

# Potential Demand for Local Agricultural Products by Mobile Markets

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## Abstract:

The objective of this agreement is to evaluate the potential impact of the emerging mobile markets distribution system on sales of farmers providing locally grown foods. This case study considers Santa Fe, New Mexico and its surroundings to assess the potential demand for local produce and farmers' interest in sales to mobile markets. Using in-depth interviews with two mobile markets, a food bank, a farmers' market promotion organization, and local urban and rural farmers, we find a high level of cross referencing, collaboration and innovation in the Santa Fe area. The participants are highly cognizant of the challenges facing farmers and increasing food access in areas with low population density. While they have found ways to address some of the challenges, they identify much that needs to be done to raise awareness about the costs of healthy, local food, to facilitate entry of new farmers, to create new markets, and to promote access by the food insecure.

## Introduction

Although farmers have successfully produced an abundance of food, many areas in the US are defined as food deserts, and food insecurity affects 16% of the US population and over 17% in New Mexico (Feeding America, 2014). This is despite the fact that US households spend the lowest percentage of income on food in the world (Seale, Regmi and Bernstein, 2003) and the percentage spent on food at home has declined steadily in the US over the past century (US Department of Labor, 2015).

Production of healthy food by a vibrant agricultural sector is crucial to food access. Small farms are the primary suppliers of fresh local food for which the demand is increasing (USDA ERS, 2011). However, farmers are getting older (the average age is currently 58.3 years) and the number of beginning farmers decreased by 20% between 2007 and 2012 (USDA, 2014b). As a result, from 2007 to 2012, the US lost 4.3% of its farms while farm size increased (USDA, 2014a), raising concern about who will farm in the future. New Mexico is running counter to this trend; in most counties, farm numbers have increased and average farm size is decreasing (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2014b).

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While this report does not explain this trend, it does highlight some innovative marketing and distribution strategies, which may have helped facilitate farm entry.

Mobile markets and mobile pantries are channels that can increase access to healthy, fresh foods. They make locally grown produce accessible by reaching communities that do not have access to a full-service grocery store and by providing fresh food at reduced prices or for free. In addition, they may provide additional markets to local farmers.

Mobile markets and mobile food pantries differ in structure, mission, and challenges. Mobile markets can be, non-profit, for profit, offer only fresh produce, or include a full range of grocery items. The produce can be local, organic, or conventional and sold at full or discounted prices. Mobile markets typically require outside funding; food prices usually cover only the cost of product and not the full cost of labor, transport and operations. Some of the challenges mobile markets face include: lack of advertising, affordability, lack of convenience in terms of hours and products offered, offering sufficient value and service, and lack of trust from the communities they serve (Zepeda, Reznickova and Lohr, 2014).

In contrast, mobile food pantries distribute free food to regions or neighborhoods with no regular food pantries. Some mobile food pantries offer a full range of foods while others focus on fresh items, especially produce. The latter is increasingly important because the nutritional quality of food pantry food has been criticized (Akobundu et al., 2004). Furthermore, food pantries no longer operate as emergency food sources; many people rely on them as a regular source of food (Daponte et al., 1998), hence the nutritional quality of the food needs to support long-term health. Mobile pantries are sustained by volunteer labor, donations, and a food bank system that sources and distributes food. Donations are tax deductible and donors of food are protected by the Good Samaritan Act.

In this case study of the Santa Fe, New Mexico area we investigate whether mobile markets and mobile food pantries can provide farmers with a venue to increase their sales as well as increase access to healthy foods by the food insecure. We interview mobile market managers, a food bank, farmers, and local food organizations. We also conduct a survey of farmers, the obstacles they face, their interest in mobile markets, and willingness to donate to food pantries.

### **Study Site: Santa Fe, New Mexico**

New Mexico is an interesting case study to examine food access issues because of its high levels of poverty and food insecurity, low population density, remoteness of farms from markets, and arid climate. New Mexico is the poorest state and has a poverty rate that is above the US average (Table 1) and nearly 30% of children in New Mexico live in poverty (US Census, 2013). Food insecurity is also higher than the US average, particularly among children (Feeding America, 2013). While Santa Fe County is somewhat better off than the rest of New Mexico, the rates of poverty and food insecurity are higher than the US averages (Feeding America, 2013; US Census, 2013).

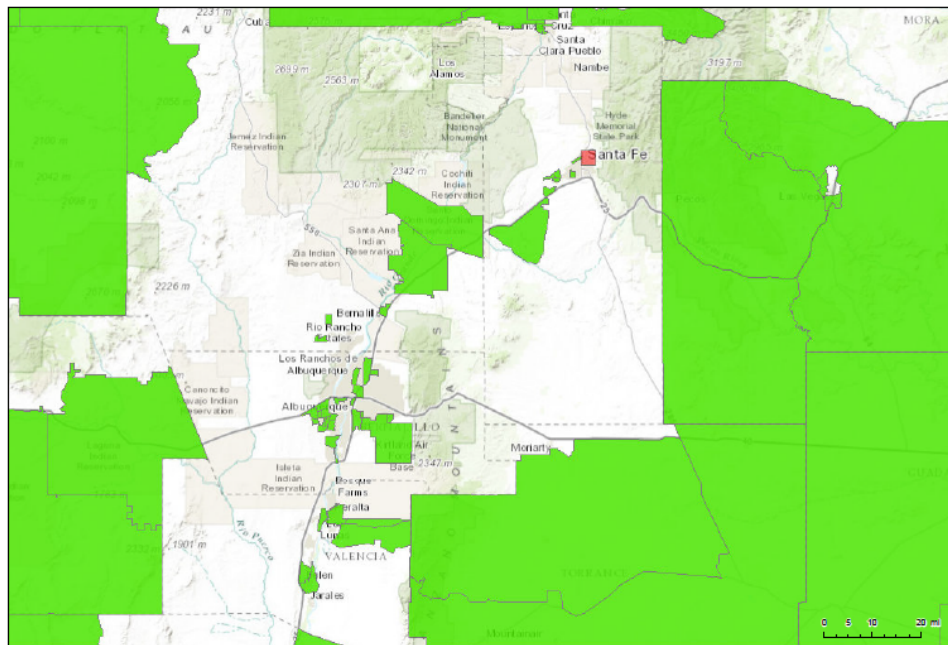
**Table 1.** Poverty, food insecurity and SNAP benefits in Santa Fe, New Mexico and the US

Variable	Santa Fe County	New Mexico	United States
Overall poverty*	17.0%	20.4%	14.5%
Child poverty*	26.0%	28.9%	19.9%
Food insecurity overall **	13.5%	17.3%	15.8%
Food insecurity of children **	23.9%	28.3%	21.4%
SNAP benefits*	10.1%	14.3%	14.6%

Source: \*(US Census, 2013); \*\*(Feeding America, 2013)

A map of food deserts in north central New Mexico illustrates food access (Figure 1). Food access is a problem in parts of Albuquerque and in the communities along the urban corridor north to Santa Fe, as well as in a small part of Santa Fe. Since the rural areas have low population density and few services, a high percentage of them are designated as food deserts.

**Figure 1.** Food deserts in Santa Fe and Albuquerque (in green)



Santa Fe and Albuquerque

Source: (USDA ERS, 2015)

While overall farm numbers in the US are decreasing, the number of farmers in New Mexico has increased from 2007 to 2012 by 18%. New Mexico has seen a growth in the number of small farmers, particularly around its urban centers. The numbers of minority farmers have increased, as well. Over the same period, the census noted a 45% increase in farms run by a Hispanic operator. While the average age of farmers in New Mexico is rising similarly to US trends, the number of farmers under 34 in New Mexico is also increasing. One reason for these increases may be that more farmers are taking the time to fill out the agricultural census (NM Department of Agriculture, n.d.). Along with the increase in the number of farmers, the value of agricultural sales went up 17% from 2007 to 2012; three-quarters of these sales increases were livestock and poultry.

Despite the increase in farm numbers, the total amount of farmland decreased slightly (NM Department of Agriculture, n.d.). As a result, average farm size has decreased from nearly 3,000 acres in 2002 to 1,748 acres in 2012. This average farm size belies the fact that the majority (57.8%) of farms in New Mexico are less than 100 acres and 75.6% have sales under \$10,000; only 12% of farms are 2000 acres or more (USDA NASS, 2014a).

Small farms (1-9 acres) had the largest increase in numbers; there were 1,400 more small farms in 2012 than in 2007. Most of the increase in farms was found around Albuquerque and Santa Fe as well as in counties in Northern New Mexico. The number of vegetable farms between 0.1-0.9 acres increased by 700, the number of orchards by 700, total cattle ranches by 3000, while cropland declined in every size category except one to nine acres. This increase in small farms has been accompanied by an increase in tenant farming; from 2007 and 2012 the percentage of farms that rented land increased from 5.1% to 18.9% (USDA NASS, 2014a).

In terms of organic practices, there were only 215 certified operations in New Mexico in 2011 (Table 2). Since most of this acreage was in pasture and rangeland, the average size of organic certified farms exceeded 1,000 acres.

Table 2: Organic agriculture in New Mexico

<b>Organic Agriculture</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Certified operations (number)	123	261	215
Crops (acres)	7,291	38,615	70,025
Pasture & rangeland (acres)	33,535	266,131	195,694
Total (acres)	40,826	304,745	265,719

Source: USDA ERS (n.d.).

## **Methods**

The purpose of this research was to examine whether and how mobile markets promote local farm sales and local food access in and around Santa Fe, New Mexico. Santa Fe was selected as a site because it is home to a mobile market that was partially funded by the USDA AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP). We conducted in-person, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with this mobile market operator. In addition, we interviewed a for-profit mobile market operator, nonprofit organizations promoting food security and/or food marketing, and urban and rural farmers. We also surveyed farmers online and at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market to identify obstacles farmers face in establishing farms and increasing their sales.

### ***Interviews***

Initial contact was made with the FMPP funded mobile market. This mobile market is currently working with a for-profit mobile market operator, who we interviewed. We also interviewed the director of the local food bank that operates a mobile food pantry in the region. Additionally, we included the Farmers Market Institute, a non-profit organization supporting the Santa Fe Farmers' Market. Everyone we contacted agreed to be interviewed.

Local farmers were recruited in two ways: (1) e-mail and phone recruitment from the online farm databases of Local Harvest or the farmers' market (five participants: two urban and three rural farmers) and (2) locally during survey collection at a farmers' market (one rural farmer).

The participants were interviewed at a convenient location during field data collection May 16-20, 2015. The semi-structured, in-depth interviews consisted of eight questions for mobile market/food pantry managers and six questions for farmers (Appendix). This format allows for comparison across participants as well as pursuit of emerging themes and clarifying answers. Prior to the interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to initial a consent form allowing use of quotes to illustrate responses. Interviews lasted between 34 and 78 minutes (55 minutes on average) and were audio recorded. Participants also filled out the survey discussed in the section below. Participants received \$50 in compensation.

The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service and checked for accuracy by both co-authors. The interviews were then coded to answer the questions central to this project: specifically what are the advantages and disadvantages for mobile markets to source from local farmers, what are the advantages and disadvantages for farmers to work with mobile markets, and do mobile markets make fresh local food more accessible? Other themes included descriptions of innovations, collaborations, and obstacles farmers face in establishing and operating their farms. The results are presented

below and summarized in the conclusion. The participants were given a draft of this report and asked to identify any miscommunication or errors.

### ***Surveys***

The researchers identified a farmers' market operating in Santa Fe during their visit. At the market, all produce (fruits and vegetables) farmers were asked to participate and agreed to do so, resulting in a total number of ten participants from the farmers' market. An additional six surveys were completed by participants who were interviewed for this study. One survey was filled out online, resulting in a total number of 17 responses.

The farmers were approached by a researcher who introduced herself and informed them about the study using a verbal consent form. The researcher enumerated the surveys, taking notes. The surveys took about five to ten minutes to complete, depending on the number of customers approaching the farmer during the survey. The farmers were asked about their farm size, farm products, the venues they sell their products, their waste, their sales, obstacles to expansion, and their involvement with mobile markets/mobile food pantries. The surveys are summarized in the Survey Results section.

### **Survey Results**

Our survey suggests that farmers in New Mexico are on average middle-aged, White, Non-Hispanic, and the majority has been farming over eight years. Almost three-quarters are farming as their second career and 37% currently hold another job outside farming.

The respondents' farms are smaller than 10 acres (88%). About half the farmers farm year round, the rest of them start farming as early as February and continue through December. Aside from produce, farmers produce eggs (47%), staples (41%), baked goods (18%), dairy, meat, and canned goods (12%). In addition, they produce flowers (including dried and ornamentals) and personal care, beauty and health products. About half of the farmers are certified organic and an additional 21% follow organic practices without certification.

The most common sales venue is farmers' market (88%), followed by retail and restaurants (53%), CSA (47%), wholesale (29%), farm stand (18%), catering, Pick-Your-Own, schools, and via a website (one farmer each). Aside from being the most used venue, farmers' markets are also considered to be the most profitable venue (87%) and where the most volume is sold (93%). However, for 60% of the respondents who sell at farmers' markets, it is also the most difficult venue.

On average, farmers do not sell approximately 10% of their products. However, none is wasted as the majority of farmers give unsold food to either charitable organizations or friends and family (82%), use it themselves (65%), feed it to their animals or compost it

(47%). Some farmers indicate it that they try to resell their product at the next farmers' market or use it for value-added products.

With the exception of one respondent who would like to retire, all farmers would like to increase sales. Labor is a general concern: 34% would need more labor to expand. Other obstacles are particular to each respondent; general themes include capital, improved marketing, not having to compete with others, more time, and increased production.

All but one respondent was involved with a charitable organization in some way. The majority donate food, either delivering it or having it picked up. Most would feel comfortable selling food at reduced prices to charitable organizations.

## **Interview Results**

Below is a summary of each interview. We begin with MoGro, a mobile market that received FMPP funding and Skarsgard Farm, a for-profit mobile market they partner with to source and deliver food. The next organization discussed is the Food Depot, a food bank serving Northern New Mexico. The last group interviewed was the Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute. This group facilitates the largest farmers' market in the area, supports local farmers through grants and training, and provides coupons to the food insecure to access local food. This is followed by the experiences of two urban and four rural farmers. Characteristics of the narratives of organizations are summarized in Table 3 and those of farmers in Table 4.

### ***MoGro***

MoGro is a nonprofit organization run out of Santa Fe Community Foundation that is an FMPP recipient. MoGro works with underserved communities, particularly five Pueblos between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Their mission is to support sustainable local food systems and promote access to affordable healthy food.

In 2011, MoGro's began operations as a mobile market using a small beer truck equipped to bring a full grocery and fresh produce selection to Pueblos. The food was offered on tables next to the truck, but because of the desert conditions in tribal communities, a lot of food was lost.

To address this, MoGro obtained a new truck that had refrigeration and permitted customers to walk in. However, this truck cost \$22,000 per month to operate, including staff, maintenance, machinery and fuel. This was not financially sustainable because the communities they serve do not have the purchasing power to pay the prices or to buy the volumes to cover the costs. The lack of financial sustainability risked their ability to continue working with the community and they do not want to be "white people who

abandon the communities when difficulties present themselves.” This was an issue for future expansion, as the manager describes:

*“So that model, while incredibly sort of attractive and drew people in, ...[it] was not the sustainable way forward, particularly if we wanted to think about, how do we bring the service to more communities. You know, it’s fine to do five and six [communities], but if we wanted to expand to anywhere else, we’d have to design and purchase another trailer.”*

An attractive solution was a partnership with Skarsgard Farms, a for-profit farm with a CSA home delivery service (Skarsgard operations are described in detail below). Under this partnership, MoGro is able to provide CSA shares that retail for \$30 for only \$20 to community members in Pueblos. Skarsgard Farms provides the fresh, local produce to MoGro for a nominal markup, charges a monthly fee for truck and warehouse space, and charges a mileage fee for deliveries to Pueblo drop-off sites based on deviations from Skarsgard Farms usual routes. Skarsgard Farms takes care of the sourcing, packing, and distribution of the shares. Thus MoGro does not need to own trucks or storage facilities, nor does it need procurement or delivery staff, to provide fresh, local produce at reduced prices to the Pueblos.

The partnership has reduced MoGro’s expenses by 60%. Their current sales are \$17,000 per month and they have calculated that if they can reach \$60,000 per month they would be completely self-sustaining financially. They believe that at that level of sales, they can operate with their current staff of two employees and one Americorps volunteer.

Another key factor in this new model is community partners: MoGro only serves sites where local volunteers agree to help. These “local champions” are community members that are already involved in fitness and wellness; they distribute information, recruit and assist others to purchase the CSA boxes online, coordinate payments and coordinate distribution of boxes at the drop-off site. Customers can pre-pay or pay the local champion upon pick-up. MoGro accepts EBT and WIC, but cannot accept farmers’ market coupons because unlike some mobile markets, they do not operate their own farm. In addition to the CSA boxes, MoGro sells local food at wholesale prices for single events or recurring meal programs in the Pueblos. These sales bring in more money than the CSA deliveries and help to support the CSA delivery routes.

MoGro currently has 150 CSA customers at five sites. The customers are tribal community members, low-income Hispanics and Latinos. The unemployment rate in these communities is between 30-40%. MoGro plans to expand to more communities; they have found that word of mouth is the best way to expand and the easiest sites to establish are where food access programs already exist. They hope to expand to the point that Skarsgard operates a delivery route just for the Pueblos.



**Table 3.** Summary of mobile market and mobile food pantry characteristics<sup>2</sup>

<b>Market/ Pantry</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Areas served</b>	<b>Work- force</b>	<b>Fresh Produce Source</b>	<b>People Served</b>
MoGro	support sustainable health systems & provide access to healthy food	5 pueblos between Albuquerque and Santa Fe	2 FTE + 1 AmeriCorps	Local farmers (through Skarsgard, individual collaborations with farmers/ranchers/native farmers)	150 clients/week (\$20/bag)
Skarsgard Farms	for-profit CSA farm with home-delivery	home delivery to Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos and El Paso; other pick-up sites	30 FTE (15 farm, 15 CSA)	Their own farm; local farmers	1,500/week
The Food Depot	foster healthy communities by engaging a network of partners and developing solutions to create hunger free New Mexico	Northern New Mexico	14 FTE + 1,563 volunteers	Local farmers (pick-up after farmers' market, growing specifically for them)	4.9 million meals/year

MoGro also provides education activities, such as cooking workshops with community members, nutrition classes, and recipes in the CSA boxes. They are mindful that the foods and recipes offered are culturally relevant.

<sup>2</sup> Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute is not included because it does not have the same function as mobile markets and pantries.

MoGro works with local farmers in several ways. First, local ranchers and growers sell to them at reduced prices – these producers would not do this for another distributor. Furthermore, if the farmers donate any produce or seconds to MoGro, they get a tax deduction. Second, MoGro also supports farmers in tribal communities through workshops and by buying from them directly to promote community economic development. These farmers get a better price than they would from wholesalers and can avoid the time and fuel costs of going to farmers’ market to sell.

MoGro identified financial sustainability as a major concern of their operation. While providing the CSA boxes at a subsidized price makes produce affordable, it is not clear that MoGro will be able to continue selling at this level indefinitely. This will depend on how fast they can grow to have the volume of sales to be self-sustaining and whether donors and grants can fill the gap in the meantime. Another issue is that there is no refrigeration at the drop-off sites, and if the boxes are not picked up right away, the food may spoil. They identified food banks and pantries as potential partners to share the cost of refrigeration and other infrastructure. However, an obstacle to this potential partnership is that it is hard to ask people to pay for food if they can get it for free from a pantry.

### ***Skarsgard Farms***

Skarsgard Farms is a for-profit home-delivery CSA farm that sells in Northern New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. They operate a 40-acre farm (half is owned, half leased) near Albuquerque that produces vegetables, some fruit, pigs, chickens and eggs. The farm includes buildings, pens, wells, pumps and two acres of greenhouses. Aside from their own products, Skarsgard Farms operates as a food hub; they purchase products from a variety of producers around Albuquerque, throughout New Mexico, southern Colorado and eastern Arizona to be able to offer a diverse range of foods to their customers.

Skarsgard Farms started as a traditional CSA farm; they sold only their own produce seasonally and members picked up their boxes. In response to member surveys and requests to offer more products, value, and convenience, they expanded their offerings by sourcing from other farmers, provided year-round service, and eventually became a mobile market by offering weekly home delivery. Members found the traditional CSA model too restrictive for two reasons: (1) there are a number of growing seasons in New Mexico and no single CSA could provide the range of foods that could be produced and (2) traditional CSA’s offer a narrow range of products meaning members still need to go to grocery stores.

Skarsgard Farms responded to this by sourcing from other local food producers to provide a full range of foods and providing the convenience of weekly year-round home delivery. Members still have the option to pick up their boxes at a warehouse in Albuquerque, but can also opt for home delivery in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and El Paso, TX. In 13

years, Skarsgard Farms has grown to over 1,500 members and has 30 employees – 15 on the farm and 15 who work for the CSA.

Skarsgard Farms sources predominantly from mid-size producers who produce too much food for a farmers' market, but are too small to sell to brokers. Skarsgard Farms offers prices that are higher than these producers would get from wholesale brokers. Developing these relationships is something of a "courtship." Skarsgard's partner producers are looking for a good price, increased sales, and consistency. Skarsgard Farms is looking for a wide range of fresh local products, high quality, and availability. Skarsgard Farms is also willing to purchase "ugly" vegetables for half the cost and waste from their partners for their animals. Though these partnerships can be very beneficial to both parties, sourcing from partners requires infrastructure such as refrigeration to keep products fresh which can be costly. Furthermore, relationships and lines of communication need to be maintained, which requires additional effort. Skarsgard Farms works with small growers on quality standards and explains consumer expectations. As an example, they had to explain to a grower that 40 pounds of zucchini was not one 40-pound zucchini.

Products are dropped off at the Skarsgard warehouse by producers. Most products are repackaged into portable chilled coolers, which can keep products fresh for up to 48 hours, and are loaded immediately onto delivery trucks. Skarsgard Farms provides home-delivery in locations with a sufficient density of orders, delivering between 14-18 deliveries per hour. High density of deliveries makes home delivery cost effective and if home delivery replaces trips to the grocery store, Skarsgard Farms believes it can reduce the carbon footprint of food procurement. If members live in an area with low density of deliveries, the coolers are dropped at a publicly accessible site. Members can also pick up their order at the warehouse.

Members can set up a standing weekly order, opt out, or change their order each week through an online ordering system. Skarsgard Farms no longer takes phone orders because they take too much staff time and therefore are not cost effective. Orders must be placed 24 hours before delivery; this timeframe could be reduced if they had a third shift. Customers can order a standard CSA box that comes in three sizes: 10, 12 and 14 items at \$3 per item. Price comparisons indicate that the medium sized share is \$6 cheaper than similar products at a nearby Whole Foods; however, in contrast, all the produce at Skarsgard Farms is certified organic and the food is delivered to the member's home.

In order to provide maximum flexibility and satisfaction, members can swap items in their share; they can double items they like, eliminate items they do not, and substitute for other items available, all at no extra charge. This makes the CSA shares completely individualized. In addition to produce, members can select from baked goods, dairy, eggs, staples (flour, rice, oil, etc.) and processed foods (sauces, salsas, burritos, lasagna, etc.). The source of all products is indicated on the website, allowing for identity preservation and additional

advertising for the producers. While Skarsgard Farms tries to source what members request, there are products Skarsgard refuses to provide because they are not organic, not produced locally, or because they are deemed unhealthy.

Skarsgard Farms offers day routes and night routes, so that members may get their delivery when they arrive home from work or when they get up in the morning. To reduce costs, Skarsgard Farms contracts with other transportation companies to deliver coolers to their distant markets. These coolers are then delivered by Skarsgard vans in the local area.

Skarsgard members tend to be working parents from middle-income neighborhoods who find home delivery convenient and time saving. Despite the online ordering, Skarsgard attempts to stay in touch with their customers through a weekly paper newsletter included in deliveries, social media, and an annual member survey. Feedback has consistently indicated their customers want more food, more diversity, and freshness.

Skarsgard Farms used to donate food to a food bank, but their volume is insufficient, they do, however, receive food from a food bank for compost. They donate about 300 to 400 pounds of food to a soup kitchen that picks up twice a week. Food waste such as carrot tops and lettuce trimmings are used on the farm as compost or animal feed.

Skarsgard Farms has been successful in their expansion of the quantity and variety of local food offered, and in the growth of their members. They plan to expand deliveries to southern New Mexico, west Texas and Arizona.

### ***The Food Depot***

The Food Depot food bank is a member of Feeding America and the five-member New Mexico Association of Food Banks. The Food Depot serves nine counties in northern New Mexico, Roadrunner Food Bank in Albuquerque serves Southern New Mexico, and three smaller food banks in Gallup, Farmington, and Clovis cover the rest of the state. The food banks work together to source produce; their goal is that fresh produce account for 50% of the food they distribute, currently they are at 41%. This goal to provide healthy food is in response to the high rates of diabetes and heart disease among those who utilize food pantries.

The Food Depot works with 145 partner agencies to fundraise and to distribute food to food pantries in their region; last year, they distributed enough food for 4.9 million meals. Their clients are 25% children, 25% seniors, and 50% working adults. About 10-11% of all their clientele is homeless. Like other food banks, The Food Depot relies on volunteers. Recruitment of volunteers is easy because Santa Fe is a retirement community.

The major challenges for The Food Depot are serving a large area that has a low population density with many isolated communities. In addition to the food distributed through their

partner agencies, The Food Depot serves about 10,000 people in 22 rural communities using mobile food pantries. Mobile food pantries are a strategy to serve isolated rural communities that are far from services; some are up to two hours from the nearest grocery. The Food Depot delivers to sites monthly, and volunteers at the sites distribute the food almost immediately.

Similar to MoGro, The Food Depot requires communities that want a mobile food pantry stop to find community volunteers to help distribute the food and to do their own outreach to bring in clients. Distribution needs to be done immediately because there is no storage or refrigeration at the mobile pantry stops. The food is either pre-bagged or clients are allowed to choose; the latter is preferred as it minimizes waste.

The main challenges are due to the isolation of the communities. Often there is only one road leading to the community, which makes deliveries more costly than if the community were on a loop route. In some cases, the food bank partners with other businesses or individuals who pick up food from the mobile pantry stop and deliver it to even more remote locations. Another problem is the lack of refrigerated storage at the stops, which are usually in front of a fire station or a community center. Finally, despite the mobile pantry locations being in rural, agricultural communities, there are few opportunities for backhaul, meaning there is no opportunity to reduce transport costs.

The Food Depot prioritizes in-state and nutritious food procurement. It is a challenge to get fresh produce and protein items because they are expensive to purchase and not often donated. Much of the food they obtain is either from Feeding America who sources from large wholesale and retail companies and is largely processed or from the USDA, which sends commodities supplemented by few fruits and vegetables. Some of the food is obtained through the USDA's Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), but the distribution of this food has stricter guidelines regarding amounts given and poverty qualifications.

To source fresh food, The Food Depot employs a number strategies. One strategy, mentioned by the farmers we interviewed, is to pick up leftover food at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market during the summer season. While compared to other sources this is a small amount of food, it is among the best and the freshest they are able to provide to their clients. The Food Depot sees that as an important interaction with the farmers because, "the farmers love it...If we're, for some reason, not there, they get mad at us." The Food Depot also seeks fresh food donations from grocery stores, restaurants, and bakeries. Any food waste not usable for humans is donated to farmers for animal feed or compost.

Another strategy to obtain fresh produce is to contract with the Navajo Agricultural Products Initiative (NAPI) to provide fresh produce for the food banks. NAPI discounts their products for the New Mexico Association of Food Banks, selling misshapen or seconds for pennies a pound or for free with payment for packaging and freight. A final strategy to

source fresh food is that food banks in other states share their food sources with the Association. For example, a food bank in Nogales, Arizona shares foods they get from Mexico with other food banks if they are able to pick it up within 24 hours because there is no cold storage. This requires very quick response and may be difficult if there is no opportunity for backhaul. On the other hand, the food bank is able to obtain large quantities of food at pennies a pound.

Collaboration with local farmers to source fresh food can be challenging for a number of reasons. There are no processing facilities or food hubs in New Mexico, so most produce is shipped out of state. While the number of small farmers is increasing, they produce small quantities of food and tend to plant only what they can sell, which means they have minimal surplus and transaction costs are high. While the Food Depot would like to do more direct sourcing with farmers, and some donors would like to support it, the reality is that they do not have the staff, time, or money to work with such small amounts of food.

Another option would be picking up seconds from farmers; however, that is also costly due to the small quantities, and it is often cheaper for farmers to plow under seconds than to pick them. Some states provide support for gleaning through the prison system. However, even if the Food Depot can find volunteers to do the picking, most farmers are wary of strangers picking on their land, the damage they might do, and liability for accidents.

The Food Depot believes farmers need incentives to glean food or sell at discounted prices. Even so, this requires time and trust to build relationships. An example demonstrates the possibilities; one farm fundraised for a CSA to donate fresh produce. While it was a small amount, it was the very best quality. The Food Depot is very cognizant that asking farmers to donate food may run counter to their mission because farmers have to make living:

*“But it’s nice to see that a local farmer, local farmers are supported. So that’s... always a dilemma for us, because as a food bank we’re a nonprofit, we don’t have lots of money to spend on purchasing... We also don’t want to put a farmer out of business, because he’s trying to help us and reduce his...price, so that he can work with us. We don’t want to find that our local farmer is standing in the line at an emergency food pantry because he can’t make ends meet, you know. It doesn’t make any sense.”*

Sourcing fresh produce can present distribution problems because many partner agencies do not have the capacity to handle perishable foods. One of The Food Depot’s priorities is to support their partner agencies by finding them cold storage equipment or even refrigerators. In addition to equipment, the food bank is conscious that they need to strengthen partner agencies, to help them draw from their communities, and to educate communities to draw support from them.

Given the difficulties in procuring fresh food, The Food Depot is interested in growing their own food. They are also working with programs in Santa Fe that encourage people to

garden and growing their own food. They see the network of volunteers they have as having potential to pair up people who teach gardening with those interested in learning to grow food. The underlying assumption to this project is that their clientele have the time and access to land and water to produce their own food. However, given that nearly half of their clientele are working adults, land is generally expensive, and there is a scarcity of water, it would be worth examining whether this program would be effective.

The Food Depot also expends effort on outreach and education. Raising awareness about hunger issues in the communities they serve is helpful to both fundraise and obtain volunteers. The Food Depot also conducts SNAP outreach. While 81% of people in New Mexico eligible for food stamps use them, The Food Depot's goal is to reach 100%. Other educational topics include cooking skills and nutrition education through cooking classes and providing recipes that use fresh produce. In Pueblos, such educational activities led by outsiders can be considered insensitive and offensive. For this reason, employing community members to demonstrate their knowledge and skills is essential. Addressing other obstacles to healthy eating, such as lack of equipment, is a more complex issue that the Food Depot currently does not address.

Finally, The Food Depot understands that people in need of food might be in need of other essentials. For this reason, they distribute diapers and pet food. Distribution of pet food coupled with education about spaying and neutering helps bring people who would not use their services otherwise.

### ***The Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute***

The Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute (FMI) is a non-profit sister organization to the Santa Fe Farmers Market. FMI provides services to promote local agriculture, food access and to foster health, trust, and community building. FMI's mission includes operation of the farmers' market building, farmer education, financial assistance to producers, and community promotion of farming to make it a viable career option. As a 501c3, the FMI can raise money for their services that is tax deductible to their donors. They believe that legislation is important to promote agriculture and food security and it should aim to reinvest in communities and small local farms.

One of their most visible functions is operating the indoor farmers' market facility. The farmers' market was founded in 1968 and over time was located in various parking lots. The current facility is a permanent home for the farmers' market and allows it to operate twice a week, year-round. The facility also houses FMI offices. FMI collects stall fees from the farmers, rent from a restaurant, and other offices located in the facility, as well as fees for occasional events and galas.

FMI's programs to support producers include the following: a microloan program, workshops and trainings, and assisting farmers with land and water rights. The microloan program helps farmers purchase greenhouses, equipment for producing value-added products, and to cover startup, seasonal and emergency costs. The initial loans are up to \$5000; if they are successfully repaid, farmers can apply for loans up to \$10,000. The worthiness of the projects, rather than credit history, is used to determine whether a loan is given.

FMI's workshops and training for farmers currently focus on production, but surveys show that marketing and grant writing are desired. FMI's work on land and water rights, titled Small Agricultural Land Conservation Initiative (SALCI), is currently on hold. However, FMI plans to invest in this program to secure land and water rights for new farmers.

In addition to supporting producers, FMI supports community and food equity. One of their first programs raised money to match food stamp dollars, up to \$20 per market day. This program has been very successful as it doubled EBT purchases at the farmers' market in a year. The program has inspired legislation that is being implemented statewide to provide \$400,000 in Double Up Food Bucks to people on public assistance. This program now matches up to \$50 of EBT or WIC purchases per market day at all New Mexico farmers' markets. An FMI representative explained this program as follows:

*"So [farmers' market customers] can use their WIC and EBT dollars on any food products. They can use the matched dollars on any fruits and vegetables. So it is doubling the amount of money that they can spend in the market, which improves the likelihood that people living on low income have access to healthy food, and it's also increasing the amount of money that is coming to the farmers because these are customers that maybe wouldn't be there, or if they were there, [their purchases] wouldn't be as much. So it's kind of [a] win-win program."*

Educational activities for the community include visits to the market by elementary school students (Children's Nutrition Program) and a community movie night. The elementary school program is bilingual and it focuses on nutrition. Through this program classes visit the farmers' market where there is a presentation by a local teacher and a market vendor; the children taste foods and get tokens to buy fruits and vegetables. The community movie series brings the community together while also raising awareness about food and agricultural issues. The FMI also fosters community education through discussions and partnering with other nonprofits to help people understand what it means to be a farmer and why locally sourced products may be more expensive. This approach facilitates connections with farmers and creates awareness about low farm incomes and the costs of growing food. FMI noted that people do not know that some farmers are on food stamps.

FMI is interested in growing the South Side Market. South Santa Fe is a food desert where incomes are low, in contrast to the affluent, northern Santa Fe neighborhoods where the Santa Fe Farmers' Market is located. Like most emerging farmers' markets, the South Santa



Fe Market has a conundrum: vendors do not want to go there because there are no customers and customers do not want to go because there are few vendors and therefore no variety of products. However, as the summer progresses and word gets out, the market gets larger. Building a strong farmers' market from the beginning of the season would strongly improve this program.

**Table 4.** Summary of farmer characteristics

<b>Farmer</b>	<b>Size (actual/ farmed) (acres)</b>	<b>Products</b>	<b>Workforce</b>	<b>Venues</b>	<b>Wants growth? Needs __</b>
<b>Urban Farmer 1</b>	?/11	Produce	1 FTE + volunteers	Farm stand, donations to the Food Depot	Labor
<b>Urban Farmer 2</b>	3.5/0.5	Produce, staples, plant starts, medicinal products	1 FTE; volunteers	FM, CSA, retail, attempted farm stand	Land, being able to have a farm stand, greenhouses
<b>Rural Farmer 1</b>	5/5	Produce, eggs, ornamentals	Hired labor (no specific number)	FM, restaurants	Time for marketing
<b>Rural Farmer 2</b>	5/2	Produce, eggs, canned goods, baked goods	1 FTE	FM, wholesale	No (gradually retiring)
<b>Rural Farmer 3</b>	12/4	Apples, other produce	1 FTE	2 FM, co-op, U- pick	Land; labor; sales; time for marketing
<b>Rural Farmer 4</b>	30/5	Produce; eggs; staples	Family (2 FTE; 1 PT)	FM, CSA, co-op, restaurant	Labor; increase production

***Urban farm 1: Community Farm***

Community Farm is an organization that was founded in the 1980's on land that was part of a private farm outside of Santa Fe. Its original purpose was to give disabled children a

chance to farm, but over time, it proved to be too difficult. The farm has since become a non-profit and its mission has turned to food donations; all produce is donated to the Food Depot and Meals on Wheels of greater Santa Fe. The farm is operated by a paid farm manager, who is supported by a volunteer board that provides financial, legal and management assistance. Additional labor includes volunteers from schools, church groups, AmeriCorps, and individuals. Number of volunteers limits their production potential: the more volunteers they have, the more food they can grow and donate.

Community Farm produces 12,000-15,000 lbs of produce for The Food Depot each year. This collaboration provides the food bank with fresh food it can count on and ensures variety; the Food Depot could not get most of this produce otherwise. The Food Depot picks up the donated produce. While pick-up is more efficient for Community Farm, it does not give them direct contact with the people who need the food, which they had in the past when the Community Farm delivered directly to food pantries.

The Community Farm aims to improve neighborhood food access by providing affordable produce to their immediate neighborhood. They operate a farm stand where they sell their produce. In addition, they give people in need free food at the farm. This latter service is not advertised because Community Farm does not have a mechanism to assure accountability.

The founder and the farm stand sales pay the costs of operations and salaries of Community Farm. While Community Farm does not have fundraising events, they do have a kick-off event for volunteers and an "Adopt a Row" program. The program asks donors for \$100 in exchange for sponsoring a row of produce of their choice; a card with their name is placed at the end of the row.

Community Farm believes that food insecurity is a big issue in Santa Fe because there are few good jobs for people without education. Community Farm would like to see more community gardens in Santa Fe; they believe the gardens offers opportunities to sell produce and value-added products at the farmers' market. However, access to land and water in Santa Fe are difficult.

### ***Urban Farm 2: Gaia Gardens***

Gaia Gardens is the only urban farm in Santa Fe; they are a non-profit organization. Gaia Gardens are a diversified, certified organic year-round operation with a mission to demonstrate the viability of urban farming. While they practice biodynamic methods, they are not certified. Biodynamic certification would require having a cow on site, which is not permitted by city ordinance. Gaia Gardens is on leased land; however, future tenancy is insecure because the owner is in the process of foreclosure. Gaia Gardens raised money to purchase the land but the financial problems of the landlord have complicated negotiations.

Gaia Gardens main venue is the Santa Fe Farmers' Market. However, they believe it is not sustainable due to the need to transport products to the market, which involves a vehicle, fuel and a lot of labor to load and unload. While they are successful at selling plant starts, they believe that most people at the farmers' market are tourists or people who want a social outing. This makes sales more difficult, particularly in the summer when the farmers are not only competing with each other, but also with Whole Foods and other large retailers, who can undersell them.

Gaia Gardens view an onsite farm stand as a sustainable solution that would be less costly and require less labor. Hypothetically, the farm could survive by selling to the immediate neighborhood. They believe they produce enough food for the 80 to 100 people who can walk to the farm stand, further reducing wasteful transportation and greenhouse gases. Supporting food access in their neighborhood rather than selling to affluent people at the farmers' market is a goal of Gaia Gardens. Neighborhood support would also include education about growing food and cooking. They view this model of highly localized urban production as the future of urban farming.

Gaia Gardens also operates a CSA with 25 members, conducts educational workshops and works with two schools to create school gardens, provide plant starts, and farming education to kids. The founder does not believe this is a good use of school money; they pay him for 45 minutes with the children once a week during the school year. However, there is no program for the kids in the summer when the gardens are actually producing. This means a lot of work in the summer to maintain the gardens without students' help; this takes away time from his farm, and the food in the school gardens goes to a food pantry and the food bank.

The founder identified many difficulties with farming and urban farming in particular. The most prominent problem is the amount of work for little pay. Similar to other farmers we interviewed for this project, the founder and his partner do not make enough to live on. In addition, the cost of land is prohibitive for small farmers. Water is also an issue; even though there is a well on his land, they have to pay costly residential water rates.

The founder suggested that farmers cannot earn a living wage because grocery stores do not sell food at the real price that it costs to produce and customers do not understand the real cost of food. According to the farmer, this is unfortunate because fresh local food is high quality and healthy.

He believes that urban farmers cannot make enough unless they sell high-end specialty products to affluent markets, which runs counter to his desire to promote neighborhood food access. He believe the reasons for the difficulties with urban farming is that small farmers are marginalized and do not have a voice in policies. He also was concerned that agriculture workers, who are often undocumented immigrants, are exploited, working in dangerous conditions for low wages.

Gaia Gardens has experienced numerous difficulties with the city, which has not yet developed regulations for urban agriculture. These issues have generated a lot of publicity and local support for Gaia Gardens (Albuquerque Editorial Board, 2015; New Mexican, 2015). Indeed, seven attorneys work pro bono for Gaia Gardens on various issues related to water, land, zoning and marketing. Despite this, the city declared the farm stand to be illegal. So on August 13, 2015 Gaia Gardens decided to leave Santa Fe. They have stopped the CSA, which is also illegal under city code and have been donating their harvest to a local food bank and other nonprofits. Gaia Gardens presents an important example of how city legislature can support or thwart urban farming.

### ***Rural Farm 1***

Rural Farm 1 is a ten-acre, certified organic farm that sells products year-round. The owner inherited the original plot of land from his grandmother, and obtained other plots through purchase, leasing, and borrowing from other family members. The farm is certified organic; the farmer believes the certification is worthwhile because for a small fee and time spent record keeping, he is able to charge a 30% price premium on his product, increasing his earnings by \$100,000 in one year.

The farmer believes the primary challenge to farming in New Mexico is marketing. While he has had few issues with production (e.g. stealing by labor), he thinks he is approaching production capacity. He pointed out that infrastructure for supply is difficult. Because of the low population density, New Mexico lacks a distribution system. This causes each farmer to have her own refrigeration, storage, and transport. The farmer believes food is accessible and that the problem is that people do not seek it out.

The farmer sells at the farmers market, grocery stores, restaurants, and has a CSA. Like other farmers at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market, he pointed out the high level of competition among farmers in the summer. However, he sees potential for growth in the winter, particularly if one can provide a variety of products. He views farmers' markets as potentially wasteful because he strongly believes he needs to bring more produce than he can sell for presentation purposes. This means that after the market, he has to bring leftover product back to the farm, which requires additional labor and reduces the freshness of his produce. He would be interested in selling leftovers to institutions at a 60% of the original price. While donating food may have psychological value, he believes financially it is no different than throwing the food away.

While the farmer is not interested in donating food, he would like to collaborate with and sell to institutions such as schools to provide healthy food. He believes schools should be mandated to buy organic and local. He also would like to sell to large CSA's like Skarsgard

Farms or Beneficial Farms. He also has been chosen as a vendor for Whole Foods and hopes he can sell the rest of his food to them.

The farmer named other obstacles associated with selling at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market, including traffic congestion, parking, exclusivity of shopping there, and convenience. One solution he suggested was for the city to provide a shuttle to the market from parking areas. The farmer believes that lack of parking options is a major obstacle for restaurants that makes it difficult for them to purchase from the farmers' market. He also believes there needs to be more awareness of the market as well as information on what products are available to encourage people to buy. He finds that providing free samples is a good way to attract people to buy more.

The farmer noted that Double Up Bucks were successful as EBT participation increased 300-400% since they were introduced. However, similar to Gaia Gardens, he believes farmers need high-end retail sales to survive because of the high costs of land, labor and fuel.

### ***Rural Farm 2***

Rural farmer 2 started her farm as a second career; originally she was in elementary education. The farmer bought five acres of land herself. The farmer grows mostly raspberries; other crops include blackberries, rhubarb, and asparagus. The farm is not certified organic because the farmer sees it as too much money and a hassle. The farmer does most of the work herself; however, she requires help with berry picking, which has proven difficult to find. For this reason, she has reduced production to two acres.

The farmer currently sells at a farmers' market and wholesale. In the past, she used to make value-added products in her commercial kitchen. She is working on closing her operations and retiring, so she no longer uses her kitchen. The farmer views the customers at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market as loyal and willing to pay premium prices for specialty crops, but not commodities. However, as the price of raspberries (\$5/pint) has not risen over the past two decades, she says it is not enough to cover her costs. In addition, similar to Rural Farmer 1, the farmer dislikes the farmers' market building; it is hard to get there, there is no parking, and the nearest parking is expensive. The farmer also sells products to a wholesale buyer who uses them in baked goods that are also sold at the market and used for catering. Because of her remote location with only one road leading to the farm, the farmer is unable to do U-Pick.

The farmer used to give some food after the farmers market to food pantries, if they came to pick up. However, now she has no leftovers to donate nor would the distance from food pantries permit convenient delivery. In the past, she used leftover food in her commercial kitchen, however, now she is downsizing operations and only picks what she sells.

Her major obstacle to farming has been finding labor to pick raspberries. Over the years, she found that finding and keeping workers for \$10/hour was difficult. She discussed how other farms having success using low-paid, undocumented, immigrant labor, but she made it clear she would not employ undocumented workers. She also indicated that interns would not be possible because she cannot provide housing. Other production problems she noted include weather and lack of water. She emphasized that water needs to be used wisely and not used to grow hay to feed animals.

The farmer identified several ways that the farmers' market, the city, and state/federal government could support small farmers. First, similar to Rural Farmer 1, she would like to see farmers' markets encourage year-round participation. Second, city government should be supportive of farmers' markets through zoning, location, advertising, and changing rules; however, this might prove difficult, as rules may be controversial. For instance, an ordinance allowing home kitchens to sell at farmers' market would lower income for farmers who already paid for and built commercial kitchens. Third, the farmer suggests that the government needs to have realistic funding for small farmers. She described how she was not able to obtain funding for drip irrigation because the funding was only available to farmers changing to such systems, not to farmers installing drip irrigation where there was no irrigation before. She would also like to see funding for commercial kitchens on farms. She also commented that young farmers need support because land and equipment are expensive.

### ***Rural Farm 3***

Rural farmer 3 is also a second-career farmer; she was originally a chemist and an amateur gardener. The farmer bought the land herself and subsidizes her farm from her pension. The farm size fluctuated from four to 12 to the current size of eight acres. The farm includes an apple orchard, and produces chilies and vegetables. In the future, the farmer would like to sell seeds and plant starts because they are non-perishable and easier to transport. She is certified organic and did the three-year transition herself.

The farmer sells at three different farmers' markets, but will be downsizing to two. She also sells at a local co-op and has a family oriented u-pick operation. The farmer grows a lot of chilies, which she would like to turn into value-added products; however, she does not have access to a commercial kitchen.

With regards to donations, it is easy for the farmer to donate when the food bank picks up after the farmers' market. However, the farmer usually does not have time to pick more than she would sell. She is not sure if she would be willing to sell to a mobile market or mobile pantry; it would depend on the price because she would need to be paid to cover the cost of the harvest and the time and energy. She would not allow gleaners into her

fields due to concerns about compacting the soil. While she expressed interest in a delivered or mobile CSA for the elderly because they often do not have money for a normal CSA, she did not explain at what price she would be willing to sell.

The farmer does not see lack of demand as an issue for farmers. She believes that food stamps help increase demand as well. Her main difficulties are cash flow as she uses her pension for her living expenses and to subsidize the farm. Having money to pay for insurance to sell to larger stores, taxes, and irrigation fees would improve her situation.

#### ***Rural Farm 4***

Rural farm 4 is a multigenerational farming family. The parents started farming as a second career after retirement. They wanted to farm because they grew up with gardens in a poor area and see farming as worthwhile effort. The parents have paid for the equipment, greenhouses, and land from savings. They farm with their adult daughter who has a full-time off-farm job.

They farm most of the year, using greenhouses in the winter. They grow tomatoes, peppers, flowers, lettuce, garlic, beets, grapes and other produce. They sell at the Santa Fe farmers' market, a co-op, restaurants, and through a 15 member CSA July to October.

The farmers view selling at the farmers' market as a full days' work. While they believe the Santa Fe Farmers' Market attracts a variety of people, it is a small portion of the 75,000 residents of Santa Fe and they wonder how to attract more people. They support Double Up Bucks because they believe prices at the farmers' market can keep people away. Their CSA is a result of a request from their committed farmers' markets clients. This venue is easy to manage and they appreciate getting the money up front. Members can either pick up at the farm or at the farmers' market.

The farmers are happy to donate unsold food at the farmers' market to the Food Depot or the food pantry that comes to the Tuesday market. They do not want to throw anything away; they want somebody to eat the food they grow. They prefer pick up but if need be, would be willing to take their food to the Food Depot. They harvest everything so they do not have any seconds for gleaning.

Selling to a non-profit mobile market or food pantry would not be cost effective for them. While they do not need to earn a lot of money, they do need to cover labor, water and other inputs. They would love to sell to schools and other institutions where people need healthy food. However, schools are mandated to buy from the lowest bidder, and small farmers cannot sell at prices that do not cover costs since they do not receive subsidies like big agriculture. They would like to see small farming valued and subsidized.

The biggest challenges they face are water, weather, and land availability. Leasing land is not viable because if the lease is broken, the investment made in improving soil is lost. Currently they are using all their land. They hire a full-time worker in high season to help with labor. Overall, they indicated that farming is a risk, “you might learn something if you fail, but how do you pay the bills?”

The farmers believe health and the environment are connected. They spoke about the Farmers Market Institute and how it is: helping people realize the connections between health, money, and good food; that food is not cheap; and that somebody is going to pay for it somewhere, in terms of health or the environment. They suggested that the food bank and food pantries should try marketing and outreach about the farmers’ market, that it would be a good partnership. The food bank could let people know about the benefits of healthy local food, supporting local farmers and the availability of “Double Up Bucks.”

They would like to see people have gardens and cook to feed themselves. They are also concerned that cooking has disappeared, and this puts people at a huge disadvantage health-wise. They believe people need to invest time and make decisions about what’s important to them, people need to take initiative to learn, if there’s willingness, people can help, that people do not need to be dependent; they can empower themselves. They provide opportunities for people to learn about farming and have never said no to anyone who wanted to learn.

## **Conclusion**

We conducted ten interviews in Santa Fe to examine whether mobile markets and mobile food pantries could increase farmers sales and food access. We also explored obstacles farmers are facing in getting established and increasing sales. Throughout the interviews, we found that many of the participants referred to other farmers or organizations. This is truly a community where the participants know each other and try to collaborate.

Small producers face a number of challenges in northern New Mexico. Access to land and capital are universal challenges they share with farmers elsewhere, as are the time needed to build soil and cultivate markets, the massive demand for labor, and the generally low returns to farming. The current system is unsustainable because returns are low and farmers are aging. Finding a source of competent and reliable labor is also an issue. The farmers in this case study are in their second career or inherited land; therefore, are able to subsidize their farms with savings or pensions. The challenges make it difficult for farmers to donate food or sell it at reduced cost to mobile markets or mobile food pantries.

New Mexico faces some unique challenges: it is an arid climate with scarce water, the population density is diffuse and perhaps because of that, it lacks a distribution network and infrastructure (such as refrigeration or commercial kitchen access to produce value-



added products), and it has high levels of poverty and food insecurity. Despite this, it has a vibrant local food community that is developing some novel and cost effective ways to promote farming and food access.

Some of these innovations are market driven. The partnership between for-profit and non-profit mobile markets demonstrate huge cost savings in delivering healthy food to low income communities, as well as creating demand for local products. Some of the innovations are more community driven. The local food bank has multiple partnerships with farms and organizations to source local food. The Farmers' Market Institute has fostered education programs, outreach, microloans and an effective coupon program that has been adopted as a state program to increase access to healthy, local foods by those on public assistance. The farmers themselves have developed many innovative marketing channels, but they face high costs and particularly for urban farms, a lack of supportive city policies that thwart urban farming.

Overall, the community is well aware of the issues and is trying to address them, whether through legislation built on the Double Up Bucks, the FMI providing loans and land access, the growth of Skarsgard Farms, MoGro's partnership with Skarsgard Farms, or expansion of Food Bank into partnerships with farmers. The take away messages of this case study are the benefits of working collaboratively and being innovative and the need for supportive local policies. All of the participants have different ideas about how to get local food to the community, about attitudes, obstacles, and even the degree to which they work collaboratively. However, they do have a common goal; they all care about getting healthy local produce to their community. What may be missing is more input from the communities at risk, what is it that they want to promote their own food security?

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## **Appendix:**

### **Interview questions (mobile market managers)**

1. How would you describe your mobile market/food pantry?
2. Please, tell me about your products: What do you offer? Where does it come from?
3. How do you choose where to get your product from?
4. (If produce from local farmers') Could you tell me about the advantages and disadvantages of getting product from local farmers?  
(If no produce from local farmers') Would you be interested in obtaining produce from local farmers? Why – or why not? What would prevent you from obtaining local produce?
5. Please tell me about the people who shop/receive food from you. Who are they? Why do they choose to come to you?
6. Please, tell me about the people who do not shop/receive food from you. Who are they? Why do they not choose to come to you?
7. How would (or do) your customers and/or your community respond to you obtaining local food?

### **Interview Questions (farmers who do not sell to mobile market/pantry)**

1. How would you describe your farm?
2. What are the venues you use to sell your product? Can you tell me about why you choose those venues?
3. Have you heard of the [insert name of a mobile market/pantry] in town?
  - a. If yes: What do you think about this business?
  - b. If no, explain about the mobile market/pantry
4. Would a mobile market/pantry be a possible venue for selling your product? Why – or why not?
5. How do you think the market/pantry customers and/or local community would react to local produce offers?

### **Interview Questions (farmers who do sell to mobile market/pantry)**

1. How would you describe your farm?
2. What are the venues you use to sell your product? Can you tell me about why you choose those venues?
3. Can you tell us how your partnership with a mobile market/pantry started and how it developed over time?
4. Compared to other venues, what is the volume of produce that you sell to the mobile market/pantry?
5. Are there any difficulties with using mobile market/pantry as a venue for your produce? Are there any advantages?
6. How do you think the market/pantry customers and/or local community react to local produce offers?