

NCW Regional Food Systems Strategic Priorities
In-person Interview Guide

INFORMATION

Interviewer:

Date:

Interviewee:

Mailing address:

Email:

Phone:

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I'm part of a small team of contractors working with IRIS – The Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship– to create a baseline regional food system assessment for North Central Washington.

IRIS is interested in increasing the amount of food grown and consumed in North Central Washington. They've hired us to compile information that will help them, and others in the regional food community, prioritize the steps that need to be taken to support this goal.

The purpose of today's interview is to get your perspective on what needs to be done to develop a successful regional food system. We are talking to producers, direct marketers, non-profit and academic leaders throughout the region.

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

Let's start by talking generally.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tell me about yourself and how you have been involved in agriculture. Prompts: *personal experience as a producer, direct market experience, experience being involved in organized efforts*

Why do you think it's important for more of the food consumed in our region to be grown here?

When you hear the phrase "regional food system" what does it mean to you?

Thinking about the big picture of the region, most people we have talked to agree that there are a number of key issues that stand between our current situation and a stronger regional food system. I'd like to ask you a series of questions about three of the most commonly identified issues. We know these aren't the only issues, but since we have limited time today we are focusing on these.

DIVERSIFYING FARMS

Many of the people we have already spoken with say that getting more farmers to diversify their production is a major need if we are to supply more food regionally. Do you agree? If not, why not?

What kind of diversification do you think is most important at this point?

What do you think is needed to help producers diversify in this way?

Who are the people who could help with that?

What other resources would it take?

VALUE ADDED PROCESSING CAPACITY

Many of the people we have already spoken with say that having facilities available to process value-added foods is a major need if we are to grow more of our own food here in the North Central Washington region. Do you agree? If not, why not?

Whose help is needed to create such facilities?

What other resources would it take?

MARKET CHANNELS

Many of the people we have already spoken with say that producers need more or better ways to sell food directly to consumers, if we are going to develop a successful regional food system. Do you agree? If not, why not?

Specifically what kind of market opportunities do you think should be developed or expanded?

Whose help is needed to do that?

What other resources would it take?

CLOSING

We're also very interested in stories about creative ways people are finding to encourage the development of a successful regional food system. Can you tell me one success story about how you or someone you know has addressed one of the issues we've talked about?
(prompts: diversification; value added processing; market channels)

I know we only covered a few topics here. If we are able to expand this study, what other things do you think we should ask about?

Who else would you suggest we talk to?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. A summary of your thoughts will be included in a final report prepared for IRIS this summer. We will make sure you receive an electronic copy of that.