

Local Food Connection: 2011 Conference

WORKSHOP: Online Food Marketing: FoodHub & Local Food Market Place

Description: *Online sites connecting food buyers and sellers are fast becoming a great way to easily increase business opportunities. Learn how the two most prominent Oregon online local food websites work, and how best to market yourself on their sites. Understand what the differences are and which sites will serve your business needs best.*

Speakers: Doug Frazier, Founder, Eugene/Willamette Local Foods & Local Food Market Place; Amanda Osborne, Sales & Marketing Director, FoodHub.

Moderator: Kelly Hoell, Associate, Good Company

Workshop Notes:

Demo of Tool: Local Food Market Place.com

- The online tool allows farmers to update their available product 24 hours a day. This takes less pressure off the grower by not forcing them to estimate what they will have ready by a certain day. The online tool is an online shopping market that allows buyers to get online and purchase from the farmer and pick up the product at a local site.
- The process of the online market tool begins on Tuesday evenings, when the buyers are allowed to get online and start purchasing what they want to pick up the next week. They can purchase any of these products until the following Monday at noon when the shopping is suspended while the farmers receive their invoice and harvest the product that was purchased to be delivered on Tuesday morning.

Food Hub Tool: <http://food-hub.org/>

- This online tool is directed towards wholesale buying in which restaurants, grocers, and professional food buyers can purchase local product. Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska and Northern California are all included in food hub's region. Food Hub allows any farmer within this region to sell on their site unrestricted by their production practice and scale. Food Hub also allows the buyer to choose specifically which farm to purchase from and also has the farms contact information. There is also a section to choose which distributor to use.

Q&A Discussion:

Q: What started this idea?

- LFMP: Economy, gas prices, popularity of local food
- FH: Farmers needed the ability to sell their products without having to do their own marketing and also they can update their product availability at anytime.

Q: What are the plans for expansion in the next 5-10 years?

- LFMP: Adding arts and crafts, more diverse food products and extend their local area. Adding a rating to local products.

- FH: Create density across their regional map. Create a self sustaining business, and add e-mail updates to members.

Q: How are you planning to promote the website?

- FH: Planning to attend lots of events
- LFMP: Word of mouth

Q: How was the initial tool funded?

- LFMP- Startup was cheap, because Doug and his partner were able to do it all themselves. Now their struggle is marketing.
- FH: Initially it was funded by Ecotrust. Expenses were very high, since they had to hire a web creator. They also received grants for specialty crop and other farm grants.

Q: Three Reasons why to use their site?

- LFMP: Support local economy, keep money in the community, its easy.
- FH: It's easy for the producer, easy for the buyer, and its good business.