Project Report for Food Bank Farm Incubator Feasibility Study

PROJECT TITLE

Food Bank Farm Incubator Feasibility Study

PROJECT SUMMARY

*Describe the importance and timeliness of the project.*

Access to land, water, and equipment have been identified as the leading challenges faced by beginning farmers and ranchers in the West; as the average age of America’s farmers reaches 60, the next generation of farmers and ranchers in Northern Colorado is starting at a disadvantage.

While the direct marketing of locally grown foods through farmers markets and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs has been overwhelmingly successful, many small farms and ranches are unable to break into the wholesale market for a multitude of reasons. While the direct-sales market is fairly saturated locally, there exists market opportunities for small to mid-scale farms to sell products to institutions and other larger suppliers of processed foods through wholesale marketing and distribution models.

The Be Local Incubator Farm will train beginning farmers to add value and “scale up” from the outset, and will work to open up new wholesale markets for these and other established farms in the area. Eventually, the Incubator Farm will facilitate the aggregation of multiple small-scale farms’ products

*Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.*

This project is the planning stage of a farmer training program and food access collaboration providing access to land, water, equipment, peer-to-peer learning and technical assistance for young and beginning farmers in Northern Colorado. But, since little is known about the best practices and challenges faced by incubators in other regions of the country, this project will compile that information, frame a few alternative models that could be considered and pursued. A particular focus was on models that may include partnerships to use production on the incubator site to support food access goals of the community as well, using resources and assets of food security partners to partially fund the project.

Finally, while considering the organizational and operational models that may be the most
sustainable and serve the educational mission and food access goals of the stakeholders, site assessment of an available public land site was completed.

**PROJECT APPROACH**

_Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period._

This project, with an amended scope because of a significantly reduced budget, focused on three key efforts in its scope of work:

1) Survey, compilation and summary of nationwide incubator programs to identify best practices and relevant models that could be considered for the Northern Colorado project.

2) Development of a program budget template including some of the shared revenue and cost categories that the program may need to plan for or consider
   
   a. Assume individual farm enterprise budgets for each producer to plan independently.

3) Site evaluation and initial land preparation steps for the farm considered in the Northern Colorado region.

_If the overall scope of the project benefitted commodities other than specialty crops, indicate how funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops._

Although some incubators considered may integrate livestock, all planning and summaries focused on models that will grow specialty crops.

_Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project._

CSU Extension and DARE provided technical assistance and oversight, along with student graduate research assistance.
GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal.

1) Survey, compilation and summary of nationwide incubator programs to identify best practices and relevant models that could be considered for the Northern Colorado project.

   The statewide summary and materials/information gleaned from a few key cases are shared in the appendices. Since no one on the team was in a place to make those decisions (after Karen McManus left the Food Bank), we felt the best option was to learn about best practices and success stories. This information will hopefully guide the choices on operation models, management structure and financial sustainability that need to be made in the next phase by the key stakeholders of this project. Note, there will likely be a new Northern Colorado Food Cluster that will take the project over at this stage.

   In addition, there will be a fact sheet developed that summarizes this information more fully to be shared with others who have interest in specialty crop-oriented incubators throughout the state of Colorado.

2) Development of a program budget template including some of the shared revenue and cost categories that the program may need to plan for or consider

   The attached spreadsheet is to guide the program planning once a decision is made about the operational model and management choices by the key stakeholders (primarily City of Fort Collins and the Larimer County Food Bank). It includes the types of personnel, programming costs and shared equipment that would be expected given how other programs that size have operated across the US. However, the budget template was made so that it can be amended easily once decisions are made.

   We did assume individual farm enterprise budgets for each producer to plan independently so there was no work done in this record, but CSU Extension is developing benchmark budgets that can be shared with participants when this program.

   Finally, the CSU Building Farmers in the West program has offered to offset some of the fees for a supervisor if the project is started before their grant ends in 2015, using some of the experiential learning monies they have committed to Northern Colorado.

3) Site evaluation and initial land preparation steps for the farm considered in the Northern Colorado region.
The site evaluation was completed by Mike Baute with assistance from the City of Fort Collins Natural Resources staff. That full assessment is attached to this report as an appendix.

_If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement._

The only outcome achieved is a tentative agreement by the City of Fort Collins to pursue production development of that land, and CSU Extension to support education/coordination, but the Food Bank has not been approached with any scenarios as of yet. The development of a City of Fort Collins Food Cluster may provide some support as well.
BENEFICIARIES

Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.

The primary group that benefits is the set of aspiring specialty crop producers in Northern Colorado who may get access to land and markets that they would not otherwise be financially or professionally prepared to take on independently, helping to address the shortage of beginning farmers in the region.

Another group that will benefit is the growing population of communities considering the establishment of an incubator, as this has compiled a lot of relevant information for their use.

Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

This is hard to determine, but if connections are made in Northern Colorado, we assume that this land could help to produce up to $10,000 per year per acre adapted to specialty crops for food assistance programs and untapped markets in its first year of operations (based on numbers shared from other incubators’ who track the sales/production volumes of their participants).

LESSONS LEARNED

Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project.

The diversity of incubator models is great, and given increasing interest in Colorado, CSU Extension has great knowledge and information to share with those considering this model.

Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.

There is some stagnation in the development of the project because of an organizational shift in Be Local Northern Colorado, and key point person with the Food Bank, Karen McManus left the region. So, it is not clear how to move forward without decisions from the relevant people at the City and Food Bank.

If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

A new partnership was created when Be Local Northern Colorado was unable to handle the project at this time. All goals that were included in the revised scope of work were met (it was scaled back significantly).
Lessons learned should draw on positive experiences (i.e., good ideas that improve project efficiency or save money) and negative experiences (i.e., lessons learned about what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

Although this project was to begin development of this project, it is probably best to complete this step first, and know the universe of operational choices the City and Food Bank should consider. We should be very careful to look for great case studies and best practices around the country before investing in projects and “rebuilding the wheel.”

CONTACT PERSON

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

☐ Several appendices (outlined in the discussion of outcomes) follow or are attached as Spreadsheets.
Appendices:

Appendix I-State-wide Review of Farm Incubator Programs (Spreadsheet with program details attached)
Those included comply with at least 2 of the 3 major components of an Incubator Farm: education, land-access and/or apprenticeship. Most of the data was found using the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) online interactive map (https://nifti.wikispaces.com/National+Incubator+Project+Map).

1. Alabama
2. Alaska
3. Arizona
4. Arkansas
5. California

   a. **Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA): Monterey County, CA**
      i. Targets socially disadvantaged, small-scale and often immigrant farmers
      ii. Two training and education farms
      iii. PEPA (*Programa Educativo Para Agricultores*) program leads to a Farm Business Plan
      iv. Farm Apprenticeship Program
      v. Small Farm Incubator: business incubator, providing subsidized access to land, water and equipment and intensive technical assistance.
      vi. Sliding scale to assess course fees
      vii. Partners and collaborators: [http://www.albafarmers.org/resources.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/resources.html)
      viii. Funding: [http://www.albafarmers.org/about/partners.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/about/partners.html)
      ix. Programs: [http://www.albafarmers.org/programs.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/programs.html)

   b. **California Farm Academy: Center for Land-based Learning: Winters, CA**
i. Consists of a nine-month training program followed by a farm business incubator component. Graduates lease plots of land at less than typical market rates for up to 3 years.

ii. Provide networking

iii. [link]

iv. Private and publicly funded

6. Colorado

   a. **Old Fort Market Garden Incubator Program: Durango, CO**
      i. Provide farmers access to irrigated land and education
      ii. Attend weekly classes to create business plans, find and analyze potential markets and on-site training and mentorship.
      iii. Funding: La Boca Center for Sustainability, Colorado Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Grant
      iv. Beth LaShell at (970) 247-7189 or [lashell_b@fortlewis.edu](mailto:lashell_b@fortlewis.edu)
      v. [link]

7. Connecticut

   a. **Community Farm of Simsbury (CFS):**
      i. Inexpensive farmland, assisting with plowing, irrigation, equipment, storage and other storage.
      ii. Hands-on training
      iii. Donates produce to needy families
      iv. Non-profit and educational partners
      v. [link]

8. Delaware

9. Florida

10. Georgia

   a. **Refugee Family Services In.—Global Growers Network**
      i. Land and Agricultural Support to develop hands-on production skills during a two-season growing cycle.
      ii. Classroom training on production
      iii. Marketing and business training
      iv. Food safety training and monitoring
      v. A newly developing registry of low-cost, no-cost agricultural land
      vi. Access to sell at the market coop
      vii. [link]

11. Hawaii

   a. **Go Farm Hawaii**
      i. Up to 2 years
      ii. Land access
      iii. Mentorship and technical workshops
      iv. Shared equipment and infrastructure
      v. Opportunity to market through AgIncubator CSA
      vi. [link]
12. Idaho
   a. **Global Gardens Incubator Farm in Star: Global Gardens, Boise, Idaho**
      i. New farmers can borrow land and equipment
      ii. 1-acre plots
      iii. Markets: Capital City Public Market, Boise Coop and various local restaurants.
      iv. Farmers keep all of the income they earn.

13. Illinois
   a. **New Illinois Fruit & Vegetable Farmers: Urbana, IL**
      i. Year-long programs of classroom and hands-on in-field instruction on essential skills and information.
      ii. Access to incubator plots
   b. **Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE): Refugee Urban Farming Project**
      i. Matches the agricultural expertise of refugees with training about urban farming in temperate climates.
      ii. [http://clese.org/elder-programs/refugee/refugee-urban-farming-project](http://clese.org/elder-programs/refugee/refugee-urban-farming-project)
   c. **The Land Connection: Central Illinois Farm Beginnings (CIFB)**
      i. 1-year program with seminars, planning, field days and customized mentorships with area farmers.

14. Indiana
   a. **St. Joseph Community Health: Fresh Food Initiative**
      i. Assistance in developing participants’ goals, aspirations and existing skills to become self-sufficient in agricultural careers.
      ii. Access to free raised beds and farmland, seeds, tools, and technical assistance.

15. Iowa
   a. **Iowa Lutheran Services:**
      i. Connects growers to community or private garden plots
      ii. Provides access ot larger pieces of land to explore starting a small business
      iii. Provides training and mentoring for growers who want to get into the market

16. Kansas
   a. **Cultivate Kansas City: Kansas City, Kansas**
      i. Provides technical assistance
      ii. Access to a ¼ acre plot on training farm, soil preparation, farm equipment and supplies
iii. Assistance selling produce at local farmers markets

17. Kentucky
   a. Catholic Charities: Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program
      i. Access to land, education and training, along with sales opportunities

18. Louisiana
19. Maine
   a. Cultivating Community: NASAP Fresh Start Farms
      i. On-farm workshops, one-on-one consultation

20. Maryland
21. Massachusetts
   a. Flats Mentor Farm: Lancaster, Massachusetts
      i. Offers resources, hands-on-training and technical assistance and marketing opportunities.
      ii. Opportunities for beginning farmers, mainly refugee and immigrant populations.
   b. New Lands Farm, A Refugee Farmer Collective: Worcester, Massachusetts
      i. Refugee farmers
      ii. Access to tools, plants, seeds and land, support in marketing.
      iii. Technical assistance and training and opportunities
   c. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project: Dracut, Massachusetts
      i. 1998- The Agriculture, Food and Environment Program of The Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University
      ii. Farm training for immigrants and refugees
      iii. Partnership between Tufts University and Community Teamwork Inc. a 501©3 non-profit based in Lowell, Massachusetts.
      iv. INCLUDES FARMER MANUAL :
      v. List of partners: http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/about/projectpartners.html
      vi. List of funders (including USDA and SARE):
          http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/about/projectfunders.html
      vii. Markets: World PEAS Cooperative & CSA program, farmers markets
   d. Grow Food Northampton: Northampton, Massachusetts
      i. Provide new farmers with affordable farmland for lease
      ii. Hands-on learning opportunities with shared information, tools and resources
      iii. Educational partnerships
      iv. Farmers/Gardners, US born

22. Michigan
   a. Tilian Farm Development Center: Ann Arbor, Michigan
i. Access to land and resources for 2 years
ii. [http://tiliancenter.wordpress.com/incubator-project/](http://tiliancenter.wordpress.com/incubator-project/)

b. **Greater Lansing Food Bank: Lansing Roots: Lansing, Michigan**
   i. Limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged individuals
   ii. Access to land, basic farm supplies, training, technical assistance and cooperative marketing
   iii. Demonstration farm at the food back where produced and donated

23. **Minnesota**
   a. **Growing Farms: A Northeast Minnesota Farm Incubator: Deluth, MN**
      i. Provides access to land, farmer mentors, access to markets and reduce capital costs through equipment sharing.
      ii. Transitioning to a Non-Profit
      iii. [http://growingfarms.org/](http://growingfarms.org/)
   b. **Big River Farms: Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota**
      i. Access to land, basic farm supplies, training, technical assistance and cooperative marketing.
      ii. [http://www.mnfoodassociation.org/training-program](http://www.mnfoodassociation.org/training-program)

24. **Mississippi**

25. **Missouri**
   a. **International Institute Global Farms: St. Louis, Missouri**
      i. On-site agriculture-based career training for refugees
      ii. [http://www.iistl.org/globalfarm.html](http://www.iistl.org/globalfarm.html)

26. **Montana**

27. **Nebraska**
   a. **Community Crops: Prairie Pines Training Farm: Lincoln, NB**
      i. Access to water, tools, equipment and other supplies. Receive ongoing technical assistance as well as marketing support.
      ii. Collaboration between Community CROPS and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s School of Natural Resources.
      iii. Markets: Farmers market, CSA program and the on-line Nebraska Food Cooperative.
      iv. 3-year program
      v. [http://media.communitycrops.org/crops-files/farm/CROPSIncubatorFarm.pdf](http://media.communitycrops.org/crops-files/farm/CROPSIncubatorFarm.pdf)

28. **Nevada**

29. **New Hampshire**
   a. **The New Hampshire Institute of Agriculture and Forestry: North Conway, NH**
      i. Business planning, supplies, tools, starter livestock and shared large farm equipment. Farmers own 100% of their operations and lease the land at low or no cost.
      ii. Application Process is rigorous.
      iii. [http://www.nhiaf.org/#/about](http://www.nhiaf.org/#/about)
   b. **International Institute of New England, Common Earth Farms: Manchester, NH**
      i. Classroom and hands-on farm experience
ii. Targets new Americans

c. Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success, Fresh Start Farms: Manchester, NH
   i. Workshops on vegetable production, agricultural ESL, financial literacy and marketing.

30. New Jersey
   a. NOFA-NJ Beginning Farmers: Hillsborough, NJ
      i. Support with utilities and irrigation, low rent, shared farm equipment and barn space, experienced mentors ad educational field days.
      ii. Lank linkage opportunities

31. New Mexico
32. New York
33. North Carolina
   a. Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS): Raleigh, NC (FEATURED IN APPENDICES)
      i. Repurposing public land. Farmers get access to land in exchange for “rent” in the form of fresh farm products or other services donated to communities in need.
      ii. http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/
   b. PLANT@Breeze Farm Enterprise Incubator: Hillsborough, NC
      i. Land with irrigation to lease
      ii. Technical training on: whole farm planning, plants, soils, irrigation & equipment, planting, harvesting, etc.
      iii. http://www.orangecountyfarms.org/PLANTatBreeze.asp
   c. Transplanting Traditions Community Farm: Chapel Hill, NC
      i. Agricultural and entrepreneurial education to limited reource refugee farmers on a 4-acre incubator site.
      ii. http://transplantingtraditions.com/about/
   d. Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm: Concord, NC
      i. Access to land, classroom and hands-on experience on the farm. 3-5 Year participation periods.
   e. FIG Farm/ Maverick Farms: Banner Elk NC
      i. Affordable access to land, production and marketing infrastructure nad a support program.

34. North Dakota
35. Ohio
   a. The Kinsman Farm: Cleveland, OH
      i. Eligibility requirements:
         1. Successful completion of the “Market Gardener Training Program”
            http://cuyahoga.osu.edu/topics/agriculture-and-natural-
resources/market-gardening-and-urban-farming/market-gardener-training-program

2. Completed a farm and business plan and Kinsman Farm Application
3. Be a beginning farmer with less than 10 years of farm experience.

ii. Benefits:
   1. Access to shared infrastructure (water, fencing, soil amendments, etc)
   2. Ongoing education opportunities from OSU extension
   3. Longer term leases—up to 5 years
   4. Collaborative networking and decision making with other farmers on site

iii. Partners: West Creek Preservation Committee (WCPC), Burten, Bell, Carr Development Corporation (BBC), the City of Cleveland, and OSU Extension

iv. Funding: Ohio Department of Agriculture, the city of Cleveland and the Ohio State University Extension through a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant.

36. Oklahoma
37. Oregon

   a. Headwaters Farm Incubator Program: Portland, OR
      i. Access to farmland, farm equipment and infrastructure, farm networks and support systems and agricultural training.
      ii. http://emswcd.org/farm-incubator

   b. Grow Portland/ MercyCorps Northwest: Portland, OR
      i. Access to land, business planning and market development, financial assistance, infrastructure, equipment, supplies and agricultural skills development.

   c. Growing Agripreneurs, Oregon State University:
      i. Collaboration of multiple organizations.
      ii. 3-year training program, access to land, technical training
      iii. http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sfn/su11agripreneurs

   d. Rogue Farm Corps: Ashland, OR
      i. FarmsNext is an intro program with hands-on training, classroom learning, peer discussion and independent study.
      ii. FarmsNOW is a 2-year program with planning, designing and running an integrated farming system.
      iii. Also includes Field Based Education with on-farm trainings.

38. Pennsylvania

   a. Horn Farm Center: York, PA
      i. Access to land, equipment, storage and processing space in addition to education.

   b. The Seed Farm: Emmaus, PA
      i. Links new farmers with training, equipment and land through its Apprenticeship and Stewardship Programs.
      ii. http://www.theseedfarm.org/farm-incubator

39. Rhode Island
40. South Carolina
41. South Dakota
42. Tennessee
43. Texas
   a. New Farm Institute at Green Gate Farms: Austin, TX
      i. Educate, assist and inspire citizens.
      ii. Classes, workshops, camps and events and an Incubator Farm to have hands-on training.
      iii. http://newfarminstitute.org/
   b. Alliance Community Garden: Houston Texas
      i. Access to plots and training on local environments and growing, farming systems.
   c. Plan It Forward: Houston, Texas
      i. Economically disadvantaged refugees.
      ii. Secures land, selects, trains, and mentors farmers and establishes each on their own micro-urban farm to sell under the Plant It Forward Brand.
44. Utah
45. Vermont
   a. The Intervale Center: Burlington, VT
      i. 1990—part of the Vermont New Farmer Project:
         http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/?Page=about/funders.html&SM=about/sub-menu.html
      ii. Leases land, equipment, greenhouses, irrigation and storage facilities to small independent farms
      iii. Funding: revenue from Intervale programs, grants, community support, UVM extension and center for sustainable agriculture, USDA.
      iv. Ma2ets: Intervale Food Hub (online local foods market offering year-round delivery), city market, onion river co-op, local restaurants and local farmer’s markets
46. Virginia
   a. Prairie Crossings Farms: Flint Hill, VA
      i. Access to farmland, infrastructure, equipment, knowledge and skill transfer, advice on start up capital needs, access to markets, business planning, etc.
   b. Local Food Hub: Charlottesville, VA
      i. Educational classes, 8-month farm apprenticeship
      ii. http://localfoodhub.org/our-programs/educational-farm/
47. Washington
   a. The Organic Farm School, Green Bank Farm: Greenbank, WA
      i. Technical skill training, apprenticeship program.
      ii. http://greenbankfarm.biz/farm-school/
b. Washington Farm Link—Cascade Harvest Coalition:
http://www.cascadeharvest.org/programs/washington-farmlink

c. Viva Farms: Mount Vernon, Washington
   i. Provides: land, equipment, infrastructure, education, training and technical assistance, marketing and distribution support, start-up loans.
   ii. June 2009
   iii. Requirements for applying:
        1. Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching coursework completion
        2. Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Farm Business Planning coursework completion
        3. written farm business plan
        4. proof of experience producing the crops that you plan to grow commercially
        5. operating costs:
           a. land lease of $200 per acre, per season
           b. irrigation supply of $80-$100 per season
           c. field equipment rental
           d. expenses not covered by Viva: seeds, transplants, greenhouse supplies, row covers, hoop house construction, irrigation supplies, packaging, marketing materials, farmers market fees, business licensing fees, transport.
   6. Sponsors: Viva Farms and Washington State Extension

48. West Virginia
49. Wisconsin

a. Farley Center: Dane County, WI
   i. 2010: new farmers are supported with land, tools, education and marketing support.
   ii. Organic, 10 acres, ethnically diverse farmers.
   iii. Close collaboration with Community Groundworks—‘The Friends of Troy Gardens’.
        Also collaborates with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and many university and nonprofits
   iv. Markets: farmers markets, ethnic grocery stores, hospice care, CSAs
   v. Funding: USDA grant “Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture”, USDA grant “Small Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant from USDA Rural Development, the City of Madison, MGE Foundation, Willy Street Co-op, private donations.

b. Fondy Food Center: Milwaukee, WI
   i. Education and marketing to immigrant and limited-resource farmers.

50. Wyoming
Appendix II:
Detailed Information on Key Incubators Identified as Innovators/Relevant for this Project

Key Practices of Full Set available in attached Spreadsheet

Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) incubator-Key Informant Interview
Joanna Lelekacs is the coordinator of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) incubator farm project initiative in North Carolina. CEFS was established through partnerships with North Carolina State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The project initiative was started to “bring new farmers to the table” and has been funded by national grant opportunities thus far. However, due to issues with the Farm Bill, there was no chance to re-apply for funding when it ended this past August and the project has stalled. Despite this, the incubator farm projects are still moving forward in each community.

The Incubator Farm initiative began in the early winter of 2011, when they put out an application for communities to apply for support from CEFS. 5 communities were chosen for planning support and strategic planning. Of these 5, 4 continued after initial conversations and each program is in varying stages of development across the state. The four communities include: Wilmington, Jacksonville, Robbins and Gilford. The communities began the planning process with meetings to develop a shared vision of their community and gain a greater understanding of what an incubator farm would look like in their area. Each community constructed a graphic visual of what their incubator farm would be. They also discussed important elements of the program such as: who the stakeholders are, who should make major decisions, what the economic downturn of the program could be, and what resources aside from financial ones existed within their community that they could utilize (essentially a community assets assessment). Each community identified people and organizations that would make good partners moving forward and identified the folks of critical importance to formulate a guiding committee.

In Wilmington, a notable nonprofit had already begun working with individuals coming out of incarceration and the idea of incorporating the good work of this nonprofit with urban farming was initiated. The idea was to inspire entrepreneurship and to continue their efforts as a social enterprise within the community. Phase 1 of the project has been to develop an urban farm and to build interest and involvement with folks in the M.E. Roberts Transitional Living Facility. The facility is on public land and is still in the early portion of their Phase 1 plan.

The next initiative is in Jacksonville where the community is primarily made up of marine families. The proposal for the project came from the farmers market because they were beginning to see farmers retiring in their community with no one to replace them. Because of this, the farmers market began focusing on the incubator farm idea to encourage and support new and beginning farmers. Aside from the farmers market however, there are not many direct marketing opportunities, so the program is exploring the idea of an aggregation facility where they could sell to institutions such as hospitals and schools. Initially they had the intention of starting the project on city lands, but that fell through so they are going to use cooperative extension lands. The project is still in the planning stages. Because of our potential interest in partnering with institutions, I asked Joanna what she thought were important aspects to consider in forming this type of partnership. She explained that having enough product is important to consider when you are selling to big institutions. Additionally, establishing an aggregation facility or a food hub is important and those often require Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification, which can be tricky to get. Finally, she explained that it would be important to reach out to nutrition directors at the institutions, as they may be the best way to get into those markets.

The third incubator farm project is in Robbins, North Carolina, a former mill town close to a large affluent golfing community. The town initiated the idea to try and reinvent their town because of the mills closing. They also saw this as an opportunity to connect with the large (49%) and growing Latino population to help bring in new jobs. Because of a long history of dairy within the community they are interested in establishing a creamery. To do this they will build a market component around local dairy products before

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investing the money into starting new dairy farms. They will start by building a creamery and will initially source milk from outside of the community until they see enough demand to begin to source it locally to re-inspire farmers to have dairy cows. Three acres in the downtown area are being donated to the project by a local landowner and they are beginning to work with a local group that works with low income people including the Latino community to find out if this initiative is something that there is interest in. They are also working to begin a community garden. The project is still in the planning stages. All of the projects in Robbins are hoped to be longer-term projects that focus on the whole-food systems concept.

The last project is in Gilford County. The Gilford community has taken a more traditional approach to incubator farms. They want a regional focus with a multi-county draw of participants. The county owns the public land they plan to use and they are working on getting final approval by the county. However, due to transitions in government, they are still working out the fine details. The community is still in the process of completing a feasibility study, with major support form a local non-profit organization.

Overall, Joanna was very excited about the four incubator farm initiatives. One thing she really emphasized from her experience with the program is the important role that having a strong relationship with a land grant university is in the creation of these projects. She mentioned that having that relationship gives communities more standing when applying for national grants because they can act as a partner. Additionally, she mentioned how beneficial it was for each community to take the time to really involve the whole community in the decision making process and identify all of the usable assets within the community. This community participatory method is something to consider while moving forward with our study.
Old Fort Market Garden Incubator Program

Old Fort at Hesperus

18683 Hwy 140; Hesperus, CO 81326

This project is a partnership between Fort Lewis College, LaBoca Center for Sustainability and Colorado Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop program.

History:

2009: Introduced Incubator concept to Task Force as a long term idea for Old Fort property. Parcel known as upper seedhouse was identified because it served as the college gardens prior to 1956 and was close to an irrigation ditch that is fed by the Taylor Spring.

2010: LaBoca Center for Sustainability dissolves and offers grant opportunity for sustainable agriculture projects. Request was submitted to create needed infrastructure including wildlife fencing and basic irrigation structures for $18,000. Soil tests confirmed good soil quality.

2011: Old fence and oakbrush was removed surrounding the 6.5 acre plot. Wildlife fencing construction around perimeter began in May and 2.5 acres were plowed and disked. Mike Nolan began as the trial incubator helping to set up irrigation, planting schemes and growing models. Initial phase of fence was completed in June. Irrigation lines, a gas pump and overhead impact sprinklers were purchased. Root crops were grown on 2.5 acres with good success. Beth LaShell submitted a grant to Colorado Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop block grant program to provide training, equipment and mentorship for participants. The Specialty Crop grant was selected and will support the program through 2014.

2012: Ditches were cleaned during the offseason. Gates were constructed. 2400’ of gated pipe was purchased and a diversion box was installed so that lower part of field could be more easily flood irrigated. Second year of trial incubation added SouthWest Conservation Corp growing on a 1/8 of an acre in addition to Mike Nolan’s trial plot. Small equipment was purchased including tiller for BCS-type tractor and hand tools (rakes, shovels, hula hoes). Hosted Field Day in July and began developing Application for 2013. Joined the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI).

2013 Plans: Form Old Fort Incubator Association for all participants to make it more affordable for liability insurance.

Proposed Schedule for 2013 Incubator Program:

Incubator Applications available: Oct 22, 2012
Applications due: Monday, November 26, 2012 at 5 pm MST
Application review and Interviews: Nov 26 – Dec 15, 2012
2013 Incubators selected: December 15, 2012
Training/Planning classes begin: Jan 2013
The Old Fort at Hesperus Market Garden Incubator Information:

What we provide:

- Access to land and water
- Access to small-scale equipment (BCS-type tractor and tiller, hand tools, weed eaters)
- Basic land preparation in Spring
- Basic irrigation infrastructure (currently overhead and flood using gated pipe)
- Educational classes
  - Curriculum and books needed for training sessions
  - Incubators will begin meeting January (4 evenings per month and 3 hours per workshop).
  - Topics will include: Crop Planning; Introduction to Soils, Soil Fertility and Cover Crops;
  - Transplant Production and Irrigation basics;
  - Recordkeeping, Vegetable Post-Harvest Handling and Food Safety; How to Direct Market Farm Products;
  - Capital Resources and Enterprise Development; Weed and Pest Management; Vegetable Diseases;
  - Regulatory requirements (insurance, workman’s compensation)
- Hands-on training at incubator site
  - Irrigation Systems, Season Extension, Equipment for Small Farms,
  - Implementing your crop plan for successful marketing
- Assistance with developing Business Plan may be available during Winter (Building Farmers Class)
- On-farm mentorship during growing season
- Assistance and monitoring of recordkeeping system during growing season
- Basic harvest/processing facility

What we require from you:

- Business Plan including marketing plan
  - Resources: Ag Plan: [https://www.agplan.umn.edu/](https://www.agplan.umn.edu/) or
  - Building Farmers Class [http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/ag/CBF.shtml](http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/ag/CBF.shtml)
- Farm Liability Insurance
  - Each incubator will need to carry $1 million liability policy. We have talked with local insurance agents and have been advised that if we form an Incubator Association, the insurance could be purchased through that group at lower rates. We’ll continue to investigate this option so membership of the Old Fort Incubator Association may be required.
- Attendance at all trainings sessions during Winter and Spring
- Commitment to project
- Developed crop plan
- Provide necessary seed/transplants, special equipment, harvesting supplies
- Recordkeeping skills and reports of production and marketing data
• Daily maintenance and irrigation of plot during growing season
  o Time needed per week will vary with crop and plot size
• Adhere to organic practices and submit any proposed inputs to management
• Assistance with USDA Commodity Distribution Plot (up to 5 hours/season)
  o In 2012, we planted a small plot (less than 1/8 acre) to provide food for the June and September USDA Commodity distributions. It provided over 1200 lbs of food to low income families in the region.
• Year-end seeding of cover crop (provided by incubator project)

Proposed Access Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Size</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
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** 1st payment of fees due March 15th; 2nd payment due July 15

Non-refundable deposit of $50 due upon acceptance

Other Potential Costs
Old Fort Incubator Association Membership and Liability Insurance payment
Custom tractor work (bed shaping, laying mulch) available for hourly rates
Root crop storage available for monthly rates
We anticipate that total costs for 1/8 acre will be approximately $1,000 for year 1 if you do not have any growing or harvesting supplies.

Special Notes:
Growing areas are not certified organic but organic practices will be used by incubators
Housing is not available on site.
No greenhouse or hoop house space is available. Incubators may construct low tunnels on plots.
No perennial plantings in 2013.
Old Fort Incubator Project
2013 Growing Season Application

Name: 
Phone number: 
email: 
Mailing Address 

Which of the following programs have you completed?

_____ Building Farmers 
_____ FLC Field Class 
_____ Backyard Food Production 
_____ Growing Partners Apprenticeship 
_____ Master Gardener 
_____ Farm Internship (please describe)

_____ Please list and describe other Certificates or related programs

Please attach your TYPED responses to the following question:

1. How did you hear about the Old Fort Incubator program?

2. Explain your interest in the Old Fort incubator and how it fits into your future plans.

3. Please describe your experience farming (especially as it relates to specialty crop production)

4. Please describe the type of farm enterprise you are interested in creating.

5. What crops or value-added products do you plan to grow?

6. Describe the type of irrigation needed for your crop.

7. How will you build soil in your plot?

8. How do you plan to manage pests?

9. What markets do you intend to grow for?

10. Please describe the following inputs you need to be successful:

   a. Training 
   b. Equipment

Last Modified: 3/14/13
c.  Capital
d.  Other

11. Do you have a written business plan? If so, please attach to this document.

12. Where do you see your business in three to five years?

13. Do you plan to stay in the Four Corners region?

14. Are you ready to begin in January of 2013 with monthly training?

15. Do you have local housing and transportation?

16. With the high cost of living in the Durango region and the small beginning plots, how will you support yourself financially while working on your Incubator project?

17. Give an example of a project you have worked on independently.

18. Size of plot being requested (1/8 or ¼). Briefly explain why you have requested this amount.

19. Please include the name and contact information for three references including their relationship to you.

Please return application by Monday, November 26th at 5 pm to:
Beth LaShell
18683 Hwy 140
Hesperus, CO 81326
970-385-4574
lashell_b@fortlewis.edu
Old Fort Market Garden Incubator Acceptance Form

What we provide:

- Access to land and water
- Access to small-scale equipment (BCS-type tractor and tiller, hand tools, weed eaters)
- Basic land preparation in Spring
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### Special Notes:

- Growing areas are not certified organic but organic practices will be used by incubators
- Housing is not available on site.
- No greenhouse or hoop house space is available. Incubators may construct low tunnels on plots.
- No perennial plantings in 2013.

I have read and understand the information provided on the 2013 Old Fort Market Garden Incubator program.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participating Farmer Name(s)</th>
<th>Signature(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please return this form and your $50 non-refundable deposit (payable to Fort Lewis College) to:
Old Fort at Hesperus, Beth LaShell  18683 Hwy 140; Hesperus, CO  81326
Appendix III: Site Evaluation

Fort Collins Incubator Farm Project

Michael Baute
Spring Kite Farm LLC

Farm Site Overview

Proposed Site:
Andrijeski Farm at Reservoir Ridge Trailhead
XXX Overland Trail
Fort Collins, CO

Size:
10 ac. *
*Phase 1

Land Ownership:
Natural Areas Program; City of Fort Collins

Water:
Adequate water is available via Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal, Terms TBD

Terms of Land and Water Lease:
TBD

Figure 1- Arial view of Andrijeski Farm at Reservoir Ridge Trailhead
Site Summary
The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program has expressed interest in the use of 10 ac of land currently being leased for mixed grass/alfalfa hay production as the possible site for the Fort Collins Incubator Farm. The proposed site is adjacent to Overland Trail and is accessed via the parking area of the Foothills Trail, a connector trail within the Reservoir Ridge Trail System. Two possible fields have been identified as suitable for the beginning phase of the project, shown in Figure 2. Each field consists of 10 ac. of tillable land with access to irrigation water. Each 10 ac. field has been divided into North and South plots for soil sampling purposes.

Figure 2- Details of Proposed site for Incubator Farm

The site has access to adequate water from a lateral of the Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal, flowing onto the site from the west.

As detailed on the above image, an equipment yard and packing shed will possibly be located directly to the north of the newly built trailhead parking area and restroom facility. This location has been selected due to existing infrastructure, a favorable traffic flow pattern, and proximity to power and potable water tap.
Soil Suitability
According to the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, the soil type for the majority of the site is Altvan-Satanta loam. This soil type is considered *Prime Farmland if irrigated*, is well drained with an average slope of 0 to 3 percent. Soil tests indicate the suitability for production of mixed specialty crops, although general soil fertility is considered low and soil pH is considered high in all sites where samples were taken. This is common among soils in Northern Colorado and should not be interpreted as a major barrier to the production of mixed specialty crops on this site.

Soil reports are attached in the Appendix.

Soil Testing Methodology
Soil reports were acquired from Colorado State University’s Soil, Water, and Plant Testing Laboratory for 4 separate plots: West Field North (WFN), West Field South (WFS), East Field North (EFN), and East Field South (EFS).

Four soil samples were taken from each of the four separate plots with a soil probe from a depth of 9” – 12”. The samples from each plot were then aggregated and a total of four samples were submitted to Colorado State University.

Initial Site Improvements
Site-specific improvements and preparations will be necessary for the initial success of the project. At a minimum, the project will require field preparation and specific infrastructure improvements.

Field Preparation
Field preparation (including cover cropping, establishing irrigation system and access roads) prior to incubator launch will prepare the site and begin the process of building soil fertility and organic matter; this process will work out the “kinks” for the various technical aspects of farm operations.

Infrastructure Needs
While accommodating the constraints of the project (i.e. temporary infrastructure improvements for Phase 1), the following will be necessary:

1. Packing shed/cold storage with power and potable water
2. Secure equipment shed/yard
3. Irrigation system
4. Access roads
5. Signage

Lease Details
The current leasing rate in Northern Colorado for 1 acre of land with water is assumed to be $175 per year; lease agreement and corresponding rates will be based on this assumption.

It is understood that the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program will consider an initial lease period of 3-5 years for 10 ac. of land with adequate water right for Phase 1 of the project.
Assuming the project’s initial success, the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program has agreed to consider a longer-term lease agreement for subsequent phases of the project.

**Proposed Partners**
Currently, the following entities have expressed interest in pursing the project as partners:

Natural Areas Program, City of Fort Collins  
Social Sustainability, City of Fort Collins  
Food Bank of Larimer County  
Building Farmers and Ranchers Program - Colorado State University Extension Services  
Spring Kite Farm LLC

**Next Steps**
1) Proposed Partners to gather and discuss level of interest and finalize concept  
2) Formalize Partnership  
   a. Main Aspects of Partnership  
      i. Land/Water Lease – City of Fort Collins, Natural Areas Program  
      ii. Education Program – CSU Extension, Building Farmers and Ranchers Program  
      iii. Operational Oversight - TBD  
         1. Private farm business or Non-profit organization selected through RFP process  
*It is recommended that an established farm move onto the site to work out the “kinks” prior to implementation*
3) Natural Areas Program to put out RFP (Request for Proposals) for Operational Oversight of project  
   a. Requirements of RFP  
      i. Implementation Plan  
      ii. Organizational Capacity  
      iii. Equipment requirements  
      iv. Formal Business Plan  
         1. Long-term Management Strategy  
         2. Marketing plan  
         3. Crop/Livestock Enterprise Budgets  
      v. Additional requirements TBD  
4) Selection of private farm business for Operational Oversight  
5) Start Land/Water Lease process through City of Fort Collins  
   a. Process takes several months

**Appendix**

Soil reports to be attached in final PDF  
-file name Incubator_Farm_Soil_Reports.pdf
Appendix IV: Attached Program Budget Template using Numbers from other Programs

(Can be Customized once Operational Choices are made)