



# FoodHub in the News

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## **Sustainable Food News**

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### **Online regional food marketplace to go national next year**

*Next-generation FoodHub lets members 'more aggressively' promote and market food products*

FoodHub, an online directory and marketplace matching western U.S. regional food buyers - restaurants, grocers, schools - with regional food sellers like farmers, ranchers, fishermen and others, said Tuesday it is going national next year.

The online buying/selling platform, a social venture business of the Portland, Ore., nonprofit EcoTrust, is currently available to buyers and sellers in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, California and Alaska.

"Before FoodHub we were raising 30 different varieties of crops to take to the farmers market and sell to consumers," said Phil Greifs of PD Farms in Eastern Oregon. "Now, I grow 16 crops that do really well in my region and I can sell everything because of the connections I've made on FoodHub. I just moved my entire potato crop through Grand Central Bakery and Besaws restaurant in Portland."

EcoTrust's Leora Stein, FoodHub Membership Coordinator, said in an email the online marketplace is going national next year.

Some FoodHub success stories:

- Sound Food in Bainbridge Island, Wash., helped a retailer on the island source USDA-certified local pork from Flying Dog Farm in nearby Grapeview.
- Our Family Farm in Eugene, Ore., now supplies pastured chicken to the 350 families who do their food shopping through buying club Know Thy Food in Portland, Ore.
- The Wahluke School District in Mattawa, Wash., connected to Bella Terra Gardens in Zillah and is planning regular deliveries of tomatoes and cucumbers for the school's salad bar this fall.

EcoTrust also said FoodHub now has an expanded suite of features and improved functionality to make using FoodHub faster and easier for chefs, grocers and foodservice professionals to communicate with and source from local farmers and food producers.

"Members will now have the ability to more aggressively promote and market their food products, services and organizations on FoodHub with display advertising, seller-sponsored search terms, sponsored content and enhanced profile listings.," the group said.

The next-generation FoodHub is dramatically new in both design and function, and is reflective of usage trends and feedback received from an engaged community of 2,300 active members using the network to localize their supply chain.

"FoodHub has grown into a network of thousands of qualified professional food buyers and savvy food sellers, plus the service providers, certifiers, processors, distributors and organizations integral to a sustainable, regional food marketplace," said Deborah Kane, founder of FoodHub and vice president of Ecotrust's Food and Farms program. "The latest version has been engineered to benefit users of all sizes and types, from food carts to corporations, and ensure that navigation, making connections and doing business is faster and more intuitive – it's what everyone has been asking for!"

The latest FoodHub upgrade:

- Improved Marketplace– FoodHub's dynamic online trading floor for foods and services has evolved well beyond a "Craig's List" style bulletin board; it can now be sorted and filtered by product type, distance or custom criteria with a single click. It also now accommodates posts related to transportation, services, and events and announcements to encompass the full breadth of the regional food trade.
- Advanced Search - foraging gets faster and more efficient with advanced search tools that allow users to search multiple variables at once and make finding local producers a snap.
- Step-by-Step Tutorial Videos, available online 24-7, and a Help Desk staffed with live agents 8am-6pm weekdays, help members take full advantage of FoodHub's cutting-edge technology to build their businesses, free of charge.
- The FoodHub Knowledge Base, an online library of tools, resources and thought leadership on local food sourcing and supply chain challenges and solutions, is now available to the public.
- All Member Profiles have been enhanced with ratings and recommendations, clickable maps, links to social media pages and more.
- Three levels of Membership help users to stand out from the crowd. "FastStart" accommodates a basic user profile, provides access to the Member Directory and Marketplace and is free of charge. For greater visibility, members can upgrade to a monthly "Advantage" or annual "All-Access" account.

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