

Food System Infrastructure Analysis

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Background Information

The Martin County Food System Feasibility Study, funded by a USDA Rural Business Development Grant, assessed the capacity of the region to support a local food hub and identified food system constraints and opportunities. The study includes an Infrastructure Analysis, wherein existing food system infrastructure (packinghouses, processing facilities, and markets) were inventoried and assessed, in terms of their current offerings, as well as their potential to address constraints and support opportunities for food system improvement. This report presents the findings of the Infrastructure Analysis.

Survey Content

Interviewees were asked to identify the features of their operation (processing, packing, commercial kitchen, storage, etc.), discuss sourcing and transport of products, share information on the types of buyers served, note primary months of operation, and indicate whether there would be capacity for additional product. Lastly, interviewees were asked to share their perspective on the primary needs of the local food system. The full survey content is provided in Appendix A.

Purpose of the Survey

The survey was intended primarily to identify where capacity may already exist to address food system needs. A secondary goal was to compile an initial resource list, which can be added to over time, to improve connections among food system infrastructure facilities and to facilitate more partnerships between growers and food system infrastructure facilities.

Data Collection Procedures

Between November 2017 and May 2018, interviews were conducted with the operators of food system infrastructure facilities, such as local food banks, food pantries, retailers, commercial kitchens, processors/packers, distribution hubs, etc. A total of seven (7) Martin County establishments were interviewed, along with one (1) in Palm Beach County, and four (4) in St. Lucie County. For interviewees who agreed to share information publicly, their establishment's profile was included in a Food System Infrastructure Resource List (Appendix B). In August and September of 2018, draft reports were also shared with local planning agencies, including the Martin County Business Development Board (BDB), Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC), Martin County Growth Management Department (GMD), and Martin County Economic Development Council (EDC) for their input, particularly with regard to food system constraints and opportunities.

Report of survey results and findings

Characteristics of Existing Infrastructure

- **Operational Components**

Interviews revealed great diversity within and among facilities. The facilities' primary operations included retail, donation, production, processing, packaging, storage, and distribution. Most facilities are multi-purpose, including a variety of functions in support of their primary mission. For example, a couple of local growers have diversified into a mix of product aggregation, food preparation, retail, distribution to local restaurants and consumers, and agri-tourism. In diversifying, they are developing facilities in support of the food system, including commercial kitchens. Similarly, some of our food pantries, in an effort to preserve fresh produce for clientele, have constructed commercial kitchens and processing facilities, which complement their storage and consumer pantry operations.

- **Product Sourcing**

Most facilities draw from a mix of sources, including: distributors; an on-site farm/garden; direct purchase or donation from growers, ranchers, or value-added producers; donated products from food drives, individuals, restaurants, retailers, etc.; and/or gleaning.

- **Sourcing Specifications**

Recognizing that fresh local produce and protein sources can be difficult to obtain, facilities offer flexibility in their sourcing specifications. For example, though they would sometimes prefer larger quantities of produce, all of the interviewees expressed openness to accepting even very small quantities. As far as produce quality, standards can be flexible, depending on availability, demand, and end-use (i.e. lower quality may be more acceptable if it can be processed into a value-added product). None of the interviewees require organic, certified naturally grown, or other special designation; instead, some operators stated that relationships and commitment to humane, sustainable production are important. Local produce was generally preferred, though many, especially food pantries, were willing to source as far away as necessary to serve clientele. Value was also seen in products offered outside of the Treasure Coast, such wild-caught Florida seafood, central Florida pork and chicken, etc. Food safety was a concern for some facilities more than others. In particular, food banks operating under USDA requirements are limited in their ability to accept home-grown produce, due to food safety concerns. Grower interviewees were wary of mixing their products with those of other producers, due to concerns with food safety and traceability, though some will bring in additional product if food safety can be reasonably assured. Pre-processing and packaging are not usually required of suppliers, except with animal protein sources.

- **Transport**

Though some facilities, particularly food pantries, use distributors, most are not reliant on distributors. Instead, facilities use their own vehicles to pick up products and/or individual farmers, donors, or vendors (such as value-added food producers) may transport products to the facility. Transportation of goods from the facilities interviewed, in cases other than direct-sale or donation to consumers, is primarily through self-transport, with rare use of distributors.

- **Expansion**

Interviewees expressed interest in expanding operations to better meet clientele needs. A wide variety of new operations were in consideration, including distribution hubs, processing/packaging and other value-added facilities, commercial kitchen or processing facility rentals, and farm incubators. Additionally, across the board, interviewees stated they need more product to meet clientele demand, including more local protein, seasonal local produce, shelf-stable goods for pantries, and summer produce. Specific product needs and seasonal fluctuation in need vary by facility, based on clientele served, availability of refrigerated/non-refrigerated storage, seasonality of currently sourced product, and other factors.

Constraints and Opportunities to Address Food System Needs

- **Distribution hub requirements**

In determining whether to expand into a distribution hub, interviewees saw potential benefits and identified a number of considerations related to staffing, food safety, and capital. Sufficient staffing would be needed to properly track and distribute multiple crops during their harvest window. For example, one farm noted that during season they harvest 80 different crops. The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) was also a consideration mentioned by interviewees. FSMA requires that, unless exempted by 21 CFR 1.226, facilities engaged in manufacturing/processing, packing, or holding of food must register with FDA and meet certain requirements to reduce potential impacts of a foodborne outbreak originating from that facility. Even when not required by FSMA, growers saw traceability as key to maintaining a good reputation among consumers; the potential risk associated with sourcing and distributing a contaminated product was a real concern. On the other hand, a distribution hub was seen as potentially beneficial, in that it would offer growers and value-added food producers another outlet for their products and a means of offering products year-round, even during the summer when vegetable production is reduced.

- **Farm to School**

Farm to School was viewed by some as a potential opportunity for expansion. At least one local grower and a local retailer expressed interest, though uncertainty over pricing and food safety requirements would need to be addressed. Food safety concerns are not unique to Martin County, and as such, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) developed a Florida Farm to School Certification Program, which offers free farmer food safety training through the Produce Safety Alliance, followed by a food safety audit (<https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/Farm-to-School>). The Treasure Coast Food Bank has recently completed construction of a processing facility, which can prepare local produce for school cafeterias. The food bank expressed strong interest in expanding provision of local foods to schools, especially in Indian River and Martin counties.

- **Markets for produce and protein**

Farmers indicated they would benefit from additional market outlets. Some already offer sales to restaurants, which the growers indicated they have found are able to pay more for local produce than a distributor would offer. One suggestion was for a

new or relocated farmers' market with a roof and refrigerated storage; perhaps an existing facility, such as a community center, could be used for a market location. Planning agencies identified additional potential market outlets as including Meals on Wheels, local assisted living facilities, and a new farm stand/market intended for Pineland Prairie.

- **Processing**

Processing facilities are in various stages of completion in the area. As mentioned earlier, the Treasure Coast Food Bank recently completed construction of a processing facility and is actively seeking to increase the organizations and agencies they serve. A local retailer and a farm are both considering developing some sort of processing capability in the future; limiting factors identified were capital and uncertainty around zoning, landuse, and permitting requirements. Also, for highly diversified producers, processing equipment would not be as straightforward as it would be for a producer focusing on one or two primary crops.

- **Farm Incubator**

Most interviewees indicated they may be open to working a farm incubator into their operations, though there were some concerns and alternatives offered. The primary concern relates to costs for staffing and infrastructure (equipment, ADA accessibility, etc.). One alternative offered would be a community-wide approach that incorporates children, inmate populations and horticulture therapy at locations throughout the county/region. Another suggestion was to train inmates as Farm Bureau Young Farmer/Rancher interns. The EDC suggested connecting with the Boys & Girls Club, who may soon include job training for teens in their offerings. Other potential partner organizations identified were the Future Farmers of America, South Fork High School, and Vets in Agriculture. Planners with GMD and EDC also mentioned the role of community gardens in incubating potential new farmers, noting that gardens currently exist at House of Hope's Golden Gate facility, in Jensen Beach, Martin Correctional Institute, and soon also in East Stuart and Pineland Prairie. With interest expressed by interviewees, it's possible that a network of community-based incubators could draw from the field experience of local farmers and the food preparation abilities of local pantries and commercial kitchen operators to expand opportunities for beginning farmers and food entrepreneurs alike. At the same time, participating businesses and organizations may benefit from an expanded volunteer base, increased product supply, and clientele workforce training.

- **Waste**

In a few of the interviews, food waste was discussed at some length. According to the USDA, in the United States, food waste is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply, which has far-reaching impacts on food security, resource conservation and climate change. Food waste is the single largest component going into municipal landfills (<https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/faqs.htm>). The FDACS Florida Food Recovery Program seeks to coordinate farmers, wholesalers, retailers, community action agencies and other food relief agencies to make better use of existing food sources. They offer a Food Recovery Resource List of entities (suppliers, volunteers and non-profit organizations) that participate in food recovery; explain the needs, benefits, and protections of food recovery; and offer community workshops to facilitate support and partnerships at the local level

(<https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/Food-Recovery-Program>). Farmers receive certain protections from liability and can qualify for a tax deduction when donating produce to a non-profit organization for charitable purposes

(https://www.freshfromflorida.com/content/download/78379/2314637/Tax_incentives.pdf). Even if food is past its human consumption window, there are opportunities for composting or livestock feed. Currently, some food pantries are diverting waste to livestock feed, but composting has been limited. One farmer recommended County government and/or Waste Management could pilot a program to collect and compost pre/post-consumption waste. If waste could be decreased, we would be better able to meet our community's need for food, while also supplying our food producers with feed for livestock and compost for fruit/vegetable production.

- **Pantries**

- **Transportation/Accessibility**

- Food pantry operators discussed constraints related to their clientele's ability to obtain fresh produce and proteins, and they offered options to improve access. For example, it was mentioned that more coordination and infrastructure are needed to get the available food to people in need in a timely manner, especially in Indiantown. One challenge the pantries identified is that they often receive products very near the end of their shelf life, so they have difficulty distributing in time for human consumption. At least one interviewee expressed a need for additional refrigerated trucks to improve timely distribution. Another difficulty mentioned is the ability of clientele to access pantries, due to lack of transportation and hours of operation that may not be appropriate for the working poor. For example, pantries in the region are often open during typical work-day hours or only for a few hours in the morning or afternoon on weekdays; some pantries do offer weekend hours, which provide some additional opportunity for access. Expanded offering of prepared meals for home delivery was also identified as a need for low-income residents who cannot travel. One interviewee, United Against Poverty (UAP), suggested accessibility could be addressed in part through partnerships between pantries and small neighborhood retailers. UAP indicated they would be open to providing product, which retailers could then sell at a price that would be affordable to low-income residents, while also providing the retailer with some profit. Another interviewee suggested that the customer base of pantries could be expanded to include mid- to high-income residents seeking local produce for purchase; the pantries would then bring in additional income to fund new locations, while also connecting more consumers with local produce and offering more sales outlets for local growers.

- **Outreach**

- Some food pantry interviewees expressed a need for improved outreach, as they saw low-income residents were not always aware of where they could go to find food. Existing outreach materials and tools identified by interviewees included: 1) the FDACS Roadmap to Healthy Living (<https://gis.freshfromflorida.com/roadmaptohealth/>), which gives locations of food banks, senior feeding sites, after school meal sites, etc.; 2) the Treasure

Coast Food Bank's Agency Locator (<https://stophunger.org/findhelp/>), which lists soup kitchens and pantries; and 3) the House of Hope's Community Resources page (<http://hohmartin.org/resources>), which lists food pantries and meal sites.

Resources

In addition to the needs identified in the preceding paragraphs, food pantry interviewees indicated that volunteers, funding, and more fresh produce would help them to better care for their clientele.

- **Research & Education**

A couple of the farmer interviewees identified research needs they felt would benefit the local food system, including research on climate change, alternative crops, and innovations to expand summer vegetable production (for example, temperature-controlled nutrient flow technology). Another farmer expressed concern with misuse of the terms "organic" and "local", indicating this was an area where consumer education was needed.

Many local food pantries indicated they would like to expand educational offerings for their clientele. For example, the House of Hope would like to have more nutrition education and job training (ServSafe, OSHA, forklift operation, etc.) at their pantries or at the Golden Gate Center in Stuart. Several of the pantries engaged in food production are incorporating hospitality and food safety education for clientele, as a workforce training opportunity. Many pantries distribute recipes to help clientele prepare less commonly used produce. Any additional resources that could help pantries expand their educational offerings would benefit clientele.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the food system infrastructure analysis identified additional capacity already available in our local food system, particularly with regard to processing and commercial kitchen facilities. Interviewees expressed interest in further expansion of food system capacity as well. Making full use of our region's existing food system infrastructure, along with assisting organizations and businesses in planning future infrastructure, could help to reduce food waste, promote food security, improve our economy, and support local growers and food entrepreneurs. The food system interviewees and planning agencies could benefit from food system improvements, while also serving as technical and in some cases, financial resources for future food system innovations. For example, the BDB offers a Business Accelerator Program, which provides guidance, training, and micro-grants for new or expanding businesses. Similarly, many farms provide mentorship and support with product distribution to one another and also serve local pantries. Additionally, in August 2018, a census tract in the Village of Indiantown in western Martin County was designated as a Low Tax Opportunity Zone, with the goal of encouraging private investment and job creation. Based on stakeholder input, priority areas of focus include community food security planning, farm incubator development assistance, improved linkages among growers and food system infrastructure components, and research-based training programs.

Community food security planning could be accomplished by bringing together food pantries, growers, and other stakeholders across the region to innovate around issues raised by the interviewees, including food accessibility and outreach to low-income residents, farm to school

provisioning, recycling and reduction of food waste, and local food sourcing. One example of such a planning effort is the 2015 Palm Beach County Hunger Relief Plan, commissioned by the United Way of Palm Beach County and the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and backed by a group of 183 organizations (<http://www.pbcbank.org/strategic-hunger-relief-plan>).

With several farms and agencies expressing interest in farm incubator development, a pilot incubator program could provide valuable insights and guidance. Local community gardens could provide initial guidance, in terms of cost, infrastructure, equipment, labor, bylaws, etc. Partner organizations could be identified to assist with funding, siting, and management of a pilot incubator to benefit their members/clientele and others. Before a pilot could begin, a lead agency, organization, or business would need to commit to the project, and start-up resources (land, funding, etc.) would need to be secured. Lessons learned and materials developed could then be shared with other stakeholders interested in developing new incubators.

Food system linkages need to be strengthened in order to capitalize on our existing area resources. For example, growers could benefit from increased awareness of opportunities for donation to food pantries, sale to retailers/restaurants, processing at commercial kitchens, etc. Similarly, establishments seeking additional produce/protein need to know where to find resources locally. One opportunity to better connect the food system components locally would be to further develop the Food System Infrastructure Resource List in Appendix B as an online tool for food system entrepreneurs, local/regional farmers, and social service organizations. The FDACS Florida Food Recovery Program could potentially facilitate connections to reduce food waste. Local planners also offered the Farm City event could be an opportunity to develop stronger linkages. With its focus in 2018 on automation and technology in farming, the event could begin to engage youth in agribusiness, including production agriculture and regional food system coordination. Planners recommended utilizing social media or other online technology, perhaps led by local youth interns, to better coordinate food distribution across the region.

Consumer education and work-force trainings were identified by interviewees as food system needs. Consumer education could address common myths and misunderstandings related to the safety and nutritional value of produce and protein sources. Work-force training in food safety, production season extension, alternative crops, and other topics would benefit farmers and food system infrastructure operators by bringing the best available science and technologies forward in support of safe, sustainable food production and processing. Training resources include the BDB, Produce Safety Alliance, UF/IFAS Extension, and others. Likewise, farmers and other food system operators inform research, helping to identify areas where field-testing and changing conditions indicate a need for additional research.

Moving forward, community leaders and food system participants have opportunities to improve the security and sustainability of our local food resources. The stakeholders we interviewed were invested in our food system, each contributing in their own way in supporting the web of connections that brings food to table for people of all income levels. Based on their input, food security innovation, farm incubator development, food system stakeholder linkages, and training/research would be helpful next steps in better addressing our food system infrastructure needs.

Appendix A.

Infrastructure Survey

- 1) Type of facility (circle all that apply):
 - a. Processing
 - b. Packing
 - c. Commercial kitchen
 - d. Refrigerated storage
 - e. Non-refrigerated storage
 - f. Distribution hub
 - g. Arable land for potential farm incubator
 - h. Other: _____

- 2) Was the facility in use this year?
 - a. If not, then:
 - i. Why not in operation? _____
 - ii. Length of time out of operation? _____
 - iii. What would be needed to re-start or begin new operation?

- 3) From where do you typically source your products? _____

- 4) Are there specific requirements your suppliers need to meet?
 - a. Food Safety standards _____
 - b. Quality standards _____
 - c. Pre-processing and/or packaging _____
 - d. Organic or other certification _____
 - e. Minimum volumes _____
 - f. Other: _____

- 5) Please indicate which buyers you primarily service and provide locations (city/state/region) for each:
 - a. Distributors/Wholesale

 - b. Retailers

 - c. Institutions

 - d. Consumers

 - e. Other: _____

- 6) How are products distributed to/from your facility?
- a. To your facility:

 - b. From your facility:
- 7) Types and volumes of produce or protein sources handled, along with notes on seasonal fluctuations: _____
- 8) Primary months of operation: _____
- 9) Capacity for additional product:
- a. Interest in expanding and/or taking on new product? YES or NO
 - b. If not interested, please explain why. _____
 - c. If interested, then:
 - i. Quantity and type of additional product that could be handled?

 - ii. Months of year when additional product could be handled?

 - iii. Would it be feasible to expand into new operations at the facility? (e.g. to expand from packing to processing and packing, etc.) Why or why not?

- 10) What do you feel is most needed for Martin County's food system?

Food System Infrastructure Resource List

Martin County

Palm City Farms

Facility Components:

- Processing – small, light processing and re-packing
- Refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage
- Would like to develop into a distribution hub, as an outlet for small growers; intending to distribute to local restaurants
- May consider creation of an on-site farm incubator in the future
- Beehives and greenhouse on-site; House of Hope operates the greenhouse

Facility was not in use this year – expect to open in June; still under construction

Product Sourcing:

Planning to use distributor(s), as well as a local buyer who picks up produce regularly from growers around the lake; hoping that eventually local growers can provide sufficient inventory regularly.

Sourcing Specifications:

- Quality standards will be balanced with other considerations like local, organic & customer demand
- Pre-processing and/or packaging not required, except that meats, cheeses and eggs must have proper packaging
- Organic or other certification not required, but hoping to make organic products available; will encourage market by offering pre-orders for pickup
- Willing to accept even small volumes of product; would like to encourage hobbyists to increase production and become suppliers

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

- Primary buyers will be customers visiting the retail store
- Distributors/wholesalers/retailers are not likely buyers, because of expected low profit margins
- Institutions may become buyers; perhaps Palm City Farms could supplement what they receive from other sources

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Contracting with distributor, who will truck in majority of supply, at least until local supply network develops. Some produce and value-added products will be brought in by growers and craft food manufacturers; in some cases food will be picked up from local growers.

- Intended as a retail location for local residents, but in the future may also serve as a distribution hub, using their refrigerated trucks to transport locally/regionally sourced product to retail, institutional, or other buyers.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

Will not have this information until they've been open and have records/data to analyze. Intending to sell local, pre-packaged beef.

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- As the facility is brand new and has not yet stocked its shelves, capacity for additional product is very high, particularly for locally grown/produced items.
- Would like to eventually construct a processing and packaging facility on-site, if permitted by regulations, and if there is enough demand. Products could include fresh made salads and sandwiches.
- Seeking as much local produce as possible, year-round.

Ground Floor Farm

Facility Components:

- Processing and packaging products for retail on-site
- Commercial kitchen produces food for café and retail on-site
- Refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage
- Developing into a distribution hub
- No arable land for potential farm incubator at this time; would be open to it if space were available in the future, especially for youth

Product Sourcing:

Much is grown on-site; other products are purchased from local growers. Products are sourced from within state or as close as possible. May source out of region/state for desirable products not available locally.

Sourcing Specifications:

- Owners consider themselves “honest brokers”. Priority is given to working with farmers they have verified are using best practices for sustainable and humane production.
- Pre-processing and/or packaging may be needed, depending on the product. For example, local potatoes are packaged by Ground Floor into smaller bags for purchase, while shrimp must be sourced pre-packaged and frozen.
- Organic or other certification is not necessary; Best Management Practices are more important.
- No minimum volume required.
- As a reseller, Ground Floor Farm requires suppliers to be properly licensed.

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

- Primary buyers are customers visiting the on-site retail store and café.
- The farm also sources to a handful of local restaurants, when excess product is available after café and retail needs are met.

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Most product is grown on-site. Products purchased off-site are either picked up by Ground Floor Farm or delivered by the producer.
- Products are distributed from the facility primarily by retail/café customers. Ground Floor also delivers to local restaurants as feasible.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

- For protein, Ground Floor purchases an average of 40 lbs chicken monthly and approximately 150 lbs of pork every other month.
- In the 2017/18 season (October thru April), 1,800-1,900 lbs of produce were grown per month at the farm. Yields by weight were comprised of 43% fruiting vegetables (cukes, tomatoes, eggplant), 36% leafy greens, and 21% root crops.

Months of Operation:

Almost year-round - closed six weeks starting August; sales are slower during summer months when seasonal residents are away.

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Ground Floor is interested in expanding and offering new products, especially:
 - Florida beef
 - Local eggs
 - Supplemental produce in season. During fall/winter/spring when tourists and out-of-state residents are in town, the farm can't always produce enough to supply the on-site commercial kitchen; additional produce is needed
 - Seasonal local fruit
- Could be feasible to expand into new operations. If sufficient capital were available, they would like to develop processing infrastructure for a meadery or other value-added production.

Kai-Kai Farm

Facility Components:

- Packaging for CSA, restaurant buyers, on-site retail market, and farmers' market in Palm Beach Gardens
- Currently constructing a licensed commercial kitchen for on-site restaurant and in the planning stage to expand; may consider renting kitchen space to value-added food entrepreneurs
- Small packing house of about 600 sf. Plans are to replace and relocate this with a significantly larger purpose-built facility within two years

- Refrigerated storage includes three walk-in coolers currently, with plans to add more in second phase of redevelopment project
- Non-refrigerated storage only for non-food items, such as farm equipment
- A distribution hub is not in current plan, but if the demand is there and supply available of local, fresh produce, they would be interested. Customers at on-site agri-tourism events would be able to sample and purchase a wider array of products grown or created locally.
- Would be open to a farm incubator on-site, but would take money and time to manage.
- Venue for live music and events, such as weddings, farm tours, and farm to table dining
- Educational programs (farm tours for UF/IFAS Extension Beginning Farmer trainees and current/potential agri-tourism operators) offered, with interest in providing more programs in the future.

Product Sourcing:

All product grown on-site, with the exception of some ingredients that are needed for the on-site restaurant but not available on the farm.

Sourcing Specifications:

- Sustainable growing practices are important, as are quality and food safety
- No need for pre-processing, packaging
- Organic certification not required
- No minimum volume necessary

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

- Majority of farm produce is sold to local restaurants, followed by direct retail at one farmers' market (CSA and retail).
- Kai-Kai Farm has been developing as an agri-tourism destination for four years running. Visitors to their events, such as farm to table dinners, concerts offering farm-fresh meals, and farm tours are primary customers. Some residents also come to the farm to purchase retail or through their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.
- Farm produce is sourced to one local distributor, but this only amounts to less than 1% of total sales.

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Most product is grown and sold on-site. Additional product needed to prepare farm to table meals on-site is either delivered or picked up.
- Produce is transported off-farm to markets and restaurants by farm staff, with the exception of the one distributor who sells Kai-Kai Farm's produce.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

Labor-intensive to track and record volumes produced/sold.

Months of Operation:

Seasonal for events, but growing year-round with significantly reduced production in the summer.

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Interested in additional product, particularly:
 - Trendy vegetable varieties
 - Fruit
 - Herbs
 - Microgreens
 - Shrimp
 - Free range chicken
 - Free range eggs
- Extra product is especially desirable in the summer.

Love and Hope in Action (LAHIA)

Facility Components:

- Food pantry and meal site
- Distribution hub, with donated food and/or prepped meals redistributed to other organizations
- Re-packaging of donated items as needed
- Commercial kitchen prepares two meals a day, six days a week for homeless/needy
- Refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage
- Showers, laundry, bicycles for clientele; volunteer opportunities
- Food safety training
- On-site garden provides produce for facility and for Meals on Wheels clientele; also serves as therapeutic and educational garden for Lahia clientele

Product Sourcing:

Donated from food drives (such as Scouting for Food), churches, youth groups, restaurant overages, local produce markets, House of Hope, community at large, and local growers; Facebook requests for food have been very helpful

Sourcing Specifications:

- Volunteers check expiration dates on donations before redistributing
- No minimum volume required

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

Food-poor homeless and needy residents in Martin County; all food is given for free.

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Donations are typically delivered by donors, though restaurant and produce donations are picked up by volunteers or staff as available
- Homeless/needy clientele pick up food items and receive meals directly from the facility
- Overages are shared with nearby organizations, such as Samaritan Center for Boys, City Church in West Palm that feeds Palm Beach County homeless, and Courageous House; some hot meals are provided to local organizations such as Safe Space and Mary's Shelter; donations are either delivered by LAHIA or picked up by receiving organization

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

Fresh, canned and frozen proteins are received/distributed year-round; holidays provide an extra influx of donations. Fresh and canned produce is received/distributed year-round.

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Some produce is grown on site, and they would like to expand the production area, including adding chickens
- Could handle more donations in summer especially
- Long-term intent to offer catered meals prepared by clientele to other local organizations
- Interested in possibly using garden space as a farm incubator, but not at this time

House of Hope

Facility Components:

- Re-packaging bulk product into smaller portions for clientele
- Processing of value-added products, such as sandwiches, blanched vegetables, frozen meats, salads, and croutons in commercial kitchen at Stuart location
- Refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage
- Stuart location serves as a distribution hub, taking in product from Treasure Coast Food Bank and other sources and distributing to service centers in Stuart, Jensen Beach, Hobe Sound, and Indiantown
- Service centers are co-housed with thrift stores; thrift stores provide affordable clothing and other goods for clientele and other residents, while also serving as a funding resource to support the pantries
- Fruit and vegetable gardens at Stuart location and in Palm City
- Greenhouse at Banner Lake location for seedling production to supply gardens

Product Sourcing:

Products are received as donations from local farms, distributions from local food banks, products gleaned from farm fields, produce grown by House of Hope at their Stuart and Palm City locations, and purchases from local and non-local suppliers

Sourcing Specifications:

- Food meets USDA guidelines pertaining to expiration dates and shelf life standards
- Pre-processing and packaging is not necessarily required, depending on the product
- Organic or other certification is not required
- Even a small amount of product would be accepted; no minimum volume required of donors

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

House of Hope supplies soup kitchens, churches, food pantries, and residents in Martin County.

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Products are either transported to the facility by the supplier, or the House of Hope will use their refrigerated truck to pick up supplies
- House of Hope delivers product to recipients; they have one refrigerated truck, as well as a van for dry goods
- Any food waste is donated either to farmers, who come and pick up, or to a waste hauler, who brings the product to chicken farms

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

- 6K people per month are served among the four Martin County House of Hope food pantry locations, with additional residents served through partner organizations receiving product from House of Hope

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Year-round need for additional produce
- Would like to be able to provide unfrozen meats to clientele, but would require direct supply from processor or distribution network
- Intending to add processing equipment to the commercial kitchen to allow for manufacture/packaging of preserves, honey, or similar products
- Would consider developing a farm incubator at the House of Hope garden in Palm City
- May be open to renting commercial kitchen use to local food entrepreneurs for creation of value-added products

Stuart Green Market

Facility Components:

Farmers' market

Product Sourcing:

Some local growers within 100 mile radius; other vendors may source further out for produce

Sourcing Specifications:

- Growers and other vendors are responsible for maintaining proper licensing and food safety
- Organic or other certification is not required
- Even a small amount of product would be accepted; no minimum quantity or number of days at market

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

Consumers visiting the market

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Product is transported to the facility by individual vendors.
- Transportation from the market by end-users (consumers and sometimes restaurateurs).

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

Varies depending on vendors and season.

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Between October and May is the greatest demand for product, but they have need for more local produce and protein year-round. Produce is especially sought-after by consumers.
- Would like to offer more green market vendors within the existing leased space, to meet consumer demand.

Palm Beach County

CROS Ministries

Facility Components:

- Re-packaging for distribution to food sites
- Commercial kitchen (Caring Kitchen) at Delray Beach site prepares hot meals for weekly distribution
- Summer day camp, where participants receive lunch, snacks, and breakfast
- Nutrition in a Knapsack program provides weekend food bags to food-insecure students during the academic year
- Limited refrigerated storage. One site has a walk-in cooler; others have refrigerators
- Non-refrigerated storage in warehouse at main location; limited storage at other locations
- Main warehouse serves as a storage and distribution hub with donated, purchased and USDA products. Food products are then distributed to various off-site CROS food programs
- Coordination of volunteer gleaning efforts on farms and in processing facilities
- No arable land available for potential farm incubator
- CROS Ministries has food pantries throughout Palm Beach (6) and Martin Counties (1 in Indiantown). Locations are provided through partnership with city facilities, faith communities, and other social agencies' space.

Product Sourcing:

Gleaning, donations, bulk purchases from commercial distributors and retailers, distributions from Palm Beach County Food Bank, and USDA supplies from Feeding South Florida.

Sourcing Specifications:

Primary specifications relate to USDA requirements, in terms of storage.

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

- USDA, donated and purchased food product distributed to low-income residents in Palm Beach and Martin Counties.
- Gleaned produce is distributed to local food programs by several food banks.

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Most donations from food drives, products sourced from USDA food programs, and products purchased retail in bulk are delivered to the warehouse for distribution to pantries/clientele. Some donations and all gleaned produce go directly to food banks from the donors/gleaners. CROS Ministries coordinates volunteers to do gleaning, but CROS does not transport gleaned produce.
- Products are transported from the main warehouse to CROS regional sites for program needs.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

- Served over 68,000 hot meals in 2017
- Over 66,000 individuals received food from seven Community Food Pantries
- CROS volunteers gleaned almost 0.5M lbs of fresh produce during the 2016-2017 gleaning season. The produce was distributed to local food programs by the Palm Beach County Food Bank, Feeding South Florida, and House of Hope. Gleaning season runs November to July.

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Somewhat limited by storage space and lack of processing capability, but would welcome additional product, especially in summer months, when donations decline. Need more space for shelf-stable (non-refrigerated) products; with refrigerated storage, cost is a major issue.
- Considering development of a mobile food pantry, in collaboration with United Way of Palm Beach County.
- Would like to purchase a flatbed truck, so they have more capability to accept additional product and deliver it to community sites.

St. Lucie County

Treasure Coast Food Bank

Facility Components:

- New facility for processing recently completed at 25th Street site; they use the processing area primarily to preserve produce and have a commercial kitchen used to prepare meals
- Packing and re-packaging
- American Institute of Baking (AIB) certified warehouse facility at Angle Road site
- Refrigerated storage and freezer
- Non-refrigerated storage
- Distribution hub for Treasure Coast food pantries
- Organization has arable land and discussing possible community garden at 25th Street location
- Two outreach locations with light distribution, but primarily education; Whole Child Connection in Stuart and Your Plate Health & Wellness Center in Ft. Pierce

Product Sourcing:

Donations from retail stores; local growers; and USDA programs. Some products are purchased as well, primarily from distributors and from a food bank in Tennessee that offers processing services.

Sourcing Specifications:

- General food safety and quality standards
- Encourage donations of healthier food, but nothing is turned away
- Pre-processing and/or packaging of produce not necessary, but encouraged; volunteers help sort and package produce from bins into smaller containers
- Organic or other certification not required
- Even small volume donations accepted, but more efficient to handle volumes commercial growers can provide
- Local small-scale or backyard growers are referred to partner organizations for direct supply

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

- The food bank provides products to food pantries and other organizations throughout the region; they also provide products directly to needy clientele
- Resource for institutional organizations, such as schools in the region. Currently sourcing to St. Lucie County School District for farm to school program and processing corn for Palm Beach County schools. With their new processing facility, they are now able to meet specific needs of other county school districts, so will be seeking more institutional partners
- Restaurants sometimes offer overages; in these cases, food bank typically connects the restaurant with a local partner agency for direct donation
- Preparing to offer new Harvest Box service –a food subscription service/CSA for clients

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Most donations and purchases are delivered to the facility by the donor/vendor.

- Product is taken from the facility by social service agencies/organizations who pick up. The food bank also uses their own trucks to deliver to partner organizations, including deliveries for the mobile, backpack, and school pantries.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

- Processed 1M lbs of produce since the new facility opened June 2017.
- A wide variety of produce is available (about 20 different crops), though less in the summer months. Frozen chicken is donated from TEFAP, especially in September and October. USDA offers canned goods, such as beans. Local retailers provide frozen meats.

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Could handle more product, especially fresh produce, year round. In addition to donations, the food bank is willing to purchase produce from farmers; the new processing facility is intended in part to offer another market channel for local growers, especially for seconds or products less likely to fetch a good price in other market channels.
- Would be beneficial to have more fresh produce for processing; the processing facility is capable of handling 25M lb of produce per year, but they are not yet receiving this quantity.
- Some partner agencies have offered to contract grow for food bank, which would increase product availability
- May be open to renting space in processing area and commercial kitchen
- Working to implement Seafood Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety plan, which will expand capacity for seafood distribution/processing
- A couple of new outlets under consideration will offer expanded capacity/demand for product:
 - Starting to offer a catering service, which would include culinary training for volunteers/staff; aiming to work with 40-60 trainees per quarter for culinary or food production training
 - Considering production of additional value-added products, such as baby food, yogurt, etc.
 - Interested in providing foods to Meals on Wheels, additional schools, and other agencies/organizations
 - Working toward CSA with low fee for clientele

United Against Poverty

Facility Components:

- Primarily serves as a member grocery program, where low-income residents can access food for 33% of retail prices on average; cost is intended to cover handling fees
- No processing, packing, or commercial kitchen
- Refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage on grocery aisles

- United Against Poverty operates a distribution hub from Indian River County, Vero Beach; distributes food to four sites: two in Vero Beach, one in Ft. Pierce, and one in Orlando
- Offers workforce development and life enrichment classes and computers for clientele; onsite DCF ACCESS site to sign up for SNAP, etc.

Product Sourcing:

- Donations make up 68% of their product, with the remainder purchased with program revenue and sourced from all over the southeastern United States.
- A grant helped them increase availability of protein grocery items; funds were used to purchase proteins, so that organization could build relationships with suppliers. Many suppliers then became donors and continued protein supply.

Sourcing Specifications:

- Volunteers check expiration dates on donations, following USDA standards
- Willing to accept lower quality produce, as long as it is still fresh
- Pre-processing and/or packaging of produce not required
- Organic or other certification not required
- Though smaller volumes are more difficult to manage, they are willing to accept in order to develop a working relationship with a supplier, especially local growers, who they hope will turn to them as an outlet for their overages

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

Buyers are people in households less than 200% of poverty level

Transportation to/from Facility:

- An average of two shipments of fresh produce daily are initially delivered to or picked up by their distribution center in Indian River County. The Indian River facility then delivers to grocery locations in Vero Beach, Ft. Pierce, and Orlando.
- Ft. Pierce location has about 10K square feet for produce
- An average of 500 customers per day visit each grocery location around the state. A total of 50K members are registered at all locations in Florida, with 44 counties represented.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

Frozen meats; canned, frozen and fresh vegetables; and other dry goods. Aside from seasonal flux in fresh produce availability, other products are consistently supplied year-round.

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Need for more produce year-round, especially in the summer
- Could benefit from more frozen and canned proteins donated year-round
- Raising funds now to expand classroom and partner agency space at Ft. Pierce facility

- Would like to expand product availability by creating similar programs at new facility locations
- Seeking to add more refrigerated trucks

Mustard Seed Ministries

Facility Components:

- Two locations, Ft. Pierce and Port St. Lucie, operate as food pantries and thrift stores
- No processing, packing, or commercial kitchen
- Refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage are available
- No plans to develop into a distribution hub at this time
- Produce is grown on-site with assistance from volunteers. They've had great success and are looking to expand; potential for farm incubator, where volunteers would receive and/or provide beginning farmer training and produce would supply pantries.

Product Sourcing:

- Food bank and local grocery stores provide proteins
- Produce is grown on site, sourced from Treasure Coast Food Bank or donated by a private gardener in a neighboring county
- Mustard Seed purchases approximately 25% of the food they distribute

Sourcing Specifications:

- Insurance requires traceability, in terms of the source and growing practices of fruits/vegetables
- Prepared foods must meet ServSafe standards
- Lower-quality produce acceptable, as long as it is still fresh
- No pre-processing and/or packaging required
- Organic or other certification not required
- Willing to accept even small volumes of donated foods

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

Food pantries serve clients in Fort Pierce and Port St. Lucie with 25 pounds of groceries monthly; serve as emergency food pantries.

Transportation to/from Facility:

- Produce either grown on-site at their Fort Pierce headquarters or picked up from local grocery stores, the Treasure Coast Food Bank, and a local grower in Vero Beach.
- Products are distributed from the pantries by clientele, who receive food at no charge.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

Mustard Seed receives 2K lbs of frozen protein each week (each family receives two packages of meat), and the organization purchases pallets of tuna and peanut butter. In the summer,

demand is higher, due to needs of families with school-age children. Produce is picked up by Mustard Seed twice a month, or more often during the growing season.

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- They have capacity and demand for more dry, cold and frozen goods for clientele year-round.
- Hesitant to seek additional fresh produce; without processing capability, they do not have the means to preserve produce, so they are careful not to take in more than they can distribute fresh.
- Would like to expand into new operations at either facility, if cost effective. Currently, don't have plans or specifics to expand, but if funds available and it helps the client, they would consider any idea.

Sunshine Kitchen

Facility Components:

- Commercial kitchen
- Food truck commissary

Not yet open; construction expected to be complete by July 2018

Product Sourcing:

Contracted kitchen users bring their own food products to use in preparing value-added products.

Sourcing Specifications:

Contracted users would be expected to follow food safety standards while preparing food products.

Primary Buyers or End-Users:

Contracted users of the Sunshine Kitchen could service distributors/wholesalers, retailers, institutions and consumers. The Sunshine Kitchen specifically does not make a product; they sell the service of access to a certified kitchen.

Transportation to/from Facility:

Products are transported to and from the facility by the contracted users preparing the food.

Types, Volumes of Produce and Proteins:

Will vary by customer

Months of Operation:

Year-round

Capacity for Additional Product:

- Considering contracting with a vendor to provide a retail food outlet from the kitchen.
- May also provide education and training, parking for food trucks, and/or meeting space.

Compiled by Yvette Goodiel, UF/IFAS Extension Martin County and Carol Alberts, UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County, based on interviews conducted with the listed agribusinesses and organizations between November 2017 and May 2018.