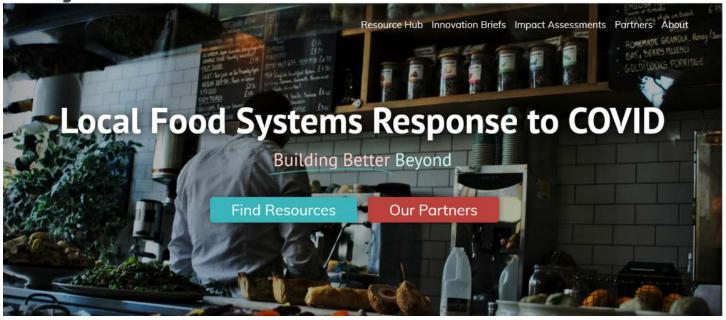
## ECONOMIC & POLICY UPDATE

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Specialty Crop COVID-19 Response Project



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USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), along with the cooperating research team led by the University of Kentucky's Dr. Tim Woods, Dr. Lilian Brislen, and Dr. Jairus Rossi, seeks to enrich existing efforts within local and regional food systems (LRFS) communities of practice who provide essential support to our nation's producers. This national project includes researchers from Colorado State University and the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development at Penn State University. During this moment of simultaneous disruption and rapid innovation, our project supports LRFS communities of practice by documenting and disseminating innovations and best practices developed on the ground and drawing on LRFS thought leaders to frame research on COVID-19 relate shifts to



LRFS markets with the aim of supporting long term resilience. The project consists of 6 primary research collaborations and outputs:

- A Resource Hub with resources uploaded by 17 communities of practice spanning the local and regional food system.
- Short articles called *Innovation Briefs* that highlight rapid innovations sectors of the local food system have made in response to various restrictions brought on by COVID-19.
- Impact Assessments written by each community of practice that indicate positive and negative changes to their sector in the midst of COVID-19 alongside marketing innovations, economic impacts, and desired data and technical assistance.
- Social Network Analysis (to be completed April 2021) will be completed among sector members from the project's partner communities of practice. This will be completed to determine cross-sectoral connections and new relationships among project partners.
- Consumer Survey (October 2020) to aid project partners in understanding consumer behavior in relation to purchasing local food during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A monthly *webinar series* to highlight the incredible pivots, innovations, and adaptations happening across the local and regional food system.

Each month of the project, a minimum of 2 Innovation Briefs will be published to the resource hub. These briefs highlight the project's aim of showcasing innovations that will help the LRFS in "Building Better Beyond," that is, building a more resilient food system for a post-COVID world. Innovation Briefs currently published include *Virtual CSA Fairs*, which details the decision of many CSA fair organizers to pivot to an online format in the Spring to continue to create grower-consumer engagement. In addition, *FRESHFARM's Market Tracker* describes the potential of data for farmer's market organizers. Each brief highlights an issue, innovation, and outcome of the change the organization(s) had to make in response to circumstances brought about by COVID-19.

## Innovation Brief | Virtual CSA Fairs



In addition to these Innovation Briefs, each of the 17 communities of practice have written an initial impact assessment in which sector leaders have detailed COVID's economic, logistic, and social impact on their respective sector. These will be updated throughout the project, as sector response



and impact evolves over the coming months. These impact assessments can be found on the project website, alongside the innovation briefs and COVID-19 resources uploaded by the communities of practice.

The project's monthly webinar series begins in October with a panel discussion from local food systems leaders from the National Farm to School Network, the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network, and the Wallace Center at Winrock International. The panel will be discussing "marketing innovations when communities eat at home," focusing on market channel shifts and adaptations the local food system made in response to the closure of schools, restaurants, and institutions. This webinar series will feature a panel discussion on a different topic the third Monday of each month at 1 pm EST.

## Upcoming Webinar

## Marketing Innovations When Communities Eat at Home

OCT. 19TH I 1 PM EST

For more information, visit the project website: <a href="https://lfscovid.localfoodeconomics.com/">https://lfscovid.localfoodeconomics.com/</a>

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