


Food hubs

3.6a Watch “Common Market Anchor Institutions” (6:55)

<p>Common Market Anchor Institutions</p> 
<p>The Common Market. “Common Market Anchor Institutions,” video, 6:55, posted by the author to YouTube on April 4, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWKhqErbtPw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWKhqErbtPw</p>

3.6b explore the graphic titled “Pathways to Mission Success (9 minutes).

The Common Market. “Pathways to Mission Success,” graphic, accessed January 2, 2019,
<https://www.thecommonmarket.org/about/the-common-market> <https://www.thecommonmarket.org/about/the-common-market>

Can a localized CSA-type model be organized in a way that it might be able to scale its impact to feed a region or a city? Food hubs are trying to tackle this question of scaling up and some have achieved a scale that seems to suggest it is feasible.

Common Market made its first delivery in June 2008, just when enthusiasm was taking off for the 100-mile diet. Advocates of the “food hub” model saw real potential for advancing this agenda through creating a means to systematically aggregate supply and distribution, as well as marketing and consumption of the products of local and regional food producers. Designed to close the gap between those growing good food and those needing it, The Common Market and its partners are “delivering local food for the common good.” Their video introduces the aggregation model they use for moving food from local organic farmers to anchor institutions like hospitals, universities, and health conscious businesses in Philadelphia. Following the video take a look at the excellent summary graphic of the food hub model titled “Pathways to Mission Success” that’s on the same web page. (See the detailed article in Supplementary Reading to learn more about how this model is evolving in the United States.)

3.7 Read “Follow the Vegetable Box: How Britain’s Riverford Farms Works.”

The Miracle of Feeding Cities. “Follow the Vegetable Box: How Britain’s Riverford Farms Works,” by

Vivian Winterhoff, December 18, 2014. <http://miracleoffeedingcities.com/follow-the-vegetable-box-how-britains-riverford-farms-works/> (<http://miracleoffeedingcities.com/follow-the-vegetable-box-how-britains-riverford-farms-works/>)

3.8 Read “Staff Ownership Ensures Organic Veg Firm Riverford Doesn’t Forget its Roots.” (~12 minutes)

Butler, Sarah. 2018. “Staff Ownership Ensures Organic Veg Firm Riverford Doesn’t Forget its Roots,” The Guardian, April 7. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/apr/07/riverford-organic-veg-employee-ownership-plan> (<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/apr/07/riverford-organic-veg-employee-ownership-plan>)

Riverford Farms started over 30 years ago in SW England on an undersized three-acre farm as a small food box experiment. Since then, Riverford has expanded its farm land base and now delivers 50,000 boxes weekly, but to operate at this scale it collaborates with other farmers. Their solution: a network of organic family farms, small producers, and cooperatives that collaborate as growers in a Riverford model for aggregation and distribution. On the home farm, Riverford staff pack over 50,000 boxes each week and co-ordinate their distribution through franchise delivery businesses scattered across the country. They also borrow and share equipment with over sixteen other co-operatives to keep the cost of equipment lower. The complexity of the operation is well presented in “Follow the Vegetable Box.” The owner, now nearing 60 years old, and not wanting venture capitalists to gain control of what is a U.S. \$80 million enterprise, has recently developed an employee ownership share structure that will place more than 75% of the business in employee hands. As well, governance and management frameworks ensure employee control. The Guardian article addressed Riverford’s ownership model and transition.

3.9 Read “Seikatsu: “Living People” Transforming their Relationship to Food and Each Other,” pages 133-141 from Mike Lewis and Pat Conaty, The Resilience Imperative. 2012 Section of Chapter 6 “Seeking Pathways to Sustainable Food.” (~10 minutes)

[“Seikatsu: “Living People” Transforming their Relationship to Food and Each Other.”](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/files/857633/download) (<https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/files/857633/download>) pages 133-141 from Lewis, Michael and Pat Conaty. The Resilience Imperative: Cooperative Transitions to a Steady-State Economy. Gabriola Island, BC:New Society, 2012. pp 131-141.

In Japan, the birthplace of the CSA model some 50 years ago, the Seikatsu Club Co-operative scaled the simple reciprocity principle embedded in the CSA across the country, federating small, localized CSAs (called Hans) into 32 regional consumer co-operatives. Today, 350,000 members participate in a highly efficient and coordinated system that sells over US \$1.1 billion in nutritious, ecologically grown, fair price food staples to their members. With high environmental standards required at every stage of the supply chain, the Seikatsu Co-operative system has stimulated and facilitated the growth of 600 collectively owned enterprises run by 17,000 worker-owners.

There are many more examples: some are listed in the supplemental readings. The sample here introduces the complexity, the promise, and the challenges of emerging alternatives.