that affect food security for Jackson County residents surveyed at food pantries and the WIC office.



On the Oregon Food Bank Hunger Factors Survey in 2012 only 6% of food pantry clients indicated that their SNAP benefits last the whole month.<sup>xiii</sup> When families living with insufficient income run out of their SNAP benefits for the month they often turn to food pantries as a source of food.

## Other Federal Food Sources Improving Food Security

The Women Infant and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program is a federal supplemental food and nutrition program for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women and children under age five who have a nutritional risk. WIC provides specific supplemental nutritious food, nutrition education and referrals to health and other social services to income qualifying participants at no charge. In 2009, WIC served 10,643 pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants and children under five, representing 49% of all pregnant women in Jackson County (compared to 38% statewide average).<sup>xliii</sup>

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to low-income children each school day. In 1998, the program was expanded to include snacks served to children in afterschool educational and enrichment programs. The Summer Lunch Program provides low-income children with nutritional meals during the summer months. Programs are offered throughout Jackson County through local sponsors, such as Sodexo. In 2009, 14,644 students (53.1%) were eligible for free and reduced price meals in Jackson County, yet only 8,441 received a lunch each day on average; 55% of them received school breakfast, and 29% ate meals through the Summer Food Program.<sup>xliv</sup>

Meals on Wheels is a nutritional meal program targeting low-income individuals and is provided throughout Jackson and Josephine counties by the Rogue Valley Council of Government program, Food and Friends. Over 220,000 hot nutritional meals, annually, are provided to seniors at senior meal sites and delivered by volunteers to home-bound seniors.<sup>xlv</sup>

## Local Food Sources Improving Food Security

As the state designated Regional Food Bank for emergency food distribution, ACCESS is a major resource for providing food to low-income families and individuals. Together with a partner agency network of 24 pantries (including Salvation Army and St Vincent DePaul) ACCESS provides close to 3 million pounds of food annu-

### PEARS FROM HARRY & DAVID AT APPLGATE FOOD PANTRY



ally to food insecure residents in Jackson County. The food pantries are run by volunteers in each community and are generally sponsored and supported by churches. Most pantries are open once a week. Families and individuals needing food are designated a pantry nearest their home. With enough resources to provide up to 12 emergency food boxes (5-7 day supply) in a twelve month period, ACCESS encourages families to stretch out their need for food boxes, but also provides a list of non-ACCESS pantry that can provide additional food. Food pantries are encouraged to set up as a shopping style pantry, which allows clients to choose the foods that they would like resulting in less waste and a better experience for the individuals. Other food organizations providing additional food resources include Ashland Emergency Food Bank, Table Rock Fellowship and Northwest Seasonal Workers.

Over the past several years, the emphasis of Regional Food Banks has moved from the distribution of non-perishable food that would come from outside the area to perishable food produced and sold locally. This movement has also brought a change in infrastructure that has forced many pantries to increase their capacity (refrigerators and freezers) to accept perishable foods (i.e. frozen meats, dairy and fresh produce). Additionally, many young families do not have the knowledge or the skills to cook from scratch and require support and education in order to best utilize the foods distributed through food pantries. An increasing number of food banks and pantries are learning more and more how important it is to be able to offer fresh healthy food to those in need of food assistance. On the Food Education Survey conducted at food pantries around Jackson County, there were two clients who actually wrote on the margins of the survey that the only fresh vegetables that they

eat are what they get through their local ACCESS pantry. There are several avenues that ACCESS has been developing to utilize locally available fresh foods, one of which is through local agricultural producers.

Jackson County is fortunate to have a number of generous food production and food retail donors that donate pears, peaches, pizzas, fresh produce, frozen meat and dairy products (including Harry David, Amy's Kitchen, Umpqua Dairy, Albertson's, Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart). ACCESS also works regionally with its partners to share product such as potatoes from Klamath County.

There are many other farmers, large and small, who donate their extra product throughout the growing season. At the end of a Grower's Market day is an ideal time for farmers to donate product that did not sell, is already picked, and may go to waste.

Thrive, The Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy, coordinates the New Farmer Subsidy Program that pays new farmers for food delivered to area food banks and community meal sites. The funding for this program was initially made possible through a grant from the Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation. Currently, individual donors contribute to supporting the program by making a pledge through Thrive's online Farmers Market, Rogue Valley Local Foods. Farms and ranches must be in their first five years of business in order to participate. This program provides fresh local food to the community, offers farmers an outlet for their products, and gives beginning farmers the chance to experience how to sell their product in a wholesale model. <http://www.buylocalrogue.org/business-resources/southern-oregon-farmer-incubator.html>

### Profile: The Farming Fish

The Farming Fish describes itself as a multifaceted farm centered on Aquaponics & passionate about holistic farming practices. They grow organic produce and tilapia in the Evans Valley. In response to the need that the farmers see for access to fresh healthy food for all, regardless of income level, they have developed a donation program. Donors interested in supporting local, organic agriculture and providing fresh produce to food bank clients can make a cash donation to The Farming Fish. This cash donation then supports the production of produce to be donated to the donor's choice of ACCESS, the ROC food pantry in Grants Pass, or Feeding America. Olivia Hittner explains, "This way we can provide fresh food more consistently to the food bank and I think that people will be excited to have their donation go towards getting fresh food to people instead of canned food." With their aquaponics system The Farming Fish is able to supply some produce all year round. For more information visit: <http://www.rogueaquaponics.com/page3.html>.

#### THE FARMING FISH



### Plant a Row for the Hungry

ACCESS coordinates a program, Plant a Row for the Hungry, that encourages home gardeners, schools, church groups, youth groups, and businesses to get involved by planting a few extra rows of vegetables in their garden to donate. Gardeners can then find out through ACCESS where there is a food pantry site near them so that their contribution stays in their neighborhood or community. ACCESS can provide gardeners with seed packets to get them started as well as some technical support, such as when to plant what or suggest a few crops that are needed by food pantries.

### Profile: ACCESS Food Share Gardens

In 2010, as requests for emergency food relief climbed, ACCESS Food Share sponsored the creation of Food Share Gardens throughout the area. Individuals and organizations in many communities stepped forward to play a role in helping meet the demand. Through their efforts, Food Share Gardens were developed in Medford, Rogue River and at the VA–Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics in White City to create sustainable sources of fresh produce for the local food banks and food pantries they serve. The gardens also give people an opportunity to learn how to grow their own. With so many of the food items that are available through the emergency food system being non-perishable, prepared, and often not the most nutritional, the gardens provide a way to offer low income families fresh, organic produce that is full of nutrients.

The Food Share Gardens are high producing and tended collectively by volunteers who share the harvest and provide fresh, healthy produce for their community. This model was inspired by a community tended garden that has been operating in Gold Hill. The Gold Hill garden manager, Curt Shuler, has been an advocate of communities creating their own locally sourced food sup-



GOLD HILL FOOD SHARE GARDEN



MEDFORD FSG AND ROGUE VALLEY ADVENTIST SCHOOL 8TH GRADERS

plies to alleviate hunger. In 2011 the Gold Hill garden officially became an ACCESS Food Share Garden.

Each garden is “hosted” by the property owner who also provides free water in exchange for fresh vegetables. ACCESS maintains oversight of the gardens which are managed and run by individuals within the community, many of whom have years of gardening experience and some who are learning the ins and outs of vegetable growing “on the job.” The gardens are made possible by the hundreds of volunteers that lend a hand in the gardens each year and the generous support of local businesses.

ACCESS Food Share Gardens follow sustainable growing practices so residents and families requiring emergency assistance receive the full nutritional benefit of organically grown vegetables. The typical garden site is about 9,600 square feet and allows many hundreds of pounds to be harvested each week. The high productivity is due in part to the drip irrigation used that ensures efficient water usage, and the crops planted are popular varieties known for their productivity.

In 2012, a sixth growing garden in Central Point was added to the Food Share Gardens. Food Share Gardens are now located in Central Point,

Gold Hill, Medford, at OSU Extension, Rogue River, and at the VA—SORCC in White City. Since the inception of the gardens in 2010, more than 142,400 pounds of fresh produce have been harvested for donation to ACCESS food pantries.

#### Profile: The Gleaning Network Food Pantry, Inc

The Gleaning Network Food Pantry, Inc has been salvaging food to feed the hungry in Southern Oregon for 30 years. The network is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers who are available to harvest and collect food that is going to go to waste. The network then works with a variety of community organizations to distribute the food to those in need. The Gleaning Network encourages, but does not require, those who are able and would like to receive food from the network to participate in gleaning activities. The Gleaners Network has a centralized location for sorting and storage in Central Point where they also have a thrift store that raises funds to support the overhead costs of the network. For more information about the Gleaners Network visit their website at <http://www.gleaningnetwork.com>.

#### Profile: Neighborhood Food Project

The Neighborhood Food Project, also known to many as “the green bags,” started in Ashland,

and then spread to Medford, and then the surrounding communities in Jackson County. The Food Project collects donated, non-perishable, food by neighborhood once every two months. The Food Project collection is convenient for the donors and therefore gets many people in the community involved who would not otherwise be involved on such a consistent basis. Many people participate in seasonal food drives, but the Food Project encourages people to donate throughout the year. This steady stream of food provides food pantries and meal sites around the community with a consistent supply of some non-perishable foods at no cost to them. In its third year of operation, the Food Project is the largest volunteer organization in Jackson County, with more than 5,500 food donors and coordinators participating. By the end of 2012, the project was collecting about 50,000 lbs of food every two months and had delivered more than 700,000 lbs since started in Ashland in June 2009.

The Neighborhood Food Project's tag line is "Building Community. Sharing Food." The Associate Director of the Medford Gospel Mission, Jason Bull, has seen this aspect of building community happen. The Gospel Mission receives donations of food for the community meal they serve from a variety of sources including the Medford Food Project. Jason has seen that there is more of a working relationship between different organizations that are working to serve the food needs of the community as a result of the Food Project. He says, "We talk to each other a lot more about what we are using and make trades so that each organization ends up with the things that they use most. The Gospel Mission can go through a lot of dried beans and other things that the food pantries have a harder time moving."



ACCESS MOBILE OUTREACH SERVICES

## Strengthening Food Assistance

### Profile: ACCESS Mobile Outreach Services

The ACCESS Mobile Outreach Services truck is set up to function as a mobile food pantry to take food out to sites in the community where there is not a facility to store food. The truck is equipped with two refrigerators and one freezer that can be run off of the onboard generator or could be hooked up to electricity if available. In addition to the cold storage capability the truck has sides that open to reveal shelves that can hold boxes of food.

The truck is currently being used two days a week to set up a food pantry at St. John's Lutheran Church in Eagle Point and at the Rogue Valley Christian Church in Southwest Medford. These sponsor groups go to ACCESS to load up the truck and drive it back to their community site.

### Opportunities:

1) The ACCESS mobile outreach truck is set up to offer wireless internet capabilities and can seat up to six people. Given this capacity the truck has the potential to be able to offer many outreach services in partnership with other service organiza-

tions. This could be anything from health care, to financial assistance, to library services.

2) The mobile outreach services could be extremely useful in more of the outlying communities that may not be able to house a pantry, but have residents who cannot afford to travel the long distance in search of services.

## Community Food Access

The USDA has utilized census tract information to identify food deserts, which are “areas where people have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable food.” They consider distance to grocery stores, income level, vehicle availability, and access to public transportation in assessing the access to food in these areas.<sup>xlvi</sup> The USDA Food Desert Locator identifies the following areas and number of people as having limited access to food in Jackson County; North Medford/ Central Point (2592 people), White City (2140 people), the area around Butte Falls and Prospect (1681 people), Talent (1493 people), and Ashland (958 people).<sup>xlvii</sup>

Certainly census data can help to provide a base of information about our community, but it does have limitations for identifying the reality of situations that people are experiencing. Through the Community Food Conversations and FEASTs held around Jackson County we learned from community members about other areas that they know to be limited in access to healthy foods for the families who live there. There were three areas that have been identified by community members in the Medford area including; East Jackson Street, north Table Rock Road, and the West Medford neighborhood. Some of our outlying communities were also identified as having limited access to food. Volunteers at the Shady Cove Food Pantry and the food pantry in Ruch described that several of their clients who do not have cars often have a hard time finding a way to

even get to the food pantry let alone a grocery store. In some rural communities, residents report driving over 30 miles to obtain groceries. Given gas prices, this can often make getting groceries very expensive. As identified here in our community and nation-wide by the USDA, food deserts are a reality for both rural and urban areas.

### Profile: Peach Street Market

The Peach Street Market is located on the corner of Peach and 13th streets in West Medford and, like most corner stores, serves many purposes. It is the quick stop for those who want a cold drink, a bag of chips, or a pack of cigarettes, but it is also where kids go after school for a snack, where families go for a gallon of milk, and it is a neighborhood gathering place.

Nancy Murrish has owned the market for 20 years and has seen how the low-income residents of this neighborhood are trying to live on a food

### PEACH STREET MARKET



stamp budget and often spend a good portion of their benefits on “junk food.” Nancy would like to set an example of healthy eating by carrying healthier options in her store. Nancy truly believes that, “when you eat fresh you feel better.” Nancy’s vision is to be able to provide the neighborhood with a place to buy affordable food and that is within walking distance to their homes. She would like to have a healthy foods cooler that is stocked with yogurts, salads, fresh produce and other healthy options.

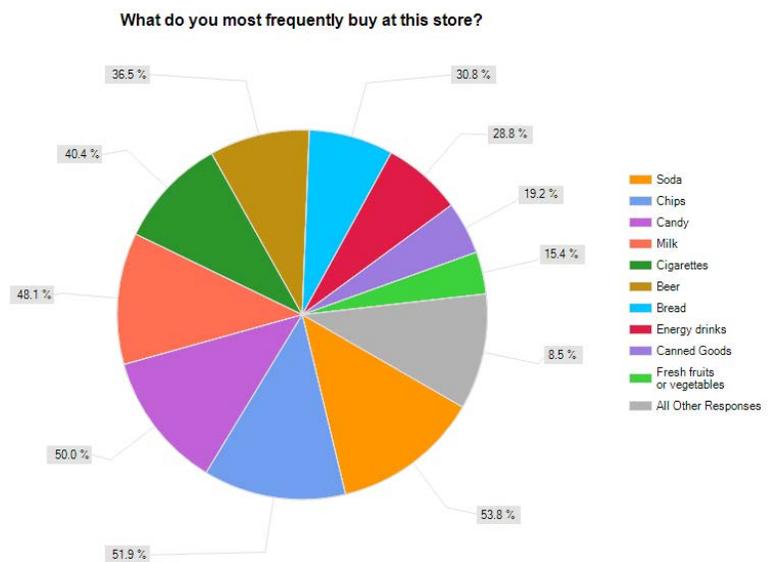
The challenge for a store like the Peach Street Market is that much of the sales are based on products like, chips, soda, candy, beer, and cigarettes. So the big question is; how do you promote healthy eating and start carrying healthier items in your store when your business is based on the unhealthy items?

Well, Nancy knew that she would need some help finding the answer to this question, so she joined with a community group that is interested in making healthy food more accessible in the community. This community group that formed out of the Community Food Conversations consists of OSU Extension Family Food Education Volunteers, ACCESS employees, Jackson County Public Health, and other community members.

On September 15th 2012, as a part of Thrive’s Eat Local Week, ACCESS, OSU Extension, and other community volunteers coordinated a local food demonstration at the Peach Street Market. ACCESS brought the Mobile Outreach Services truck to provide refrigeration for the fresh produce that came from the Food Share Gardens. The OSU Extension volunteers prepared a fresh, simple vegetable pasta with the local produce and gave away samples for residents of the neigh-

borhood to taste. People that came by that day could also take home the recipe and a bag of the ingredients to make the dish at home. The store owner Nancy said that following the event five people told her that they repeated the recipe at home and it was great.

To help inform possible changes to the store, a consumer survey of neighborhood residents was conducted at the store. The survey revealed that the majority of the residents travel over a mile to get the majority of their groceries and 75% reported being eligible for food assistance such as SNAP or WIC. When asked what healthy foods they would like to be able to buy at the Peach Street Market 65% said that they would buy fruit and 55% said vegetables. The kids in the neighborhood were encouraged to put a dot on the dot survey for their favorite vegetable. Broccoli, carrots, and cucumbers were the top favorites. Price was a concern for residents, with 96% saying that they consider price when they purchase food. Given the limited-income demographics of the neighborhood, it will be important to try to offer healthy options at a price at least comparable to the unhealthy items if not lower. See the below chart for items that residents said they are currently purchasing at the Peach Street Market.



Results taken from the Food Desert Survey

Overall there was a lot of excitement that day about the possible changes. One middle aged man said, “It is important for people to be able to get healthy food in this neighborhood because you are what you eat.” The neighborhood also showed a strong interest in growing food for themselves. On the survey 70% said that they would like to have access to garden space (see appendix B).

### Opportunities:

- 1) Set a model at the Peach Street Market for offering healthy foods in convenience stores that could be duplicated at other stores around the community.
- 2) Partner with the Washington Elementary School located one block from the Peach Street Market to encourage healthy eating among youth and possibly create a garden at the school to increase the connection to healthy food for youth.
- 3) Link an area farmer to stores like the Peach Street Market to maintain a small vegetable section.
- 4) Continue to offer food demos at the market to encourage sales of healthy foods.

## Affordability of Healthy Food

Of low-income consumers surveyed in Jackson County 72% said that insufficient income was a factor affecting their ability to get the food they need and 58% said that it was due to high food costs. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) plays a huge role in providing a food budget for families. However, for many SNAP is not enough. If families are eligible for the maximum amount of benefits, SNAP provides for \$4.50 per person per day.<sup>xlviii</sup> In Jackson County the average meal costs \$2.47 per person, or a total of \$7.41 per person per

day.<sup>xlix</sup> Most families have to supplement their food budget in some way. On this stretched budget it can be challenging for families to afford nutritionally dense, fresh foods. Instead many turn to cheap, high calorie foods. One man who was waiting to receive food at the Medford Presbyterian Church Food Pantry said that, “I mostly eat frozen vegetables not fresh, fresh is too expensive.” Another pantry client indicated, “I buy some fresh produce, like a bag of oranges, at the beginning of the month when I have food stamps and then when that runs out that is it for the month.”

### Opportunities:

- 1) Make sure that grocery stores are coding food producing plants and seeds as food so that SNAP customers can use their benefits to buy plant starts and seeds to grow their own food. Do more outreach to SNAP recipients to make sure that they know that they can use their benefits to get started growing their own food.
- 2) Provide pantry basics cooking classes to make sure that families have the skills to cook with whole foods and stretch their food dollars further.

## Assistance for Buying Fresh Healthy Food

Families receiving WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) benefits also receive Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP) checks that they can spend for fruits and vegetables with farmers who are signed up to receive them at Farmers Markets or Farm Stands. Senior Citizens who are receiving SNAP benefits are also eligible for the FDNP checks. Families on WIC also receive Fruit & Veggie Vouchers that can be spent in the same way. This program allows families to have a little extra money that they can only spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. The program also increases sales for local farmers. Farmers and market

organizers in the town of Rogue River identified the Farm Direct Nutrition Program as an important asset for their small market. The Jackson County WIC office reported that 63.3% of FDNP checks distributed had been redeemed for the 2012 season. This is a significantly higher redemption rate compared to the state average; however it shows that a significant amount of these benefits are being left on the table.

The Rogue Valley Growers and Crafters Markets accept SNAP benefits for the farm fresh products sold at the markets. During the 2011 market season SNAP customers spent a total of \$49,402 of their benefits at all of the Growers Markets. This amount increased during the 2012 season to \$56,222. That is \$56,222 worth of fresh food on the tables of low-income community members in Jackson County. In addition to the nutritional value there is also a large economic impact of spending SNAP benefits on local foods. Every \$1.00 in SNAP benefits spent has been shown to equal \$1.79 in economic activity and there are varying numbers showing that dollars spent on locally produced foods have a greater impact than dollars spent on non-local foods.<sup>1</sup> The effect of these economic multipliers combined offer a significant benefit to our local economy. Considering that the total SNAP benefits redeemed annually in Jackson County is \$69,169,754 the benefits currently spent at growers markets (less than 1%) is a minute portion of the potential.<sup>1i</sup> In order to increase the rate of benefits used at the market, to encourage new customers to the market, and make fresh food more affordable many other communities have offered a SNAP incentive match program. For this the community raises funds to provide a match for the benefits that SNAP customers spend. Commonly, the market will match the first five dollars that a customer spends of their benefits.

Through a USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant, Thrive worked in 2012 to educate

social service case managers about the opportunities for low income families to use their SNAP benefits at area markets, Community Supported Agriculture programs and the online farmers market. This information was well received, but Thrive staff note that staff turnover makes it important to continue to repeat this outreach.

### Opportunities:

- 1) It would be helpful to continue to do outreach around the community to make sure the recipients of the benefits know where and how to spend their benefits as well as to identify if there are any barriers to using them. There may also need to be some outreach done to make sure that farmers know how to sign up to accept the FDNP benefits, that they are posting signs that they accept them, and that they are redeeming them at the end of the season.
- 2) Provide a SNAP Incentive Match program at the growers markets to encourage SNAP customers to the market and to stretch their food dollars for healthy items further.

### U-Pick Opportunities

Being able to pick large quantities of fruits and vegetables yourself is an excellent way for consumers to be able to afford local fruits and vegetables. This makes fresh produce more available when in season and then allows families and individuals to be able to preserve a significant quantity of food for the off season. Community members of varying backgrounds have voiced an interest in having more opportunities to pick their own on farms. The numbers of u-pick farms have declined. There are challenges for farms in offering u-pick due to the liability and logistics of having the public on your farm. The benefit to farms is that they get some compensation for crops that they do not have to provide the labor to pick. This could be done toward the end of a crops season when it is no longer viable to pay

workers to pick. An added benefit to families is the appreciation and understanding of where one's food comes from by going out into the field and picking it right off the plant.

### Opportunities:

- 1) Create a comprehensive list of farms offering u-pick opportunities.
- 2) Identify barriers that are preventing farmers from offering u-pick and provide education about how to work around these barriers, possibly through OSU Extension.

## Consumer Education

Another important piece of the puzzle is inspiring consumers to eat healthy foods and making sure that they have the resources and skills to make use of these foods. We can increase access to healthy foods all we want, but if people are not inspired to choose carrot sticks over potato chips or if they don't feel confident cooking fresh green beans, then it does little to truly improve their diet. There are a significant number of organizations, businesses, and agencies currently working to make this education available to the public, each with its own curriculum and target population.

The Southern Oregon OSU Extension Service and their Family Food Educator Volunteers (FFEV) play a large role in offering food related education to the community. OSU Extension has a plethora of resources for nutrition and food skills education, much of which can be found online through their Food Hero program. Extension also has staff who are funded through USDA to provide nutrition education to families who are eligible for SNAP benefits. The Family Food Educators are volunteers who attend a one-day training on USDA nutrition guidelines and then many of them go out into the community to locations such as food pantries to offer educational demonstrations about healthy food choices and

how to prepare healthy foods. The volunteers have an "adopt a pantry" program and currently about 20% of the pantries around the county are adopted. OSU Extension works with ACCESS and the Josephine County Food Bank to provide this education at each pantry at least once a year. The MOU outlines that each pantry will get at least one visit a year. This program is especially helpful because the volunteers go out to locations where low-income community members are rather than expecting them to come to a class. Ideally, this type of outreach would happen on a weekly basis.

### Profile: Rogue Valley Farm to School

The Rogue Valley Farm to School program is addressing several of the needs that the community has identified around food education and developing more markets for farmers. The hands-on experiential education that kids need in order to have more of a connection to what real food is, and where it comes from, is exactly what Rogue Valley Farm to School is working to provide. Several schools in both Jackson and Josephine Counties participate in the program. Whole classrooms can take part in a trip to a local farm where students participate in activities in the field and in the kitchen. These activities help to make the connection of where the food on their plate comes from and teaches some skills around how to prepare whole foods as a healthy meal. The farms participating in the program are Eagle Mill Farm, Rogue Valley Brambles, Dunbar Farms, Fort Vannoy Farm, and White Oak Farm. The program has more teachers interested in participating than they can accommodate at this time.

Rogue Valley Farm to School also provides support and resources to develop, expand, and maintain school gardens as another way to increase opportunities for kids to experience where fresh food comes from. The schools that have gardens are: Ashland Middle School, John Muir School, Walker Elementary, Helman Elementary,

Bellview Elementary, Willow Wind CLC, Ashland High School, Oak Grove Elementary, Jackson Elementary School, Washington Elementary, and Talent Elementary for Jackson County. In Josephine County there are gardens at; Fruitdale, Highland, Parkside, Madrona, Allendale, Lincoln, St. Anne's, and Gladiola Alternative High Schools.

Rogue Valley Farm to School is also playing a key role to try to connect our small farmers to the school cafeterias and find solutions to barriers that prevent more local food from being served as an everyday part of school meals. The two school districts with independent cafeterias that are currently buying local foods are Central Point School District and Grants Pass District 7.

## Nutrition Education Symposium

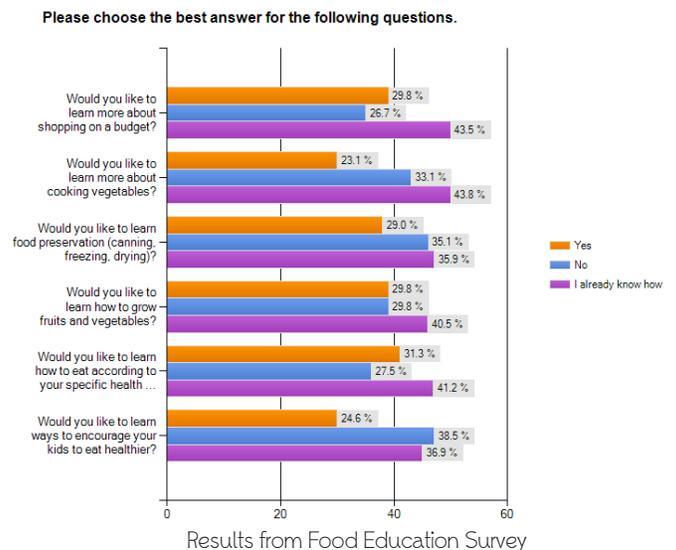
The Leightman Maxey Foundation, whose mission is to support nutrition education for a healthier community, has been supporting the coordination of the Nutrition Education Symposium formed in 2010. The mission of the Nutrition Education Symposium is to champion a holistic approach to nutrition education through; experiential learning, assisting in implementing public wellness policies, and building partnerships. There are over forty groups who participate in this group who would like to find ways that as a region we can increase the impact of nutrition education in the community. Some of their main tactics are outlined as; encourage food bank donors to donate healthy choices, promote portion sizes, get businesses and organizations to pledge to provide healthy snacks, and procurement of healthy snacks centralization. In the fall of 2012 the Leightman Maxey Foundation hired a part-time coordinator to assist with the communication among this group and move their goals forward. The symposium group has named themselves Great Start, Eat Smart. The Foundation is currently

coordinating the production of a half-hour TV program and a series of short (five or ten minute) cooking demonstration videos that could be shown at locations such as food pantries and schools.

### What is the need for more education?

At every FEAST workshop and Community Food Conversation that was held around Jackson County, community members voiced a need for more education for consumers on nutrition, cooking skills, home gardening, food preservation, meal planning, and where their food comes from. Generally it was identified that much of this education does exist in the community, but there needs to be more of it and we need to be taking the education to where people are living, learning, working, and receiving services already. As a result of this community input, we surveyed low-income families at food pantries and the WIC office in Jackson County to gauge their interests and experiences directly.

The results of the survey indicate that people self identify that they possess more of the food skills and resources than is commonly believed. Of individuals surveyed 95% say they are cooking on the stove top, when it was expected to see more people using microwaves. 94% say that they cook fresh vegetables and 86% say they cook from scratch. Below are the responses from the survey that inquired about some possible topics for education.

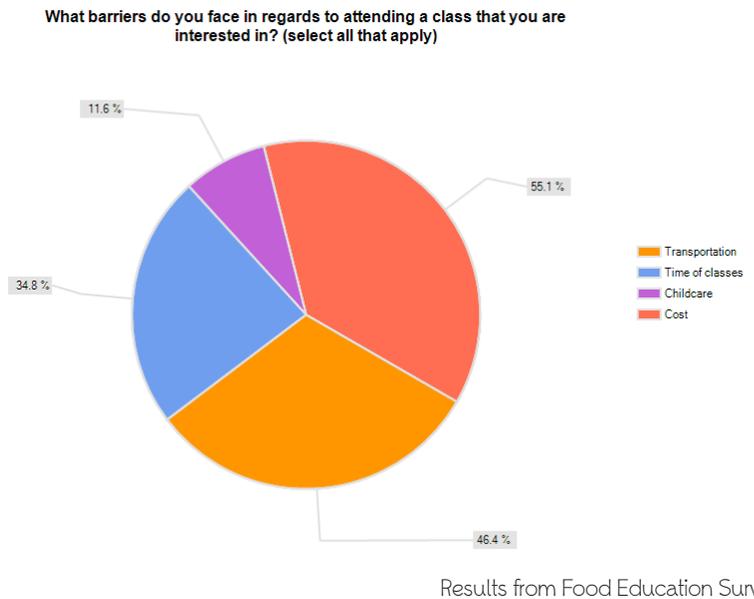


Numerically, the survey results do not show an overwhelming interest in more education. However, through having conversations with pantry and WIC clients we learned that there is interest and what some of their specific needs are. Of the survey respondents who said that they would like to learn to eat according to their specific healthy needs, the health conditions ranged from diabetes, HIV, celiac disease, to high blood pressure. Those who were interested in learning to preserve food said that they have wanted to learn to can for some time, but they have never been able to afford the investment in canning equipment. Even though the percentages are low, the survey still shows that there are 30 people who were surveyed that would like to learn to cook fresh vegetables for example. That is 30 families whose dietary habits could be greatly improved.

At the Spanish Language Community Food Conversation held at Anderson Vista Apartments in Talent, residents said that they would like to learn how to can tomatoes, chilies, and other produce. They would also like to learn to interest their kids in how to eat well and to teach them how to cook. They would like to have cooking and baking classes at the apartments. Residents are interested in learning more about which foods are nutritious and which should be avoided. The Hispanic Interagency Committee (HIC), a group of representatives from agencies and organizations working with the Hispanic community, many of whom are Hispanic themselves, also participated in a Community Food Conversation. This group also voiced a need for education on making healthy food choices, planning meals and cooking skills. They explained that many of the older Latina women know how to cook well, but they have lost those skills with the younger generation.

The majority of consumers surveyed selected that they would be most likely to attend a class in the evening or while waiting for other services. Some of the locations that people identified

as being convenient for them to attend a class were; the library, community centers, churches, a school, health clinic, the housing complex where they live, and food pantries. For some there are barriers that would prevent them from attending a class that they might be interested in, see the following chart.



### Opportunities:

- 1) To develop a model that provides community volunteers with the tools to go out into the community and demonstrate food skills to community members at convenient locations.
- 2) To partner with the healthcare community to advise patients while receiving care on the benefits of eating fresh, whole foods and the resource in the community to access those foods. This could be similar to the programs in other communities where a physician writes a prescription to get fresh local foods.

# Bi-Products of Our Food System

What is traditionally called the “waste” generated by our food system is an often overlooked but important part of what could truly be a nutritious and economic cycle if we choose to look at the bi-products from our food system as potential resources. Here in Jackson County there are several efforts to divert our food scraps from the landfill and capture it as a resource for food production in the form of compost.

Recology Ashland Sanitary Service is currently collecting pre-consumer, vegetable and fruit trimmings, paper coffee filters, coffee grounds, tea bags and floral trimmings from over 40 businesses in Ashland and Talent including restaurants, coffee shops, B&Bs, and school cafeterias. Recology Ashland supplies these commercial customers with 32 gallon carts that are picked up weekly. This service costs \$6.07 per month per cart. This is roughly a third of the cost of garbage pickup, which is \$ 17.86 per 35 gallons. Thus, there is an economic incentive for these customers to participate in diverting their

food waste from the landfill. More can be learned about the composting services that Recology Ashland offers by visiting their website at <http://www.recologyashlandsanitaryservice.com/commercialCompost.htm>.

The compostable material that Recology Ashland collects is taken to Rogue Disposal’s compost site. Rogue Disposal is permitted to accept only pre-consumer food scraps and other non food organics. The specifications around pre-consumer, un-cooked materials are due to Rogue Disposal’s organic certification with OMRI, Organic Materials Review Institute. Rogue Disposal is collecting curbside yard waste to compost, but not residential food waste. Currently there is no permitted site for composting post-consumer food scraps on a large scale. Generally, households do not produce enough pre-consumer food scraps to make collection make sense. Risa Buck from Recology Ashland explains, “Curb side compost pickup for households could make sense if pre and post-consumer composting was available, but it would not be cost effective, given our small county, unless everyone participated.” Additionally, education would be needed to better inform the community about what can and cannot be composted for collection to work.

There is a small business called Community Compost that is collecting pre and post consumer food scraps from about 100 residents of Ashland and Talent and taking the material to a nearby farm. The goal of this business model is to make organic material available to local farms that are in turn making food available to the local community.

Green Planet Organics is a local company pro-



ROGUE DISPOSAL & RECYCLING COMPOSTING DISPLAY

ducing compost from “feed stock” (the materials that make up compost) that they collect for free from a variety of locations where waste is being generated on a large scale. Green Planet Organics is able to take some bread and dairy products due to the way that they are able to break up the compost material. They are selling their organic certified compost at a variety of locations in bag or it can be purchased in bulk.

Despite there not being a widely available option for residents to divert their food scraps from the landfill, there are many resources and programs available to help residents with composting their own food scraps. There are classes on composting through the Master Gardener program at OSU Extension. The Master Recyclers program supports education for the community about recycling and composting. The Recycling Center in Ashland has a compost demonstration area and free composting classes are offered there by the Ashland Conservation Commission and Recology Ashland Sanitary Service. Rogue Disposal encourages community members to help divert organic material from the landfill when possible. Rogue Disposal is very supportive of the Master Recycler’s program and offers education and outreach about composting and recycling. Given

that they currently cannot take residential food waste, Rogue Disposal encourages residents to compost their own and they have a demonstration at the Public Transfer Station on various home compost setups to help get people started. (See photo)

Food packaging is probably an even larger bi-product from the food system than organic waste. Mike Jacobson the Manager at Rogue Disposal says that, “Truly the biggest issue of waste around food and other items is packaging. It is a marketing issue that everything has to be attractive for people to buy it and then things get over packaged. There is just too much packaging material that can’t be reused like the old days when goods used to come in glass, like milk. We have a throwaway society.” In addition to where our food comes from, we can also be aware of what our food comes in and make choices as consumers that reduce packaging waste.

#### Opportunities:

- 1) Support existing and additional resources to educate the community about composting and recycling.
- 2) Develop the infrastructure to more efficiently utilize our food scrapes as a community.

## Connecting Our Food System

A common theme across all sectors of the food system is that our community could greatly benefit from having a centralized source for information related to all things food and a network through which to communicate information. We currently have an abundance of resources related to food and it is important that everyone has access to them. There are

also some crucial partnerships that are forming and more yet to be developed that could use a mode through which to be connected. This centralization location for information could house resources such as a list of U-pick opportunities, classes offered in the community, resources about community gardening, and where WIC participants can spend their Farm Direct nutrition

checks. This could also be a network to exchange information about a resource that someone is looking for. A farm equipment share could be coordinated through this network. Farmers have shared that they would like to have a farm supply buying club through which farmers could purchase items such as fencing materials, reemay fabric, shade cloth, hoop houses, and feed that would be bought in quantity by the club and available to the farmers at a reduced price. Recently a 211 phone hotline was implemented for people in need to find out information about community services geared toward low-income community members, including food assistance. The 211 hotline could be promoted through the food network. Similarly, there has been an interest expressed to be able to connect gardeners looking for land with people who have extra space, a website already exists to connect gardeners and it could be promoted.

Given the power of visual images there would be great benefit to having the resources of each sector of the food system mapped out. Local food businesses have expressed the need for this tool as well as community organizations. Such a map could include layers that would show various categories of resources such as: farms and ranches, community gardens, vacant lots that could become gardens, certified kitchens, storage facilities, packing houses, food pantries, grocery stores with healthy foods, farmers markets, food distribution routes, cooking classes, and composting sites.

#### Opportunities:

- 1) Develop a central source for information and networking across the food system.
- 2) Create an interactive map of our food system resources using GIS that could be available to the public online.

## Granges

There are many Grange Halls scattered around Jackson County: Enterprise Grange in Wimer, Gold Hill Grange, Live Oak Grange in Rogue River, Eagle Point Grange, Lake Creek Grange, Central Point Grange, Bellview Grange in Ashland, Phoenix Grange, Roxy Ann Grange in Medford, Upper Rogue Grange in Butte Falls, and the Applegate Valley Community Grange. Some of the Granges are more active than others; however, they are a resource that once served the farming community and have the potential to fill that role again. Grange Masters and members of the Granges in Jackson County, and around the state, are interested in finding ways to become more involved with community wide efforts across the food system in order to develop stronger links between the Grange and the community. Granges in Jackson County have already begun getting involved in several ways. The Phoenix Grange has taken a strong position to support a GMO free Jackson County and encouraging the community to buy local. The members of the Phoenix Grange have been using their kitchen to host canning parties

### APPLEGATE VALLEY COMMUNITY GRANGE



and would like to do more of this. The Bellview Grange in Ashland has been working to develop garden beds around the outside of the Grange building to increase the connection of seed to table as a part of their gatherings.

What was the Upper Applegate Grange was re-chartered in June of 2012 as the Applegate Valley Community Grange by a group of farmers, long time grange members, food pantry organizers and several other community members. This group saw the need to retain the Grange as a resource for the Applegate Valley community where everyone was welcome and community efforts could be supported. At their first fundraiser breakfast of all locally produced foods the line of community members there to support the grange was out the door. The large turnout demonstrated the huge potential for the role that the Grange can play in this farming community.

#### Opportunity:

The granges in Jackson County could serve as physical hubs in our food system network. Could use the kitchens for food processing and cooking classes, and supportive network for farmers, and support for food assistance efforts.

## Food System Council

Many communities that have gone through a community food assessment process have formed a food system council or food policy council to provide the leadership and advocacy needed to make real lasting change. Similarly, a food system council could provide the leadership to implement project that strengthen the food system of the Rogue Valley. The members of the food system council would be representatives from sectors across the food system and would be committed to helping to move the prioritized projects along. Past experience has indicated that these groups need the support of a paid staff position to assist with administrative needs. The council could meet monthly or quarterly depending on the pace of the projects. There has also been interest expressed to allow for networking opportunities that are open to the public within the structure of the council. Ideally the council would have involvement from city and county government and operate a structure for making decisions that affect our community's food system.

#### Opportunity:

Create a Food System Council to network and provide leadership.



# Recommendations

1) Expand the Market for Local Food through Grocery Stores - Increase sales of locally produced food through grocery stores. Consumers in Jackson County have expressed a desire to purchase more local foods in the places where they are already shopping. Farmers are expressing a need for an expanded market to sell to.

A) Identify stores that are willing to purchase locally produced foods and what their requirements are of producers.

B) Identify what producers need in order to meet the requirements of stores and make it worth it to the producer.

C) Coordinate production and distribution to ensure a consistent supply of local products to stores.

D) Provide tools to encourage grocery stores to identify which farm foods come from and some basic information about the farm.

Possible Partners: Thrive, OSU Extension Small Farms Program, grocery stores, farmers with success selling through wholesale such as Blue Fox Farm and Fry Family Farm.

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2) Local Food Distribution – Develop a system to transport local food from the farm to the market and connect local food with avenues of sale.

A) Support regional businesses that have the capacity to fill the role.

B) Support the development and marking of a local food brand.

C) Look into the feasibility of developing a physical “food hub” for the aggregation, storage, and processing of local products.

Possible Partners: Organic Produce Warehouse, Fresh Express, Organically Grown Company

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3) Processing & Storage – Increase access to processing and storage space for food businesses to extend the seasonal availability of local foods and add value through the production of specialty foods.

Short term:

A) Utilize churches, granges and other existing facilities with certified kitchens and storage space to process and store surplus local foods.

Long Term:

B) Develop a physical “food hub” where local foods can be packed or processed for sale.

C) Include additional freezer storage in a facility that could provide meat locker space making the purchasing of a whole or half animal more feasible for consumers.

Possible Partners: Churches, Granges, Rent-A-Kitchen, Space LLC, Central Point Cold Storage, Raptor Creek Farm

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4) Offer Hands-on Cooking Education to Food Insecure and other Target Populations – Expand the reach and scope of current education programs to engage a greater audience and address the needs for food skills education in the community to have a more informed and self-sufficient consumer community.

A) Identify a model/curriculum/ tools to use around the valley

- B) Acquire funding to furnish materials
- C) Identify educators who could train volunteers
- D) Train volunteers from various communities
- E) Identify sites that reach populations who need education. The Food Education Survey has identified food pantries, libraries, community centers, and housing complexes as sites convenient for low-income consumers.

Possible Partners: OSU Extension Family Food Educators, Ashland Food Coop, ACCESS, Thrive, Food Pantries, WIC

5) Increase Access to Healthy Food –Develop avenues to make fresh, healthy foods more accessible and affordable in parts of the community where these foods are not readily available and residents have limited resources to acquire healthy foods.

Strategies:

- A) Increase access to healthy foods at retail locations

Steps:

1. Identify stores in limited food access areas that might be interested in offering healthier foods. Conduct a survey to assess interest among store owners in being a part of a healthy retail network.
2. Support changes to the Peach Street Market to feature healthy foods as a pilot project.
3. Create signs to have at stores to highlight the healthy items on the inside and outside of the store. Promote the healthier foods as “Tastier” or “Fresher.”
4. Offer cooking demos and tastings of healthy foods. Focus on meals that could be made with some of the ingredients al-

ready available in stores. Recruit neighborhood residents to be involved with offering cooking demos. Offer demos consistently. Find a community space in the neighborhood around target stores to potentially hold cooking classes in, possibly the school or a church.

5. Partner with Schools to do outreach in the community and to get youth involved.

6. Feature healthy snack foods. Offer healthy options that are ready to be eaten as snacks like veggie sticks. Promote veggies with dip instead of chips. Could have recipes for simple dips that can be made from some of the items in the store like canned beans. Identify a few items in the store that could be switched out for a healthier alternative.

7. Explore the possibility of partnering with local farmers to sell and maintain a small produce section at stores like the Peach Street Market. Farmers could sell produce on consignment to eliminate the risk and maintenance for the store owner.

B) Explore the possibility of a mobile farm stand to serve limited access neighborhoods.

C) Make sure that residents know about the Growers Markets, that they can use their SNAP and WIC benefits at the market, and possibly provide transportation to the Growers Markets

D) Offer SNAP Incentive Match Programs at area Farmers Markets to encourage SNAP customers to markets and to make fresh food more affordable.

E) Partner with the healthcare community to advise patients while receiving care on the benefits of eating fresh, whole foods and the resource in the community to access those foods. This could be similar to the programs in

other communities where a physician writes a prescription to visit the Farmers Market and get fresh local foods.

Possible Partners: Jackson County Public Health Department, ACCESS, Peach Street Market, Rogue Valley Growers and Crafters Markets, OSU Extension FFEV

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6) Increase and Strengthen Community Gardening Opportunities – Provide support to existing community gardens and increase access to garden space for interested community members.

- A) Network existing community gardens to provide support and resources needed.
- B) Identify spaces to develop additional gardens making more garden space available to the community, especially in neighborhoods with limited access to healthy food. Partner with city planning departments to map vacant lots that could possibly be repurposed for gardens.
- C) Partner with churches that have land and/or volunteers to help develop additional community gardens.
- D) Support and encourage school gardens.
- E) Encourage edible landscaping in public spaces.
- F) Make sure that grocery stores are coding food producing plants and seeds as food so that SNAP customers can use their benefits to buy plant starts and seeds to grow their own food. Need to more promotion to SNAP recipients to make sure that they know that they can use their benefits to get started growing their own.

Possible Partners: Jackson County Master Gardeners, Housing Authority of Jackson County, ACCESS, Gardening for All, Rogue Valley Farm to School.

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7) Utilize More Food Scraps as Compost – Complete the cycle of our food system by increasing the amount of our food scraps that is utilized as compost to produce more food and reduce the amount of bi-product going to the landfill.

- A) Support existing and additional resources to educate the community about composting and recycling.
- B) Develop the infrastructure to more efficiently utilize our food scrapes as a community.

Possible Partners: Recology Ashland, Rogue Disposal, Master Recyclers, OSU Extension, Green Planet Organics

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8) Centralized Information, Networking & Leadership – Make information about resources related to the food system more available to community members in one central location and increase opportunities to share information and connect across sectors of the food system. Continue to provide leadership and increase partnerships across sectors of the food system to improve our community's overall food security.

- A) Develop a website to have one centralized location for information about resources & activities related to all sectors of the food system.
- B) Have a list-serve to share information about food system related topics, activities, and needs
- C) Map the resources in each sector of our food system to identify resources, gaps, and analyze trends.
- D) Form a Food System Council with a paid coordinator to provide networking opportunities and leadership. Provide networking opportunities through regular partners meetings and a Rogue Valley Food Summit. Involve local

government as a part of the Food System Council.

E) In the long term develop a physical central location for food related organizations to work under one roof thus increasing cross-collaboration.

Possible Partners: OSU Extension, United Way, Jackson County Public Health Department, SOU, City Planning Departments, ACCESS, Thrive, Food System Steering Committee, RVCOG

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9) Land Use Planning - Ensure that county and statewide land use regulations support and enhance opportunities for agricultural businesses in Jackson County.

#### Short term Strategies

A) Gain one or more seats on and help shape the work of the Agricultural Task Force the county is creating as part of the implementation of the RPS plan.

B) Monitor the work being done by Jackson, Josephine and Douglas counties to redefine what is agricultural land, and be prepared to engage the farming and local food communities to participate in making sure those efforts are not detrimental to the local food system.

#### Long Term Strategies

C) Participate in local and statewide policy discussions regarding enhancing opportunities for agritourism while minimizing potential negative impacts on legitimate agricultural businesses.

D) Create opportunities to educate producers about what is currently allowed on their land and provide support through the appropriate process.

Possible Partners: 1000 Friends of Oregon, Rogue Advocates, OSU Extension, Jackson County Planning Department, Friends of Family Farmers, Thrive.

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10) Farmer Training - Develop and implement education, training, and business development support for aspiring farmers and ranchers.

A) Support the development and implementation of SOFI goals and vision to create a comprehensive education, training, and business development support program for aspiring farmers and ranchers in the Rogue Valley. Specifically, offer more training on skills related to post-harvest handling and marketing of products to ensure that producers can meet the quality standards of retail stores. Provide assistance to support producers in exploring retail sales avenues.

B) Focus on training to help farmers to scale up to a size that could market to wholesale avenues.

C) Create “next step” opportunities for graduates of RFC’s Farms Next program and OSU Extension Small Farms Growing Agripreneurs program to bridge the gap from trainee to farm/ranch owner.

#### Steps:

1. Seek funding to develop curriculum modules for advanced agricultural skill development and advanced business and marketing skill development.
2. Develop tools and resources to link land holders and land seekers utilizing local resources and iFarm Oregon.
3. Develop market opportunities for aspiring farmers and ranchers.

Possible Partners: Rogue Farm Corps, OSU Extension Small Farms, Friends of Family Farmers, Thrive, Food System Councils, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Community Colleges, farmers and ranchers.

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## APPENDIX A - PRODUCER QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

20 producers responded to this survey

1. How long have you been farming/ ranching? Response Percent

Less than 1 year	9.5%
1 to 2 years	4.8%
3 to 4 years	9.5%
5 to 6 years	4.8%
7 to 8 years	9.5%
9 years or more	61.9%

2. What type(s) of agricultural products are you producing? (Select all that apply) Response Percent

Vegetables	65.0%
Fruit	65.0%
Dairy/ Cheese	30.0%
Grains	20.0%
Pork	30.0%
Poultry	30.0%
Beef	15.0%
Lamb	15.0%
Eggs	50.0%
Wine/ Beer/ Spirits	5.0%
Value-added Products	60.0%
Other (please specify)	8

3. During what season(s) do you have product available? (Select all that apply) Response Percent

Spring	90.5%
Summer	95.2%
Fall	95.2%
Winter	76.2%

4. How many acres do you use for production? Response Percent

0 to 2 acres	20.0%
3 to 6 acres	20.0%
7 to 15 acres	35.0%
16+ acres	25.0%

5. Where do you sell your product(s)? (Select all that apply) Response Percent

Growers Markets	90.0%
Farm Stand	35.0%
CSA	50.0%
Grocery Stores	40.0%
Restaurants	55.0%

Schools/ other institutions	10.0%
Wholesale distributors	20.0%
Other (please specify)	9

6. What have been your most successful avenues of sale? (Select all that apply) Response Percent

Growers Markets	88.9%
Farm Stand	22.2%
CSA	27.8%
Grocery Stores	16.7%
Restaurants	22.2%
Schools/ other institutions	11.1%
Wholesale distributors	0.0%
Other (please specify)	8

7. What sales outlets would you be interested in selling to that you DO NOT already? (Select all that apply) Response Percent

Growers Markets	0.0%
Farm Stand	46.2%
CSA	30.8%
Grocery Stores	7.7%
Restaurants	7.7%
Schools/ other institutions	38.5%
Wholesale distributors	15.4%
Other (please specify)	2

8. How many seasonal employees do you have? Response Percent

1 to 2	41.2%
3 to 4	29.4%
5 to 7	17.6%
7+	11.8%

9. How many year round employees do you have? Response Percent

1 to 2	86.7%
3 to 4	6.7%
5 to 7	6.7%
7+	0.0%

10. Is your farm/ ranch a main source of income for you? Response Percent

Yes	70.0%
No	30.0%

11. What challenges do you face as an agricultural business? (Select all that apply) Response Percent

Access to land	17.6%
Access to capital	41.2%
Access to water	17.6%

## APPENDIX A – PRODUCER QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (CONTINUED)

A market for your product	29.4%
Transportation	41.2%
Other (please specify)	9

12. Would you be interested in learning more about being a part of a cooperative of producers in order to sell to larger retailers?	Response Percent
Yes	73.7%
No	26.3%

13. What are your needs for infrastructure? (Select all that apply)	Response Percent
Distribution route	35.3%
Packing facility	41.2%
Dry Storage	35.3%
Cold/ Freezer Storage	64.7%
Value-added processing facility (non-meat processing)	41.2%
USDA Meat processing facility	35.3%
Other (please specify)	5

14. Would you be interested in being apart of an Agro-tourism network for the purpose of coordinating and promoting any or all of the following; on farm classes, farm stays, or farm tours?	Response Percent
Yes	81.0%
No	19.0%

15. What do you currently do with surplus product? (Select all that apply)	Response Percent
Compost it	50.0%
Feed to animals	75.0%
Preserve it	75.0%
Donate to a food bank	60.0%
Donate to a meal site	10.0%
Other (please specify)	4

Food Bank	30.4%
Food Coop	5.4%
Farmers' Markets	21.4%
Farm Stand/ You-pick	17.9%
Other (please specify)	0

2. Which of the following local stores do you go to most often? (select all that apply)	Response Percent
Sherm's Thunderbird	55.6%
Winco	59.3%
Peach St. Market	63.0%
7-11	7.4%
Minute Market	9.3%
Albertson's	13.0%
Grocery Outlet	11.1%
Food 4 Less	18.5%
Woodland Heights Market	3.7%

3. How often do you go to get groceries?	Response Percent
Daily	9.1%
At least once a week	41.8%
At least twice a week	10.9%
At least once a month	18.2%
At least twice a month	20.0%

4. What is the most common way that you travel to get food?	Response Percent
Drive your own car	64.8%
Ride with another	18.5%
Bicycle	11.1%
Bus	1.9%
Walk	22.2%

5. How far do you travel to get the majority of your groceries?	Response Percent
0 - 1/2 mile	13.0%
1/2 - 1 mile	31.5%
1 - 3 miles	50.0%
3+ miles	9.3%

6. How often do you eat fresh vegetables?	Response Percent
At every meal	19.6%
At two meals daily	16.1%
At one meal daily	41.1%
Weekly	17.9%
Never	5.4%

7. How often do you eat fresh fruit?	Response Percent
At every meal	10.9%

## APPENDIX B - FOOD DESERT SURVEY RESULTS

56 individuals responded to this survey

1. Where do you get your food? (select all that apply)	Response Percent
Grocery store(s)	85.7%
Grow Your Own	25.0%
Large retail store (ie, Costco, Winco, etc)	37.5%
Convenience store (ie, 7-11 or corner store)	30.4%
Restaurants	1.8%

**APPENDIX B – FOOD DESERT SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)**

At two meals daily	23.6%
At one meal daily	34.5%
Weekly	25.5%
Never	5.5%

High food cost	47.1%
Distance	11.8%
Rising cost of household expenses (ex: childcare, rent, utilities)	29.4%
I don't have trouble getting food	41.2%

8. What type(s) of fresh fruits do you normally eat?  
(select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Apples	50.0%
Avocado	20.0%
Bananas	60.0%
Grapes	46.0%
Melons	46.0%
Oranges	46.0%
Tomatoes	52.0%
Berries	38.0%
Pears	26.0%
Peaches	42.0%
All of the above	28.0%
Other (please specify)	1

12. What types of fresh and healthy foods would you purchase if they were made available at this store?  
(select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Pre-made salad	39.2%
Yogurt	45.1%
Meat	33.3%
Granola	29.4%
Fresh Fruit	64.7%
Fresh Vegetables	54.9%
Healthier frozen meals	33.3%
Nuts	29.4%
All of the above	19.6%
Other (please specify)	3

9. What type(s) of fresh vegetables do you normally eat?  
(select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Broccoli	52.9%
Carrots	51.0%
Celery	31.4%
Cauliflower	31.4%
Lettuce	62.7%
Potatoes	62.7%
Winter squash	11.8%
Green Beans	58.8%
Peppers	41.2%
Summer Squash	21.6%
Leafy Greens (kale, chard, etc)	23.5%
Cucumbers	51.0%
Onions	51.0%
Peas	39.2%
All of the above	29.4%
Other (please specify)	3

13. What do you most frequently buy at this store?

	Response Percent
Bread	30.8%
Milk	48.1%
Beer	36.5%
Cigarettes	40.4%
Soda	53.8%
Candy	50.0%
Spices	7.7%
Canned Goods	19.2%
Dry Beans	5.8%
Tortillas	9.6%
Chips	51.9%
Energy drinks	28.8%
Baking Ingredients	11.5%
Fresh fruits or vegetables	15.4%
all of the above	7.7%
Other (please specify)	5

10. Are you eligible for government food assistance? (ie, SNAP/ WIC/ food stamps)

	Response Percent
Yes	75.5%
No	18.9%
Not Sure	5.7%

14. How do you normally prepare your food?

	Response Percent
Stove top	83.9%
Microwave	42.9%
Oven	62.5%
Toaster Oven	12.5%
Hot Plate	3.6%
BBQ	10.7%
Crock pot	5.4%
I don't have a way to prepare food	1.8%
Other	1.8%

11. Do any of the following factors affect your ability to get the food you need? (select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Insufficient income	37.3%
Lack of time	13.7%
Lack of transportation	17.6%

## APPENDIX B – FOOD DESERT SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

15. Do you have the ability to refrigerate your food?	Shady Cove	0.0%
Response Percent	Trail	0.0%
Yes	Prospect	0.0%
94.2%	Gold Hill	0.0%
No	Rogue River	0.0%
5.8%	Jacksonville	0.0%

16. Would you be interested in ordering groceries through a local grocery store that would be delivered to a central location in your neighborhood?	Ruch	0.0%
Response Percent	Applegate	0.0%
Yes	Phoenix	0.0%
79.5%	Talent	0.0%
No	Ashland	0.0%
20.5%	Other (please specify)	0

17. Please assess the follow statements, yes or no.

	Yes	No
If accessible, I would buy fresh fruit and vegetables.	100.0%	0.0%
When purchasing food I consider the price.	96.4%	3.6%
I know how to cook from scratch.	86.3%	13.7%
I have access to garden space.	51.0%	49.0%
I would like to have access to garden space.	69.8%	30.2%
I would like to learn how to cook vegetables.	28.3%	71.7%

18. What is your gender?	Response Percent
Female	50.9%
Male	49.1%

19. How many people live in your household (counting yourself)?	Response Percent
1	12.0%
2	32.0%
3-4	24.0%
5-6	24.0%
7+	8.0%

20. What is your race and ethnicity?	Response Percent
Caucasian	80.0%
Black or African American	1.8%
Asian	3.6%
Hispanic or Latino	10.9%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	3.6%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.0%

21. What community do you live in?	Response Percent
Medford	98.2%
Cental Point	1.8%
White City	0.0%
Eagle Point	0.0%

## APPENDIX C - FOOD EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS

134 individuals responded to this survey

1. Where was this survey taken?	Response Percent
Medford 1st Presbyterian Pantry	11.2%
Medford 1st Christian Pantry	11.9%
Eagle Point Pantry	6.0%
Ruch Pantry	13.4%
Ashland Pantry	6.7%
Talent United Methodist Church Pantry	1.5%
Butte Falls Pantry	0.0%
Gold Hill Pantry	11.2%
Prospect Pantry	8.2%
Rogue River CC Pantry	11.2%
Shady Cove Pantry	11.9%
WIC Office	6.7%

2. Where do you get your food? (select all that apply)	Response Percent
Grocery store(s)	89.6%
Grow Your Own	25.4%
Large retail store (ie, Costco, Winco, etc)	32.1%
Convenience store (ie, 7-11 or corner store)	10.4%
Restaurants	4.5%
Food Bank	76.9%
Food Coop	7.5%
Farmers' Markets	17.9%
Farm Stand/ You-pick	7.5%
All of the above	0.0%
Other (please specify)	2

**APPENDIX C – FOOD EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)**

3. How often do you go to get groceries?	Response Percent
Daily	5.2%
At least twice a week	23.1%
At least once a week	20.1%
At least twice a month	35.8%
At least once a month	20.1%

4. What is the most common way that you travel to get food?	Response Percent
Drive your own car	68.7%
Ride with another	23.9%
Bicycle	4.5%
Bus	6.7%
Walk	12.7%

5. How far do you travel to get the majority of your groceries?	Response Percent
0 - 1/2 mile	7.5%
1/2 - 1 mile	11.2%
1 - 3 miles	17.9%
3+ miles	67.2%

6. How often do you eat fresh vegetables?	Response Percent
At every meal	15.0%
At two meals daily	18.0%
At one meal daily	42.9%
Weekly	21.1%
Never	3.0%

7. How often do you eat fresh fruit?	Response Percent
At every meal	8.2%
At two meals daily	16.4%
At one meal daily	37.3%
Weekly	32.1%
Never	6.0%

8. What type(s) of fresh fruits do you normally eat? (select all that apply)	Response Percent
Apples	51.9%
Avocado	39.5%
Bananas	72.1%
Grapes	51.9%
Melons	37.2%
Oranges	46.5%
Tomatoes	65.1%
Berries	38.8%
Pears	32.6%
Peaches	42.6%
All of the above	17.8%

Other (please specify) 9

9. What type(s) of fresh vegetables do you normally eat? (select all that apply)	Response Percent
Broccoli	58.7%
Carrots	55.6%
Celery	41.3%
Cauliflower	36.5%
Lettuce	65.1%
Potatoes	69.0%
Winter Squash	19.0%
Green Beans	51.6%
Peppers	39.7%
Summer Squash	29.4%
Leafy Greens (kale, chard, etc)	21.4%
Cucumbers	50.0%
Onions	56.3%
Peas	36.5%
All of the above	17.5%
Other (please specify)	10

10. Are you eligible for government food assistance? (ie, Oregon Trail Card/ WIC)

	Response Percent
Yes	72.7%
No	15.2%
Not Sure	12.1%

11. Do any of the following factors affect your ability to get the food you need? (select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Insufficient income	72.4%
Lack of time	3.9%
Lack of transportation	22.0%
High food cost	58.3%
Distance	23.6%
Rising cost of household expenses (ex: childcare, rent, utilities)	40.2%
I don't have trouble getting food	16.5%

12. How do you normally prepare your food?	Response Percent
Stove top	94.7%
Microwave	47.3%
Oven	65.6%
Toaster Oven	9.2%
Hot Plate	2.3%
I don't have a way to prepare food	0.0%

13. Do you have the ability to refrigerate your food?

Response Percent

APPENDIX C – FOOD EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Yes	97.7%
No	2.3%

14. Please choose yes or no for the following questions.

	Yes	No
Do you have access to a garden space?	52.7%	47.3%
Would you like to have access to garden space?	58.4%	41.6%
Do you cook meat?	98.5%	1.5%
Do you cook fresh vegetables?	93.8%	6.2%
Do you cook meals from scratch?	85.9%	14.1%

15. Please choose the best answer for the following questions.

	Yes	No	I already know how
Would you like to learn more about shopping on a budget?	29.8%	26.7%	43.5%
Would you like to learn more about cooking vegetables?	23.1%	33.1%	43.8%
Would you like to learn food preservation (canning, freezing, drying)?	29.0%	35.1%	35.9%
Would you like to learn how to grow fruits and vegetables?	29.8%	29.8%	40.5%
Would you like to learn how to eat according to your specific health needs?	31.3%	27.5%	41.2%
Would you like to learn ways to encourage your kids to eat healthier?	24.6%	38.5%	36.9%

16. When would be a good time for you to attend a class or demo on any of the above skills?

	Response Percent
Evening	47.9%
Weekend	26.8%
Lunchtime	7.0%
While waiting for other services (i.e, food boxes, WIC)	50.7%
Other (please specify)	5

17. What barriers do you face in regards to attending a class that you are interested in? (select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Transportation	46.4%
Time of classes	34.8%

Childcare	11.6%
Cost	55.1%
Other (please specify)	5

	Response Percent
18. What is your gender?	
Male	39.8%
Female	60.2%

19. How many people live in your household (counting yourself)?

	Response Percent
1	23.5%
2	31.1%
3-4	27.7%
5-6	15.1%
7+	2.5%

20. What is your race and ethnicity?

	Response Percent
Caucasian	86.5%
Black or African American	4.0%
Asian	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	7.1%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	3.2%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1.6%

21. What community do you live in?

	Response Percent
Medford	29.0%
Cental Point	3.8%
White City	3.1%
Eagle Point	1.5%
Shady Cove	9.2%
Trail	3.1%
Prospect	8.4%
Gold Hill	6.9%
Rogue River	11.5%
Jacksonville	3.1%
Ruch	8.4%
Applegate	2.3%
Phoenix	3.1%
Talent	0.8%
Ashland	6.1%

## APPENDIX D - ROGUE VALLEY CONSUMER SURVEY RESULTS

365 individuals responded to this survey

1. Where do you get your food? (select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Grocery store(s)	89.9%
Grow Your Own	58.7%
Large retail store (ie, Costco, Winco, etc)	42.1%
Convenience store (ie, 7-11 or corner store)	4.8%
Restaurants	46.6%
Food Bank	4.8%
Food Coop	42.4%
Farmers' Markets	60.4%
Farm Stand/ You-pick	29.5%

2. How often do you go to get groceries?

	Response Percent
Daily	6.2%
At least twice a week	37.6%
At least once a week	41.5%
At least twice a month	12.7%
At least once a month	2.0%

3. What is the most common way that you travel to get food?

	Response Percent
Drive your own car	89.9%
Ride with another	2.8%
Bicycle	3.4%
Bus	0.6%
Walk	3.4%

4. How far do you travel to get the majority of your groceries?

	Response Percent
0 - 1/2 mile	6.8%
1/2 - 1 mile	15.5%
1 - 3 miles	37.7%
3+ miles	40.0%

5. How often do you eat fresh vegetables? Response Percent

At every meal	19.8%
At two meals daily	39.5%
At one meal daily	30.9%
Weekly	8.9%
Never	0.9%

6. How often do you eat fresh fruit? Response Percent

At every meal	10.5%
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At two meals daily	29.5%
At one meal daily	44.2%
Weekly	15.0%
Never	0.8%

7. Do any of the following factors affect your ability to get the food you need? (select all that apply)

	Response Percent
Insufficient income	22.6%
Lack of time	15.1%
Lack of transportation	2.6%
High food cost	25.4%
Distance	6.3%
Rising cost of household expenses (ex: childcare, rent, utilities)	16.6%
I don't have trouble getting food	62.0%

8. Please choose yes or no for the following questions.

	Yes	No
Is fresh food accessible to you?	99.7%	0.3%
Is fresh food affordable to you?	85.5%	14.5%
Do you buy food that is produced in Southern Oregon?	95.2%	4.8%
Would you buy more locally produced food if it was available where you currently shop?	95.9%	4.1%
Do you base your food purchases on price?	68.8%	31.2%
Do you consider where your food comes from when you buy it?	85.5%	14.5%
Do you have access to a garden space?	77.1%	22.9%
Would you like to have access to garden space?	66.8%	33.2%
Do you cook fresh vegetables?	96.3%	3.7%
Do you cook meals from scratch?	95.1%	4.9%

9. What is your gender?

	Response Percent
Male	29.8%
Female	70.2%

10. How many people live in your household (counting yourself)?

	Response Percent
1	20.5%
2	46.6%
3-4	28.4%
5-6	3.1%
7+	1.4%

11. What is your race and ethnicity? Response Percent

Caucasian	92.7%
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APPENDIX D – ROGUE VALLEY CONSUMER SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Black or African American	0.9%	Applegate	3.2%
Asian	0.6%	Phoenix	3.7%
Hispanic or Latino	4.1%	Talent	4.9%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0.9%	Ashland	23.5%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.9%	Grants Pass	9.5%
		Wolf Creek	0.0%
12. What community do you live in?	Response Percent	Merlin	0.3%
Medford	24.1%	Williams	0.6%
Cental Point	6.0%	Murphy	0.0%
White City	2.0%	Cave Junction	1.7%
Eagle Point	7.2%	Selma	0.0%
Shady Cove	0.0%	Kerby	0.0%
Trail	0.0%	O'Brien	0.3%
Prospect	0.0%	Takilma	0.9%
Gold Hill	1.7%	Wonder	0.0%
Rogue River	2.0%	Galice	0.0%
Jacksonville	4.0%		
Ruch	4.6%		

PUMPKIN HARVEST NEAR JACKSONVILLE – COURTESY OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY







JACKSON COUNTY  
Community Food  
Assessment 2013



Leightman Maxey  
Foundation

