

## Webinar Transcript

### Growing Your Farm: Funding, Labor, and Market Solutions for Sustainable Farmers

**March 26th, 2025**

[00:00:00] Good morning everyone thank you so much

[00:00:02] for joining our webinar this morning I'm

[00:00:05] going to give everyone just a couple

[00:00:06] more minutes to let the attendees

[00:00:08] continue to join but this webinar is

[00:00:10] being recorded and I will be uploading

[00:00:12] it to the silt YouTube later so if you

[00:00:14] have to hop off early or you miss the

[00:00:16] end don't worry because you'll have an

[00:00:17] opportunity to catch up

[00:00:28] later

[00:00:58] we

[00:01:28] we can

[00:02:17] well I want to be respectful of

[00:02:18] everyone's time so as people continue

[00:02:20] joining I'm going to go ahead and get

[00:02:22] started with introductions I just wanted

[00:02:25] to start up with a huge thank you to all

[00:02:26] of our panelists for taking time out of

[00:02:28] their busy schedules to be here and

[00:02:30] share their expertise with us I'm

[00:02:32] incredibly excited to hear everything

[00:02:34] they have to say and I also wanted to  
[00:02:37] give a huge thank you to the sponsor of  
[00:02:38] this webinar sustainable agriculture  
[00:02:40] research and education S without the  
[00:02:43] support this Outreach and education  
[00:02:45] would not be possible some housekeeping  
[00:02:48] notes to consider is as we continue with  
[00:02:51] this webinar you'll notice that we have  
[00:02:53] a Q&A function so as the panelists each  
[00:02:57] give their presentation they'll have  
[00:02:58] about 20 minutes to present EV and then  
[00:03:00] afterwards we're going to reserve an  
[00:03:02] extra five minutes to answer questions  
[00:03:04] so make sure that if you have any  
[00:03:06] questions as they come up to ask the  
[00:03:08] panelists because if we don't have time  
[00:03:10] for additional questions at the end you  
[00:03:12] want to make sure that you get them in  
[00:03:13] before their presentations are over and  
[00:03:16] then at the very end of this webinar  
[00:03:18] don't log off because we have a very  
[00:03:21] exciting opportunity to win a raffle  
[00:03:24] prize if you are over the age of 21 and  
[00:03:27] in the state of Iowa if you fill out the  
[00:03:29] survey at the end of this webinar you  
[00:03:31] will be entered for the chance to win a

[00:03:33] bottle of our locally sourced Farmstead  
[00:03:36] red labeled silt wine in partnership  
[00:03:39] with Fireside Winery or if you're under  
[00:03:41] the age of 21 or outside the state of  
[00:03:43] Iowa you'll be entered to win a silt  
[00:03:45] merch gift basket so when the zoom  
[00:03:48] webinar concludes make sure you stay on  
[00:03:50] the browser so that you are able to fill  
[00:03:52] out the post webinar survey and sign up  
[00:03:54] for our e newsletter and if you do both  
[00:03:57] of those things you'll have an  
[00:03:58] opportunity to win a really exciting  
[00:04:00] prize so you don't want to miss out on  
[00:04:04] that so to kick things off I am  
[00:04:06] incredibly excited to tell you a little  
[00:04:08] bit more about the sustainable Iowa land  
[00:04:13] trust my name is Katie Doss and I am the  
[00:04:15] state coordinator here at silt if you  
[00:04:18] haven't heard of us the sustainable Iowa  
[00:04:21] land trust is a  
[00:04:23] 501c3 nonpartisan nonprofit organization  
[00:04:27] and our mission is to permanently  
[00:04:28] protect Iowa farmland for sustainable  
[00:04:31] food farming and to connect new and  
[00:04:34] beginning Farmers to farming  
[00:04:36] opportunities who may not otherwise have

[00:04:38] the ability to access

[00:04:42] Farmland a little bit more about silk is

[00:04:45] we are a land trust and land trusts are

[00:04:47] the only kind of 501c3 nonprofit

[00:04:51] organizations that can make forever

[00:04:53] promises on land it does not own This

[00:04:56] Promise is called a conservation

[00:04:57] easement and this is the primary way

[00:05:00] that Silk permanently protects farmland

[00:05:02] for sustainable food

[00:05:06] farming other ways that Silk can protect

[00:05:08] Farmland is through something called a

[00:05:10] reserved life estate which is where land

[00:05:13] owners have the ability to will their

[00:05:16] land to silk so they maintain all

[00:05:18] ownerships and All rights to the land

[00:05:20] during their lifetime and then at the

[00:05:21] time of their passing silk becomes the

[00:05:23] manager and owner of that land and then

[00:05:25] stewards that land to make sure that

[00:05:27] we're continuing to promote sustainable

[00:05:29] Agriculture and Local Food Systems silk

[00:05:32] can also acquire Farms through bequest

[00:05:34] or land donations so people have the

[00:05:37] ability to outright give their land to

[00:05:38] us since its founding in 2015 silk has

[00:05:42] protected 16 Farms across the state of  
[00:05:44] Iowa totaling 1200 acres and we are just  
[00:05:47] getting started it is almost our 10th  
[00:05:50] birthday which is an incredibly exciting  
[00:05:52] Milestone that we get to celebrate here  
[00:05:54] at  
[00:05:55] silt and one thing also that we're  
[00:05:57] trying to prioritize is our Circle our  
[00:05:59] cities Campaign which is where we are  
[00:06:02] prioritizing permanent protection in and  
[00:06:04] around areas that are major cities in  
[00:06:06] Iowa that way as cities continue to grow  
[00:06:09] and expand we are making sure that we  
[00:06:11] always have access to those local food  
[00:06:14] systems and that these farmers are  
[00:06:16] closest to Market we don't know what  
[00:06:18] Iowa is going to look like a 100 years  
[00:06:20] in the future so this is one way to  
[00:06:22] protect our Farmland to make sure that  
[00:06:24] as things change we always have that  
[00:06:26] security  
[00:06:31] r y in Iowa we lose about  
[00:06:35] 275 Acres of Farmland per day and  
[00:06:39] despite being more than 85% Farmland  
[00:06:42] Iowa Imports 90% of our food our vision  
[00:06:45] is a future of Iowa where we are

[00:06:47] supporting local farmers and the health  
[00:06:49] of our community to ensure that our  
[00:06:51] communities always have access to that  
[00:06:53] food that we're growing right here and  
[00:06:55] to De to develop those personal  
[00:06:56] relationships with Farmers that you get  
[00:06:58] to have  
[00:07:03] so a little bit more on what exactly is  
[00:07:05] silt conservation easement since you  
[00:07:07] heard me reference that earlier in this  
[00:07:09] presentation a silk conservation  
[00:07:12] easement is a legal document that is  
[00:07:14] tied to the deed of a land that exists  
[00:07:17] in perpetuity so that means no matter  
[00:07:20] who owns that Farmland whether it's you  
[00:07:22] or your neighbor or your next of kin  
[00:07:25] maybe a new and beginning or  
[00:07:26] historically underserved farmer that  
[00:07:28] land always has to stay in sustainable  
[00:07:31] food farming in alignment with the terms  
[00:07:33] of the conservation easement a  
[00:07:35] conservation easement devalues land by  
[00:07:37] about 40% but this isn't necessarily a  
[00:07:41] bad thing because in the eyes of a land  
[00:07:43] assessor when land cannot be used for  
[00:07:45] different purposes going forward then

[00:07:48] that's a limited use and so it's worth  
[00:07:50] less but that also makes this land more  
[00:07:53] accessible to new and beginning farmers  
[00:07:55] who may not otherwise be able to  
[00:07:56] purchase this Farmland as the value is  
[00:07:59] 40% devalued from when it previously was  
[00:08:01] creating more opportunities to people  
[00:08:04] who maybe have that passion and that  
[00:08:05] drive for Farmland as we know so many of  
[00:08:08] these people exist across the state of  
[00:08:09] Iowa and many of them are probably on  
[00:08:11] this webinar and giving them that access  
[00:08:14] to produce their own food because  
[00:08:17] conservation easements devalue the value  
[00:08:19] of a land there are some opportunities  
[00:08:21] for land owners to gain some of that  
[00:08:22] back placing an easement on your land  
[00:08:25] through silk qualifies you for a 16-year  
[00:08:28] 100% deduction  
[00:08:30] of your adjusted gross income at the  
[00:08:31] federal level or up to a 20-year  
[00:08:34] \$100,000 Iowa state tax credit silk is  
[00:08:38] also an El eligible entity through the  
[00:08:41] AC AI program and if you're interested  
[00:08:44] in learning more about this please reach  
[00:08:45] out to us but basically what that is is

[00:08:48] a program where Sil will partner with  
[00:08:50] you to apply and you will be eligible to  
[00:08:53] get gain 50% of that devaluation back so  
[00:08:57] say a parcel of land is valued at 200  
[00:08:59] ,000 and a conservation easement brings  
[00:09:02] it down to 100,000 if you're selected  
[00:09:04] through the ACP AI program then you are  
[00:09:07] eligible to receive \$50,000 of that  
[00:09:10] devaluation back so it's a great way for  
[00:09:12] people to help maintain some of that  
[00:09:14] Capital asset as for many people land is  
[00:09:17] their most valuable asset but the main  
[00:09:20] reason that people permanently protect  
[00:09:22] their Farm through silk is to maintain  
[00:09:24] their legacy for many of these people  
[00:09:26] they've been acting as stewards of the  
[00:09:27] land maybe their entire lifetime or even  
[00:09:30] generations of farmers and it can be a  
[00:09:32] true tragedy to see that Land Lost to  
[00:09:34] development or see those Family Farms  
[00:09:36] with that deep history go and so silt is  
[00:09:39] one way to make sure that they are  
[00:09:41] always maintaining that Legacy no matter  
[00:09:43] what happens as things continue to grow  
[00:09:45] and change silk conservation eat means  
[00:09:47] protect from zoning changes and

[00:09:48] development and so that permanent  
[00:09:51] protection and creating access for  
[00:09:52] future opportunities and for people who  
[00:09:54] are the next Generations of farmers are  
[00:09:57] the main reasons why people choose to  
[00:09:58] protect their land through  
[00:10:07] silt so a little bit more on what we  
[00:10:10] mean by sustainable agriculture because  
[00:10:12] now I've said that quite a few times  
[00:10:14] generally what we mean is guidelines for  
[00:10:17] farming that work in harmony with the  
[00:10:19] land rather than depleting it so  
[00:10:21] examples of this include practices that  
[00:10:23] build soil Health improve water and air  
[00:10:26] quality and promote Energy Efficiency  
[00:10:28] currently still asks Farmers be working  
[00:10:30] towards or already have a thirdparty  
[00:10:32] certification to show that they are  
[00:10:34] farming their land sustainably and right  
[00:10:36] now those certifications include  
[00:10:39] certified biodynamic USDA certified  
[00:10:42] organic food Alliance approved Animal  
[00:10:44] Welfare approved or certified naturally  
[00:10:46] grown but if there's another  
[00:10:48] certification that a farmer is  
[00:10:49] interested in or if a farmer decides

[00:10:51] that maybe a third- party certification  
[00:10:53] doesn't necessarily put them into a  
[00:10:55] market that is beneficial to them and  
[00:10:57] it's not something that they need to  
[00:10:59] pursue then we're happy to work with  
[00:11:00] Farmers to do a more in-depth evaluation  
[00:11:03] to ensure that sustainable practices are  
[00:11:05] still being implemented on the Farmland  
[00:11:07] because we want to create less barriers  
[00:11:09] for Farmers rather than more and so our  
[00:11:11] goal is to work with Farmers to make  
[00:11:13] sure that the land is both being farmed  
[00:11:15] sustainably but we aren't creating  
[00:11:16] additional hurdles for them to jump  
[00:11:20] through and then a little bit more on  
[00:11:23] projects that we've been working on over  
[00:11:25] the past year silta has been working  
[00:11:27] with three different organizations  
[00:11:29] across the state of Iowa on an nracs  
[00:11:31] increasing land access Grant we've been  
[00:11:34] partnering with be Iowa first in Cedar  
[00:11:37] Rapids Global greens LSI in De Moine and  
[00:11:39] we of rose in waterl and if you're local  
[00:11:42] to any of these areas I highly recommend  
[00:11:44] checking out these incredible  
[00:11:46] organizations they do so much to grow

[00:11:48] food for their communities and have so  
[00:11:50] many different opportunities to get  
[00:11:51] involved from csas to outreach programs  
[00:11:54] so I highly recommend checking them out  
[00:11:57] but like many organizations this work is  
[00:12:00] being impacted by federal funding so we  
[00:12:02] are working together now to navigate  
[00:12:04] this situation and to try and continue  
[00:12:06] this work so that we can keep connecting  
[00:12:08] historically underserved Farmers to land  
[00:12:10] access we've been incredibly grateful to  
[00:12:13] all of the individual donors and other  
[00:12:16] foundations who have stepped up to help  
[00:12:17] us work to continue this work as we  
[00:12:19] navigate whether or not the funding for  
[00:12:22] this program is going to continue so  
[00:12:24] thank you all so much to all of the  
[00:12:26] people who have supported us so far and  
[00:12:28] to all of you who showed up today  
[00:12:30] because by just showing up to this  
[00:12:31] webinar to learn more you're supporting  
[00:12:33] this work so thank you again for all of  
[00:12:37] you for being here and that's about  
[00:12:40] everything I have on silt so before I  
[00:12:44] get to ahead of myself I'm going to  
[00:12:47] introduce our next speaker thank you all

[00:12:50] so much for listening to my silt  
[00:12:54] Spiel our first speaker that we have  
[00:12:57] today is  
[00:12:59] sorry give me a moment to pull up the  
[00:13:02] order first off we're going to be  
[00:13:03] hearing from Beth RoR so Beth romer's  
[00:13:07] passion for agriculture was kindled on  
[00:13:09] her family's Century Farm where she  
[00:13:11] learned firsthand the value of hard work  
[00:13:13] and respect for stewarding the land for  
[00:13:15] future Generations now she's honored to  
[00:13:18] lead the choose Iowa team in supporting  
[00:13:20] Iowa farms and AD businesses through the  
[00:13:22] choose Iowa program which identifies and  
[00:13:24] promotes the food Beverages and a  
[00:13:27] products that are grown raised and made  
[00:13:29] in Iowa Beth earned a Bachelor of  
[00:13:32] Science and business marketing from  
[00:13:33] Wayne State College and a master's in  
[00:13:36] Business Administration from Iowa State  
[00:13:38] University when not helping on her  
[00:13:40] family's Farm or exploring farmers  
[00:13:42] markets and agrotourism destinations  
[00:13:45] Beth and her husband James raise  
[00:13:47] specialty cut flowers with the Menagerie  
[00:13:49] of farm animals near Altuna Iowa thank

[00:13:52] you so much for being here today Beth if  
[00:13:54] you want to go ahead and share your  
[00:13:55] screen  
[00:14:01] gladly gladly thank you I appreciate  
[00:14:04] being here and joining thank you for  
[00:14:06] letting me share and for the great  
[00:14:08] invitation I really appreciate it so I'm  
[00:14:10] so excited to visit with all of you and  
[00:14:13] excited to share today talk a little bit  
[00:14:15] about some funding opportunities and  
[00:14:17] choose  
[00:14:19] Iowa  
[00:14:21] hopefully the presentation will click  
[00:14:24] through  
[00:14:27] here okay so when we talk about choose  
[00:14:31] Iowa choose Iowa is a brand program  
[00:14:33] first and foremost and it is similar to  
[00:14:36] Brand programs that exist in other  
[00:14:38] states across our country So within the  
[00:14:40] 50 states that we have there are  
[00:14:42] actually 57 brand programs that promote  
[00:14:45] a products in those respective States  
[00:14:48] some states love their brand programs so  
[00:14:50] much that they actually have more than  
[00:14:51] one we have one that does a lot of  
[00:14:54] different things and including some

[00:14:56] unique funding opportunities so I'm  
[00:14:58] excited to share with you about choose  
[00:15:00] Iowa our vision is to connect consumers  
[00:15:03] to Iowa food and products and expand  
[00:15:05] markets for Iowa farmers and we do that  
[00:15:07] in several different ways the key  
[00:15:09] components of that is through a  
[00:15:11] Statewide brand program the logo and our  
[00:15:14] brand identity and through several  
[00:15:16] grants that we administer that are  
[00:15:18] funded through the state of Iowa that  
[00:15:19] we'll talk about in a little bit so I  
[00:15:22] want to share the background of the  
[00:15:23] state brand program because that helps  
[00:15:26] uh better understand the grants um to  
[00:15:29] the brand program is Statewide and it  
[00:15:31] provides a single logo and brand that we  
[00:15:34] can use across Iowa to identify and  
[00:15:36] promote the foods Beverages and AGG  
[00:15:39] products that we grow raise and make  
[00:15:40] here in Iowa and this is to support our  
[00:15:43] Iowa AGG Commodities and by that I mean  
[00:15:46] anything from peas and carrots to corn  
[00:15:48] and soybeans but specifically we really  
[00:15:51] like to tie things back to individual  
[00:15:53] farms and really help those Farms with

[00:15:55] their um diversification and growth  
[00:15:58] we're about increasing Market  
[00:16:00] opportunities and encouraging people  
[00:16:01] when you have options please choose Iowa  
[00:16:04] and purchase local foods and beverages  
[00:16:07] so the choose I will logo is appearing  
[00:16:09] on more and more foods and AG products  
[00:16:12] across the state um people if they join  
[00:16:15] the program they have the option of  
[00:16:16] using stickers if they have existing  
[00:16:19] labels to add the logo and or they can  
[00:16:22] add it directly as they update their  
[00:16:24] branding and their labels they can add  
[00:16:26] the logo directly on so these are some  
[00:16:29] of our founding members because the  
[00:16:31] choose I logo is trademarked um then  
[00:16:35] there is a trademark protection and an  
[00:16:37] agreement with members then allows them  
[00:16:39] to use the logo it also gives them  
[00:16:41] several other benefits such um but the  
[00:16:44] membership criteria is that you just  
[00:16:46] need to be in good standing with the  
[00:16:48] state um currently reside or conduct  
[00:16:50] business here in Iowa and then you  
[00:16:52] either produce process prepare or sell  
[00:16:54] foods and a products in Iowa that met or

[00:16:57] exceed minimum criteria and we'll talk  
[00:16:59] about that in a little bit but or you  
[00:17:01] can be an organization that supports the  
[00:17:03] choose IA program the ideas and its  
[00:17:05] members there's three steps to being a  
[00:17:07] member and I'm mentioning this because  
[00:17:09] that applies later for one of the  
[00:17:11] funding opportunities but there's a  
[00:17:13] brief membership application there's a  
[00:17:15] members once that's approved then  
[00:17:17] there's a brief membership agreement  
[00:17:19] that you sign annual dues of \$100 that  
[00:17:22] gets invested directly in the program  
[00:17:24] and then you set up your business PR  
[00:17:26] profile so people can find you in the  
[00:17:28] fine local  
[00:17:29] directory so benefits again I'm  
[00:17:33] mentioning that fine local directory all  
[00:17:35] of the promotions that we do for  
[00:17:36] consumers is to encourage them to find  
[00:17:39] local products and businesses in that  
[00:17:41] fine local directory and then be by  
[00:17:44] becoming a Cho IA member it makes you  
[00:17:47] eligible for food banks and schools that  
[00:17:50] are um part of the Cho IA food  
[00:17:52] purchasing pilot program then those

[00:17:55] schools and food banks can purchase from  
[00:17:57] you as a choose I member um and we are  
[00:18:01] hoping that this program is it's a pilot  
[00:18:03] program right now we're hoping that that  
[00:18:05] continues to be funded we'll talk about  
[00:18:07] that a little bit more in a bit uh we  
[00:18:08] have exclusive events and promotions  
[00:18:10] including a new choose IA passport we're  
[00:18:12] rolling out this year to help people  
[00:18:14] find and visit farms uh restaurants that  
[00:18:17] serve Iowa ingredients and then also  
[00:18:20] stores that s sell Iowa products we're  
[00:18:23] doing a farm store crawl Statewide in  
[00:18:25] June the 21st and 22nd and a Farm open  
[00:18:28] house in September we're also offering  
[00:18:31] some co-op advertising opportunities um  
[00:18:33] later this year and some social media  
[00:18:35] campaigns and we have a newsletter for  
[00:18:37] members with funding resources in that  
[00:18:40] plus more so now to talk about grants  
[00:18:44] here in this map you can see that there  
[00:18:46] are a lot of Grant recipients who have  
[00:18:49] received um funding through the various  
[00:18:51] choose Iowa Grant programs in the last  
[00:18:54] four years uh the um the state of Iowa  
[00:18:58] has invested Ed over \$7.8 million in

[00:19:01] Grant funds in the choose Iowa program  
[00:19:04] in the various Grant programs and the  
[00:19:07] newest grants uh recipients to be  
[00:19:09] announced will soon be the value added  
[00:19:12] Grant recipients for 2025 and The  
[00:19:14] Butchery Grant um recipients which will  
[00:19:17] be announced soon as  
[00:19:18] well the value added Grant is the first  
[00:19:22] grant that helped our program get  
[00:19:24] started it the goal of this grant is to  
[00:19:27] increase sales of Iowa products by  
[00:19:29] increasing production capacity or  
[00:19:31] expanding Market access for value added  
[00:19:34] products and th this is unique against  
[00:19:37] or compared to several Federal programs  
[00:19:39] in that individual organizations farms  
[00:19:42] and businesses can apply for this grant  
[00:19:45] the um Grant amount that can be  
[00:19:47] requested is up to 25,000 there is no  
[00:19:50] minimum so we have funded some Grant  
[00:19:53] projects as small as a little over  
[00:19:56] \$1,000 several projects that were under  
[00:19:59] \$5,000 so it's a very flexible Grant um  
[00:20:03] it is a cost share Grant which mean and  
[00:20:05] there is a Ono one match uh which means  
[00:20:08] that for every dollar of grant funding

[00:20:10] that is requested it must be matched by  
[00:20:13] equal or greater amount of private  
[00:20:15] funding and then the grant is also a  
[00:20:17] reimbursement Grant which means that the  
[00:20:20] um if someone is selected for funding  
[00:20:23] then they sign an agreement to do their  
[00:20:25] Grant project and then they um submit  
[00:20:28] their invoices or their receipts and the  
[00:20:30] grant funds are reimbursed to them  
[00:20:32] afterwards you do not have to be a  
[00:20:35] member of the CH IA grant program or the  
[00:20:37] brand program to apply for this grant uh  
[00:20:40] we had 99 applications in this latest  
[00:20:43] round and those are being scored right  
[00:20:44] now we hope uh the end of next month to  
[00:20:47] make an announcement of those recipients  
[00:20:50] so we're pretty excited to see which  
[00:20:51] projects receive funding um the projects  
[00:20:56] for the value added Grant must increase  
[00:20:58] sales um by either again increasing  
[00:21:01] production capacity or expanding your  
[00:21:02] Market access so for example that might  
[00:21:05] be building an on farm store or  
[00:21:08] expanding your cold storage or a  
[00:21:10] refrigerated delivery vehicle so there  
[00:21:12] those are some common um projects that

[00:21:15] have been funded in the past uh one  
[00:21:18] stipulation people should understand is  
[00:21:20] that a project should not be in progress  
[00:21:23] um until the grant is awarded and so the  
[00:21:26] we are audited every year and the  
[00:21:28] auditors do look at those dates of  
[00:21:30] receipts submitted and then make sure  
[00:21:32] that any project that you um apply for  
[00:21:35] funding that your project can be  
[00:21:36] completed in 12 months or less and your  
[00:21:39] project must be completed in the or done  
[00:21:41] in the state of  
[00:21:43] Iowa again we are talking about some of  
[00:21:45] those project examples food processing  
[00:21:48] training workshops specialized equipment  
[00:21:51] is generally um funded more so than  
[00:21:55] general purpose so an example of  
[00:21:57] specialized equipment would be one  
[00:21:59] project last year was funded for a still  
[00:22:03] for the production of um for making  
[00:22:04] essential oil from lavender and that was  
[00:22:08] that's very specialized equipment and  
[00:22:10] difficult to obtain um generalized  
[00:22:12] equipment for example would be a pallet  
[00:22:14] jack something where you could use a lot  
[00:22:16] of different ways that's less likely to

[00:22:19] be funded than the specialized things um  
[00:22:23] so if you have questions ideas you can  
[00:22:24] contact our team and we are happy to  
[00:22:26] help you navigate what might be a good  
[00:22:28] fit for this grant in the application  
[00:22:31] they ask six main questions in addition  
[00:22:34] to contact information ask you to  
[00:22:36] describe your business its history and  
[00:22:38] how it interacts with Iowa a and Farms  
[00:22:40] describe your project in detail describe  
[00:22:43] how you're going to increase sales and  
[00:22:45] describe your budget what are the things  
[00:22:47] that you plan to purchase and how will  
[00:22:49] you finance those purchases um then  
[00:22:51] create a timeline so once you are  
[00:22:54] awarded funding if should you be awarded  
[00:22:56] funding what is the first step you're  
[00:22:58] going to take how much time is that  
[00:22:59] going to take then what is the next step  
[00:23:01] and how much time will that take that's  
[00:23:03] what they're looking for in that answer  
[00:23:05] then the last question is what are the  
[00:23:06] outcomes you anticipate seeing as a  
[00:23:08] result of doing your  
[00:23:10] project there are points assigned to  
[00:23:13] each the answer of each question all

[00:23:16] those details including the scoring  
[00:23:17] criteria are in the grant guidelines for  
[00:23:20] each of the grants and you can find all  
[00:23:22] of this information at choose ia.com and  
[00:23:26] then click on grants each Grant then has  
[00:23:28] its own page but we all we list all of  
[00:23:32] them on the main grants page and again  
[00:23:34] if you have any questions please reach  
[00:23:36] out so timeline for this grant the  
[00:23:40] application period opens typically early  
[00:23:42] December it closes the end of January at  
[00:23:46] noon on the day that it closes um and we  
[00:23:49] have not determined that for the next  
[00:23:50] year yet so I'm just saying end of  
[00:23:52] January but we just want to let you know  
[00:23:54] it closes at noon not 5 not midnight  
[00:23:57] noon um and then then uh recipients are  
[00:24:01] contacted in March ideally if scoring is  
[00:24:05] finished by then Agreements are  
[00:24:06] finalized and then sometime in April is  
[00:24:08] when recipients are announced and again  
[00:24:11] the there oh and note there is a budget  
[00:24:14] worksheet we have found that some of the  
[00:24:16] early applicants really struggled on how  
[00:24:19] to detail out their budgets and explain  
[00:24:23] why they needed to purchase some things

[00:24:25] and so now a budget worksheet is a  
[00:24:27] requirement for applying for this grant  
[00:24:29] so I just wanted to mention if you have  
[00:24:30] any questions on how to fill that out um  
[00:24:33] again contact our team we're here to  
[00:24:35] help you can apply online at choose  
[00:24:38] iowa.com so the second Grant I want to  
[00:24:40] talk about that is funded through the  
[00:24:42] state of Iowa and administered through  
[00:24:44] choose Iowa is a dairy Innovation Grant  
[00:24:46] this grant has  
[00:24:48] \$750,000 in funding and you can request  
[00:24:51] a maximum of  
[00:24:52] \$100,000 per Grant awarded and this also  
[00:24:56] requires that one to one match and it is  
[00:24:59] again a reimbursement Grant the Dairy  
[00:25:01] Innovation Grant focuses on on Farm  
[00:25:03] Processing labor reducing technology or  
[00:25:06] you can you can request a combination of  
[00:25:08] both and again you do not have to be a  
[00:25:11] member of choose Iowa to apply for this  
[00:25:13] one The Butchery Innovation Grant is a  
[00:25:17] new one within the choose Iowa umbrella  
[00:25:20] this was announced in January of 2025  
[00:25:22] there's  
[00:25:23] \$250,000 available funding you can

[00:25:26] request up to \$100,000

[00:25:29] there's no minimum amount and um you

[00:25:32] have to provide a match again for this

[00:25:35] one in kind contributions I want to note

[00:25:38] for all of the chose Iowa grants are not

[00:25:40] accepted so that would be the value of

[00:25:42] your time or um anything that's a non

[00:25:47] Financial amount that is not accepted

[00:25:50] and this grant is particularly focused

[00:25:53] on Butchery and meat processing

[00:25:55] equipment and you do not need to be a

[00:25:57] member of the choose program to apply

[00:25:59] for this however this one is unique and

[00:26:02] we are piloting where if you are a CH IA

[00:26:05] member you might receive bonus points on

[00:26:07] your application

[00:26:09] score the last funding program that I

[00:26:12] want to um share details about within

[00:26:15] the CH Iowa program is the food

[00:26:17] purchasing pilot program and this is for

[00:26:20] focused on food banks and schools the

[00:26:23] food bank pilot rolled out last summer

[00:26:26] and there are six Key Food Banks in our

[00:26:28] Iowa and Demar that are particip

[00:26:30] participating in this um if this is

[00:26:34] continued then emergency feeding

[00:26:36] organizations will be eligible to apply  
[00:26:39] in the future um the school purchasing  
[00:26:43] pilot rolled out in March um just a few  
[00:26:46] weeks ago and \$70,000 was allocated for  
[00:26:50] schools and the the application period  
[00:26:52] for schools will close April 7th and  
[00:26:55] schools are um able to apply up for up  
[00:26:58] to \$11,000 per School building um and  
[00:27:02] districts can apply for all of the  
[00:27:04] school buildings in their District or  
[00:27:05] individual schools can apply for this  
[00:27:07] funding it is a there is a match  
[00:27:09] requirement so for every thousand of  
[00:27:13] funding that a school would request  
[00:27:15] through this P purchasing pilot program  
[00:27:17] then the the school needs to spend an  
[00:27:19] additional ,000 on local food and this  
[00:27:22] is where that membership um in the  
[00:27:25] choose IA brand program pertains  
[00:27:27] specifically to the this program is that  
[00:27:30] purchases of local food according to the  
[00:27:33] legisl legislation those purchases can  
[00:27:36] only be done or made from choose Iowa  
[00:27:38] members and the eligible foods that can  
[00:27:40] be purchased are meat and poultry Dairy  
[00:27:43] eggs honey and produce for schools that

[00:27:45] would be dairy products other than milk  
[00:27:47] because there is a separate program that  
[00:27:49] funds milk purchases for schools so  
[00:27:53] distinctions between the brand and  
[00:27:55] grants the brand is focused on marketing  
[00:27:57] and promotion and and um includes Foods  
[00:28:00] Beverages and egg products this year we  
[00:28:02] are expanding to include all of  
[00:28:04] horticulture and natural fibers or  
[00:28:06] announcements later in the year to come  
[00:28:08] on that it gives people the ability to  
[00:28:10] use the CH I will logo to identify their  
[00:28:12] foods and their AG products and then  
[00:28:14] those products must to use the logo must  
[00:28:16] meet or exceed minimum criteria um there  
[00:28:19] are those annual membership dues and  
[00:28:22] then that enables people to um  
[00:28:24] participate in the passport and other  
[00:28:26] exclusive events the grants are  
[00:28:29] available for anyone in Iowa to apply  
[00:28:31] for um for the specific ones if they  
[00:28:34] meet those criteria you do not need to  
[00:28:36] be a member to apply but for the food  
[00:28:38] purchasing pilot they can only purchase  
[00:28:40] from members and then there's no minimum  
[00:28:43] amount that you can apply for but there

[00:28:45] are maximums depending on the  
[00:28:48] grants if you're looking for that  
[00:28:50] information you can go to choose  
[00:28:53] iowa.com and click on the grants tab to  
[00:28:56] go to the grants page and then also  
[00:28:58] additional funding opportunities we want  
[00:29:01] to try and be as helpful as possible so  
[00:29:03] lower down if you keep scrolling on the  
[00:29:06] grants page you will see additional  
[00:29:09] Grant um funding opportunities listed  
[00:29:12] and we link to those programs so that  
[00:29:15] you can see those guidelines and all  
[00:29:16] those details separately if you know of  
[00:29:19] a grant program that we should link to  
[00:29:21] please let us know um and then there are  
[00:29:23] a couple of these that I think are  
[00:29:24] ending that we will be pulling off this  
[00:29:27] list um in in the near future but um I  
[00:29:30] wanted to highlight that if you go to  
[00:29:32] choose ia.com you can look at all of the  
[00:29:34] choose IA grants and then find  
[00:29:36] information about additional grant  
[00:29:38] opportunities so if you're curious about  
[00:29:41] how you can join you can become a member  
[00:29:43] at choose ia.com um there is that become  
[00:29:46] a member button where you start your

[00:29:47] journey you can apply for Grants at CH  
[00:29:50] ia.com and all those details are on the  
[00:29:52] grants page and then invite your  
[00:29:54] neighbors if you know someone that could  
[00:29:56] benefit from a a grant or may be an  
[00:29:59] excellent fit um to participate in the  
[00:30:01] brand program if they're producing local  
[00:30:03] food and act products in Iowa please  
[00:30:06] share the good news with them you can  
[00:30:07] follow us on social media our handle on  
[00:30:10] all of the social media accounts is at  
[00:30:12] choose Iowa and you can contact us send  
[00:30:15] us an email and reach our whole team at  
[00:30:17] choose Iowa Iowa agriculture. goov it's  
[00:30:20] a great way to ask questions and get a  
[00:30:22] quicker answer because we are are all  
[00:30:24] checking that account constantly so the  
[00:30:28] time or later depending upon um when  
[00:30:31] Katie recommends I will be happy to  
[00:30:33] answer  
[00:30:36] questions yeah if anyone has any  
[00:30:38] questions that they thought of feel free  
[00:30:39] to put them in the chat or in the Q&A  
[00:30:43] section um we do have some pre-prepared  
[00:30:46] questions that people have sent in when  
[00:30:48] they registered for the webinar and I

[00:30:49] know one of them was whether or not  
[00:30:52] you've gotten any feedback on the  
[00:30:54] effectiveness of the choose iowa logo as  
[00:30:56] a marketing tool and whether or not  
[00:30:58] you've heard from any Farmers that  
[00:30:59] that's been a very impactful tool to let  
[00:31:02] people know that their products are made  
[00:31:04] here oh yes we are so excited so um last  
[00:31:09] week we um we were pleased to have a  
[00:31:13] panel discussion at the iowa tourism  
[00:31:15] conference and there were  
[00:31:19] um three choose iowa members who shared  
[00:31:22] on that panel discussion and they it was  
[00:31:24] really cool to see how each one of them  
[00:31:26] was talking shared about the impacts  
[00:31:29] that they are making in their Community  
[00:31:31] but then also how they have been  
[00:31:33] connecting with others through CH iowa  
[00:31:36] um in sourcing iowa products for um in  
[00:31:40] one example sourcing iowa products for  
[00:31:42] her on farm store and for others um in  
[00:31:46] just sharing the good word and sharing  
[00:31:49] news about um Local Foods from iowa and  
[00:31:52] other a products we recently had a  
[00:31:56] conducted a study  
[00:31:58] through iowa State Extension and asked

[00:32:01] lowans um if you knew that a product was  
[00:32:05] from Iowa versus another state uh would  
[00:32:08] you be more likely to purchase that Iowa  
[00:32:10] product and 80 uh n let's see  
[00:32:14] 86% of those respondents said that they  
[00:32:17] would um support or select the Iowa  
[00:32:20] product over the out of state product  
[00:32:22] and of those 94% said that they would be  
[00:32:25] willing to even pay a little bit more if  
[00:32:28] they knew that a product was  
[00:32:29] specifically from Iowa versus another  
[00:32:31] state so we are encouraged and excited  
[00:32:34] that now that this brand program exists  
[00:32:36] um that we are able to to help with that  
[00:32:40] identification and on the grant side  
[00:32:43] it's been neat to see how many Grant  
[00:32:45] projects the grant the value added Grant  
[00:32:48] especially is helping people with  
[00:32:50] whatever bottleneck they have in helping  
[00:32:52] their Farm operation grow or their food  
[00:32:55] business so there's been some some  
[00:32:58] really neat projects related to um Cold  
[00:33:00] Storage that expands some growing  
[00:33:02] seasons and um we're calculating lately  
[00:33:06] we're working on just what that  
[00:33:08] investment of those \$7.8 million of

[00:33:12] State funding what kind of investment  
[00:33:14] that has created now so excited to see  
[00:33:16] the  
[00:33:19] growth that's so incredible to hear and  
[00:33:21] so exciting to see Ians rallying around  
[00:33:24] choosing Local  
[00:33:25] Foods it looks like we don't have any  
[00:33:29] questions that I've seen come through in  
[00:33:31] the chat but I just wanted to plug on  
[00:33:34] April 2nd coming up so is a member of  
[00:33:36] the Iowa food system Coalition and we're  
[00:33:38] having a day on the hill to help  
[00:33:41] advocate for the expansion of the choose  
[00:33:44] Iowa program and all of the great work  
[00:33:45] it's been doing so if you're available  
[00:33:48] on April 2nd and are interested in being  
[00:33:50] at the Iowa state capital I'll be there  
[00:33:52] so you'll already have a friend to go  
[00:33:53] with but I highly recommend showing up  
[00:33:55] and advocating for this incredible  
[00:33:58] programs that we can continue to support  
[00:34:00] Iowa  
[00:34:03] Farmers well thank you so much Beth for  
[00:34:05] being here I'm going to go ahead and  
[00:34:08] introduce our next speaker which is Kim  
[00:34:11] Anderson Kim is a longtime educator

[00:34:14] currently teaching from Southern New  
[00:34:15] Hampshire University online as well as  
[00:34:17] an organic farmer in southeast Iowa Kim  
[00:34:21] serves on the board for the Iowa organic  
[00:34:23] Association she lives on her  
[00:34:25] grandparents Century Farm where Heritage  
[00:34:27] and sustainability are always in the  
[00:34:28] Forefront Kim along with her husband  
[00:34:31] Steve and brother Kevin grow organic  
[00:34:33] corn soybeans wheat oats hay blueberries  
[00:34:37] chestnuts hazelnuts paw paws pumpkins  
[00:34:40] and  
[00:34:41] strawberries every farm and field are  
[00:34:44] unique and their Farm goals revolve  
[00:34:46] around doing what is best for each field  
[00:34:48] based on the lay of the land soil type  
[00:34:51] and feasibility and resources they put  
[00:34:54] their best ground along the skunk River  
[00:34:56] into a permanent wetland in 2011 Kim is  
[00:34:59] hopeful that one of her nephews or  
[00:35:01] grandchildren will want to carry on the  
[00:35:03] Family Farm someday a great day for Kim is  
[00:35:06] a walk in the timber to Revel in the  
[00:35:08] peace Kim go ahead and take it away  
[00:35:11] thank you so much for being  
[00:35:14] here thank you Katie um will you be able

[00:35:18] to share my  
[00:35:19] slides yes of course let me pull them up  
[00:35:22] for  
[00:35:25] you thank you Julie for the invitation  
[00:35:35] it's taking me a moment to find the  
[00:35:36] share screen button but I got there  
[00:35:51] eventually okay  
[00:35:55] um thanks for that int production I did  
[00:35:58] include my email and the website um I'm  
[00:36:03] mostly known as the blueberry lady which  
[00:36:05] I think is an okay thing to be called so  
[00:36:09] I'm okay with that  
[00:36:11] um I included a quote here on this first  
[00:36:15] Slide by Wendel Barry most of you  
[00:36:17] probably know who he is but um a  
[00:36:21] sustainable agricultural does not  
[00:36:23] deplete soils or people so these things  
[00:36:25] are really important to me and as  
[00:36:27] especially as we've you know ventured  
[00:36:29] into uh specialty CRS and needed more  
[00:36:33] help on the farm to accomplish that um  
[00:36:36] we're empty nesters and so um it's  
[00:36:40] usually just two people here doing a lot  
[00:36:42] of the work but we do hire people as  
[00:36:44] well and that's one of the things I was  
[00:36:45] asked to talk about today um you go to

[00:36:49] the next slide Katie I just wanted to  
[00:36:51] kind of show you where I'm at in the  
[00:36:53] state of Iowa so the map at the top left  
[00:36:57] um  
[00:36:58] shows the Little Dot we're about an hour  
[00:37:01] south of Iowa City 15 minutes south of  
[00:37:04] Washington Iowa we're actually in  
[00:37:06] Jefferson County and the picture at the  
[00:37:09] top right is an aerial of our um acreage  
[00:37:14] and then the Blueberry Field uh you can  
[00:37:17] see we have a lot of Frontage on a  
[00:37:18] highway there we're on a state highway  
[00:37:21] and uh that's kind of a negative for me  
[00:37:23] and I've tried to make it a  
[00:37:25] positive um having all that traffic  
[00:37:27] going past um we planted a a field a 5  
[00:37:33] acre field to blueberries in  
[00:37:36] 2017 uh there are 98 rows  
[00:37:40] 2563 plants and eight varieties we know  
[00:37:44] how many plants because we counted it  
[00:37:46] for a contest so that's the only way  
[00:37:49] I've got that number in my head um then  
[00:37:52] last year through a choose Iowa Grant we  
[00:37:56] added straw berries to our um Berry  
[00:37:59] offerings by putting in three um they're  
[00:38:03] called caterpillar tunnels from Farmers

[00:38:06] friend uh they're 16 foot wide by 100  
[00:38:09] foot long each um tunnel has 10 rows so  
[00:38:14] uh with a 100 plants so each tunnel  
[00:38:16] holds 1,000 strawberry plants and we had  
[00:38:20] three varieties last year so a different  
[00:38:22] variety in each tunnel we're going to  
[00:38:24] continue that this year but we're  
[00:38:26] changing one of the varieties  
[00:38:29] okay the next slide  
[00:38:33] please I just wanted to show off some of  
[00:38:35] those blueberries which hopefully in  
[00:38:37] this picture you can see how big they  
[00:38:39] are um and the strawberries which were  
[00:38:42] delicious um that's my husband in the  
[00:38:45] lower left we're just kind of trying to  
[00:38:47] take some pictures as to how much the  
[00:38:49] plants have grown we put them in as twoy  
[00:38:53] olds and they were maybe 20 lnes tall so  
[00:38:56] he's only 5'9 but still uh the the  
[00:39:01] plants are uh they're nine and 10 years  
[00:39:03] old now so they're getting to full  
[00:39:05] production and a lot of them are getting  
[00:39:08] five and six feet tall um and then the  
[00:39:12] strawberry tunnel this picture was taken  
[00:39:13] on in October um you can see a few spots  
[00:39:18] where we lost plants but overall it it

[00:39:21] was a really great experience and we  
[00:39:24] actually did our last picking of  
[00:39:26] strawberries on November  
[00:39:28] 15 um which was pretty amazing we  
[00:39:31] thought okay next slide uh so with that  
[00:39:35] background I was asked to talk about  
[00:39:37] marketing how we Market um and I'm  
[00:39:40] mostly going to talk about the  
[00:39:41] blueberries and  
[00:39:43] strawberries um the Blueberry Field was  
[00:39:46] designed and built as a upick um I had  
[00:39:49] been picking blueberries in Illinois for  
[00:39:51] 20 years and  
[00:39:54] um wanted something closer so having  
[00:39:58] something at my own Farm made a lot of  
[00:40:00] sense I researched it for seven years  
[00:40:03] before I actually pulled the trigger now  
[00:40:05] I wish I'd have done it sooner um we we  
[00:40:10] are hoping to sell the majority of our  
[00:40:13] berries you pick and they are we do pick  
[00:40:16] some as well and we had to expand like  
[00:40:19] our crew to do that um that was the  
[00:40:22] first couple of years like whatever  
[00:40:24] needed picked got picked it was great um  
[00:40:26] I've never paid to advertise mostly use  
[00:40:29] social media but then uh several years

[00:40:32] ago we had kind of a bumper crop and it  
[00:40:34] felt bad that we weren't able to get it  
[00:40:36] all picked um so then we had to think a  
[00:40:41] little bit more about how we were going  
[00:40:42] to deal with that um as you probably all  
[00:40:45] know berries are um not very shelf  
[00:40:48] stable you know they don't last a long  
[00:40:51] time and so it's really important to get  
[00:40:53] them moved quickly so our theory is get  
[00:40:56] people to come here pick them themselves  
[00:40:58] that's the very best situation the next  
[00:41:00] best situation is we pick them and then  
[00:41:03] someone Picks Them Up the next day um so  
[00:41:07] uh that meant uh this refrigerator that  
[00:41:09] you see in the picture in the top right  
[00:41:11] purchasing that um two years ago um so  
[00:41:15] that we would have storage um this is a  
[00:41:18] picture in the middle of us actually  
[00:41:21] storing we do everything by volume not  
[00:41:24] weight um picture in the lower right I  
[00:41:27] think it got turned I'm not sure what  
[00:41:29] happened but that's a gallon um bag do  
[00:41:33] uh sell some frozen to conferences like  
[00:41:37] practical farmers of Iowa the Iowa  
[00:41:39] organic conference um the people in  
[00:41:42] charge of those meals uh contact us and

[00:41:45] want us to freeze some for them we have  
[00:41:48] sold some through um food Hub as well um  
[00:41:52] always Frozen just because of the  
[00:41:54] challenge of getting um fresh picked and  
[00:41:58] moved very quickly um we've also sold  
[00:42:01] wholesale and partnered with an ice  
[00:42:03] cream maker last year which was really  
[00:42:06] fun um and we're planning to do that  
[00:42:08] again this year and then the picture  
[00:42:10] with the coins I just wanted to point  
[00:42:12] out that that is a quarter and a 50 Cent  
[00:42:16] just to wow you a little bit with one of  
[00:42:19] our varieties called  
[00:42:21] chanler and that's a picture of our Farm  
[00:42:23] Stand which is inside of the Blueberry  
[00:42:26] field so this is where people check in  
[00:42:28] and check out when they're coming for  
[00:42:30] upic but we've also expanded after the  
[00:42:34] blueberry upic season we still use this  
[00:42:37] um Farm Stand to run a farm store into  
[00:42:42] October okay the next slide  
[00:42:49] please so in adding strawberries to the  
[00:42:52] mix last year in  
[00:42:54] 2024 um we decided pretty e early on if  
[00:42:59] you look at the picture in the middle of  
[00:43:01] those spacing of those rows um those

[00:43:04] strawberry plants are 12 inches apart in  
[00:43:06] the row and then the rows are 12 inches  
[00:43:09] but then we have three like aiseways  
[00:43:12] for us to walk you know to be able to  
[00:43:13] get through there to pick and it's  
[00:43:15] really not wide enough I'm guessing that  
[00:43:18] it's like 21 inches or something but  
[00:43:20] it's not wide enough for like strollers  
[00:43:22] or  
[00:43:23] wagons um so we determined and this is  
[00:43:26] not not inside of our fenced Blueberry  
[00:43:29] Field it's up on a hill on our behind  
[00:43:31] our aage we decided it wasn't going to  
[00:43:34] be conducive for you pick so we're doing  
[00:43:37] this strictly as you as we pick it and  
[00:43:39] sell it fresh and here's a the  
[00:43:42] refrigerator full of all the clamp  
[00:43:44] shells of  
[00:43:45] strawberries um and we are freezing some  
[00:43:48] as well um then what happens once the  
[00:43:52] blueberry season ends uh the Farm Stand  
[00:43:54] continues and we're really working hard  
[00:43:57] to train people to come to us to pick up  
[00:44:00] these strawberries um we're also  
[00:44:02] bringing in other items from local farms  
[00:44:06] like you see a picture here of the mums

[00:44:08] the pumpkins that we grow um even some  
[00:44:11] of our Orchard crops like the pawon pmen  
[00:44:14] we were able to sell directly to the  
[00:44:16] consumer at our Farm Stand this year um  
[00:44:19] the ice cream was very popular um this  
[00:44:22] is one that featured our strawberries in  
[00:44:25] the picture it was called pink pony srel  
[00:44:27] the other one that was extremely popular  
[00:44:30] they let us name um and I didn't have a  
[00:44:32] picture of it but it is it was called  
[00:44:34] peachberry bottom and it was a peach ice  
[00:44:37] cream with a blueberry swirl and it made  
[00:44:40] from our blueberries so some awesome ice  
[00:44:43] cream um so that's really how we're  
[00:44:46] marketing things okay next  
[00:44:51] slide um labor which you know I I think  
[00:44:56] this is the thing that was the most  
[00:44:57] scary to me about that I wasn't going to  
[00:44:59] be able to do everything myself and what  
[00:45:01] was I going to do to find people to work  
[00:45:05] um we kind of have two two different  
[00:45:08] labor forces they work together  
[00:45:10] sometimes sometimes separately the first  
[00:45:12] labor source has been mostly teens um  
[00:45:17] I've started to stick with age 14 or up  
[00:45:20] I've tried some younger than that and it

[00:45:23] seems to never work very well so I'm  
[00:45:26] really sticking to for and up um I start  
[00:45:29] them over minimum wage I give incentives  
[00:45:32] about uh they get a 50 cent raise every  
[00:45:35] six months that they keep coming back so  
[00:45:38] one of the girls in this picture um in  
[00:45:40] the lower left the one in the very front  
[00:45:42] the blonde she um is going on your four  
[00:45:47] here um and uh she knows as much as I do  
[00:45:51] or more probably so so so it it's been  
[00:45:55] really great to have her stick with with  
[00:45:57] us so long she's really proud that she's  
[00:45:59] our longest term employee to date um we  
[00:46:03] have tried having mixture of girls and  
[00:46:05] boys and I've had no bad experiences  
[00:46:08] with that but I've been kind of warned  
[00:46:10] that little things could develop um  
[00:46:14] maybe trying to show off to one another  
[00:46:16] or something so we've really kind of  
[00:46:20] stuck to girls um I'm working with these  
[00:46:23] girls like on a daily basis and I just  
[00:46:26] love love that when it's all girls  
[00:46:28] because um I feel like our conversations  
[00:46:31] can be  
[00:46:32] Freer um I also do incentives like give  
[00:46:36] gifts and this picture was taken

[00:46:37] yesterday morning these two girls are  
[00:46:40] homeschooled and they were doing their  
[00:46:42] Iowa assessments um and so I took them  
[00:46:46] to breakfast yesterday morning just as  
[00:46:49] um as an educator I want to tell them  
[00:46:51] that they're valuable to me as an  
[00:46:53] employee but I really want them to also  
[00:46:56] um focus on their school and not not  
[00:46:59] choose work over  
[00:47:01] school um we also do celebrations like  
[00:47:04] at the end of some of it might be kind  
[00:47:06] of silly but like when we finish pruning  
[00:47:08] we'll probably have a little celebration  
[00:47:11] at the end of the upic season we usually  
[00:47:13] take them out to a nice dinner somewhere  
[00:47:16] um usually a local restaurant so anyway  
[00:47:21] then the other part of our labor force  
[00:47:23] is made up of Amish girls um per their  
[00:47:27] request they are age 21 or older because  
[00:47:32] uh this is an old order Amish community  
[00:47:34] where they are allowed to keep their own  
[00:47:36] money at age 21 and uh they don't have a  
[00:47:40] lot of opportunities and ways to earn  
[00:47:42] money so um anyway um we've developed a  
[00:47:47] good  
[00:47:48] relationship uh last year we had

[00:47:50] anywhere from 6 to 7 it kind of like  
[00:47:53] changed during the season depending on  
[00:47:56] who was available we had two girls get  
[00:47:58] married last fall so they are no longer  
[00:48:01] available and that's going to continue  
[00:48:03] to happen um one of the things I do to  
[00:48:06] help them out is provide rides um  
[00:48:10] because some of them do live a little  
[00:48:12] far that it would be like over an hour  
[00:48:15] buggy ride to get here and that's kind  
[00:48:17] of um too far you know to expect them to  
[00:48:21] do that um another thing we do for both  
[00:48:24] the Amish girls and our teens is provide  
[00:48:27] fruit weekly in season um my thought is  
[00:48:31] I sure wouldn't want to work at a  
[00:48:32] blueberry farm and then not be eating  
[00:48:34] those blueberries at my own house  
[00:48:37] so um I they basically get a fruit share  
[00:48:41] um then uh the Amish girls especially  
[00:48:45] but some of the teen girls too help out  
[00:48:47] with picking um blueberries they all  
[00:48:49] help with picking strawberries um but  
[00:48:52] the Amish girls are really experts in  
[00:48:53] picking blueberries now and we pay for  
[00:48:57] that whichever works out the best for  
[00:48:59] them the best I can describe it is as

[00:49:02] peace work and mostly I pay them per  
[00:49:05] bucket and uh we they just total up how  
[00:49:08] many buckets they picked for the day for  
[00:49:09] me whether that was 16 buckets or 20  
[00:49:12] buckets I pay them so much a bucket and  
[00:49:14] then they just divvy it up among  
[00:49:16] themselves um but sometimes in the  
[00:49:19] season like early in the blueberry  
[00:49:21] season or later in the blueberry season  
[00:49:23] when it might take longer to fill a  
[00:49:26] bucket cuz you're having to move around  
[00:49:28] more then I'll just fig we we'll  
[00:49:30] calculate it out and if that works out  
[00:49:32] to be better to pay them their hourly  
[00:49:34] wage then that's what I'll do so I  
[00:49:36] always want it to come out on the best  
[00:49:38] end for  
[00:49:40] them okay next  
[00:49:44] slide uh these are some of the tasks  
[00:49:46] that we do at Blueberry bottom Farm  
[00:49:49] related to blueberries and strawberries  
[00:49:51] and all of these tasks I've list listed  
[00:49:54] I do with them what's not on the list is  
[00:49:57] all the tasks that they don't get  
[00:49:59] involved in um things like uh irrigation  
[00:50:03] and fertigation and uh setting up the

[00:50:07] irrigation at the beginning of the  
[00:50:08] Season dra draining it at the end of the  
[00:50:10] season all of those mowing all those  
[00:50:13] tasks are done by my husband or myself  
[00:50:16] but these tasks pruning which we're  
[00:50:18] currently doing we hope to wrap up this  
[00:50:20] week were really close we always strive  
[00:50:22] to be done by the end of March and we've  
[00:50:24] never made it before and I think this  
[00:50:26] time we're going to so that's exciting  
[00:50:29] um march to October there's weeding in  
[00:50:32] the Blueberry Field um but thanks to  
[00:50:35] grant money we were able to um do fabric  
[00:50:39] on our entire Blueberry Field this past  
[00:50:41] year we finished by mid October so we're  
[00:50:44] hoping that our weeding is going to be  
[00:50:47] much less and more manageable this year  
[00:50:50] uh the the the weed fabric has also  
[00:50:53] really helped us retain moisture one of  
[00:50:55] our berries was Baker than it's ever  
[00:50:57] been last year and the only thing we can  
[00:50:59] figure out is we had the fabric down in  
[00:51:02] April and we think we were able to hold  
[00:51:04] that moisture in and grow bigger  
[00:51:06] blueberries in that variety so that was  
[00:51:09] exciting um April um we're hoping to

[00:51:12] plant the strawberries in April this  
[00:51:14] year due to receiving the Grant and  
[00:51:16] getting the tunnels and getting them set  
[00:51:18] up we were we planted strawberries the  
[00:51:21] middle of May last year but we hope to  
[00:51:23] be at least three weeks earlier than  
[00:51:25] that also planting a new variety that um  
[00:51:30] produces more early and so we're hoping  
[00:51:32] to have that better overlap with our  
[00:51:34] blueberry season that when people come  
[00:51:36] to pick blueberries they can also buy  
[00:51:38] strawberries last year that was going on  
[00:51:40] but we didn't have enough to satisfy  
[00:51:43] people uh we never have enough berries  
[00:51:45] to satisfy everyone really um then June  
[00:51:48] to August um we're picking blueberries  
[00:51:52] um through the upick system and the  
[00:51:54] girls mostly the team girls that you see  
[00:51:57] pictured um they work at the stand um  
[00:52:00] the Amish girls prefer not to kind of do  
[00:52:03] that they they would be out rather be  
[00:52:05] out weeding or picking the blueberries  
[00:52:07] or packing the blueberries um those  
[00:52:10] kinds of jobs so um so we do have some  
[00:52:13] separation of duties there uh June  
[00:52:17] through October we are picking

[00:52:18] strawberries um selling them at this  
[00:52:21] Farmstand and we're the other kind of  
[00:52:23] big task but not as often as Pi in the  
[00:52:27] strawberry tunnels was cutting Runners  
[00:52:29] because we're growing day neutrals as  
[00:52:32] annuals so we don't want it to produce  
[00:52:35] more strawberry plants we want to  
[00:52:37] produce more strawberries on the plant  
[00:52:40] um and then the weeding the weeding at  
[00:52:42] first was um a well was more frequent  
[00:52:47] but what we noticed as the season went  
[00:52:48] on and I think what you probably saw in  
[00:52:50] the prior picture is as the strawberry  
[00:52:52] plants got bigger the weeds really  
[00:52:54] didn't compete so weeding was very  
[00:52:57] minimal later in the season okay next  
[00:53:03] slide am I doing okay on  
[00:53:06] time okay um so people have asked how do  
[00:53:11] we find  
[00:53:13] employees um and these are my answers  
[00:53:16] prayer Word of Mouth I've never  
[00:53:19] advertised um I actually have teen girls  
[00:53:23] now like starting at age 13 sending me  
[00:53:27] messages through my website or getting  
[00:53:29] my number and texting me saying can I  
[00:53:32] work at the Blueberry field so um and

[00:53:36] I've gotten in with some families that  
[00:53:37] have numerous girls you know um so I  
[00:53:41] think I'll be getting the younger  
[00:53:42] sisters of the ones who work here now  
[00:53:45] which is always fun um so I just wanted  
[00:53:49] to share that because people are always  
[00:53:50] asking me how I found people so these  
[00:53:53] pictures I just want to show off clean  
[00:53:55] fields so this is when the one at the  
[00:53:59] top you know showing the Blueberry field  
[00:54:01] after it's been weeded with all the  
[00:54:02] hardwood chip mulch and then the picture  
[00:54:05] at the bottom is as we were wrapping up  
[00:54:07] last fall and the plants are turning red  
[00:54:10] and looking pretty and we have all this  
[00:54:12] gorgeous fabric out in the field um  
[00:54:14] keeping the weeds that day so um we also  
[00:54:18] didn't really have any comments from  
[00:54:19] customers we we kind of expected some  
[00:54:22] people to make comments um because  
[00:54:24] during blueberry season last year part  
[00:54:26] of the field was finished with the  
[00:54:27] fabric part wasn't um here's a picture  
[00:54:30] in the top left of my husband um and  
[00:54:34] what it looks like when you have all  
[00:54:35] this grass and weed in your row and how

[00:54:38] awesome it looks when you get it all out  
[00:54:41] um and then this is my one of my  
[00:54:43] youngest grandsons uh down here in the  
[00:54:45] left he absolutely loves strawberries so  
[00:54:49] we had just picked a bunch of  
[00:54:50] strawberries so we set him on the table  
[00:54:52] in the middle of the buckets and I wish  
[00:54:55] this was a video and you could hear him  
[00:54:57] because he just kept giggling he just  
[00:55:00] couldn't get  
[00:55:01] over he was so overwhelmed by all those  
[00:55:05] strawberries he just had no idea what to  
[00:55:08] do so that was that's fun okay next  
[00:55:14] slide okay um I just wanted to bring it  
[00:55:16] back to oh there's another picture that  
[00:55:19] got flipped sideways sorry about that um  
[00:55:22] so the our farm goals are building  
[00:55:25] Community growing for food versus feed  
[00:55:28] and share what we love be resilient um  
[00:55:31] sustainable and fair and I think with  
[00:55:34] everything I've shared with you about  
[00:55:36] Labor and marketing that we're we're  
[00:55:38] accomplishing those goals um picture  
[00:55:41] that's flipped is our oldest customer to  
[00:55:44] date that that we know of not everybody  
[00:55:46] tells you their age obviously but um I

[00:55:49] think she's 97 now and this was when she  
[00:55:51] was 94 or five she had never picked  
[00:55:53] blueberries before and she came with  
[00:55:56] several generations of her family and at  
[00:55:59] first she wouldn't accept the little  
[00:56:00] stool from us but then she did accept it  
[00:56:04] and they started picking and believe it  
[00:56:06] or not all the younger generation of her  
[00:56:08] family like was like we got enough we're  
[00:56:11] done and she's like they gave us this  
[00:56:13] row we're picking this  
[00:56:15] whole she was so so funny and I ran into  
[00:56:19] her not too long ago and she goes I'll  
[00:56:20] be back this summer God willing that I'm  
[00:56:22] still alive so she's a real sweetie  
[00:56:26] um and then these other pictures are my  
[00:56:28] grandchildren which I absolutely love  
[00:56:31] having them here and love having them  
[00:56:33] making memories riding their little  
[00:56:35] four-wheeler out to the field and  
[00:56:38] picking uh they in the one picture they  
[00:56:40] have what we call the kid buckets  
[00:56:42] they're just hold a court and we found  
[00:56:44] that little kids really like to not mix  
[00:56:47] their berries with their mom's berries  
[00:56:49] they want their berries to take home so

[00:56:52] we started getting these little buckets  
[00:56:54] for that reason and then I was told that  
[00:56:56] we could plug some things we have coming  
[00:56:59] up so big for us um we're calling it our  
[00:57:03] second annual we've been doing plant  
[00:57:05] sales as popups for several Springs um  
[00:57:08] after we order in Plants um and what we  
[00:57:11] have left over it kind of grew during  
[00:57:14] covid because we had to order in lots of  
[00:57:16] 10 and so we ended up with more plants  
[00:57:19] than we normally did so we've expanded  
[00:57:22] this we're bringing in other vendors so  
[00:57:24] our spring plant sale is going to be on  
[00:57:27] the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend May  
[00:57:29] 10th it looks like cut off to me but  
[00:57:31] it's from 10: to 2 um we sell blueberry  
[00:57:35] um two-year-old blueberry potted plants  
[00:57:38] the same varieties that we grow we give  
[00:57:40] a planting and Care Tip Sheet we we're  
[00:57:43] also selling the strawberry be roots  
[00:57:46] that we grow um and then we're having  
[00:57:49] some fun things this year we're having  
[00:57:50] blueberry pancakes we're having  
[00:57:52] blueberry and strawberry  
[00:57:54] BRS um we're having um somebody with  
[00:57:58] honey um that we sell their honey at our

[00:58:01] Farmstand we have some uh flower farmer  
[00:58:04] bringing fresh  
[00:58:05] bouquet um we have an Amish grower  
[00:58:08] bringing like hanging baskets and  
[00:58:11] vegetable STS and all kinds of plants  
[00:58:13] that they grow in their  
[00:58:15] Greenhouse um we have an Amish Baker  
[00:58:17] making pies and cinnamon rolls people  
[00:58:21] can buy those for their Mother's Day  
[00:58:23] celebration so it's turned into a big  
[00:58:26] thing and we love it and it's a great  
[00:58:28] way to kind of like kick off um a season  
[00:58:32] for  
[00:58:33] us and that's all I've got and I'm  
[00:58:36] apologizing because I have to leave at  
[00:58:39] 11:15 to go pick up some Amish girls so  
[00:58:42] if there's any questions I'd love to  
[00:58:43] answer them now yes thank you so much  
[00:58:46] Kim for everything you've shared I know  
[00:58:48] a farmer is always on the run um it  
[00:58:52] looks like we did have one question in  
[00:58:53] the chat from Amber and that question  
[00:58:56] was what do Winters look like on a Berry  
[00:58:58] Farm and how do you prepare your crops  
[00:59:00] for the winter and that they love your  
[00:59:02] setup okay thank you well with the

[00:59:05] strawberries um we are growing them as  
[00:59:08] annuals so we actually plant them in the  
[00:59:10] spring and we pull them in the fall and  
[00:59:12] we put all the plants in a big compost  
[00:59:14] pile um this year we left the fabric  
[00:59:17] down but in the future we'll be taking  
[00:59:19] it up and putting a cover crop in those  
[00:59:21] tunnels um by mid to the end of October  
[00:59:26] so we can get those  
[00:59:27] established um and then the blueberries  
[00:59:30] they're all high Bush blueberries out of  
[00:59:32] Michigan so they go dormant um the  
[00:59:35] leaves all turn red and look beautiful  
[00:59:38] in the fall then they all fall off so we  
[00:59:40] don't really have to do anything special  
[00:59:42] other than draining irrigation so that  
[00:59:45] we don't have any broken pipes and so  
[00:59:47] forth but the blueberry plants are very  
[00:59:50] well suited to cold we do love it when  
[00:59:52] there's snow because it helps insulate  
[00:59:55] so we don't like when it gets like -20  
[00:59:58] with no snow but they can still handle  
[01:00:03] it well thank you so much for all of  
[01:00:06] your insight and thank you for being  
[01:00:07] here I know you have to get on the move  
[01:00:09] soon so I'm going to go ahead and

[01:00:12] introduce our next speaker but thank you  
[01:00:14] again so our final speaker that we have  
[01:00:18] is Teresa weer slag who is a field  
[01:00:22] specialist with the farm food and  
[01:00:24] Enterprise development program at Iowa  
[01:00:26] State University extension and Outreach  
[01:00:29] in her current position she specializes  
[01:00:32] in food system development food hubs  
[01:00:34] Farm to school and on-farm food safety  
[01:00:38] she lives on a fourth generation Family  
[01:00:40] Farm in the northeast corner of the  
[01:00:41] state where they raise cattle corn and  
[01:00:51] hay and I forgot to unmute myself before  
[01:00:54] I shared my screen  
[01:00:56] good morning  
[01:00:57] everyone glad I could join you today um  
[01:01:00] I was asked to share a little bit of  
[01:01:02] information about food hubs and how they  
[01:01:05] work in the state and what um  
[01:01:08] opportunities they provide to Farmers um  
[01:01:11] interested in growing more food  
[01:01:16] crops um I usually don't get a lot of  
[01:01:18] time to talk about stuff so I tend to  
[01:01:20] pack a lot of information into my slides  
[01:01:23] um I'd like to start with the this first  
[01:01:26] one because I want to give a definition

[01:01:29] for how what the term food Hub means and  
[01:01:32] then where they fall with in the bigger  
[01:01:34] food system so food Hub is still a  
[01:01:37] relatively new term um it was termed by  
[01:01:41] the USDA in  
[01:01:43] 2009 it's a business or an organization  
[01:01:47] that actively manages the aggregation  
[01:01:49] distribution and marketing of source  
[01:01:52] identified food products which that  
[01:01:54] makes it a different than other types of  
[01:01:57] aggregators primarily from local and  
[01:02:00] Regional producers to strengthen their  
[01:02:02] ability to satisfy wholesale and  
[01:02:04] institutional demand um my journey into  
[01:02:08] food system work was starting about the  
[01:02:10] same time we were trying to find markets  
[01:02:13] for farmers in Northeast Iowa other than  
[01:02:17] the traditional commodity markets you  
[01:02:19] know what are ways that they could  
[01:02:21] diversify their family farms and food  
[01:02:24] production was one of those options um  
[01:02:27] as we investigated those markets it  
[01:02:29] quickly became clear to us that there  
[01:02:32] was this  
[01:02:33] missing level or missing tier in the  
[01:02:36] food system um so this graphic from

[01:02:39] Wisconsin has been one of my longtime  
[01:02:41] favorites because I think it really  
[01:02:43] shows us what our current food system  
[01:02:47] looks like when we talk about Local  
[01:02:50] Foods immediately people tend to think  
[01:02:53] of the farmers markets or those Farm  
[01:02:55] stands you know exactly the type of  
[01:02:57] thing that Kim was just talking about  
[01:02:59] with her Farm um so that's what we call  
[01:03:03] tier one that direct to direct producer  
[01:03:06] to Consumer  
[01:03:07] Market there's also a tier zero which is  
[01:03:10] anything you produce on your own or  
[01:03:12] anything you harvest on your own so if  
[01:03:14] you're raising livestock for your own  
[01:03:16] use you have a big Garden or you go  
[01:03:18] hunting or fishing that's tier zero tier  
[01:03:21] one is when you buy directly from your  
[01:03:23] neighbors tier two is that strategic  
[01:03:27] partnership  
[01:03:28] level that's the place where food hubs  
[01:03:31] fit into our food system and my argument  
[01:03:34] for a long time has been that tier 2 is  
[01:03:38] what disappeared in our state or it's  
[01:03:40] really been lacking um for those um food  
[01:03:45] Farmers to scale up to bigger

[01:03:48] production at the other end of the food  
[01:03:50] system is the big red circle which is  
[01:03:53] what we call the global or Anonymous  
[01:03:55] food system  
[01:03:56] um that tends to be what most of Iowa  
[01:03:58] agriculture pours into so all the corn  
[01:04:01] beans eggs pork Dairy that um is  
[01:04:06] produced in our state tends to go into  
[01:04:09] those processing and distribution  
[01:04:11] channels where we no longer know the  
[01:04:14] farm that it comes from comes from you  
[01:04:16] know there's bigger aggregators they're  
[01:04:18] pulling Supply from many states um that  
[01:04:22] tends to be the most common wave that  
[01:04:26] Iowa producers plug into the food system  
[01:04:29] what we're trying to build with the  
[01:04:30] local food system is not only strengthen  
[01:04:33] those bottom tiers but add that tier two  
[01:04:36] that strategic  
[01:04:37] partnership  
[01:04:39] so the other thing I want to make sure I  
[01:04:42] point out with this slide is that this  
[01:04:44] is not an either or argument in order  
[01:04:47] for us to feed all the people in our  
[01:04:49] state as well as our country we need all  
[01:04:52] of the tiers so um but what we also need

[01:04:56] to focus on is making sure that all the  
[01:04:59] tiers are being supported in a way that  
[01:05:01] they can all be healthy sustainable and  
[01:05:06] profitable so a food Hub what does a  
[01:05:08] food Hub look like um I often joke with  
[01:05:12] people that I'm like well it's usually a  
[01:05:14] couple people trucks in a warehouse  
[01:05:17] right so they have cold storage they  
[01:05:19] have a truck where they delivering  
[01:05:20] product and then there's a person with a  
[01:05:22] computer and a phone that is able to  
[01:05:25] connect with um the the farmers and the  
[01:05:29] and the  
[01:05:30] customers so this data comes from the  
[01:05:32] national food Hub survey obviously it  
[01:05:35] it's a um I it's more like a biannual  
[01:05:38] survey now of all the food hubs in the  
[01:05:41] country and you can see most of the food  
[01:05:45] hubs in the country look the same  
[01:05:47] there's a space for the Hub there's  
[01:05:49] trucks in the warehouse and some of them  
[01:05:51] will have online ordering systems the  
[01:05:54] pandemic really helped with the online  
[01:05:56] ordering piece um some of them will do  
[01:05:59] processing some of them may have a  
[01:06:02] retail space um for people to come and

[01:06:05] Shop um but the infrastructure that a  
[01:06:08] food Hub needs is pretty common across  
[01:06:11] the country what do food hubs sell  
[01:06:15] obviously it'll vary depending on where  
[01:06:17] you live and what um what state you're  
[01:06:19] in but we tend to see a lot of produce U  
[01:06:23] food hubs that are doing produce meat  
[01:06:26] poultry eggs milk grains um those are  
[01:06:30] it's a similar here in Iowa the same  
[01:06:33] product mix the hubs that are doing the  
[01:06:35] best have the most Pro different types  
[01:06:38] of products that they're offering  
[01:06:40] because now they're able to offer a  
[01:06:42] consistent catalog of items to their  
[01:06:44] customers all year  
[01:06:47] around obviously there's seasonality  
[01:06:49] that comes into play with the food hubs  
[01:06:52] um but being able to offer both produce  
[01:06:56] proteins as well as other types of value  
[01:06:59] added products really helps um with  
[01:07:03] their  
[01:07:06] availability so this slide is a picture  
[01:07:09] of um the current members or some of the  
[01:07:12] current members of the food Hub managers  
[01:07:14] working group so there's a that's a  
[01:07:17] group here in the state that started um

[01:07:20] meeting back in 2012 13 um what after  
[01:07:24] the term food Hub came out there were  
[01:07:27] folks that were saying hey we're we're  
[01:07:30] food hubs you know they're all they were  
[01:07:32] all new businesses at the time they were  
[01:07:35] all struggling with the same sorts of  
[01:07:36] challenges so they started meeting on a  
[01:07:39] regular basis um what's really neat  
[01:07:41] about this group is that they still  
[01:07:42] continue to meet and for the most part  
[01:07:45] right now they're still meeting every  
[01:07:46] week um on various dimensions of the  
[01:07:50] aggregation and distribution piece  
[01:07:53] um the the map that you see on the  
[01:07:56] screen um shows some of the service  
[01:07:59] areas of the different hubs and then the  
[01:08:02] in the table the colors correlate with  
[01:08:04] those hubs in Iowa we have a mixture of  
[01:08:08] business structures so there are several  
[01:08:10] hubs that are nonprofits as well as some  
[01:08:13] that are um llc's or and a Cooperative  
[01:08:16] the other thing I want to draw your  
[01:08:18] attention to is what type of Hub are  
[01:08:21] they now the national food Hub survey  
[01:08:23] likes to put the hubs into different  
[01:08:26] groups you know what is your primary

[01:08:28] Market channel are you a direct to  
[01:08:29] Consumer type Hub or are you a wholesale  
[01:08:33] Hub um what we see here in Iowa is that  
[01:08:35] we have hybrid hubs they're doing all  
[01:08:38] the hubs are doing a little bit of both  
[01:08:41] um the X's mark their um the strength so  
[01:08:47] the hubs that are doing primarily  
[01:08:48] wholesale will have the 2xs the ones  
[01:08:51] that are doing primarily direct to  
[01:08:53] Consumer will have the 2xs so that gives  
[01:08:56] you a feel for the scale and the  
[01:08:59] geography that they're operating  
[01:09:02] in um you can see the color shading on  
[01:09:04] the map but the circles are representing  
[01:09:08] where weekly service is tending to occur  
[01:09:11] so if you're a customer within that in  
[01:09:14] that circle area you can usually get a  
[01:09:17] weekly delivery from a food Hub um with  
[01:09:21] the recent expansion in the last few  
[01:09:22] years of the lfs and lfp grants the  
[01:09:26] shading on the map has really expanded  
[01:09:30] um and the food hubs are reaching almost  
[01:09:33] all the counties in the state it's just  
[01:09:36] not necessarily on a weekly  
[01:09:39] schedule so at the bottom you can see  
[01:09:42] the general characteristics now there's

[01:09:45] a saying out there when you know when  
[01:09:46] you've been to one Farm you've been to  
[01:09:48] one Farm well same thing with the food  
[01:09:51] hubs every food Hub operates just a  
[01:09:53] little bit differently but here are some  
[01:09:56] characteristics that they have in common  
[01:09:58] the direct to Consumer hubs will tend to  
[01:10:00] have online order Cycles either a weekly  
[01:10:03] every other week or a monthly cycle and  
[01:10:06] um a lot of times they'll have  
[01:10:07] storefronts or pickup locations for  
[01:10:09] those products the wholesale hubs tend  
[01:10:12] to be the larger hubs they'll have  
[01:10:14] bigger Cold Storage larger delivery  
[01:10:17] trucks and weekly delivery routes there  
[01:10:20] is a link to the food Hub directory on  
[01:10:23] the screen and I'll get that posted into  
[01:10:25] the chat  
[01:10:28] later there are other aggregators in the  
[01:10:31] state and this is where it gets really  
[01:10:32] confusing on how people are using the  
[01:10:35] term food Hub um you know there are some  
[01:10:38] folks that are doing aggregation um and  
[01:10:41] are marketing off of a specialty store  
[01:10:44] or a Farm Stand or farmers market and um  
[01:10:48] you know they are definitely doing that

[01:10:50] aggregation and marketing piece for  
[01:10:52] those local local products um there's  
[01:10:55] other groups that are doing multiarm  
[01:10:57] food box programs and there're yes those  
[01:11:00] are all types of Hub related activity um  
[01:11:03] they tend to have limited delivery and  
[01:11:05] distribution which is where in the food  
[01:11:07] Hub managers working group we draw the  
[01:11:09] tend to draw the line on what how we  
[01:11:12] Define food hubs and what's how's that  
[01:11:15] different than just another type of  
[01:11:20] store  
[01:11:22] so this slide shows how in the last few  
[01:11:26] years food hubs even though they on that  
[01:11:29] previous map there were some it looked  
[01:11:31] like underserved areas of the state when  
[01:11:34] in reality because there's trucks  
[01:11:37] they're serving almost all the corners  
[01:11:38] of the state so the food hubs are moving  
[01:11:40] food all the way across the state this  
[01:11:43] data comes from the 2023 food Hub impact  
[01:11:48] report um and that year food hubs sold  
[01:11:51] food to over \$2.5 Million worth of local  
[01:11:55] products to grocery stores restaurants  
[01:11:57] school districts all sorts of customers  
[01:12:00] across the state I'm right in the middle

[01:12:02] of doing the 20  
[01:12:04] 2024 impact report and that number is up  
[01:12:08] over 4.3 million so we're talking a lot  
[01:12:12] of food is moving through those food  
[01:12:14] hubs to make sure that um customers are  
[01:12:18] getting access to those  
[01:12:21] products how many farms are the food  
[01:12:23] hubs working with in 2023 they reported  
[01:12:27] working with over 350 different farms  
[01:12:30] and food  
[01:12:31] producers and you can see where the  
[01:12:34] scattering of the map um where those  
[01:12:36] Farms are located in Iowa and the  
[01:12:39] neighboring  
[01:12:43] states Mo the majority of those Farms  
[01:12:45] are going to be those small and  
[01:12:47] mediumsized Farms every food item that  
[01:12:50] goes through a food Hub is traced back  
[01:12:53] to the farm it came from um  
[01:12:56] or at least traced back to the group of  
[01:12:58] farmers that are working together to  
[01:13:00] produce that  
[01:13:02] product the other thing that we're  
[01:13:03] seeing in the state that has been under  
[01:13:06] progress for the last three years is  
[01:13:08] what we call the Iowa Hub to Hub Network

[01:13:11] and that was a project to figure out how  
[01:13:14] do we connect the hubs in the  
[01:13:17] state in Iowa we don't have a supply  
[01:13:20] problem although we could definitely be  
[01:13:23] producing more I think if we made the  
[01:13:25] ask we could have Farmers growing a lot  
[01:13:28] more product for us what we have right  
[01:13:30] now is a customer problem we need more  
[01:13:33] people buying the food so that we can  
[01:13:35] ask farmers to start growing more and  
[01:13:38] marketing more through the state so as  
[01:13:40] we were building this infrastructure at  
[01:13:42] each of the different hubs um we started  
[01:13:46] to see differences in you know there are  
[01:13:48] some parts of the state where things  
[01:13:50] grow better than others or where we have  
[01:13:52] more farmers at a scaled up level than  
[01:13:54] others  
[01:13:56] um so this hub-to-hub network was  
[01:13:57] created to help the hubs start selling  
[01:14:00] to each other so that we could actually  
[01:14:03] expand the the number of farms that  
[01:14:06] those hubs are working with and fill in  
[01:14:08] any gaps especially during the winter  
[01:14:10] months when um some parts of the state  
[01:14:14] may not have any more apples in storage

[01:14:16] or other types of crops

[01:14:19] so the Hub to Hub Network has been we

[01:14:22] just completed the third year of that

[01:14:24] Network in 2023 there was over

[01:14:28] \$355,000 worth of products sold through

[01:14:31] the network to each other to help expand

[01:14:35] those Market areas for

[01:14:40] Farmers so the last few slides that I

[01:14:42] want to share with you are directed

[01:14:44] towards those farmers and food producers

[01:14:47] that have been thinking about working

[01:14:48] with the food Hub and um it's a

[01:14:52] collection of questions on the type of

[01:14:55] of FAQs that we get well how do I decide

[01:14:59] what what do I want to do is a food Hub

[01:15:01] a fit for

[01:15:02] me so the first question is how do you

[01:15:05] choose a food Hub like we just reviewed

[01:15:08] there's you know each Hub offers a

[01:15:10] different sales channel to Farmers so

[01:15:13] it's up to them to decide which way they

[01:15:15] want to go um for those direct to

[01:15:19] Consumer hubs they tend to have order

[01:15:21] Cycles so there may be a weekly option

[01:15:24] to participate seasonal option bi-weekly

[01:15:27] option so you'll have to get to know

[01:15:29] their order cycle and then those hubs  
[01:15:31] usually require the farmer to bring the  
[01:15:34] product in on the day specified right so  
[01:15:38] if order if the cycle window is open  
[01:15:41] from Monday through Wednesday um then  
[01:15:44] they require the product to be delivered  
[01:15:46] to the hub by Friday so it can be packed  
[01:15:48] and picked up every Hub operates a  
[01:15:51] little bit different but you understand  
[01:15:52] the cycle part of it  
[01:15:55] the direct to Consumer hubs tend to be a  
[01:15:57] better fit for those beginning Farmers  
[01:15:59] or those very small farmers that may not  
[01:16:01] have a lot of quantity to offer um keep  
[01:16:05] in mind for both of these marketing  
[01:16:08] channels Cottage foods are not allowed  
[01:16:10] so any food that requires a license  
[01:16:14] needs to have that license obviously  
[01:16:17] fresh fruits and vegetables um are not  
[01:16:21] do not require a license but other  
[01:16:23] products like d  
[01:16:25] syrups um value added products anything  
[01:16:28] that's cut Master dried um will all need  
[01:16:31] to be licensed we hubs cannot accept  
[01:16:34] anything produced under the cottage food  
[01:16:37] law on the wholesale side um the way

[01:16:42] typically the way it works is that once  
[01:16:44] the Farms are onboarded they will send  
[01:16:46] an availability list to the hub every  
[01:16:48] week of what they have available to them  
[01:16:51] um the hubs will offer the products to  
[01:16:53] the customers so this is where a food  
[01:16:56] Hub differs a little bit than the bigger  
[01:16:59] distributors in that most of them are  
[01:17:01] still operating on a just in time  
[01:17:03] ordering cycle so they are only going to  
[01:17:07] bring in product that they have already  
[01:17:09] sold so it's really dependent on what  
[01:17:11] the customers want will depend will then  
[01:17:14] reflect back to what um what the farmers  
[01:17:18] bring in to the hub they're not a a  
[01:17:21] grocery store model where they're  
[01:17:22] working off of inventory and trying to  
[01:17:25] sell off of inventory they're still very  
[01:17:28] much in that just in time  
[01:17:31] cycle um hotel hubs will usually move  
[01:17:35] more volume for folks um just as an  
[01:17:39] example Iowa food Hub is a hybrid Hub  
[01:17:42] only 10% of their sales goes through  
[01:17:44] their Online Marketplace and 90% is  
[01:17:47] through their wholesale side so while  
[01:17:49] farmers can plug into both sides there's

[01:17:52] definitely more volume moving on the  
[01:17:55] hostel  
[01:17:56] side um depending for those hubs that  
[01:17:59] have trucks um there may be on Farm  
[01:18:02] pickup options available for folks so  
[01:18:05] it's becomes a little more convenient  
[01:18:08] for Farms that are further away um it  
[01:18:11] could be an option and then the  
[01:18:14] wholesale side is better for those Farms  
[01:18:16] that are interested in scaling up or  
[01:18:18] they're currently at scale they're  
[01:18:20] accessing wholesale markets already  
[01:18:24] so how do hubs onboard new Farms um  
[01:18:28] Everybody again is a little bit  
[01:18:30] different but for the most part there's  
[01:18:32] a vendor agreement that each Hub will  
[01:18:34] have the farm sign they'll require a  
[01:18:37] W9 um which just documents that it's a  
[01:18:40] legitimate business in the  
[01:18:43] country um they'll ask for copies of  
[01:18:45] different licenses or permits that you  
[01:18:47] may have um most of them require  
[01:18:50] liability insurance um on behalf of the  
[01:18:53] farm and then if there are any food  
[01:18:56] safety certifications or trainings they  
[01:18:58] also like to have that information on

[01:19:00] hand in addition if you're going to  
[01:19:03] Market on the directed consumer side  
[01:19:05] there's usually some sort of process for  
[01:19:07] you to provide information about your  
[01:19:09] farm you know hi this is wers slog Farms  
[01:19:12] this is what we raise these are the  
[01:19:14] types of products that we have um they  
[01:19:17] will also provide a way for you to um  
[01:19:21] upload or send in product information  
[01:19:24] and photo to their online catalog and  
[01:19:27] then some systems may require the  
[01:19:29] farmers to update their own inventory  
[01:19:32] that's not a deal breaker but it  
[01:19:33] definitely streamlines pieces if farmers  
[01:19:36] can manage their that piece for the  
[01:19:39] online Market every  
[01:19:41] week on the wholesale side it's a little  
[01:19:44] bit looser um The Farms still need to  
[01:19:47] provide regularly a list of products  
[01:19:49] what is the pack size and the prices as  
[01:19:52] well as what's going to be available  
[01:19:54] each week  
[01:19:55] that the Hub can offer to their  
[01:19:59] customers how do Hub set their  
[01:20:02] pricing on the direct to Consumer side  
[01:20:05] the farmers generally set their own

[01:20:07] pricing um and it's usually what I would  
[01:20:10] call farmers market pricing if you were  
[01:20:12] to go to a farmers market this is what  
[01:20:14] you can expect um the hubs May charge a  
[01:20:17] fee or take a commission from those  
[01:20:20] sales in order to cover their costs to  
[01:20:23] operate the online site  
[01:20:25] or pay for any labor for packing or  
[01:20:29] Distribution on the wholesale side um  
[01:20:32] the prices are largely driven by what  
[01:20:34] the customer is willing to pay um and it  
[01:20:37] end it ends up being more of a  
[01:20:39] negotiation or more of a discussion on  
[01:20:41] what is fair market pricing at that  
[01:20:44] scale um hubs will keep in mind that the  
[01:20:48] hubs will also add a markup to whatever  
[01:20:50] the farmer offers them in order to cover  
[01:20:53] their shipping and overhead C costs and  
[01:20:55] that o that markup tends to vary um it's  
[01:20:59] right now it's around 20 to 25% is what  
[01:21:03] we're seeing across the  
[01:21:05] state but keep in mind that the hubs are  
[01:21:08] doing the leg work for your marketing  
[01:21:10] for your delivery they're actually  
[01:21:11] taking over some of those pieces so that  
[01:21:14] the farmer doesn't have to do that which

[01:21:16] then ends up being again that discussion  
[01:21:19] or that negotiation of how farmers and  
[01:21:22] the Hub can partner together the  
[01:21:24] Partners in the  
[01:21:28] work how does payment work with the food  
[01:21:31] hubs on the direct to Consumer side um  
[01:21:34] the customers are paying for that  
[01:21:36] product up front so usually the farmers  
[01:21:38] are paid pretty quickly after the market  
[01:21:41] closes so after that order cycle is done  
[01:21:44] there's either a check or an A that is  
[01:21:46] made on the wholesale  
[01:21:49] side those customers are usually paying  
[01:21:52] on 14-to-30-day terms there's some  
[01:21:54] that'll pay on day of delivery but most  
[01:21:57] of them especially the HBS that are  
[01:21:59] working with a lot of schools they're  
[01:22:00] getting a check once a month so they  
[01:22:02] don't have that income to pay folks  
[01:22:04] until they get paid so Hub payments will  
[01:22:09] cycle and they'll vary from 14 days to  
[01:22:12] 30-day terms in some cases there may be  
[01:22:15] longer terms if it's related to a grant  
[01:22:20] project how do Farms get their product  
[01:22:23] to the hubs it's a mixture and  
[01:22:25] everybody's going to have a different

[01:22:27] situation and you may may have a one  
[01:22:30] answer for one Hub and a different  
[01:22:31] answer for another Hub um obviously  
[01:22:35] Direct Delivery is the one that works  
[01:22:37] out better for the  
[01:22:38] hubs um there may be options for on Farm  
[01:22:41] pickup if you're on a food Hub delivery  
[01:22:45] route um we're the food hubs are also  
[01:22:47] working really closely together to  
[01:22:49] identify cross docking locations so what  
[01:22:53] would it look like if if there were  
[01:22:55] several Farmers that could drop off at a  
[01:22:57] location in the waterl area and then  
[01:23:00] that product gets on the food Hub Truck  
[01:23:02] for further distribution um so those  
[01:23:05] cross dos or those nodes are becoming a  
[01:23:09] more frequent discussion topic with the  
[01:23:12] food Hub managers how can how can we  
[01:23:14] plug in more  
[01:23:16] Farmers that brings up the hub-to-hub  
[01:23:19] network so as you could see there's a  
[01:23:21] truck that goes north and south every  
[01:23:23] week and a truck that goes east and west  
[01:23:25] every week so in theory you could get a  
[01:23:28] product from Northeast Iowa in the Dora  
[01:23:30] area over to the Omaha area with a ma in

[01:23:33] a within a matter of five days  
[01:23:36] um so there are options for folks to  
[01:23:39] have an affordable way to move products  
[01:23:42] across the state without necessarily  
[01:23:43] having to take that distribution  
[01:23:46] responsibility  
[01:23:47] themselves some hubs will also hold some  
[01:23:50] small inventory but remember a lot of  
[01:23:53] these hubs are don't have a lot of cash  
[01:23:55] flow to be having it tied up in product  
[01:23:57] that's not selling so um the amount that  
[01:24:01] they're holding in inventory is usually  
[01:24:03] going to be pretty small or at least  
[01:24:05] pre-committed for a pretty quick  
[01:24:11] turnover how do hubs do or do hubs do  
[01:24:14] production planning with Farmers if I  
[01:24:16] wanted to start working with a food Hub  
[01:24:18] is there any sense of what I could sell  
[01:24:21] in a year on the direct-to-consumer side  
[01:24:24] um it's really heavily dependent on  
[01:24:26] customer interests you know it's more  
[01:24:28] operates more like a store so until  
[01:24:30] there's a better purchase history or um  
[01:24:34] identification of what those customers  
[01:24:37] are looking for it's a little bit harder  
[01:24:39] to do production planning in that direct

[01:24:41] to Consumer

[01:24:43] model it's on the wholesale side um it

[01:24:46] really depends on customer standing

[01:24:47] orders the hubs are working harder and

[01:24:50] harder all the time to get their

[01:24:53] consistent anchor buyer to identify what

[01:24:55] they want to purchase in the next year

[01:24:58] just today um a school copied me on an

[01:25:02] order that they had put together for all

[01:25:05] of their local purchases for next school

[01:25:07] year that's the type of thing that

[01:25:09] allows us to do production planning um

[01:25:11] with those Farmers um so the more we can

[01:25:14] get customers committing to regular

[01:25:17] orders um the more we can do production

[01:25:20] planning for certain

[01:25:21] Farms that being said there are

[01:25:24] definitely preferences within each Hub

[01:25:27] of a primary distributor for or a

[01:25:29] primary producer for carrots and a

[01:25:31] secondary producer for carrots so that

[01:25:34] there's always backup supply for when

[01:25:37] orders come

[01:25:38] in we rely on projections from the

[01:25:41] previous year to help us pull those

[01:25:42] plants together and it's definitely

[01:25:45] easier when you have programs like LFPA  
[01:25:47] or food boxes because you can actually  
[01:25:49] then schedule out what um a a monthly  
[01:25:55] purchase order would look like for a  
[01:25:57] distribution program like  
[01:26:01] that that's what I have for question for  
[01:26:05] uh information about food  
[01:26:07] hubs you so much Teresa you did such a  
[01:26:10] great job at explaining a very variable  
[01:26:12] and complicated topic I personally  
[01:26:15] learned so much about food hubs we  
[01:26:17] probably have a couple minutes to answer  
[01:26:19] one quick question and I know one that  
[01:26:21] we got in the surveys before the webinar  
[01:26:23] started was are there ever mentorship  
[01:26:25] opportunities through food hubs or  
[01:26:27] opportunities for Farmers to connect  
[01:26:28] with each other so I thought that's  
[01:26:30] something you could maybe speak  
[01:26:36] to that's one where I would answer the  
[01:26:38] question with the question to dig in a  
[01:26:40] little bit more as to what they mean  
[01:26:43] um mentorship opportunities the first  
[01:26:45] organization that comes to mind is PFI  
[01:26:48] right so there's um that organization  
[01:26:51] thrives on connecting and tell having

[01:26:54] Farmers talk about their experiences  
[01:26:55] with each other so whether it's a formal  
[01:26:59] mentorship program where you're  
[01:27:01] connected with labor for learning or  
[01:27:03] some of those other projects or if it's  
[01:27:05] just attending a field day to learn  
[01:27:07] about how other Farms are accessing  
[01:27:09] these markets that's a great way to do  
[01:27:12] it um on the food Hub  
[01:27:15] side there's probably some informal um  
[01:27:18] mentoring that's going on um I know the  
[01:27:22] Hub managers do a lot of Education  
[01:27:24] especially for beginning Farmers on how  
[01:27:26] does product need to get packed what  
[01:27:28] does quality control look like providing  
[01:27:30] feedback to folks um but that gets a  
[01:27:34] little bit limited because those food  
[01:27:36] Hub manager very busy people focusing on  
[01:27:39] sales of product um so they tend to rely  
[01:27:42] on the nonprofit organizations like the  
[01:27:44] PFI folks the extension folks the silt  
[01:27:47] folks to help them with some of those  
[01:27:49] pieces  
[01:27:52] um yeah yeah that was a great answer  
[01:27:55] thank you so much and I know we had an  
[01:27:57] additional question too if you all want

[01:27:59] to drop your emails in the chat and also  
[01:28:02] this webinar will be recorded so  
[01:28:03] everyone is going to have an opportunity  
[01:28:05] to go back and view it if there's any  
[01:28:07] slides they would like to see again but  
[01:28:09] thank you all so much for being here  
[01:28:11] thank you to our panelists for all this  
[01:28:13] information and thank you to our Sil  
[01:28:15] team for organizing this webinar and  
[01:28:18] again at the very end of this make sure  
[01:28:19] you don't exit out of your Zoom browser  
[01:28:21] so that you can still fill out that  
[01:28:23] survey and enter the raffle for the  
[01:28:24] chance to win a bottle of wine or the  
[01:28:26] silt merch basket so thank you again  
[01:28:29] everyone so much for being here I hope  
[01:28:31] you have an incredible rest of your  
[01:28:33] Wednesday and there are the emails I'll  
[01:28:35] give everyone a moment in case you want  
[01:28:37] to copy them  
[01:28:41] down otherwise thank you so much bye  
[01:28:45] everyone