You're invited to join **a new professional development opportunity** to hone your expertise in facilitating new and profitable intermediary sales channels for the farmers you serve.

**Read on to learn about the 'Baskets to Pallets' Educator Cohort forming now...**

This is a great time for local food. Read any of the "What's Hot" or "Top Trends" reports for another affirmation that consumers want products that are fresh or minimally processed, locally sourced food from companies that are small, transparent and socially responsible.

But - as many of us already know - getting products from our region's small and mid-sized farms into the marketplace isn't so simple. Local food may be big, but so are the challenges in getting it from the farm to intermediary channels such as groceries, food hubs, institutions and cooperatives. Distribution challenges, uniformity and consistency issues, food safety assurances, quantities, seasonal availability and pricing are all top concerns cited by intermediary buyers when working with local farmers.

**Farmers in New York need support** to get market-ready for the growing number of businesses shelving and dishing up local food.  The Baskets to Pallets Project is pleased to announce an opportunity for **10 agricultural educators or service providers** to join a professional development cohort with a focus on deepening personal expertise around **intermediary marketing channels** and diversifying teaching modalities.

**More About the New Educator Cohort**

**Who is eligible to join the new Baskets to Pallets Educator Cohort?**

Any educator or provider actively serving farmers in New York is eligible. The Team is limited to 10 spots. The project seeks to recruit a diverse group with varied backgrounds and perspectives. Food business personnel, consultants, cooperative extension agents, farmer-educators, public service officials, non-profit educators, etc. - are all invited to apply.

**What will the Team be working on together?**

Over the next 2.5 years, members will have the opportunity to work closely to share knowledge and expertise, design and teach lesson plans, meet buyers, receive free coaching and 'big picture' perspectives on local food marketing trends from specialists, and trial strategies with local farmers seeking to enter intermediary markets. 

**What is the Project's duration?**

The project runs from May 2018 through September 2020.

**Will there be a lot of travel involved?**

No. Participants will be asked to meet in person once each year of the 3 year project. Most of the project activities will be conducted remotely via webinar. During 2019-2020, you'll have the opportunity to personally work with several farmers in your cohort to trial strategies to support farmers entering new markets.

**Will I get paid?**

Stipends are available to cover your time for collaborative projects, and any travel/lodging/meals are covered by the project. Workshops and remote meetings with marketing experts and buyers are also paid for by the project.

**What is the time commitment?**

The project combines self-directed, self-paced activities such as designing lesson plans and trialing strategies with farmers with professional development activities like Q&A conversations with regional buyers (remotely) and workshops with national food business consultants. Participants will also teach farmers during a formal Baskets to Pallets Training. To some extent, the greater your involvement with the project, the greater the benefit you will receive. That said, the project is designed to be somewhat flexible to accommodate the demands of our other work commitments.

**How do I apply?**

Please fill out this short application form [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMTvhJ2XhmQTYj_vSs7KOMHEOBxF6I-VTNTYo5Oad_uikH6g/viewform?usp=sf_link). The **application deadline is May 11th**. Participants will be notified about admission by May 18th.  Selection will be based on developing a cohort with diverse skill sets, geographic locations and perspectives. 

**Questions?**

Please email Project Coordinator Violet Stone at [vws7@cornell.edu](mailto:vws7@cornell.edu) or call 607-255-9227 for a full description of project activities and timeline.