



Rosemount Urban Agriculture: Wholesale Markets Report

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SUST 4004: Sustainable Communities
December 15, 2014



This project was supported by the Resilient Communities Project (RCP), a program at the University of Minnesota that convenes the wide-ranging expertise of U of M faculty and students to address strategic local projects that advance community resilience and sustainability. RCP is a program of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and the Institute on the Environment.



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Introduction and Overview

The City of Rosemount consists of a mixture of urban and rural land that can support each other through the use of a local wholesale produce market. There are many businesses and institutions within Rosemount that can effectively utilize produce that has been locally grown within the city. This report investigates the potentials of such businesses and institutions in Rosemount, the challenges that are present to them in entering the market, and examples of ways to overcome these challenges.



Fig. 1

Around the world, cities are implementing ideas for integrating local foods into wholesale markets. Through the research of these cities and practices already implemented, the best and most realistic options for the city of Rosemount are addressed and explained in this report. Wide arrays of businesses are already providing food for consumers. The investigation of the variety of these markets in Rosemount allowed us to pick out the differences of these markets. Through the use of interviews of different individuals from these varied businesses, professional knowledge about the food systems already in place was gained and an insight into what might be preventing them from entering the local food market. This report summarizes the needs and concerns that the local businesses and institutions in Rosemount have with utilizing locally grown foods and offers possible solutions.

Market Research

Institutions

Goal: Incorporate locally produced food into large-scale institutions around Rosemount and investigate any roadblocks and potential.

Objective: Provide a means allowing locally grown food to be incorporated into meals provided at larger businesses like Flint Hills Resources

Strategy: Set up a Supplier Approval Program for producers, ensuring their resources can be used by large institutions.

a. Local Foods to Institutions

Analyzing different scales of wholesale is important, and research with Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend Refinery provided insight for the potential and roadblocks of incorporating locally produced food into meals at large institutions. Pairing Rosemount produced food with the refinery's cafe and cafeteria has the potential to feed and educate a large amount of employees, as well as benefiting relationships between the community and the refinery.

b. Food Business at Flint Hills

Being the second largest employer in Rosemount, Flint Hills Resources is an important local industry and their large-scale food operation offered useful information regarding the project. By talking to Kevin Gust, the manager of the food and café business at Flint Hills, it was possible to understand and analyze their business practices relating to such a large operation. Aramark, a multinational food service company, provides their food services. Because of this, much of the information received relates to Aramark's business practices, which works for Flint Hills but is a separate entity working within. Presently, they have a cafeteria and café on site and are in the process of adding a new cafeteria as well (Gust, 2014). On a usual workday, they provide food services to approximately 500 workers, and with a total of 930 workers at the refinery (Community Profile for Rosemount, Minnesota, 2014), this accounts for over half of their employee population. Feeding so many workers means that lots of goods and shipments need to be handled in order to bring safe, high quality meals to their workers.

c. Receiving and Handling of Food

In order to meet such high demand for food, Aramark has to use a "super-distributor" to meet their requirements. Sysco Foods, a multinational food distribution company, provides this service for Flint Hills. They typically receive shipments from them daily in a variety of forms. Kevin has a limited amount of workers to prepare food for 500 employees, so he uses cost calculations in order to determine how the food is received. For example, fresh

cut lettuce comes in daily; the amount of work it takes for his cooks to cut lettuce simply isn't practical so it must come pre-cut (Gust, 2014). Distributors are able to process the produce that comes in all at once, making it more cost effective for the food industry to use, especially for large scale operations like at Flint Hills. This is a common practice and makes it possible to provide large amount of product despite limitations and cost problems associated with food preparation on site.

d. Locally Sourced Produce

Both Aramark and Sysco strive to provide high quality products, but also are conscious of sustainable practices that are being used at Flint Hills Resources and around the world. Sysco works closely with farmers and distributors working in the area to support existing local businesses, reduce transportation, and lower costs. Inquiry into the sources of the produce used at Flint Hills Resources provided insight into how distribution works here. Produce comes from a St. Paul based distribution company called Bix Produce, which specializes in regional bulk, specialty and precut produce grown in the Midwest region and serves the areas in red to the right (Mission, 2014). All of the farms they pull from are in this region, with the closest to Rosemount being Pahl Farms in Apple Valley. Flint Hills is able to acquire produce from a close vicinity of farms, however Kevin Gust has no say in what exact farms the produce comes from. Bix Produce follows strict guidelines and safety protocol from farms, transportation, preparation, and distribution. These safety regulations are needed across all points in the life cycle of produce to ensure that it is safe for human consumption.

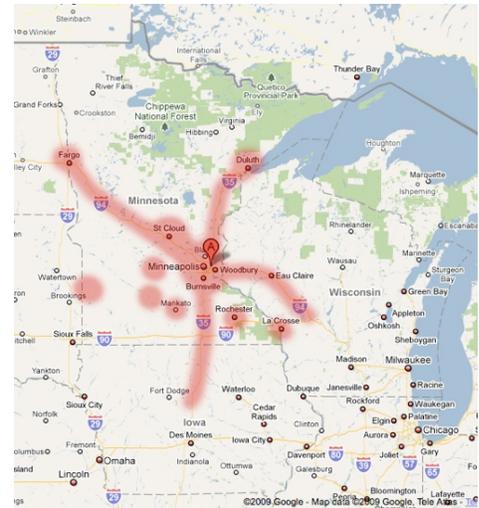


Fig 2. Areas served by Bix Produce

e. Challenges and Suggestions

The large operation at Flint Hills requires multinational companies like Aramark and Sysco to provide services. This allows for opportunities that aren't possible at a small business scale, but the scale and complexity of the interactions between all of these systems restricts some farmers from supplying larger institutions.

i. Challenges

In general and especially at Flint Hills, safety standards set by the USDA and HACCP are followed at all stages in the life cycle of wholesale food. These regulations are necessary to ensure safe produce and to keep consistent measures

throughout distribution. However, this means that Flint Hills cannot simply order produce from a local Rosemount producer. They have to ensure safety protocol was followed and not every farmer or community agriculture plot can achieve the level of regulations needed for these companies. Bix Produce does offer ways for farmers to get approved for their distribution services. The Supplier Approval Program is their way to let local producers get involved with their company and get their goods processed for larger institutions by following the FDA's food safety guidelines for the produce industry. Bix also has other immense standards set in place at their processing facility and in their refrigerated trucks, where close documentation and biological inspection happens along the entire process. Facilities like these are needed to provide a safe product and need a dedicated company like Bix to maintain and uphold regulations while still supporting local producers.

ii. Potential Suggestions

While regulations are in place, it is possible for Rosemount producers to get involved with larger distribution companies. Other farms around the area, like Pahl's Farms in Apple Valley, produce for companies like Bix, which supply larger wholesale companies. Talking to the distributor and getting certified are needed for a partnership but it could have wide benefits in the community. With so many employees at Flint Hills, and with many of them living in suburbs close by, knowing that their food came from close by would benefit relationships and educate the hundreds of workers using the food services every day.

Schools

Goal: Provide fresher and healthier school lunches to children, creating a community-based food system.

Objective: Serve local, fresh, and healthy foods for school lunches to School District 196, without exceeding the current school budget.

Strategy: Gradually incorporate affordable local food items from local farmers in Rosemount each month into the school menu.

a. Local Foods to Cafeterias

The goal is to bring locally produced food from Rosemount into school cafeterias of Independent School District 196. This would benefit the city by supporting local farmers and producers, and most importantly to provide healthy and fresh foods to children.

b. Food Budget

According to Wendy Knight, the Coordinator of Food and Nutrition Services at School District 196, they currently receive a majority of their cafeteria food from a vendor called Upper Lakes Foods, located in Cloquet, Minnesota. The district has a strict budget with commodities and milk of a little over \$4,000,000 with little to no flexibility. The addition of local foods would require additional kitchen utensils, training of staff on how to store, prepare, and cook the fresh foods. This would result in longer cooking times and more hours from the staff, which would require an increase in the staff's wages. These additions would result in exceeding the current budget (Knight, 2014).

c. Current Budgeting and Menu Planning

Currently, the schools receive their food prepackaged, washed, and pre-cut. This is to save money, stay within the current food budget, and minimize preparing, cooking time, and utensils. The School District 196 Food and Nutrition Services department has a secondary menu committee and an elementary menu committee made up of 6 managers at each level. Together with a registered dietitian they each develop their menu so that it works for storeroom size, freezer space, cooler space, student's likes and dislikes, production capabilities at each kitchen, food handling, cost per serving, accessibility and availability from our prime vendor and anything else that goes into menu development. The cashiers itemize at the point of sale to know the exact number of servings of everything they put out on the line. This helps them know what the popular items are. The menu planning follows the USDA Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act and all the new serving sizes and colors of vegetables that are required (Knight, 2014).

Upper Lakes Foods, the school district's primary vendor, is a full line distributor that also carries their own fresh produce line and processing plant. Every 3 years the school district is required by law to go out to bid. They put together a list of 50 items that are high volume and high price and send it out to 6 national distributors for their bid pricing and cost plus fixed fee pricing. They then evaluate it and recommend award on the basis of cost and fixed fee. Finally, it has to go before the school board for final approval. The school district has had a good history with the Upper Lake Foods vendor and a good working relationship (Knight, 2014).

d. Where the Food Comes From

Upper Lake Foods are a full line distributor, with 2,000 food items that come from all over the Midwest and then some. For example, the frozen Tyson chicken comes from Arkansas, where their chicken plant is located and they all come from family chicken farms. Frozen

Ore-Ida potatoes come from Oregon and Idaho, although whenever possible, the vendor gets potatoes from local farms around the state of Minnesota.

The school district also has access to farmers through a statewide reference manual that lists all the local farms. The school uses one farmer for their corn on the cob twice each Fall, and they pick the corn and send it to Upper Lake Food's processing plant where they husk the corn, remove the silk, break the cobs in half, re-portion into cardboard boxes, and deliver cases to schools for the staff to then steam and serve to students. It is fresh, local corn on the cob from one local farmer, but the vendor has to use a processing plant to "prepare the corn" for the school's use (Knight, 2014).

Some local foods are currently being incorporated into the school menus. They use many locally grown foods in the months of September and October. Upper Lake Foods has contracts with many farmers in the state of Minnesota and the school pre-books quantities of cucumbers, green peppers, squash, baby carrots, rutabagas, cabbage for coleslaw, etc. In the winter months from November through March, they use locally grown beans from North Dakota, honey from Little Falls, Minnesota, wild rice from Bemidji, Minnesota, fresh turkey from a farm south of the district, ice cream from Kemps located in Rochester and White Bear Lake, etc. (Knight, 2014).

e. Challenges of Bringing Locally Produced Foods from Rosemount

School District 196 has explored options to receive food locally produced in Rosemount. They are a district with 27,300 students and 30 school sites. Rosemount has farmers, but none of them alone are able to provide fresh fruits and vegetables enough for the district. There are Hmong farmers, which they did commit fresh produce from, but had them delivered to only 3 sites. This is due to their inability to set up for quantity distribution to 30 sites. They don't have refrigerated trucks or a fleet of trucks or drivers to deliver to all 30 sites in one day (Knight, 2014).

i. Transition

The transition to bringing in locally produced foods from Rosemount needs to start a year or year and a half before the time you want to put the locally grown food on your menu. The district decides what they want the farmers to grow, how much they need per menu, etc. The risk would be if the growing season didn't like the peppers or tomatoes and the farmer has only 30% of a normal crop, then what would the school district do? They cannot fill your menu orders for fresh green peppers or tomatoes. But, because of the regulations, the schools are required to serve a green vegetable and a red vegetable each week. This presents difficulties looking for

another farmer, who then didn't expect the school to call so they do not have the quantity that they need either. The alternative is to switch a menu item, but they still need the green and the red vegetables, resulting in going to a frozen or canned product that came from California in a truck in their freezer section delivered to the distributor to then get delivered to the schools.

ii. Cost

Cost is also a factor. Fresh, locally grown foods are 30% more expensive to buy than other food. Budgets are tight and there usually is not room to add 30% to the locally grown foods. The staff needs training on washing and preparing fresh produce. They need slicers, knives, cutting boards, peelers, etc.

f. Next Steps and Recommendations for Schools

An important resource to get local food to be served in school cafeterias is the *Vermont Farm to School, "Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools"*. This document includes step-by-step processes for starting local purchasing in schools, success stories about farm-to-cafeteria relationships, and seasonal recipes and menu ideas. The chapters touch on:

- School Food Distribution
- Creating School Meals
- Building Relationships with Farmers for Local Food Purchasing
- Affording Local Food
- Marketing Lunches: Bringing Kids to the Table
- Connecting to the Community

The *Affording Local Food* chapter provides helpful methods for successfully incorporating locally produced foods into the school menus without exceeding the current food budget. The steps are as follows:

- **Start Slowly:** Create a long-term strategy to gradually introduce new local items in small batches that the district can afford, along with regular menu items over a long period of menu cycles. Identify the top 5 to 10 food products used most in volume and commit to buying one of these each month from local farm. Then gradually increase the amount bought and introduced in the menu.

- **Look for Competitively Priced Foods:** Many locally produced foods are competitively priced. Compare costs for storage crops such as potatoes, carrots, and squash and the price differences. There is also often less waste from local produce because it is fresher, saving money.
- **Bring Community Members into Local Food Plans:** Identify local stakeholders including local farmers, restaurants, school board members, etc. Involve them in understanding the benefits and costs of transitioning to local food menus. Raise funds for lunch programs with fundraisers.
- **Use Commodities to Your Advantage:** Combine local foods with commodity foods to decrease cost.
- **Storage:** Purchase, process, and store food in bulk during growing season to save money. Store, freeze, or process foods for future use.
- **Take Advantage of Low Prices on Bumper Crops:** Farmers often have excess crops during harvest season that the school's can purchase with community help in processing. This saves money and provides the schools with vegetables for later in the year when stored.
- **Get Volunteer Food Preparation Help:** Bring in volunteers to help clean and prepare local food.
- **Buy Seconds:** Some local farmers sell "seconds", the produce that have blemishes or are dented/broken. These are sold at reduced prices. Food that is going to be cut up and cooked for school lunches does not need to be perfect and it does not compromise the quality.
- **Encourage Teachers and Staff to Buy Adult Meals:** selling more adult meals will provide more money in the lunch programs (*A Guide for Using Local Food in Schools*, 2010).

Locally Owned Restaurants

Goal: Have locally grown produce sold in locally owned restaurants to help connect local markets and provide fresher foods to diners.

Objective: Researching past approaches of integrating locally grown foods into locally owned restaurants.

Strategy: Create an easier to connect to network between local growers, restaurant owners, and community members.

a. Local Foods to Restaurants

The importance of sourcing local foods has surely become evident to all those buying, selling, and producing foods at any level. Though there is a growing trend towards increasing the use of locally sourced foods in everyday life, the restaurant markets have seen a dramatic impact on their sales. In research done by US Department of Agriculture (USDA) “Direct-to-consumer sales of agricultural products account for a small, but fast-growing segment of U.S. agriculture, increasing by \$399 million (49 percent) from 2002 to 2007, and by \$660 million (120 percent) from 1997 to 2007” (Martinez, 2010). As consumer knowledge grows, the benefits of locally sourced foods become clearer – an improved taste, fresher product, and lowering in cost for both buyers and production.

There is a clear sign that Rosemount community members, producers, and restaurant owners know that sourcing locally is both good for them as well as beneficial to their businesses. There is high turnout by consumers when local restaurants integrate local foods into their menus, even if the change is small. Community garden plots are gone as soon as they are available, and a few restaurant owners have already started to integrate local markets into their menus with great success. The government’s interest in working on this project is also a clear sign that there is enough interest in this to make this work.

On the owner side, one restaurant actually worked very closely with a local farmer for one product and, once the farmer realized how much business this could create, altered his growing habits to fit the restaurant and the owner ended up doubling the amount of produce bought from the farmer in just one year (McGunnigle, 2014). These small increases in locally circulating food at the Rosemount level show just how interested and capable Rosemount is in integrating local foods into local restaurant.

In another survey done by the USDA at a larger scale, “88 percent of chefs rated locally grown produce as a hot trend, 10 percent considered it a “perennial favorite,” and 2 percent ranked it as “yesterday’s news” (Martinez, 2010). So it is clear that the benefits of a market like this are being recognized, but now it is just making it more accessible to all owners, producers, and community members. To do this, the largest barriers need to be identified and a compilation of needs by each stakeholder must occur so that the necessary steps can be taken to integrate more local foods into local restaurants in Rosemount. Some of these

issues have been identified through our research and the findings for this research can be broken up as follows:

b. Challenges of Incorporating Local Foods into Local Restaurants

i. Legal “Grey Area” for Restaurant Owners

The Department of Health regulates foods in restaurants, and though it may have some local options they are commonly overpriced or not as fresh as to make a difference. In some cases, simply buying from a local producer is not as simple as one would assume. Though, times are surely changing and government organizations are realizing the importance of advocating locally sourced foods. This is clear by Rosemount’s involvement in a program like Resilient Communities and the University of Minnesota Sustainability Program. Some of the barriers that have been overcome on this front though, have not always been made known or clear to everyone. This is clear after speaking with restaurant owners in Rosemount.

ii. Licensing

First, it must be ensured that the grower is an “approved source”. This is one of the larger barriers, but once it is ensured the rest becomes much easier. An approved source is considered to be “food is grown on a farm or garden that is occupied or cultivated by the grower, and has not been prepared or stored in a private home” (Hultberg, 2010), which is true in most cases in Rosemount, MN farms. Handler licenses are also a requirement in some cases, which would allow restaurant owners to buy directly from producers. The requirements are as follows:

- People who sell or donate produce from a farm or garden that they rent or own are exempt from licensing. This includes growers selling their own whole produce or produce with “limited processing” (Minnesota Statutes 28A.15 and MN Constitution Article 13, Section 7). Limited processing includes sorting or trimming (e.g., topping carrots or husking corn) as part of the harvesting process, or washing.
- People who sell or donate produce that is “processed” are normally required to be licensed. Processed includes slicing, heating, canning, freezing, drying, mixing, coating, bottling, enrichment or similar actions.
- People who wish to sell produce that they have not grown themselves must be licensed to sell to any customer.

- Growers that choose to process their food by canning, bottling etc., must use an inspected and approved kitchen or processing facility, and follow all other applicable regulations (Hultberg, 2010).

iii. Receiving and Purchasing Product

Once it is determined that all producers and buyers meet license requirements stated above, the receiving and purchasing of the produce should be recorded. This is to ensure that all of the product is inspected before being integrated into restaurant menus and provide a trail back to issues if a health hazard is discovered. When Las Tortillas owner Ryan McGunnigle was interviewed, it was mentioned that there would be issues with a farmer simply coming up to a restaurant and dropping off a box of produce in their truck. But through proper planning and procedures this is actually possible (McGunnigle, 2014).

The first step that must be taken is to get copies of the grower’s documentation and references from a USDA Certifying Agent. Though this may take extra effort, it is a one time need and once completed will ensure that both the farmer and grower are interacting in a legal manner.

Once certifications are received and the delivery is organized, the simple action of taking a receipt of the product delivered can ensure that the transaction is safe and legal to integrate into the restaurant’s menu. Below is an example receipt that covers all that is necessary in case there is ever an issue with the food or a customer or someone working with the USDA requests it. All of this information can be found at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food.aspx> with a few examples.

Date: _____ Received by: _____ Donated? ___ Purchased?: ___ Purchase price: _____ Description and amount of produce: _____ _____ _____ Date harvested: _____ Harvest location: _____ Name of grower: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
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Fig. 3

iv. Lack of Connectivity Between Growers and Sellers

Currently, there is no way for restaurant owners or producers to easily find who is selling what for how much, or who is looking to buy what for how much. In interviews and research done on the topic, it was a common theme that simply not having a contact was where all dead ends lead to, especially in a small town like Rosemount. “There isn’t enough hours in the day,” as Ryan McGunnigle, Las Tortillas put it. Though there is all of this interest, there is simply not enough time for a grower or restaurant owner to go out and search each farm individually without a bit more background information on who has what produce and what their availability is to provide for them. If there were a list of growers and the information needed by buyers made easily available - whether that be online or through subscription - the process of integrating locally grown foods into local restaurants would be much smoother (McGunnigle, 2014).

As provided by The Minnesota Project as well as through direct interviews with owners, below is the information needed from a database to help connect growers and buyers effectively:

- What products does the farm offer, and in what quantities?
- When are each of these products available?
- When do they deliver? How do they deliver?
- Where is the farm located?
- Terms of payment- how do they like to be paid?
- Does the farm use any chemicals, etc?
- Does the farm carry liability insurance?
- How will the product arrive? (size of cases, bundles, etc)
- How much does the food cost?
- Do they communicate via email, phone or both?
- Do they have any suggestions about cooking the food or menus?

Minnesota Grown Program at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (www.minnesotagrown.com) is actually a great example that could be modeled after. Within the site, a user can follow the “Retailers” link to find a directory of producers of fruit, vegetables, and meats. One can also search for product-by-product name, location, or farm name. This creates a direct link for a buyer to a possible producer. Allowing it to be two sided and not only listing producers but also buyers could improve it, though. This would help establish a two-way interaction, providing more opportunity for networking and connection.

v. Seasonal Impacts in Rosemount, Minnesota

Restaurants have very few, if any, approaches to long-term food storage. Since corn can only be grown at certain times, growers must go beyond smaller restaurants to distribute it all since it can not be stored very long. In a local Mexican restaurant, they have a large source of local corn from a connection made to a local farmer. This corn is a huge hit with locals but around Cinco de Mayo, when corn is not in season, the food must be sourced from Florida or California. When owners outsource their only option is to go through US Department of Agriculture who will choose their source for them (McGunnigle, 2014). Looking into efficient and plausible food storage options would be a good focus for future studies so that less outsourcing must occur and local foods can be used for longer periods of time.

c. Other Suggested Next Steps

Marketing events seemed to be the largest successes by restaurant owners currently in Rosemount and otherwise. Events like a ‘Harvest Party’ that celebrated the consumers of the restaurant, but also used local foods as a staple (such as squash, corn, greens) of the meals to help people realize how much better it tastes and show a side to the restaurant they may not have known. By having events like this it not only shows consumers that the owners care about where their food comes from but they also see the importance of working to make Rosemount more connected.

By selling themselves and their stories, restaurant owners are making their business more memorable and relatable to community members as well. It also helps farmers by having their names put out there. This could help create rapport between producers and consumers, but also provide an opportunity for other buyers to recognize producers who are actively working locally.

The use of social media is a huge catalyst for connecting locally sourced restaurants and locals. By simply putting up a daily menu with an emphasis on what is local in each dish,

people would actually come in already knowing what they wanted for dinner. This is actually already happening with Las Tortillas. Ryan McGunnigle, the owner of the restaurant, says that at least one person comes in already knowing what they will have for dinner, commonly having come to the restaurant because of the emphasis on local produce given on the website (McGunnigle, 2014).

Large-Scale Buyers and Sellers

Goal: Provide community members of Rosemount an easier way of purchasing produce grown on farms located in Rosemount.

Objective: Incorporate produce grown by local farmers into large-scale stores located within Rosemount.

Strategy: Inform storeowners of the opportunities available to them that make it possible to sell locally grown produce in their stores.

a. Local Foods to Large-Scale Stores

Introducing locally grown foods into large-scale stores located within Rosemount, such as local grocery stores, is one of the easiest ways for community members to gain access into the market. An interview with Kim, one of the store owners of Fluegel's Farm, Garden, and Pet, made it evident that incorporating locally grown produce into such stores is possible and produces successful results. Fluegel's currently sells multiple products that are produced within Rosemount including maple syrup, honey, and grains that are sold as livestock feed and bird seed. Selling locally grown produce in a store allows the storeowners to have a special relationship with their providers and makes their store more attractive to customers by providing them with exclusive merchandise (Mohrhauser, 2014).

b. Challenges of Incorporating Local Foods into Local Stores

Many of the challenges that store owners have when it comes to integrating locally grown produce into their inventory have to do with the non-traditional and non-regulated nature of the sale.

i. Pricing

Compared to local restaurant owners, local grocers are generally less likely to pay higher wholesale price premiums when buying into the local food market. So when farmers are calculating the price of their produce, it is important for them to remember that grocers are buying foods priced as wholesale and not retail. This is different from the pricing method used for farmers markets (Ernst, 2012). It is important for the farmers to know how much it costs to grow and deliver their produce, as this is a very crucial component in calculating the wholesale price of

their produce. This number is usually used as a “floor price” and is the bare minimum the farmer needs to sell his product to break even (Bruch, 2011).

ii. Packaging

There is concern among large-scale stores about the packaging of locally grown food not being consistent with the other produce in the store. Grocers are accustomed to handling produce in corrugated cardboard boxes, wooden crates, or even reusable plastic containers. It is also normal for each item of produce to have a sticker with an individual UPC or numerical code provided on it to improve the process of purchasing the item. Many local grocers are willing to work with local growers to accommodate for these conveniences, but if not, it may be helpful for the grower to provide the packaging to make their product more attractive and to add value (Ernst, 2012).

iii. Quality and Quantity

Delivering high quality products to customers is the first and foremost priority of most successful businesses. Many large-scale storeowners worry that by purchasing produce from local growers, they are sacrificing the consistency and quantity of the produce available to their customers (Ernst, 2012). Local farms are also subject to unpredictable events such as disease or bad weather. These events are understandable, but are much less likely to be tolerated when the same products can be purchased without risk through a larger distributor (Guy, 2000). Many crops also require cooling and/or cool transport to maintain safety and quality. Finding a way to transport the large quantity of produce crops from the farm to the store safely and without damaging the quality of the crop would ease this concern for storeowners (Ernst, 2012).

c. Case Study: Hornbachers Grocery Store in Fargo, ND

Hornbachers is a chain of five grocery stores that are located around the Fargo-Moorhead area and are owned and operated by the Supervalu distribution company. While Supervalu serves as their main distributor for Hornbachers, they have the opportunity to purchase from other inventories and local producers. Hornbachers is a great example of how purchasing inventory from local producers can still provide their customers with high quality products (Guy, 2000).

Hornbachers uses local producers to supplement what they get from their warehouse. Most of the product purchased from local growers is considered “niche produce,” which means that this produce is different than the produce provided by Supervalu and can be advertised

as such. The local producers who wish to sell their produce to Hornbachers keep in close contact with the branch produce manager through daily phone calls and do not contract with the distributor. This allows each grower the opportunity to create a relationship with Hornbachers should they wish to. Several local farmers have established this relationship and have proved to consistently providing Hornbachers with quality products (Guy, 2000).

Hornbachers' experience of working with local producers is positive and, even given the risks, they continue to do so. They take pride in supporting the local economy and are happy to support local growers who have a quality product to sell.

d. Farm Direct Program - Sustainable Food Center in Central Texas

The Farm Direct program is a program that is part of the Sustainable Food Center organization located in central Texas. The Sustainable Food Center organization works to strengthen the local food system and provide the community access to these healthy, locally grown foods. One of the programs this organization created is the Farm Direct program that serves as the connecting link between the farm and the consumer. They connect local farmers with schools, workplaces, cafeterias in hospitals, universities, and other institutions, and families by delivering the food from the farms directly to the customer (Sustainable Food Center, 2014).

e. Food Processing Facility - Root Cellar Foods in Montana

Root Cellar Foods located in Montana is a food processing facility that washes, chops, and packages large quantities of locally grown foods for large-scale consumers. Root Cellar Foods is a team of three people that buy food produced by the farmers, process the food, and then sell it to local businesses (Root Cellar Foods, 2014). The food is chopped and packaged within 24-72 hours, which makes this food accessible to large institutions such as hospitals, universities, and schools. This particular facility has fresh food processing twice a week, Tuesday and Friday and switches to making some additional products such as soups, sauces, and stocks from frozen product that had been stored from the summer. The idea behind this food processing facility is to take the labor away from the kitchens in prepping the vegetables they want to use in their recipes. It also serves as a sort of middle-man in that the farmers and the consumers both have one contact in selling or buying their food rather than multiple. Root Cellar Foods sells their processed vegetables to local restaurants and to local grocery stores (Garcia, 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Rosemount is expected to face more development and rapid population in the upcoming years. Agricultural land is being lost to this development, and steps are already being taken by the city to keep agriculture as an important part of the future as it has been in the past. Wholesale markets of different scales and complexity exist around Rosemount, and they are some of the best ways to address and inform the public about the importance of eating locally grown food. Increased community awareness and health, reduced dependence on transportation, and a more resilient agricultural city are just a few effects of a more connected urban agriculture in Rosemount. Examples and recommendations have been mentioned that relate directly to particular topic sections earlier, but other ideas are listed below that help address the community and attempt to connect producers and wholesalers better.

a. Food Hub

A food hub could be a useful tool to help bridge the disconnection between producers, wholesalers, and consumers in Rosemount. It basically is a farmer collective that aggregates, markets and distributes local food to the surrounding community (Berman, 2011). A prime example has been Burlington, Vermont, which created The Intervale Center, a non-profit organization that provides a great example for sustainable agriculture and community food systems. They go in depth on their renewing efforts to the land, education for the community on the subject, and support new farmers to start growing and selling for their own enterprise (Berman, 2011). They have a system in place having experienced farmers helping new farmers, as well as providing fee benefits for both parties. This foundation started the Food Hub, their farmer collective. This food is paired directly to consumers, allowing for minimal packaging and fair prices for both parties. This Food Hub creates a single point for anyone to access food, if they are restaurants, institutions, grocers, etc. and makes it easy for the farmers to get involved in the wholesale market (Berman, 2011). This also helps smaller farmers who are not connected and need expertise to get involved with the markets in the surrounding community.

An idea of one non-profit organization that creates a hub for activity is a methodical way to get easy access for both producers and consumers on the same page for distributing their goods to each other for good prices. This promotes a great social well-being in the Intervale community, and is a self-perpetuating system due to the education in place. An initiative like this could help address connection problems in Rosemount and help pass knowledge from the older generation of farmers to newer younger generations taking over.

b. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program

Looking at surrounding communities near Rosemount provides great examples of what works in Minnesota. Using local farms to come together in a community supported agriculture program that gets fresh local foods out to residents easily would be an engaging option for Rosemount. Pahl's Farms/Pahl's Market in Apple Valley provides a great example nearby. Their initiative gets purchasing members of the community connected directly with farmers, through share boxes. These boxes come from predetermined planted plots that give purchasing members a variety of fresh food every week throughout the growing season. There is an emphasis on the getting to know the people who grow these plots and engage the community through events that educate the general public (CSA Program, 2014).

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Cover Page Rosemount, MN. (n.d.). Retrieved December 16, 2014, from <http://www.ci.rosemount.mn.us/>

Fig. 1 Rosemount, MN. (n.d.). Retrieved December 16, 2014, from <http://www.ci.rosemount.mn.us/>

Fig. 2 "Areas We Serve" (n.d.). Retrieved December 14, 2014 http://www.bixproduce.com/about/areas_we_serve

Fig. 3 Food from Farm to Table. (n.d.). Retrieved December 16, 2014, from <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food.aspx>