

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 13, 2021

Press Inquiries: Dara Boyd
Communications Manager
dara@cadefarms.org
(267) 648-3860



**The Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship and ripe.io
Launch ripeCommunity,
an Online Farm to Institution Matchmaking Platform
to Get Local Food Back on the Menu in New York**

The Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE), in partnership with ripe.io, announces the launch of [ripeCommunity](https://www.ripecommunity.com), an online directory and matchmaking site designed to connect farms and food businesses with local institutions, like K-12 schools, hospitals and universities, as well as local markets and consumers. It launches Wednesday, April 14.

A shared, and growing, obstacle for schools and other institutions across the United States is determining where and how to source local food. Even in locales with abundant local suppliers and eager institutions, connecting the two has been a consistent roadblock for both buyer and supplier. After conducting research, surveys and interviews with community partners, including farms and institutions, CADE and ripe.io designed ripeCommunity to support and increase Farm to Institution purchasing, starting in New York, where the state legislature has already prioritized local food sourcing through incentivized programs.

“New York has one of the nation’s best Farm to School incentives, plus a rich farming community ready to sell or scale up for wholesale, with clearer direction from institutions’ needs and location,” says Kaitlyn Sirna, CADE Senior Program Manager. “Through ripeCommunity, we are offering a streamlined, transparent process for institutions by aggregating New York’s farms and food suppliers into a single, searchable platform. At the same time, we are creating another vehicle for local farms and suppliers’ products to reach new markets, not only through institutions, but also grocery stores, farmers markets, suppliers and consumers who access ripeCommunity.”

ripeCommunity is a first-of-its-kind platform that supports matchmaking between farm and food businesses and buyers. Local farms and food businesses with wholesale products can create a comprehensive profile on ripeCommunity, listing their product, business description and

purchasing instructions for buyers to view and make informed decisions about their local purchasing. Institutions will be able to conduct a targeted search of farm and food businesses, filtering based on criteria like distance, farm size, product type and growing practices. Searches can also be filtered by ownership to support marginalized communities like Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+ and women. Similarly, institutions can create profiles that list their specific needs so farms and food businesses can search for and match with them. Ultimately, ripeCommunity streamlines the process of finding food and food businesses that meet specific criteria, creates opportunities for producers to find local markets, and lays the foundation for creating data-driven, values-based supply chains in our local communities.

ripeCommunity is built with an eye towards long term tracking and traceability needs. Developed and launched by ripe.io, a company that uses blockchain technology to create a more transparent food system, ripeCommunity is designed so that future iterations will allow for tracking items and their data through farm to institution supply chains.

"The more information we can associate with producers and food businesses, the more we can focus on building values-based supply chains at the institutional end of the supply chain," says ripeCommunity's Value Chain Manager Hannah Leighton. "Not only can ripeCommunity put local, sustainable, fair food into the hands of people who need it, it can also serve as the building blocks for streamlined data collection and reporting, automated incentives, and more."

ripeCommunity has been made possible by generous funding from [foundations and partners](#). CADE Executive Director Phoebe Schreiner says, "All over the country matchmaking local food to buyers continues to be the largest hurdle. We are thrilled to have dynamic project partners to bring an innovative platform, such as ripeCommunity, to our local food system that can be modeled across the country."

ripeCommunity is free and profiles can be viewed by anyone who visits the website. Future iterations of ripeCommunity will expand its reach beyond the Southern Tier, where the platform is being piloted, and will include functionality for food hubs, distributors and aggregators. Adding the middle of the supply chain will allow us to map our regional food system, increase aggregation and distribution of local products, and identify opportunities for infrastructure needs. ripeCommunity will ultimately become a tool that everyone can use to make informed decisions about the food we eat, the businesses we support, and the supply chains we build.

###

ripeCommunity is the Online Farm to Institution Matchmaking Platform Putting Local Food Back on the Menu in New York

Launching April 12, [ripeCommunity](https://ripe.io) will help bring more local food to communities across New York by connecting institutions, like schools and hospitals, with local farm and food businesses. ripeCommunity aggregates New York's farms and food suppliers into a single, searchable database of comprehensive profiles, where institutions can conduct targeted searches, filtering based on their specific needs. Farms, food businesses, K-12 schools, hospitals, nursing homes, correctional facilities, food banks, universities and other institutions are invited to create a profile today to start connecting.

Created by ripe.io and the [Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship \(CADE\)](https://cadefarms.org/ripecommunity), ripeCommunity is free and profiles can be viewed by anyone who visits the website, including consumers seeking fresh, local food options. Learn more at cadefarms.org/ripecommunity or head directly to the [ripeCommunity website](https://ripe.io) to get started!

Join the ripeCommunity Webinar on **Wednesday, April 28 at 12pm** to learn more about the Farm to Institution market, including NY's Farm to School program, and the vision behind ripeCommunity. CADE will discuss the services they offer in technical assistance pertaining to identifying new markets, becoming wholesale ready, applicable certifications, exploring new markets and more. Participants will get a walkthrough of ripeCommunity, with ripe.io and CADE staff answering questions along the way. Learn more at cadefarms.org/ripecommunity.

###



[Ripe Technology, Inc.](https://ripe.io) is on a mission to build long-lasting trust and confidence in our food supply chain through a platform where everyone can access transparent and reliable information on the origin, the journey and quality of their food. ripe.io is committed to a more transparent and trusted food supply chain. Learn more at ripe.io.



[The Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship \(CADE\)](https://cadefarms.org) is a 501(c)3, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to increase the number and diversity of successful farm enterprises and related businesses in upstate New York. CADE seeks to build a vibrant food system in which locally owned agricultural businesses thrive and consumers are nourished by healthy, sustainably produced food. Visit our website at cadefarms.org and sign up for our mailing list to stay informed about our workshops and other CADE activities.