

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Context

The King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks' Agriculture programs team spearheaded the implementation of the [Farm King County \(FKC\) website](#). FKC was created with several stakeholder organizations with the mission to expand the local agricultural economy by connecting local farmers to services, information, and technical resources that make it easier to farm in King County.



FKC also supports the goals of King County's **Local Food Initiative** which aims to strengthen the local food system and increase access to healthy foods.



Local Food Initiative

The Agriculture program saw the need to assist farmers during the COVID-19 and how FKC could be utilized as a way to share resources.

Project Description

In response to the COVID-19 crisis and sudden disruption to the local food economy, the agriculture teams wanted to utilize FKC as a central repository of COVID-19 resources specifically for KC farmers. This project focused on:

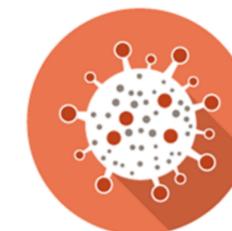
- 1) Researching, compiling, and organizing COVID-19 resources for the agricultural industry to be shared on FKC
- 2) Assist the agriculture programs team in identifying farmers most pressing needs and potential solutions

Main Outcomes

- Over 70 resources were compiled and uploaded on to FKC COVID-19 resource page. Resources were categorized into financial resources, meeting health directives, market opportunities, and consumer information.
- The local food finder map will be a central place for consumers to identify how and where they can buy from their local farms. As a first step in that process, a survey was created and distributed to farmers to have their businesses added to the new map



Key Takeaways



- Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, many farmers had very few sales outlets. With the sudden closure of restaurants and farmers markets, farmers had to quickly shift their business model during the busiest time of the year.
- The agriculture programs team works closely with local stakeholders to provide the best programs and support for KC farmers. These relationships were essential in creating a useful COVID-19 resource directory as well as the creation of the Local Food Finder map.
- Consumer demand for local food during the pandemic increased, but there lacked a central place to point consumers to for information. The Local Food Finder map will now be that resource and increase consumers awareness on how to find KC farms and support the local food system.



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