

# Idaho Farmers Accessing Local and Regional Markets: Identifying Consumer Demand and Supply Chain Strategies

**Food systems economic development activities** often focus on the feasibility of small-scale infrastructure, such as value-added processing or food hubs. Many efforts also emphasize the growing demand for local, sustainable food products. However, low population density and long transportation distances provide challenges in the West that require unique strategies.

**In Idaho**, challenges like these must be better understood and addressed if Idaho wants to further develop locally and regionally oriented production.

**A team of researchers at the University of Idaho** is working to help Idaho's small and medium-sized farmers access local and regional vegetable and livestock markets. A \$500,000 grant from the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) supports a three-year effort to understand consumer demand and market size of local and regional products at grocery stores and restaurants.

**This research will help small & medium-sized farmers** make informed decisions in terms of supply chain strategy, market positioning, pricing, and benefits of collaboration with other producers. Research findings will be integrated into educational materials and training efforts as part of the University of Idaho Extension Small Farms Program.

**The interdisciplinary effort** brings together researchers from the UI's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, College of Business and Economics, and College of Science. The project team has a rich mix of expertise from agricultural economics, rural sociology, geography, small farms, community food systems, and operations management.

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