

Newsletter | Southern SARE R&E Project Regional Food Transportation for Texas Farmers



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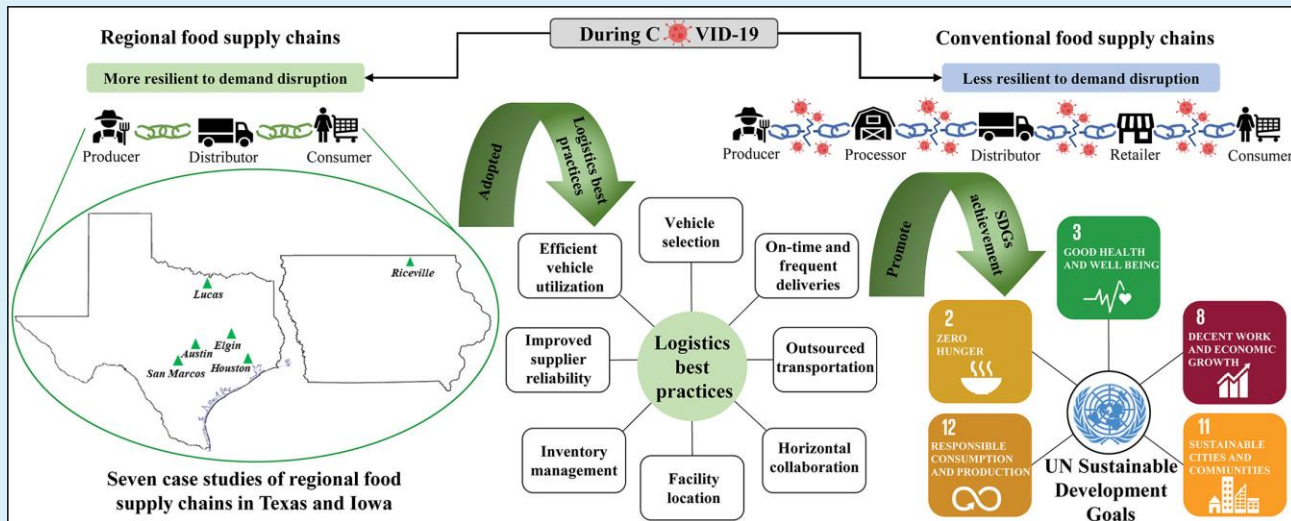
About

To ensure the survival of their farms and ranches, regional food producers must find ways of extending their market reach. This project uses data collected from Texas farmers and ranchers, via interviews and focus groups, to inform the design of a digitally-mediated platform that will facilitate transportation collaboration among producers and various transportation providers.

The objectives of this project are to 1) provide an increased understanding of the transportation capabilities and needs of Texas farmers and ranchers, 2) to define and reach a consensus on a set of regional food transportation system functions required to address current shortcomings, 3) design a transportation management tool that will enable farmers and ranchers to connect with one another and with various transportation providers, and 4) prototype and pilot the transportation management tool.

Recent Activities

Over the summer, Texas farmers, ranchers, and small-scale food distributors shared their experiences using logistics best practices to meet distribution challenges during the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fall of 2020, project members documented these experiences in an article that has been published in the *Agricultural Systems* journal. The article, "Resilient regional food supply chains and rethinking the way forward: Key takeaways from the COVID-19 pandemic", discusses how regional food supply chains can improve the resiliency of the U.S. food supply system (attached). The figure below illustrates how adopting these practices promotes the achievement of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.



A special thanks to The Common Market Texas & Texas Center for Local Food, Central Texas Farmers Cooperative, Profound Microfarms, Good Apple, Farmshare Austin, SnackShare, and Riceville Farmers' Market, who participated in the case studies!

Ongoing Activities

- The project team will be conducting focus groups with Texas farmers and ranchers to understand their transportation needs and challenges. In preparation for the focus groups, we have created a video that introduces the concept of crowdsourced transportation, which offers multiple delivery options to farmers. [Click here to watch the video!](#)
- In addition, we are evaluating the suitability of existing crowdsourced transportation platforms for farmers and ranchers.

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