Resources, Tools & Technical Assistance
December 27th, 2016

Gardening

1. **Safety Guidelines for Youth Working in Gardens** from National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety.
2. **Teaching Kids Good, Clean, Fair Food Webinars** from Slow Food USA.
3. **Tips for Starting an Organic Garden** Soil health, ecosystem conservation, and pest control tips by the USDA.
4. **Let's Move! Gardening Guide** by the White House.

Farming

1. **Mapping Tool to Help Protect Drinking Water Sources (EPA)** allows users to learn about their water sources. Users can identify polluted sources and potential water-contaminating agents.
2. **Farm Food Safety Planning (FamilyFarmed)** per USDA certification.
3. **Large Compilation of Farmer Resources (Farm Commons)**
4. **Farmer Veteran Coalition Referral and Support Connection (Farmer Veteran Coalition)** Resource library, career and legal services, and USDA technical assistance for members.
5. **Cropping Systems Calculator (Land Stewardship Project)** is an Excel-based tool that lets farmers plug in various planting and grazing scenarios and weigh financial pros/cons of each option.
6. **Cover Crops Resource Page (Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service)** Resources with 'Soils and Systems' fact sheets, an 'Ask an Organic Specialist' section, as well as an extensive publications section.
   a. Cover Crop Chart (USDA-ARS) helps farmers identify which cover crops can function best given farm plot parameters.
   b. Economics of Cover Crop Decisions Tool (USDA) helps farmers decide how to financially manage cover-cropping.
7. **Chicken Tractor 101: What It is and The Basics of Building One** Guide to build a mobile chicken coop.
8. **How to Grow Microgreens (Modern Farmer)** Guide on planting, caring for, and harvesting microgreens.
9. **New! Updated Resources for 2017 Conservation Stewardship Program Sign-Up (National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition)** New and updated resources for farmers.
10. **Food Safety Modernization Act Resources (National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition)** provides information to farmers and food businesses to comply with FSMA while still growing their business.
    a. FSMA: Overview and background
    b. For Farmers and Processors: Who is affected?
    c. Critical Issues with proposed rules: Food safety training, facility registration and more
    d. Opportunities to provide feedback/public comment
11. **How to Farm Sustainably (New Entry Sustainable Farming Project)** plain language guides about:
    a. Applying for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
    b. Applying for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
    c. Financing the Farm: Applying for an FSA Loan
    d. Guide to USDA's NASS End of Season Fruit and Vegetable Inquiry
    e. Harvesting Crops for Market
    f. How to Begin your Small Farm Dream
    g. Managing Risks on the Small Farm
    h. Selling at a Farmers Market
    i. Wholesale Packing Resources Guide
12. **How To Determine The Right Greenhouse Structure For Your Operation** by Rosemary Gordon. When switching crops or adding a greenhouse to produce vegetables, experts say to start out small when investing in facilities.
13. **Todd's Farm Tools** for crop planning and recordkeeping.
14. **Veterans' Transition to Farming Resources** Assists veterans transitioning from active service to civilian life in agriculture. Programs include loans, grants, and training. Programs are facilitated by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, USDA Farm Service Agency, and the Department of Defense.

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15. **Soil Health Conservation Tips (USDA NRCS)** How to increase soil organic matter and improving microbe activity
16. **Assessing Soil Type (USDA-NRCS)** This resource helps farmers to identify their soils based on geographic web survey data.
17. **Why Go Organic and Where to Start (USDA)** Guides, videos, resources, certification tips:
     a. The Road to Organic Certification: Two farmers consider pursuing organic certification.
     b. What's the Organic Value Proposition?: Organic farmers talk about why to go organic.
     c. Organic Certification Made Simple: Farmers describe simple steps of organic certification.
     d. Transitioning to Organic: Producers explain in this interactive video why it may be worth it for viewers to transition to organic operations.
     e. Steps to Certification, Recordkeeping, and Preventive Practices: Three interactive videos with step-by-step instructions on getting certified, controlling pests, and keeping records.
     f. Spanish-translated resources
18. **Organic Farming Handbook (USDA)** Information on nutrient released nutrient management, crop rotations, livestock grazing, pest management, and other community-supplied topics.
19. **Resources for Organic Farmers (USDA)**
20. **Expanded Crop Insurance Coverage for Organic Production (USDA RMA)** In February, 2016, the USDA expanded the number of crops covered by organic crop insurance (57 crops) and increased the amount of insurance coverage. For example, a producer can now use a contract price for millet up to $7.34 per bushel (transitional) or $8.44 (certified organic), compared to past contract prices of $3.67 (for transitional) or $4.22 (certified organic).
21. **New Farmer Guide (USDA)**
22. **Tools, Resources, Grants, News (USDA)** Know Your Farmer compiles all USDA tools, resources, grants, for farmers.
23. **Small and Mid-Sized Farmer Resources (USDA)** Information about accessing capital, risk management, marketing, land management, food safety, and educational capacity.
24. **Ten Ways to Reduce Nitrogen Loads from Drained Cropland in the Midwest (University of Illinois**)

Urban Agriculture

1. **Urban Resource Guide (Advocates for Urban Agriculture)** Growing compilation of Chicago urban agricultural resources by Advocates for Urban Agriculture.
2. **Urban Agriculture Resources (Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems)** Academic publications.
3. **Urban Agriculture Resources (Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food security (RUAF))** News, research, guidance, and reports.
4. **Urban Agriculture Resources (USDA National Agricultural Library)** Best practices related to marketing and advocacy.

Food Systems

1. **Bon Appetit, Appalachia! (Appalachian Regional Commission)** Online tool that maps local food businesses operating from Northern Mississippi to southern New York Appalachian region. This tool was created with support from the USDA's Local Food, Local Places and Food LINC programs.
2. **State Health Departments can support farmers markets (CDC)** This fact sheet, based on a CDC study, shows that state health departments can support farmers markets by working with existing markets, providing training and technical assistance, partnering with the agricultural sector, and partnering with nutrition assistance benefit programs. This guide, also by CDC, helps public health practitioners to support healthy retailers, including farmers markets.
3. **2016 Changes to Food Donation Tax Incentives (Feeding America)** This fact sheet on the new PATH Act, passed by Congress on Dec 18, 2015, includes changes made to tax incentives for food donations. Some of the changes provide protocol for farmers, manufacturers, and food businesses that donate products.

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4. **New Tools for Starting New Farmers Markets and Local Food Systems** Radio broadcasts by Gary Crawford and Secretary Tom Vilsack to help start a farmers market or other local food activity

5. **Food Sovereignty Assessment Tools** Resources for indigenous governments to plan, implement, collect data, and evaluate community food sustainability.
   a. Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool Published by the First Nations Development Institute and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
   b. The Power of the Tribal Dollar: Highlighting the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project's Food-Purchasing Program by the First Nations Development Institute and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
   c. Report on the Navajo Nation Food System and the Case to Rebuild a Self-Sufficient Food System for the Diné People by Diné Policy Institute, First Nations Development Institute, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

6. **Videos for Farmers Markets (Farmers Market Coalition)** In-depth videos about many aspects of maintaining, advertising, recordkeeping, implementing a SNAP farmers market, for farmers markets.

7. **Good Food Organizations Guide 2015 (Food Tank and James Beard Foundation)** Directory of 1000 good, clean, and fair food organizations.

8. **Database of Food Policy Growing Food Connections** Searchable collection of local public policies that support community food systems.

9. **Illinois Food and Agribusiness Guide (Illinois Department of Agriculture)** List of companies or farms that produce, process, package, or have headquarters in Illinois. This guide can help connect producers to restaurants and buyers.

10. **Selling to Restaurants (Local Food Marketplace)** Guide for food hubs.

11. **Reports on Food Safety Modernization Act Rules (National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition)** These two reports on the FDA's new Food Safety Modernization Act include information for small and mid-sized farms, new analysis on the recently finalized exemption for retail food, and updates to NSAC's popular *Am I Affected?* Flowchart.

12. **Direct Marketing Webinars for Farm Stands, Agriculture Businesses, Food Hubs, Farmers Markets, and More (Ohio State University)**

13. **Tools to Estimate Economic Impact of Public Markets (Project for Public Spaces)**

14. **Food Hub Starter Kit (Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group)** Resources on infrastructure and logistics of food hubs.

15. **Resources on Building Local and Regional Food Systems (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education)** Resources on improving local food systems from: improving business capacity, marketing, distributing, food safety and processing, and building strong communities.

16. **Farmers Market and Local Food Systems Videos (University of Illinois-Extension)** In-depth videos and webinars about some aspects of farmers markets (food sampling certification and SNAP farmers markets); and local food systems.

17. **Food Cooperatives Research and Resources (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

18. **Food Hub Tools and Resources (University of Wisconsin-Madison)** Business assessment, tech guide, business planning, and geographic placement suggestions.

19. **Food Hub Resource Guide** Comprehensive handbook on food hubs by USDA-AMS, Wallace Center, National Good Food Network, National Association of Produce Market Managers, and Project for Public Spaces.

20. **Local Food Resources** Research and development on farmers markets and direct marketing, food hubs, wholesale markets and facility design, and USDA grants by USDA-AMS.

21. **Mapping Out Farmers Market Success (USDA AMS)** is a new tool that helps farmers markets organize street market layout of vendors to boost sales.

22. **Local Food Directories (USDA AMS):**
   a. USDA's National Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Enterprise Directory – A CSA is a farm or group of farms that offers regular delivery of locally-grown farm products during harvest.
   b. USDA's National Food Hub Directory – A Food Hub is a business that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of food products from many local producers to many local buyers.
   c. USDA's National On-Farm Market Directory – An On-Farm Market is a farm market managed by a single farm operator that sells agricultural products directly to consumers on-site or nearby.

d. USDA's National Farmers Market Directory – Farmers markets feature two or more farm vendors selling agricultural products directly to customers at a common, recurrent physical location.

23. **The Economics of Local Food Systems Toolkit to Guide Community Discussions, Assessments, and Choices (USDA AMS)** 2016 guide that provides a data-driven roadmap for communities eager to join the rapidly expanding local food sector. This toolkit is made up of seven modules, which outline a path for community leaders to conduct impact assessment and data analysis to inform policymakers and economic development officials about the potential benefits of local food initiatives.

24. **Updated SNAP at Farmers Markets Webpage (USDA FNS)** provides current info for farmers markets interested in getting authorized to receive SNAP. The new webpage now has a helpful instructional on how to get authorized to receive SNAP, how to apply for free Electronic Benefits Transfer equipment, and grants.

25. **Locator Map of FINI grantees** to view locations and funded projects for grantees funded by USDA-NIFA's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant program.

26. **Incorporating Traditional Foods to Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)** Guide for tribal communities.

27. **Interactive Map for food-related entities in U.S. (USDA)** Know Your Farmer Compass Map: Food hubs, wholesale markets, meat infrastructure, federal investments, federal partners, schools, institutions, and farmers markets.

28. **Grantwriting Resource (USDA)** for all aspects of submitting federal grants in the local food sector.

29. **Do's and Don'ts of Grantwriting (USDA)** provides some general and specific tips on writing a USDA grant.

30. **Cooperatives as a Tool for Community Solutions Webinar (USDA Rural Development)**

31. **Local Food Financing and Co-op Business Model Webinar (USDA Rural Development)**

32. **Good Food Economy Digest and Resources (Wallace Center)**

33. **Resources on Food Hub Economies (Wallace Center)** Studies, recommendations, and support for food hubs.

Schools & Farm to School

1. **Common Bytes web games and activities (Common Threads and Slow Food)** takes students and families on a virtual journey to the garden, grocery store, kitchen, and table. On the way, participants learn to prepare and cook healthy recipes.

2. **New! Strategies for Beef to School (Montana State University)** Case studies and best practices on how Montana integrated local beef into their public school system.

3. **How to Partner with Farm Credit for Farm to School** Fund Farm to School efforts with this opportunity from Farm Credit and the National Farm to School Network.

4. Farm to School Indiana has two farm to school resources with links to resources and videos:
   a. Optimizing Prepackaged Salads & Serving Lines with Local Foods
   b. Optimizing Salad Bars with Local Foods

5. **Minneapolis Public Schools Farm to School Toolkit (Minneapolis Public Schools)**

6. **Finding, Buying, and Serving Local Foods (USDA)** Farm to school procurement guide for schools. Includes fact sheets for producers and schools; a new procurement guide; and policy information.

7. **USDA Resources for Kids (various USDA agencies)** compile science and nutrition-related information, resources, and games for students, parents, and teachers.

8. **USDA School Garden Fact Sheet** Provides guidance on using school garden produce in the cafeteria, planning for food safety needs, incorporating gardens into summer meal programs and early child care settings, staffing and funding gardens, and successfully sustaining garden efforts. Farm to School and School Garden Expenses Q&As USDA-FNS answers questions on using school food service funds for farm to school efforts.

9. **USDA Team Nutrition resources** USDA-FNS farm to school curricula with materials for scavenger hunts, taste-testing stickers, popular events, and the Great Garden Detective Adventure.

10. **USDA Farm to School Facts (USDA-FNS video)** Use this video to inspire schools to consider hosting Farm to School activities. With more than 30 million schoolchildren eating lunch every day, Farm to School presents a great opportunity to help children to develop positive eating habits while supporting local farmers. More than 42,000 schools participate nationwide, which reaches an estimated 23.6 million kids. Additionally, farm to school activities have contributed $789 million in the local economy.

11. **How to Use Food Hubs to Create Sustainable Farm to School Programs (Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets)** Report on how Vermont food hubs strengthened farm to school programs.

Nutrition & Cooking

1. **Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program (USDA AMS)** Provides product grading and labeling, market news and analysis, research, and grant services. This program was highlighted in this USDA blog post about helping aspiring chefs to understand the importance of egg grading.
2. **What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl** Interactive recipes and How-To's on a budget for consumers, school food professionals, and community leaders.
3. **SNAP-Ed Toolkit (Wholesome Wave and Univ of New England)** Guide for SNAP-ed educators involved in nutrition promotion at farmers markets. Includes helpful information on fruit and vegetable incentive programs.
4. **Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program Toolkit (Wholesome Wave)** Guide for healthcare providers interested in helping patients eat more fruits and vegetables. Through the program, providers prescribe the equivalent of $1/day/participant in vouchers for patients to redeem for fruits/vegetable. The toolkit uses data/lessons gathered from 6 years' implementation by Wholesome Wave across 10 states. From 2011 to 2014, 69% of program users reported increased fruit and vegetable consumption; and 47% experienced a decrease in BMI.