



FoodHub in the News

Northwest Stir

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By Amanda Osborne

Talk of the Table

Chef Connection

Ten lessons America can learn about what it takes for a midsize city to become one of the most exciting food towns in the country.

When Laura Ohm, Cuisine Manager for Grand Central Bakery was searching for local rhubarb on FoodHub's online directory she clicked on Matt Battilega's profile. As the owner of Big "B" Farm in Aurora, Oregon, Matt was growing rhubarb and offered Laura his entire crop for Grand Central's six Portland area bakery/cafes. The development of this online relationship is just one of the daily success stories of professional food buyers foraging for the freshest local and regional product from the comfort of their own kitchens.

FoodHub, the regional online marketplace where wholesale food buyers and sellers meet and conduct business, was founded in 2010 and boasts more than 1,600 members. "FoodHub allows buyers and sellers alike to spend 10 minutes doing what used to take 10 hours," said Deborah Kane, project director for FoodHub and vice president of Ecotrust's Food and Farms program. "This dynamic online tool makes it efficient for them to research, connect and do business, introducing a wide variety of players in the regional food community to one another without anyone having to leave home base."

Join FoodHub for Free

Membership in FoodHub is free and provides access to the full membership directory and the online Marketplace. Every FoodHub member has a profile page to tell the company's story and provide business and contact information. With Spring arriving, the time is ripe for food buyers to connect with growers and begin building lasting relationships.

Recently, FoodHub launched a third category of membership by welcoming associates – trade associations, farmers' markets, industry suppliers and other supporters of the regional food economy. "This new category demonstrates how FoodHub is becoming a go-to resource for everyone in the regional food community, from seed to plate," said Kane.

FoodHub plans to add new services and features to enhance the site as a marketing tool for all members. For example, advanced searches and easier access to relevant Marketplace posts will make finding good connections even faster. Upgraded membership levels will offer added benefits such as the ability to enhance a profile page with a photo and video

gallery and facilitate access by multiple users from one company. There will also be opportunities for FoodHub members to advertise and promote events on the site.

Got Sea Buckthorn? Organic peeled garlic?

"Making connections with farmers is so easy on FoodHub," said Tricia Butler, owner of Sassafra Catering. "I log onto the site, search for an ingredient I need like figs or beets and instantly have a choice of growers in the region with website links, phone numbers and emails." Chefs and artisan producers can post if they are searching for a unique ingredient like Sea Buckthorn or growers can post that they have 20 dozen pastured eggs or sweet dried cranberries for sale. A weekly Fresh Sheet delivered via email contains product alerts, Marketplace updates, featured member profiles and community wide events.

"Direct sourcing is at the core of our purchasing philosophy, and FoodHub certainly expedites the process," said Ohm. "By creating a marketplace for these small and mid-sized growers, FoodHub enables Grand Central Bakery to support local economies while giving our customers a product of exceptional quality."

Amanda Osborne is the Sales and Marketing Director for FoodHub, an Ecotrust project made possible by the generous support and contributions of many. Ecotrust's mission is to inspire fresh thinking that creates social equity, economic opportunity, and environmental well-being. Learn more at www.ecotrust.org and www.food-hub.org.

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