

SARE Grant Project

Exit Interview with Mellie Anderson of Star Root Farm

Business Model

Based on the recommendations of the CYON Business Solutions report, saying that the current Bulk CSA Model is not economically viable, farmer Mellie Anderson considers it appropriate to shift the focus of Star Root Farm from a price per pound model to a “service contract” model that increases overall production of vegetables for current customers Jackson Laboratory and Maine Coast Memorial Hospital while focusing on customized vegetable delivery systems, on-site gardening consulting, and health programs on the farm for their employees. Mellie feels that the farm operation at Star Root Farm is best suited to be a service contract for customized vegetable delivery, on-site garden development, and hosting educational, therapeutic and community gardening activities.

Hourly wage (!)

The \$15/hr does not represent a viable reference point for the Bulk CSA program since it is meant to be an overall service. Mellie does not see how that can be possible, she sees the program as having worked to her advantage even if not as business model, as a pilot project it gave the feedback necessary for an improvement plan for next year, customers were happy, and there was a profit at the end of the year.

Efficiency Analysis

The Efficiency Analysis was very helpful since now I have hard numbers that say that we cannot compete with bigger food distribution, so the business model has to work based on communication on the cost benefits of including the health, education and entertainment value of working with local farms. The information in the Efficiency Analysis gives Mellie data to back up the notion that there is not a competitive model for the project she is trying to build.

Pack House (!)

Mellie does not see the recommendation of “renovating the pack house” in Streamline Efficiency on page Efficiency of Product Mix chapter to apply to her farm. There was no data collection about the pack house.

New Product Ideas (survey results of Hospital and JAX)

- Edamame, Dry Beans, Baby Vegetables

Gleaning Partners Benefited

- Eat Well received 300lbs donations
- Emmaus Center received 300lbs in donations

Sales 2013/2014

- Community CSA Project= \$8,250
- MCMH Cafeteria= \$1000
- JAX Wellness Program = \$2000



- Mainers Feeding Mainers = \$850 (approx.)