

## Executive Summary

- I recently graduated from Louisiana State University with a B.S. in Nutrition, Health, and Society with a minor in Business Administration. Since high school I have had a passion for fighting hunger and when I saw Farmlink's FIELD Fellowship, I knew it would be the best learning opportunity for me.
- During immersion, I worked with a gleaning non-profit in San Diego who rescued fresh produce from private residences, farms, grocery stores, and farmers markets. ProduceGood was an incredible four-person team that utilized a dedicated community of volunteers to rescue over 1 million pounds of food in their area. I was able to lead gleaning events in orchards where I would educate volunteers on how their work impacts the community.
- At farmers markets, I would collect boxes full of unsold produce at the end of the day and deliver them to feeding agencies who serve people who would not otherwise have access. Having previously worked with a market in Baton Rouge, I realized the benefit of collecting the excess local produce at the end of the market.
- Farmers markets are hubs of fresh, high-quality produce that is great for the health and wellbeing of the local community. However, a percentage of this produce is not sold by the end of the market day and ends up going to waste. The goal of FMR is to recover the unsold goods and donate it to those who need it but may not have access to it. Farmers put so much love into the food they create as well as time, energy, and money. FMR wants to keep this produce useful and donate to those who need it most in the community.
- FMR will have volunteers collect excess produce and transport the bounty to a local feeding agency. To implement this program, a market willing to participate needs to be identified and established. From there a local feeding agency that can accept produce on the weekend needs to be connected with and confirmed they can accept donations weekly. The final step in ensuring the viability of the program is to establish a base of volunteers willing to staff the event and transport the produce.

## Introduction

- The FIELD Fellowship has transformed my view on the food system. I have been passionate about fighting food injustices but working with so many young people equally as passionate has truly impacted me in the best way possible.
- I was able to work very closely under the direction of the co-founder of ProduceGood and learn about all the intricacies of running a non-profit. I was able to glean, or recover produce, on private orchards, grocery stores, farms, and farmers markets. Working for such an impactful organization was overwhelming due to how much impact they had on their community.



- High-quality, fresh produce is being wasted at the end of farmers markets. Let's connect this potential waste to those burdened with food insecurity in the community.

## Needs Assessment

### Parameters

- 30-40% of food is wasted in the U.S., especially citrus in Encinitas and that is why Produce Good started. A gleaning organization that works with individual growers on personal residences, farms, farmers markets, and grocery stores to combat food waste, fight food insecurity, and reduce carbon emissions.
- Farmers market recovery is a useful tool to get local, farm fresh produce to those that may not have access otherwise. Recovery at the market level can also benefit small farmers by giving them tax benefits for produce that may not be profitable otherwise.
  1. Community: Farmers Markets in the United States
  2. Industry: Food Recovery/Local, small farmers

### Self-awareness

- I am coming into this position with more knowledge on nutrition and less on agriculture and the barriers farmers face. I need to understand and work on farms to get an understanding of how things are run and what issues young and BIPOC farmers run into.

- I have only worked in the South, so California may have different experiences of food insecurity and food abundance that I may have not dealt with previously.
- Coming into this immersion I have no relationship with the community, I will try to build that relationship and trust through listening to others stories. I am coming into a new community so I will not offer solutions, I will only listen and offer my help as often as possible. I do not believe I will run into informational barriers with ProduceGood or other sources of information because they have been nothing but honest with me since my time here.

### Mission Statement

- Create a market share program that will reduce food waste by connecting produce to feeding agencies.

### Solution Statement

- To identify a farmers market where recovery is possible, a non-profit is able to receive donations on a market day, and volunteers are able to transport donations.

### Target Population

- Small farmers that participate in local markets
- Feeding/receiving agencies - non-profits
- Colleges with food pantries - Swipe Out Hunger connection

### Data

- According to USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), from 1994 to 2019, the number of farmers markets rose from 1,755 to 8,771 in 2019, averaging growth of nearly 7 percent per year.
- Expansion began to slow in 2011 before eventually falling below a 1-percent per year increase between 2016 and 2017.
- A USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) report found that shares of local food sales have increased at intermediate market outlets, such as grocery stores, restaurants, and distributors. Increased availability of local products at these outlets corresponds with a plateau in purchases at direct-to-consumer outlets and contributes to the observed slower growth relative to the prior two decades.
- According to market managers surveyed in the USDA's AMS and NASS 2019 National Farmers Market Manager Survey, about two-thirds of farmers market vendors reported an increase in overall production and one-third reported increasing the number of workers they employed on their farm to meet demand.
- Additionally, an estimated 40 percent of vendors reported selling imperfect products that otherwise wouldn't be sold in mainstream markets. Further, 77 percent noted that their participation led to the increased production of diverse products which in turn led to the expansion of offerings for farmers market clientele.
- In 2020, U.S. farms sold almost \$10.7 billion of edible food commodities directly to consumer outlets and intermediary supply chains such as restaurant/grocery

stores, regional distributors and local institutions—a nearly \$2.8 billion (35 percent) increase from 2019.

- ⅓ of US counties in 2018 had one or more markets that excepted SNAP
- This document explains how farmers markets are beneficial to farmer success and boost local economies
- Farmers markets are business incubators for young farmers. In 2020, producers of farms that sold local food directly were more likely than all U.S. farms to be female and age 34 or younger
- Farmers markets provide one of the only low-barrier entry points for new farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs allowing them to start small and test new products. For young and beginning farmers direct marketing through CSAs and farmers markets make up the majority of their income.
- Direct marketing farmers experience lower rates of farm business failure or bankruptcy than growers who sell exclusively wholesale.
- In 2020, of the \$2.9 billion in direct-to-consumer sales reported by the USDA, on-farm stores and farmers markets accounted for \$1.7 billion (59%).
- In 2020, approximately 78% of farms selling directly to customers sold all of their directly marketed food within a 100-mile radius of the farm
- Amount of food waste from markets: around 30-40% of food that farmers produce is never consumed and between 21-33% of water used across US farms is wasted.
- There are 8720 markets in the U.S. which is a 7% increase since 2017. There are 3143 counties in the country meaning there is a 2.77 average per county.
- Markets lead to increased production and jobs for farms and they are better for young farmers, it is less likely for farmers to go bankrupt or to quit the profession when they participate in a market.
- Charitable-Donation Tax Deduction Hinges on Fair Market Value. Practically speaking, the amount of the charitable-donation tax deduction for cash-basis farmers is one-half of the donated food's fair market value (FMV) under the enhanced food deduction rules established in Section 113 of the PATH Act.

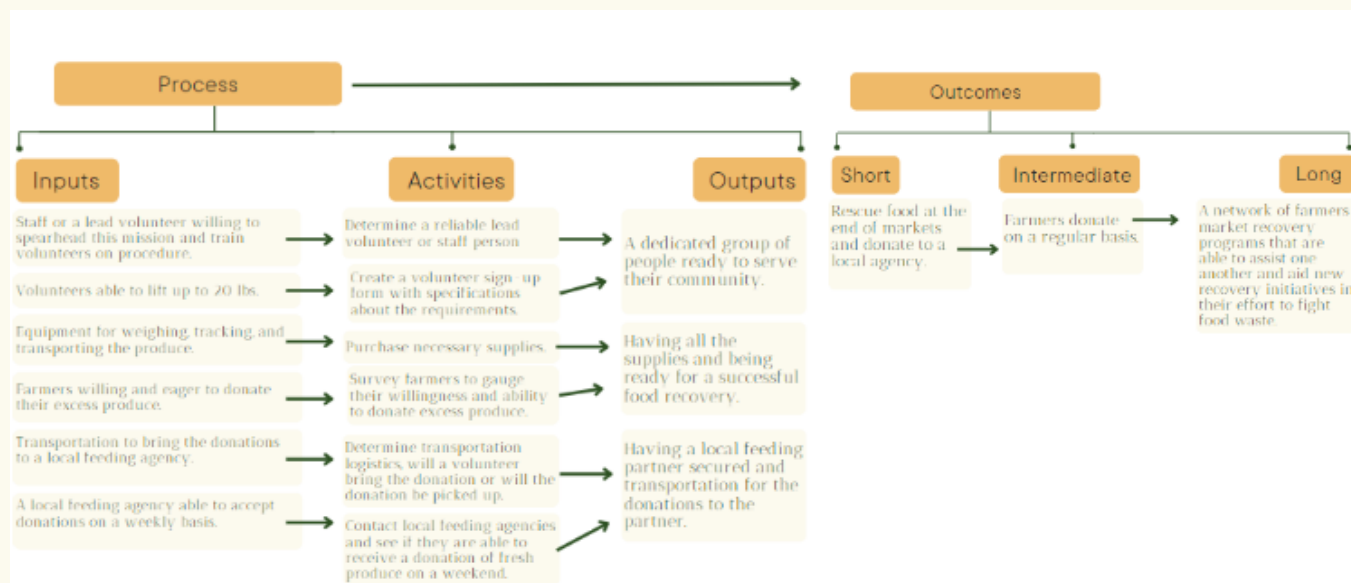
## **Solution Proposal**

My assessment will show that there is excess produce at the end of farmers markets and how it can be redistributed throughout the community.

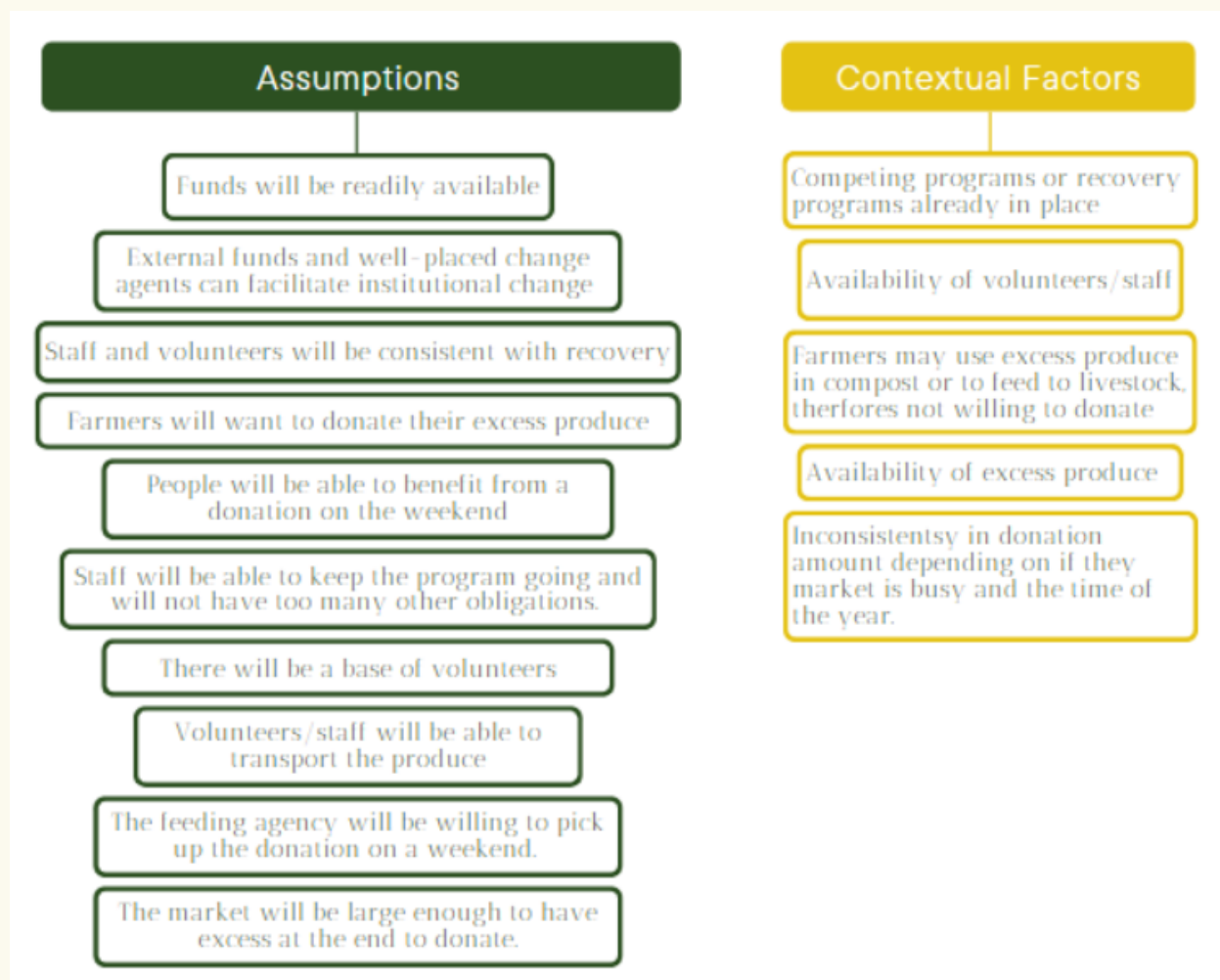
1. Goal: Establish a market recovery program at a local farmers market.
  1. Objective 1: Create a market recovery pamphlet.
    1. KR1: Explain the idea and mission behind the program.
    2. KR2: Create a cost analysis of what it would take to run the program.
    3. KR3: Explain the tax benefits the farmers would receive for donations
    4. KR4: Create a run of show of what a typical market recovery would look like to explain the step by step protocol.
    5. KR5: Create a volunteer training guide to show what would be asked of potential volunteers.

6. KR6: create a fill-in-blank template for the market so they can list lead volunteer, distribution site, etc...
2. Objective 2: Get personally involved in the market so the farmers and administration understand the mission and trust in the process.
  1. KR1: Find a market willing to participate
  2. KR2: Achieve vote-of-confidence and agreement with market administration.
  3. KR3: Identify 2-3 farmers at market with confirmed relationship for donation.
  4. KR4: Share the Market Share idea and gain feedback.
3. Objective 3: Establish the market share program at one market.
  1. KR1: Purchase necessary supplies
  2. KR2: Establish a base of volunteers and transportation logistics.
  3. KR3: Hold a training with administration, farmers and volunteers.
  4. KR4: Establish a local receiving agency.
  5. KR5: Host 1 successful recovery at a market before summit.

## Logic Model(s)







## Results

- The first step I took to try to create recovery efforts was reaching out to markets, mostly across the east coast. I reached out over Facebook, email, and cold calling. Some markets already had something similar in place and some had less than 10 vendors and did not produce waste because the vendors almost always sell out. Some had too much on their plate to organize volunteers to start a program in the middle of the growing season. This is important to acknowledge so we can assess the viability of a program like this in different locations.
- Because of this push back, I decided to create a farmers market recovery guide that will show people how recovery could be possible for them. All markets are different, so the work that goes into recovery will look different for every market. I have and plan to continue distributing this information to markets across the country and offering support when needed.
- From my outreach I connected with the Jonesborough farmers market, who have

decided to pursue a recovery program in Spring of 2024, when the growing season and market start back up. Jonesborough is the oldest town in Tennessee and has a solid community that supports each other and is excited by the prospect of recovery produce at the end of the market.

- An exciting addition to this recovery is that farmers will bring boxes of imperfect produce that originally they wouldn't bring to the market. These boxes will go directly into donations as long as the produce is still of good enough quality to be served with dignity, reducing food waste at the farm level as well. I am very excited for this partnership and cannot wait to see the difference it makes in the community.

## Conclusion

- I would reach out earlier in the growing season and get connected with vendors so it is an easier transition to recovery. This way I can work with the staff and volunteers before the markets start back up and help with setting up the transportation logistics and the feeding agency. A program like this requires connection so I know that it takes time to build trust and relationships.
- I have a meeting with the Executive Director of the Jonesborough market in January, where we will determine transportation needs, a volunteer base, and the partner that the donations will go to. From there, I will continue to reach out to markets to create more market recovery opportunities throughout the country.
- If you are interested in starting a farmers market recovery in your community, then please use the FMR Guide to get started!