COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS: INCUBATOR FARMS

GOALS

Aim to assist new and **BEGINNING FARM ENTREPRENEURS** in establishing their own successful business. Incubator farms typically train on successful business tactics and **PROVIDE RESOURCES** and services that are typically expensive or difficult to come by for start-up entrepreneurs on their own. Many forms of incubator farms exist, but all rely on **LAND-BASED** areas for training, and include multiple-growers on site. Additionally, trainers and experts can be housed or consulted to teach various technical practices of farming.

BENEFITS

- Assist farmers in retaining access and knowledge of:

- Land: low-cost rent, match landowners with incubator participants…

- Infrastructure: low cost access to equipment, infrastructure, utilities…

- Knowledge: workshops, field trips, networking, technical assistance…

- Markets: help identify markets, establish CSAs, food hub, etc.

- Capital : develop recordkeeping tools and skills, connect with suitable financial advisors, assist with business planning

- New opportunity for beginning farmers: : 50% of US farmers will retire over the next decade

COMMUNITY IMPACT

- As of 2013: 111 known project in North America. Median project size = 10 acres.
- 68% of projects are nonprofits, 8% are part of an academic institution
- Attract a new demographics: new farmers are less likely than established farmers to come from a farm background, meaning that new farmers often lack basic farm knowledge (2).
- Support the development of new farm enterprises
- Encourage the growth of strong local food systems

NATIONAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Intervale Center, Burlington VT

One of the oldest incubators in the country with 350 acres including a conservation nursery, food hub, gleaning and food rescue program, incubator program and more. The Farms program has two categories: mentor farms and incubator farms. They are open to beginning

http://www.intervale.org/

ALBA (Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association), Monterey County, CA

One of the oldest incubators in the country- hosting two organic farms: Rural Development Center with 110 acres and 16 farmers and the Farm Training and Research Center with 195 acres (60 acres cultivated).

http://www.albafarmers.org/

Headwaters Farm Incubator Program, Gresham OR

Works with a 60 acre property owned by the soil and water conservation district. They worked with 5 farm businesses on 6 acres in 2014 and have a goal to add 3-5 more businesses each year and have 15 famers at any given time.

http://emswcd.org/farm-incubator/

North Farm (Michigan State University), Chatham MI

A Land grant, university based, incubator program moving into it's first season in 2015. They are a part of the MSU's Upper Penninsula Research and Extension Center with 160 acres, with 20 acres for production.

http://www.msunorthfarm.org/

LET US KNOW OTHER BEST PRACTICES

TITLE: CONTACT INFORMATION:

INTERESTED IN HELPING? SHARE YOUR INFO

NAME: CONTACT INFORMATION: