



FARM COMMONS

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INNOVATIVE LABOR MODELS

FOCUS GROUPS, ROUND TWO DESIGN

Goal 1

- Identify the characteristics of a farm labor solution that is most likely to attract participation by farmers in the form of patronage, financial investment, and/or time investment.

Goal 2

- Sketch an initial profile of a farmer in terms of operation type, scale, and needs expressed) who is inclined to participate in the form of patronage, financial investment, and/or time investment in a proposed farm labor solution.

Achieving the Goals

- Must assess level and type of interest in participation
- Must match interest in participation to farm characteristics
- While accommodating COVID realities



Focus Groups

- Entirely online, over Zoom, 6-8 farmer/worker participants
- One Farm Commons facilitator, one local facilitator
- Combination of powerpoint-guided discussion and live completion of survey questions at intervals



Focus Groups

- Farm Commons facilitator conducts discussion and survey of business models/characteristics for consistency
- Local facilitator conducts introductions, conclusion, and supports discussion and survey.
- Local facilitator does outreach, recruitment, reminders, resource distribution and honorarium distribution

Focus Group Agenda

- Background and purpose, explained
- Introductions / icebreaker
- Progressive discussion of the characteristics of 3 potential solutions, including values, financial, practical, and legal elements.
- Ranking of priorities
- Conclusion: willingness to commit to further action

Focus Group Discussion

- Think of it like creating a new ice cream recipe:
 - Do you like ice cream?
 - Do you like ice cream with fruit? With chocolate? With fruit and chocolate?
 - How much will you pay for this ice cream? How far will you drive to get it?

Focus Group Discussion

- First, we outline the basic services that every of our potential solutions provides and assess baseline value of core solution.
 - Quantitative evaluation of survey: To what extent is this solutions package of value to you? How much per hour in wages would you pay if it captured this solution?
 - Qualitative evaluation of discussion
 - Allowing for Q and A about model details as part of discussion
 - Opportunity to modify answers after discussion

Focus Group Discussion

- Then, we run through additional characteristics:
 - Overtime and unemployment benefits as retention strategy/marketing opportunity
 - Shifting obligation to carry workers' comp or liability insurance to solution entity
 - Ability to provide and market social value of democratic control by workers
 - Opportunity to influence operations of the solution entity
 - Opportunity to receive return in form of dividends proportionate to usage of entity
 - Opportunity to financially invest and receive monetary return on that investment
 - Obligation to comply with OSHA
 - Obligation to register as a Farm Labor Contractor

Example: Control over solution

- **Let's say that you had the opportunity to influence the organization and start-up of this entity.** For example, you could assist in setting the rules for when a farm business requests workers, how those workers are allocated, the extent of training provided, etc. Of course, you'd do that in cooperation with other participating farmers and farm workers, the benefit being that you'd be more likely to get your needs met.
- Survey: Please rank the extent to which the opportunity to influence the organization and start up of the solution would be of value to your operation?
- Discuss: Why did you rank the above as you did? What would need to be present to increase the value of participating in this entity?
- **How many hours per week would you be willing to invest in organizing and start up activities, (assuming you were confident that the proposed entity would solve your operation's need for consistent quality labor at a price you could afford)?** NA as I would not be willing to invest in organizing and start up activities. 1-2 hours per month, 3-4 hours per month, 5-6 hours per month, 7-8 hours per month, 9 or more hours per month