Arizona Regional Food Producer’s Forum
Clarkdale, Arizona | July 25, 2017
**Overview**

In Clarkdale, the Regional Food Producer’s Forum highlighted local conservation practices and opportunities for supply chain enhancement, and focus on helping vendors enter wholesale markets in preparation for the Farmer+Chef Connection later that Fall in the Verde Valley to directly establish new wholesale customers.

It was clear from this forum that Northern Arizona producers, supply chain actors, and food access non-profit staff are hungry for conversation about collaboration and shared opportunities in sustainable agriculture. This Forum established new relationships to serve as the foundation for a strong regional food economy.

This event was organized by Local First Arizona Foundation and hosted at Yavapai College, with support from the United States Department of Agriculture.

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35 participants

70% of attendees are current producers or food buyers

other participants included local elected officials, future grocers, community council members, economic development specialists, farmers market shoppers, and the general public.
After attending the Forum,

- A newly founded Pickling Business in Chino Valley, Arizona has received appropriate training in food safety, increased their skills in marketing and begun tracking their product flow, and connected with local growers to utilize imperfect fruits and vegetables for their sourcing. This husband and wife food business is now selling to 3 new wholesale customers in the Verde Valley and Prescott areas of Yavapai County.
- Two farmers in the Verde Valley are now investigating their compatibility for growing hops in partnership with The Nature Conservancy as a method of water conservation and Camp Verde’s Sinagua Malt for processing, to satisfy market demand for local hops and beer with Phoenix-area restaurants.
- Cornville, Arizona’s Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance is providing seed and heritage varieties of barley and other crops to local producers looking to increase the biodiversity of their planting and flavor to satisfy local market demand.
- The Orme School in Mayer, Arizona is pursuing financial assistance and conservation technical assistance from the NRCS to install a High Wind Tunnel on their high school campus, after participating in the presentation at the Clarkdale Regional Seminar.
- Cornucopia Community Advocates connected with area producers to increase their sources for their newly established food waste diversion program.
Photos

Programs are ready for the participants as they arrive!

Kim Schonek from the Nature Conservancy shares the story of transitioning farms from alfalfa to barley production to protect the local Verde River’s surface flow and increase market opportunity for local farmers.
Kim Schoneck and Bill McDormand talk seed-saving and seed-sharing.

A delicious meal catered by Jerome’s Mine Cafe brings us all together.
Forum participants discuss opportunities for diverting food waste.

Anne Costa from Honor Health Desert Mission Food Bank shares how their CSA program and Double-Up Food Bucks have benefited farmers and consumers in Maricopa County.