BEYOND the LOCALVORES
Exploring Food Consumption in Vermont

INTERVALE FOOD HUB

GROCERY LIST
- carrots
- sweet potatoes
- tomatoes
- red onions
- romaine lettuce
- broccoli
- cucumbers

OR
Sign up for the Intervale Food Hub AT WORK!  YES
Objectives:

1. To better understand individual consumer buying and eating habits in and out of work.
2. To better understand workplace food culture.
3. To have a better understanding of the leading values of participants as they relate to local food consumption.
Desired Outcomes:

**OBTAIN...**

... a list of ways to influence healthy food culture in the workplace.

... all of the touch points for employers with food at work.

... data that tracks changes in local food consumption by individuals before and after CSA participation.

... data that tracks local food consumption between CSA participants and non-participants.

**DETERMINE** what role food plays in workplace relationships.

**EXPLORE** the possibility of advocating for a food mentor role in the workplace.

... an understanding of the factors that drive participation in workplace CSA.

... an understanding of how sustainable food fits into workplace wellness.
Desired Outcomes:

OBTAIN...

... an understanding of goals of employee workplace wellness initiatives.

... an understanding of the level of importance that is placed on workplace wellness.

... demographic information on cross section of Food Hub members and non-participants.

... the number of employees at pilot locations trying new foods.

... a clear understanding of what data is available to determine if the ease of access to local food through the Intervale Food Hub has any impact on employee health-related behavior.

DETERMINE...

... if employees are sharing more local fruits and vegetables with their families.

... if employees are gaining more satisfaction and enjoyment from eating fresh, local vegetables.
How to influence a healthy food culture in the workplace

- Flyers and other printed collateral in public spaces.
- Post content relating to healthy food culture in the workplace on company social media sites.
- Email updates and newsletters coming from management about food-related issues and healthy lifestyle choices.
- Send internal emails with information about local farms, local products and restaurants using local foods.
- Incentive programs.
- Visits from outreach representative from IFH to answer employee questions and receive feedback.
How to influence a healthy food culture in the workplace

- Make healthy choices easy and accessible (i.e., providing water bottles for employees, offering healthy food and drink options, etc.)
- Strong messaging coming from the employer supporting and encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy choices for their employees.
- Show food-related movies.
- Offer samples of local foods at lunch and/or in break rooms.
- Bring in farmers for Q&A sessions.

- Host cooking demos with local chefs and farmers.
- Encourage recipe exchanges.
- Host potlucks.
- Offer discounts or coupons to purchase local food.
- Instructional IFH videos.
- IFH payment plans/options.
- Trial options for IFH shares.
- Onsite cooking lessons.
The role food plays in workplace relationships

WORKPLACE DISCUSSIONS INCLUDE:

• Recipes
• Favorite and/or new restaurants
• Foods that employees like to cook and eat
• Health and nutrition issues
• Sources of food
• Gardening

*Level and intensity depends on management’s investment in food culture and what messaging exists in the workplace.
Touch Points for Employers and Employees

- Tabling
- Tastings
- Recipe/food exchanges
- Group dinners
- Screenings of food-related movies
- Food-related panels, discussions, seminars
- Readily available local and organic foods
- Advertising for food events
- On-site local foods market
- Informative posters, emails, flyers, etc.
- On-site nutritionist
- On-site garden plots
- Incentives
- Easy access to refrigerators, kitchens, etc.
Local Food Impact Before & After CSA Participation

OUT OF 18 RESPONDENTS

- 50% don’t purchase more local food since joining
- 50% eat more local since joining (44%)
- 44% eat the same since joining
- 12% didn’t respond
Local Food Consumption: CSA Participants (41 people)

Many people who participate in a CSA supplement their share with outside sources:

- **17% (7 out of 41) use supermarkets**
- 12% (5 out of 41) use farmers’ markets
- 5% (2 out of 41) grow their own
- 7% (3 out of 41) use food co-ops

Since joining a CSA:

- **12% (5 out of 41) shop at the supermarket less**
- 7% (3 out of 41) spend less money overall on local food
- 7% (3 out of 41) spend more money overall on local food
- 5% (2 out of 41) shop at the food co-op more often
- 20% (8 out of 41) have not changed their shopping habits
Since joining a CSA:

• 12% (5 out of 41) people are having more conversations with co-workers about local food

Since joining a CSA:

• 7% (3 out of 41) people eat out less often
• **32% (13 out of 41) people eat more fresh vegetables**
• 5% (2 out of 41) people eat more with their families/partners
• **27% (11 out of 41) people are more aware of what they eat**
• 5% (2 out of 41) people cook more
Local Food Consumption: CSA Non-Participants (191 people)

Buy local food:
• 9% (18 out of 191) garden
• 24% (45 out of 191) shop at their co-op for local food
• 18% (34 out of 191) shop at their supermarket for local food
• 20% (39 out of 191) shop at their farmers’ market for local food

Buy local vegetables:
• 16% (31 out of 191) garden
• 15% (29 out of 191) shop at their co-op for local vegetables
• 39% (75 out of 191) shop at their supermarket for local vegetables
• 34% (64 out of 191) shop at their farmers’ market for local vegetables
• 2% (4 out of 191) people get their local vegetables from delis/restaurants
Factors that Drive Workplace CSA Participation

1. Convenience (including delivery day, place, time, etc.)
2. Supporting local farmers and economy
3. Supporting year-round production of food in Vermont
4. Superior quality of food including taste and freshness
5. Health benefits of eating fresh, local food
6. Workplace incentives provided by management
Food Mentor Role in the Workplace

Thoughts from sites:
• The champions don’t have extra time to advocate for local food

• Food mentor could violate the company’s’s no solicitation rule and other policies

• One site already has a local café and life team and could see members of those two entities taking on more of a food mentor role if provided support from the Intervale Food Hub
Sustainable Food & Workplace Wellness

High importance: onsite café with sustainable food, garden plots, CSA/Local Food Delivery subsidies

Low importance: overstepping employer/employee boundary

Projected importance: sustainable foods could play a role if education initiatives were more prevalent
Goals of Employee Workplace Wellness Initiatives

- To create efficient, healthy, happy employees
- To help employees create a work/life balance
- To educate employees about local foods, eating well, and sustainable food practices
- Empower employees and help build a food community at work
- Create positive role models for employees
- To offer local, sustainably grown food in the workplace
- To spend money locally
- To make eating well and exercising more convenient for employees
Importance Placed on Workplace Wellness

High importance:
• Life coaches
• On-site fitness classes
• CSA/Local Food Delivery subsidies
• Community bikes
• Employee garden plots
• Interest free loans for gym memberships & ski passes

Low importance:
• Not responsible for providing employees with healthy foods or influencing their lifestyle choices
Demographics: IFH Members
Demographics: CSA Participants, Non-IFH Members
Demographics: CSA Non-Participants
Sharing Local Fruits & Vegetables With Families

* It’s hard to determine from data but two people did indicate that they eat more meals with their families/partner after participating in a CSA.
Consumer Profiles

**Current Intervale Food Hub (IFH) Member/Year-Round** (5 males; 4 females)

- This person is in their late 20s-mid 30s, educated, has an ample income and either lives with their partner or is married.

- They value wellness and believe that eating local, seasonal, high-quality foods is part of that.

- They enjoy having a guaranteed, year-round source of local food while supporting year-round food production in Vermont.
Consumer Profiles

Current Intervale Food Hub (IFH) Member/Year-Round (5 males; 4 females)

• This person has been eating and buying local food for a while but is fairly new to the realm of CSAs. However, they are happy with the experience and plans to join again next year.

• Their overall local food and vegetable consumption has increased since joining IFH.

Marketing Messaging to Consider:

• Eating local is the tastiest way stay healthy.
• Support your local farmers all year long. Join the IFH.
Consumer Profiles

Current Intervale Food Hub (IFH) Member/Seasonal (4 males; 4 females)

- This person is in their late 20s-mid 30s, educated, has an ample income and either lives with his/her partner or is married.
- This person is concerned with their diet and health and is making an effort to eat more nutritiously and trying out a CSA is part of that effort.
- They prefer a seasonal CSA membership because it is more cost-effective and the sizes of the shares are more manageable than a year-round membership.
- They supplement their CSA with trips to the supermarket, farmers’ markets.
Consumer Profiles

**Current Intervale Food Hub (IFH) Member/Seasonal** (4 males; 4 females)
- This person enjoys the taste and quality of IFH’s food and finds the workplace delivery convenient.
- This person enjoys supporting local food production in Vermont.
- Since joining IFH, this personal eats more local food and vegetables and is more aware of what he/she consumes.

**Marketing Messaging to Consider:**
- Enjoy fresh, delicious local foods any time of the year with the IFH.
- Delivery isn’t just for pizza. Workplace CSAs bring fresh, local fruits and veggies right to you.
- Save money while supporting your local economy. Join the IFH.
Consumer Profiles

Non-Current CSA Member/Former IFH Member (11 males; 16 females)

- This person is in their late 20s-mid 30s, educated, has an ample income and either lives with their partner or is married.
- They are vested in local food and eating well but after 1-2 seasons decided that the IFH was not the right fit for him/her.
Consumer Profiles

Non-Current CSA Member/Former IFH Member (11 males; 16 females)
- This person felt as though they were struggling to use up the food in their CSA share and ended up throwing out a lot. This made the CSA share seem as though it was not worth it.
- They ended up with a lot of food that they didn’t like and/or didn’t know how to prepare.
- They now purchase their local foods at the supermarket, farmers’ markets and co-op because they are able to purchase whatever they like and in whatever quantity they needs.

Marketing Messaging to Consider:
- We offer cooking tips, preparation pointers and delicious recipes so that you can get the most out of your CSA.
- Need a lot? Need a little? The IFH has a share that is just right for you.
- Save yourself a trip to the store. Join a workplace CSA.
Consumer Profiles

Non-Current CSA member/Former Non-IFH CSA Member  (13 males; 17 females)

• This person is in their late 20s-mid 30s, educated, has an ample income and either lives with their partner or is married.
• They enjoy buying local food, eating well, supporting local farmers and contributing to the local economy.
• After 1-2 seasons of participating in a CSA, they were not happy with the selection of food they were receiving.
Non-Current CSA member/Former Non-IFH CSA Member (13 males; 17 females)
• They had trouble using all of the food they received in their CSA share and ended up throwing away a lot and in turn, felt as though they were wasting money.
• They felt that the overall cost of the CSA share was too high.
• They now purchase their local foods at the supermarket, farmers’ markets or co-op. They can buy what they want and as much as they need.

Marketing Messaging to Consider:
• We offer a variety of CSA share sizes to accommodate any appetite and budget.
• Need help using up your CSA share? Check out our recipe collection crafted weekly so that you can get the most out of your share.
Consumer Profiles

Current Member of Non-IFH CSA (10 males; 13 females)

- This person is in his/her late 20s-mid 30s, educated, has an ample income and is married and has children in the household.
- They enjoy buying local food and spends about 20% of his/her food budget on local food.
Consumer Profiles

**Current Member of Non-IFH CSA** (10 males; 13 females)
- They prefer their CSA because it has a wide selection of food, the farm provides a lot of recipes and tips for the foods in each share and the pick-up/drop-off is convenient for him/her.
- This person enjoys buying local and having a CSA share because they value supporting the local economy and farmers and he/she likes eating high-quality, fresh, healthy food.

**Marketing Messaging to Consider:**
- Fresh, local foods delivered right to your desk. What could be easier?
- We offer cooking tips, preparation pointers and delicious recipes so that you can get the most out of your CSA.
Non-Current CSA Member/Never Participated in CSA (44 males; 70 females)

- This person is female and she is in her late 20s-mid 30s. She is educated, makes between $25,000 and $50,000 per year and she is single.
- She spends about 15% of her food budget on local food from the supermarket, co-op or farmers’ market.
- When she doesn’t buy local, it’s because it’s inconvenient, too expensive and the seasonal availability doesn’t mesh with what she wants.
Consumer Profiles

**Non-Current CSA Member/Never Participated in CSA** (44 males; 70 females)
- She chooses not to do a CSA because they’re pricey, the food choices are limited, the shares are too large and end up going bad, they’re full of unfamiliar ingredients and she simply doesn’t know much about the CSA model.
- She gardens in the summer when she wants fresh vegetables.
- She would be more likely to join a CSA if she knew more about how they worked.
- She would also consider joining if shares were cheaper and had more variety. Flexibility would also be helpful so that she could split a share with a friend or could choose what she got in each share. Cooking and recipe tips could also be a persuading factor.

**Marketing Messaging to Consider:**
- Want to learn more about CSAs? IFH offers informational seminars and farm tours!
- CSAs take the work out of eating local.
- Try a commitment-free, 2-week trial share to see if a CSA is right for you.
What data is available to determine if the ease of access to local food through the Food Hub has any impact employee health-related behavior?

*Creating the Farm to Business Impact Report.*