

COMMUNITY FOOD: A PILOT ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF LOCAL, SMALL-
SCALE, & SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN BOISE, IDAHO

by

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DEDICATION

To my wife Alicia Elizabeth Leacox (Hawa Ramata Sall). There's no reality where I did
this without you.

To Nuala Moxie. The absolute best dog humanity has ever seen. When Alicia was at
work, you were there.

This work is also dedicated to the people, my village, and my friends in Senegal. I would
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(and all the years before that).

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 revealed vulnerabilities in industrial food systems, particularly in relation to food security. In this thesis I explore small-scale, local, and ecologically sustainable forms of agriculture (Small Ag) that are frequently presented as options enabling communities to achieve increased food security. This concept of Small Ag deserves closer investigation. This thesis describes an ethnographic pilot study of Small Ag I conducted in Boise, Idaho during the 2020 pandemic. Using remote digital research methods to conduct surveys and interviews, I investigated the beliefs, motivations, and behaviors of participants in Small Ag. I sought to answer basic questions: What does Small Ag look like as a food production system? How do individuals become involved in Small Ag? Why do they persist? What sustains a vibrant local community of participants? I learned that participants in Small Ag emphasize self-reliance and informality. While these ideals are not inherently bad, they can become barriers limiting the coordination of Small Ag as a more widely applicable food system. Increased coordination is needed to grow Small Ag as a resilient community-level food system. My research suggests that when third-party facilitators help coordinate and organize collaborations between the many aspects of Small Ag, the possibility for broader community-level engagement with local foods increases. Future research should focus on understanding how such facilitation might be strengthened.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSU	Boise State University
IRB	Institutional Review Board
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
BFM	Boise Farmers Market
IFB	Idaho Food Bank
GG	Global Gardens
TVCGCoop	Treasure Valley Community Garden Co-op

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND WORKING IN A PANDEMIC

This chapter describes the origin of the research questions that I pursue in this thesis. I begin with outlining changes in my research due to the global COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Beginning a thesis introduction with this may be unusual, but it reflects the unusual circumstances that shaped my research. Developing and adapting remote ethnographic techniques was a key element of my research and important to understand as the foundation for what I was able to accomplish.

Completing a Culminating Activity During a Pandemic

I prepared for my initial master's project throughout the fall semester of 2019, ahead of schedule, and planned to begin my research early in the spring semester of 2020. Getting ahead of the curve turned out to be extraordinarily bad timing. I was in the process of launching my project when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. The pandemic not only derailed my plans - requiring a complete reinvention of my project - it also heavily impacted what was possible, and introduced an unanticipated learning curve. The pandemic reduced both the methods available to me and the responsiveness of my participants. To say that recruiting participants who were locked down and fatigued was challenging is an understatement. For example, my interactions with successfully recruited participants were limited to remote meetings. Understanding the limits imposed by the pandemic is essential to understanding what I was able to accomplish. This is not intended as an excuse. Global pandemics are rare, once-in-a-century events (we hope). If I could not anticipate how to respond, neither could anyone else. All research reflects a

negotiation between what can be planned and what cannot be anticipated. The pandemic simply magnified the force of the unanticipated. This research is the result of working inside of this elevated uncertainty.

My research developed as a pilot study, which is arguably best suited to this situation. The central idea of a pilot study is not only to investigate a research question but to also search for the best approach and methods for that investigation (Bernard 2011). In other words, pilot studies are an experiment in and of themselves (Bernard 2011). They are meant to be highly adaptable to the process of encountering the unexpected (Bernard 2011). As the pandemic continued, a foundational adaptation was the pivot to remote research, which included experimenting with the best possible combination of remote options. The process of discovering and changing the central research questions and methods is then an important element to understand aside from the specific findings of my research questions. This is particularly true for future research and project development that may need to be performed remotely. This thesis can also be viewed as a meta-analysis of performing ethnographic research in times of mass social restrictions and disruptions.

Discovering Questions Appropriate to a Pandemic: Seeking Alternative and Resilient Options to the Limitations of Industrial Food Systems

Even as the pandemic made planning and conducting my research more difficult, it brought new urgency to the need of understanding a problem that had long interested me: alternatives to the industrial agricultural process.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the national food system in the United States, exposing large cracks in the industrial food system (Kenneally, LeBlanc, and Arango

2020; Zurayk 2020; Galanakis 2020; Kadaba 2020; Goodman, Dahir, and Singh 2020; Mead 2020; Fitzpatrick 2020). These “cracks” expressed themselves in a variety of sudden and unexpected disruptions. For example, highly concentrated food processing facilities closed when their workforces contracted COVID, store shelves were suddenly emptied as just-in-time logistical systems froze due to the sudden reductions in the workforce, resulting in the inability of the centralized process of industrial agriculture to supply nationally. This culminated in massive food dumping and wastage (Pomranz 2020; Kadaba 2020; Galanakis 2020). Unsurprisingly, the crisis also manifested itself as record spikes in food insecurity in communities across the United States (Barden 2020; Fitzpatrick 2020).

The increase in food insecurity was unevenly distributed across the country (America 2020). COVID-19 exacerbated many existing social disparities. Some communities suffered double-digit percentage spikes among people experiencing food insecurity while others experienced low, single-digit growth (Barden 2020; Chien 2020; Unglesbee, Howland, and Vembar 2020; Fitzpatrick 2020). It is difficult to find clear and comparative evidence at the city level throughout the United States (most research focuses on the cumulative effect of the pandemic on food insecurity). Nevertheless, there is a variation from place to place in food insecurity spikes, often, seemingly regardless of population size or location (Chien 2020; Barden 2020; Silva 2020; America 2020). Understanding what allowed some cities to experience a more resilient response to the national disruption of agricultural production and dissemination is far beyond the scope of this thesis – but it did inspire several smaller questions. My preliminary research sought out a connection and raised an interesting possibility. In my initial review of the

literature, I began wondering about the impact of a functioning system of small-scale, localized food production on local food security. Some of the cities and towns that appeared to be more resilient seemed to have at least one shared characteristic: a functioning system of small-scale, localized food production alongside the industrial system.

There are doubtless many other variables that impact a community's degree of food in/security. Furthermore, this particular thesis could not hope to answer questions as large as “Can small-scale, local, and ecologically sustainable forms of agriculture supply resilient and stable food systems for large populations?”. However, as a pilot study, it could begin the process of investigating how to approach such a question. I narrowed my focus to investigate how and why individuals participate in or engage with these alternative forms of agriculture in the first place. Future research is necessary to discover any connection between these behaviors and possible reasons for increased – community-level – food secure systems.

Industrial Agriculture vs. Sustainable/Alternative Agriculture - Small Ag

Industrial or *large-scale agriculture* often referred to as *Big Ag*, is a complicated process of national, and global food production and dissemination. It operates through a complex system of corporate interest, government subsidies, and a slew of technological and biochemical applications and professions (Gray and Gibson 2013; Miles 2019; Goldschmidt 1947). *Big Ag* is a centralized process of food production, relying on massive, just-in-time logistics to disseminate its products nationally and globally (Mount 2012; Xiong et al. 2020). For many, industrial agriculture stands out as a once-great triumph of feeding the masses that is now fraught with detrimental impacts to ecologies,

economies, and access to affordable nutritional foods, primarily due to the techniques involved in production (Pottier 1999; Netting 1993; Meenar and Hoover 2012; Beuchelt and Virchow 2012). These techniques focus on requiring constant output from large swaths of land (Gray and Gibson 2013; Miles 2019). Those agricultural spaces are quickly depleted of the nutritional resources agricultural products require (Gray and Gibson 2013; Miles 2019). This has resulted in a massive industry of developing chemical inputs as alternative resources, alongside genetically engineered agriculture species that can tolerate the chemical additives and pesticides (Gray and Gibson 2013; Miles 2019). Because of this, it is not uncommon for the food and its duratives to be largely void of nutritional value – when compared with more ecologically friendly forms of food production (Meenar and Hoover 2012; Kenneally, LeBlanc, and Arango 2020; Allen et al. 2008). The industrial agricultural system has significantly altered ecologies as well as the nutritional quality of many food products (Lustgarten 2020). It is not uncommon for Big Ag to be viewed as one of the primary offending agents of global climate change (Thompson and Scoones 2009; Gray and Gibson 2013; Nyantakyi-Frimpong, Matouš, and Isaac 2019).

COVID-19 dramatically highlighted these issues of course, but the negative impacts to both ecologies and community food systems have been well-established norms for decades (Unglesbee, Howland, and Vembar 2020; Zurayk 2020; Galanakis 2020; Goldschmidt 1947; Netting 1993). This is not to suggest that every process or participant (farmers, genetic engineers, etc.) engaged in industrial-level agriculture is inherently bad. Rather, the process of creating and maintaining ecologically sustainable food systems is no longer met by industrial food production as it currently operates (Kenneally et al 2020;

Galanakis 2020; Beuchelt and Virchow 2012). It should be noted that many members of the Big Ag community are actively seeking more ecologically sustainable means of food production. There is a lot of potential for collaborative efforts between large and small-scale growers and their communities (Trauger 2016; Stone 2016; Gray and Gibson 2013). However, there is still a long way to go in such collaborations before large-scale agriculture can genuinely be considered a part of the solution again.

It is important to understand that large-scale agriculture is the amalgamation of multiple corporations (Gray and Gibson 2013; Miles 2019; Goldschmidt 1947). All of these businesses make decisions that are best for the longevity of the businesses themselves, not necessarily for people, their communities, nor the environments they live in (Stone 2016; Meenar and Hoover 2012; Goldschmidt 1947; Miles 2019). This is not to say that the intent of many of the participants of this system only creates negative consequences. The high rate of interdependence between the many parts of industrial agriculture also allows for its ability to function as a highly organized form of food production and distribution. The downside is that this high rate of interdependence also stymies flexibility (Gray and Gibson 2013; Miles 2019). As evidenced in the spring of 2020, this lack of flexibility also means any shifts towards more ecologically sustainable forms of food production are significantly more difficult.

Alternative and Sustainable Agriculture

Alternative and sustainable agriculture is in many ways the opposite of Big Ag. Alternative agriculture is a common term in the literature, referring to the forms of agriculture that do not operate on the industrial level, provide food primarily in and for the geographic places they physically exist (decentralized), and seek to put the production

of quality food (nutritional and culturally relevant) ahead of economic gain as the primary reason for production (Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Le Velly and Dufeu 2016; Mount 2012). However, the term *alternative agriculture* does not always include all of the behaviors represented across the literature or my research. It typically only refers to the for-profit versions of small-scale, local, and sustainable forms of food production, e.g., small-holder farms and farmer's markets. Private gardens and other, more informal options, are only rarely included in this concept (Philpott 2020; Taylor and Lovell 2014). Therefore, I developed the term *Small Ag* to refer to all the activities defined and presented by my research participants (see Appendix A for a full list of defined terms).

Small Ag is usually considered to be ecologically sustainable. Unfortunately, *sustainable* is also an unclear term because it can be used to refer to the persistence, resilience, or longevity of many things. Not all of which are ecologically sustainable. It can also be manipulated to infer one concept while meaning another. For instance, sustainability can be used to refer to the bottom line (profit margin) of a corporation. Simultaneously, it can suggest that the same corporation is “sustainably driven;” playing on a common colloquial understanding of the word *sustainable* to refer to ecological health or the consistent reliability (resilience) of a food system. The term *sustainable agriculture* similarly tends to include an ideal of economic sustainability for both the individual producer(s) as well for local consumers. However, this particular ideal is often found as a goal that many individuals and communities are still striving for, rather than an achieved and lived reality. Therefore, in this thesis, the word *sustainable* is used to refer to the food production techniques employed with a specific focus on ecologically friendly practices.

What the literature struggles to identify is an option for higher rates of coordination among the many forms of Small Ag food production which might make such *alternative* food systems more genuinely viable for larger communities. Increased rates of consistent coordination across Small Ag is a central limitation and necessary element encountered in my research and a primary focus for future research.

Emergent Themes: Toward a Hypothesis

My hunch is that an answer to improving nationwide food systems is related to the decentralized practices of Small Ag, which led to more questions. How might we better understand the influences that encourage individual participation in and with local foods? Unless we understand why individuals become and stay involved in producing and consuming small-scale and local foods, efforts to develop increased coordinated efforts of community-level local food systems will falter.

To begin answering these questions, I adopted the method of a pilot ethnographic case study. Ethnographic approaches make it possible to observe varied interactions that allow for nuance to present itself and unknown themes and/or questions to emerge (Bernard 2011; Otto and Smith 2014; Dourish 2006). “Nuance” refers to the tacit behavioral ideas and practices that are particular to cultural groups (Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Martin and Harrod 2015). They are typically understood as normal behaviors inside a given culture group, even if they do not appear "normal" from the perspective of an outside observer (Otto and Smith 2014; Nettle et al. 2013). In a pilot study, the idea is to work with nuance and unexpected themes (Bernard 2011). This more accurately lays as firm a foundation as possible for continued and future work (Bernard 2011). The assumption is that - as the ethnographer and outsider to a community (in this case a

community of agriculturalists) - I cannot know precisely what is or is not important to the world view of its members (Bernard 2011; Otto and Smith 2014). The worldview of the research group/population matters because it informs and influences reasons and motivations for their various and relative behaviors (Otto and Smith 2014). By adopting an ethnographic process, I was able to uncover unexpected themes with the potential of substantially altering the focus of my research.

All pilot studies need a place to start. My initial speculation was that social networks and ties might be an important factor in the process of Small Ag behavioral development. Perhaps social connections lead people to be involved with different degrees or types of Small Ag? Perhaps relationships create information access to enable learning about methods of local food production? Maybe social ties support an individual's level of participation? I formulated these questions and my research methods in several ways, trying to define and operationalize key variables, before settling on my initial hypothesis: Individuals who persist in Small Ag will have more extensive social networks in that community (of Small Ag) than individuals who do not persist.

However, as I endeavored to collect evidence, I encountered a recurrent problem: whichever variables I selected, gathering systematic evidence through on-the-ground fieldwork and interactions proved difficult because prolonged access to people and their physical spaces was restricted due to the pandemic. Therefore, I was unable to develop the scope of information and data I had hoped for. But rather than lament what I could not do, I focused on what was possible. I learned to apply remote methods, and as a result of my work, I can present valuable insights into Small Ag.

The Setting: Practitioners of Local, Small-scale, and Ecologically Sustainable forms of Agriculture in Boise, Idaho and Beyond

Boise, Idaho was chosen as the original focus for this research for several reasons. First, it is commonly considered (among locals) to have a relatively vibrant local food system. What “vibrant” means is subjective - there are no definitive standards of measurement. The definition of what “local” means can also vary, but definitions of what counts as “local” primarily refer to foods produced within a set geographic region that typically (though not always) allows direct market delivery from producer to consumer (Low and Vogel 2012; USDA 2020). Although the size of the geographic area can vary, a 100-mile radius is the most common perimeter used (USDA 2020; Market 2021). For example, the Boise Farmers Markets (BFM) uses this distance as part of its definition for “local” foods (Market 2021). Similarly, there is no absolute connection between ideas of *local* foods and ecologically sustainable foods. Sustainable foods do not need to be local foods. Nonetheless, most of the literature and my research participants view sustainability as an inherent quality of local foods (Netting 1993; Nicholls et al. 2020; Duignan 2019). Given this uncertainty around the meaning of some very basic ideas, I developed the concept of Small Ag, which I use to refer to any behavior or activity related to food that is local, small-scale, and at least attempting to be ecologically sustainable (see *Appendix A* for a full list of Small Ag activities).

My initial intent was to focus on Small Ag in just one geographic area: Boise and the Treasure Valley. I envisioned visiting with local, small-scale producers and mapping their organizational and social connections. After a few initial visits with a handful of Small Ag producers, I was impressed by their commitment to their occupation. As

someone who gardens, prioritizes local food consumption, and is at least peripherally a part of a community of producers and consumers – I understood that commitment to local food production and consumption is no trivial matter. I wanted to dig more deeply into the reasons for these commitments and perhaps relate them to social networks. However, the pandemic limited my ability to accurately map social networks. So, I adjusted. A new, more manageable - but still ethnographically driven - question emerged: What encourages individuals to initiate or maintain their involvement in Small Ag, whether as producers or consumers? I also decided to expand the scope of my research to include interested research participants from beyond Boise to develop comparative data.

Summary and Outline of the Chapters to Follow

The pandemic influenced this study in opposing ways. On the one hand, due to the pressures and limitations of COVID-19, my original project ideas and methods could not be pursued. However, stresses inside the national food system, exacerbated by the pandemic, inspired me to focus on understanding why various individuals develop and maintain Small Ag behaviors. In the ethnographic pilot study that emerged, I worked to develop foundational insights that might contribute to the growing national interest in developing more resilient and sustainable food systems. My study also provides an example of how to develop and successfully practice remote ethnographic fieldwork. This thesis describes my research process and my findings.

I have organized my thesis as follows. Chapter two discusses why ethnography was chosen as the primary form of investigation for this topic, reviews the sampling strategies and research methods I utilized, and evaluates their limitations. In chapter three, I describe the behaviors and ideas my participants identified with small-scale,

local, and sustainable food production and consumption. I try to capture the social influences and motivations that inform the development and persistence of consistent participation in Small Ag. Chapter four digs deeper into the question of why some people become involved in Small Ag, and why some of those people successfully engage in collaborative actions that sustain their involvement. In developing my findings, I draw upon both my primary research and insights gleaned from the secondary literature. I found that collaboration and coordination are especially important but also in conflict with other key values of Small Ag, primarily ideals of independence and informality. Chapter five concludes my thesis, focusing on identifying strategies to improve the coordination and collaborative efforts needed to increase the capacity of Small Ag while maintaining self-reliant ideals and other values that sustain it.

CHAPTER TWO: ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS AND SAMPLING STRATEGIES

In this chapter, I review the ethnographic techniques I utilized in my pilot study of local food systems. Sampling strategies and the research process are often intertwined in ethnography, because the research process itself generates participants in an emergent manner. For that reason, I have organized this chapter to reflect the chronological order in which I developed my ethnographic toolkit and recruited participants.

After explaining why, I chose to take an ethnographic approach in my research, I present the specific methods I utilized, and describe how I adapted those methods to a pandemic, requiring remote social interactions. It is important to recognize that ethnography is not so much a method as a bundle of methods that can be combined in different ways. Because ethnography is an emergent research process, I did not begin my work with my methods fully defined. For all these reasons ethnographic methods require more discussion than many social science methods, and I discuss these at some length.

Why an Ethnographic Pilot Study?

Ethnography was appropriate for this study for two reasons. First, the behaviors I describe in this study are heavily nuanced. *Nuance* points to the highly contextual character of those behaviors which are rooted in particular interactive spaces. They are shaped in the course of social interaction in shared, lived environments, and to understand these contexts and interactions I needed to encounter them. Ethnographic methods are widely recognized for their ability to convey social contexts. In addition, my study was exploratory. Although I started my work with a general orienting question, my

research took shape as the project progressed. Secondly, this is an exploratory pilot study rather than a test of a well-defined hypothesis. Ethnography is also widely recognized as an exploratory method. Because my work was nuanced and exploratory, I developed my research as an ethnographic study.

Anthropologists have utilized ethnographic fieldwork for over a century to generate deeper understandings of real-world behaviors, beginning with the pioneering work of Bronislaw Malinowski (Lamphere 2018). Much has changed. The approach has been adapted to novel social spaces, like digital technologies (Forsythe 1999), and proven its value in new kinds of collaborations (Lamphere 2018). But at its core, the method remains the same. Fieldwork involves spending time interacting with communities of interest to better understand behaviors of interest (Bernard 2011; Blomberg and Karasti 2013; Garvey and Drazin 2016; Otto and Smith 2014). This is doubly important when we want to understand complex behaviors which might appear confounding or irrational on initial inspection. Without fieldwork, most methods will only scratch the surface of the behaviors of interest (Bernard 2011). Fieldwork improves our chances of developing insights that can make hidden patterns visible and make sense of behaviors that may otherwise be deemed “irrational.” Fieldwork is also unmatched for exploring new social settings. Applying an ethnographic approach made it possible to adjust to the unexpected (Bernard 2011; Otto and Smith 2014; Duignan 2019). It also allowed me to recognize ideas and behaviors that matter to the people or groups who live them (Bernard 2011; Otto and Smith 2014; Duignan 2019).

Going Remote: Ethnographic Methods in the Context of a Pandemic

Traditionally, ethnography is an in-person, interactive method. It involves getting close to people and spending time with them. Initially I had difficulty making the mental shift to the pandemic situation. I focused on recruiting participants in Boise, Idaho's locally produced food systems, staying inside of the 100-mile radius that typically defines the concept of "local" foods. It soon became apparent that I needed to modify those traditional in-person methods, and replace them with remote analogs. Given public health restrictions, access to shared space and in-person contact with other people was severely limited or eliminated. So, instead of meeting people in their gardens or kitchens, I relied on remote interviews using Zoom. The remote methods I employed required an iterative learning process, and I came to recognize benefits as well as limitations. They allowed me to navigate around social distancing, but in addition, once I had embraced remote interviews and surveys, I realized that I could reach beyond the Boise area. This allowed me to develop comparative insights which reinforced a sense of the uniqueness of Small Ag in Boise while also demonstrating a more widespread value system that appears ubiquitous wherever the methods of Small Ag are practiced.

But the pandemic impacted my work in ways that went far beyond social distancing. I distributed surveys and conducted interviews at the very peak of the pandemic - in late 2020 and early 2021. Besides the pandemic, this was an election year, marked by severe political discord that was unusual in its intensity. Networks felt fragmented. People seemed to have withdrawn into smaller worlds. They were quite reasonably reluctant to visit with me. Everyone, myself included, was fatigued. Despite these circumstances, I was able to accomplish a great deal. In retrospect, the number of

people who elected to participate, and their level of engagement, is remarkable. Their willingness to reach out in a difficult time made this study possible.

In the sections that follow, I will describe how I recruited my participants, and the remote ethnographic methods that I utilized.

Non-Probability Sampling: Finding Cultural Experts

For the ethnographic work I was undertaking, I elected to utilize non-probability sampling strategies. Non-probability sampling is preferred when collecting primary ethnographic data collection, for several reasons (Bernard 2011). Non-probability sampling allows a much more direct form of recruitment compared to probability sampling methods. My goal was to find individuals with the most pertinent information and experience. I sought cultural experts who could accurately explain and describe what I could not physically witness (Bernard 2011). Discovering this population of interest was an outcome of the research process. For that reason I did not utilize probability sampling across a random sample, and I cannot generalize my results to a larger population with an estimate of how representative it is. I did encounter a high degree of redundancy in the statements of the cultural experts I interviewed and surveyed, suggesting that they shared many of the same perspectives. This held not only with my primary Boise sample, but also with experts in Small Ag I interviewed who live elsewhere. What I discovered is supported by the findings of similar studies elsewhere.

My Primary Methods: Remote Interviews and Surveys

My core data were collected using two main tools, both of which enabled remote interactions. I combined unstructured and semi-structured interviews with structured

surveys providing multiple choice and open-ended questions (the questions used are provided in *Appendices E & F*).

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were hosted on Zoom to allow for real-time but remote (COVID-safe) interactions, while the surveys were developed and hosted on the Qualtrics platform. Interview participants were asked to set aside a minimum of 30 minutes for the interview. I conducted 32 interviews with 29 individuals. No interview was shorter than 60 minutes and several ran longer, reaching 90 minutes. All told, my interviews produced nearly 35 hours of recorded video. 20 of my interviews were semi-structured - organized around a common set of open-ended questions. 12 were unstructured conversations directed at discovering unanticipated themes. Three individuals participated in both a semi-structured and an unstructured interview.

My survey was constructed using Qualtrics, and I recruited participants using social media platforms (Facebook and LinkedIn) as well as QR codes on physical flyers (*See Appendices D & F*). I also recruited survey participants via emails to the publicly accessible heads of different Small Ag groups. Ultimately, 39 usable surveys were collected. All participants were cultural experts who participate in some form of Small Ag, either as producers/growers, consumers, or both.

From Unstructured to Semi-Structured Interviews

Unstructured interviews provided the starting point of my inquiries into Small Ag. To build productive, future conversations about Small Ag, I needed to first engage in general conversations with experienced - and hopefully well-connected - local agriculturalists. I needed to learn the “language” of Small Ag so that I could build semi-structured interview and survey questions that would make sense to my participants and

address relevant topics. The unstructured initial interviews were essentially open-ended conversations (Bernard 2011). Their open, meandering quality of friendly discussion allowed nuanced insights to emerge. This allowed me to formulate better defined questions and to fill in the blanks in my knowledge; correcting or offering alternatives to my assumptions. They helped to define the shape of the semi-structured interviews and surveys to come.

Informed by the unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews were developed (*See Appendix E*). The questions were open-ended, but everyone was asked the same questions, allowing me to probe the topics and behaviors of interest. Nevertheless, a few new themes emerged at this stage. For example, the relevance of early childhood behavioral influences was not initially a point of focus for this research and only emerged as such because of the open-ended nature of the interview questions.

How My Surveys were Developed

I developed my surveys based on the unstructured interviews. The emergent nature of the interviews prompted changes to the survey (*See Appendices B, C & D*). The surveys were used both to recruit participants in my semi-structured interviews and to provide additional, supplementary data. After test iterations, I developed a branching logic leading respondent to different questions based on the first few questions. Each branch asked about the same behaviors and perceptions of Small Ag. However, the questions in different branches were structured and worded to more accurately fit a given respondents primary form of Small Ag activity. For example, a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) member, a community garden manager, and a private gardener

each experienced a survey tailored to the nuances of these various forms of Small Ag participation.

As participants completed the survey, three distinct groups emerged. The first two groups - a CSA group and a community garden managers group - were located in the Boise area. The third group consisted of several private gardeners who found the survey via social media – most of whom were from out of state. I initially planned to use the surveys to recruit interview participants, but they turned into something more valuable, providing a snapshot of a few forms of the Small Ag-related behaviors. The responses from the two Boise groups alongside the respondents from several other states tentatively support the likelihood that Small Ag reflects a widespread cultural paradigm.

How Interview Participants were Recruited

Interview participants were recruited in two ways. The first method was through the direct solicitation of participants who fit a category I call *Producers+*. This category included individuals who publicly practiced, engaged with, or participated in some form of Small Ag. To fit this category, the individual also had to be discoverable via public domains. Most frequently, this meant that they provided contact information on a public website or actively marketed their presence. If an individual fit this category they were approached with a pre-scripted and IRB-approved recruitment message (Appendix B), first by phone and then by email. If they agreed to participate, they were provided with an informed consent form and I discussed the informed consent process with them (Appendix C). All interviews were held and recorded over Zoom and stored on a secure Boise State University server. All participants have been anonymized.

My second recruitment focus was on a category I call *private participants*. This category was conceptualized to include anyone who engages in Small Ag privately, including individuals who were novices. *Private participants* were recruited via an opt-in method, requiring them to respond to public postings and initiate contact with me. To reach as many potentially interested individuals as possible, flyers were distributed that briefly described my project and provided my email address and a QR code leading to the survey and my contact information (Appendices D & F). The flyers were posted at many public locations, such as coffee shops and garden supply stores.

Limitations of the Recruiting Process

Two additional notes are pertinent. First, the anonymity of the survey and its dual role as a method of data collection and recruitment tool for interviews produces a potential overlap between survey and interview participants. However, I suspect that few or none of the publicly accessible interview participants took the survey, but some of the opt-in interview participants did. I was not able to recruit everyone I wanted to. I actively sought to connect with people who did not participate in Small Ag, large or industrial-scale producers, and local restaurateurs and Small Ag-related public outreach organizations, without success.

Chapter 2 Summary

This thesis reports an ethnographic pilot study. It relies on remote mixed methods, and combines a survey with real-time unstructured and semi-structured interviews. My sample was targeted purposefully, and includes individuals who in some way participate in Small Ag, primarily in Boise, Idaho. I conducted 32 interviews with 29 individuals,

produced 35 hours of recorded Zoom video as well as 39 completed Qualtrics interviews.

These data provide the basis for my analysis in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: WHAT SMALL AG LOOKS LIKE

In this chapter, I synthesize the results from my primary ethnographic research. Most of my work was in Boise, Idaho, supplemented by ten survey respondents from eight additional states and with remote interviews with two participants who live elsewhere in the U.S. The out of state surveys and interviews, though few, offer comparisons to evaluate the uniqueness of the Boise materials. First, I describe the most common activities my participants associate with Small Ag, noting the significance of *facilitatory* activities alongside actually *producing* and *consuming* local foods. After this, I develop several insights related to why individuals get started and persist in Small Ag. This includes a discussion of the importance of sustainability, transparency, community, and quality foods as common motivating ideas for participants.

Doing Small Ag: Producing, Consuming, and Facilitating Local Foods

Small Ag¹ behaviors can be sorted into the familiar economic categories of production and consumption as well as a third, more novel involvement related to facilitating Small Ag. As we will see, these activities are not separable socially, but instead overlap. *Production* refers to the many different ways people participate in growing local food, as well as sharing knowledge and access to resources. Examples of production activities include farm-to-market farms, community gardens, and local farm and garden stores. Activities related to *Small Ag consumption* overlap with *production* in

¹ See Appendix A for a full and detailed list of the Small Ag activities defined by the collective responses of survey and interview participants.

that they also include the acquisition of resources. For instance, farmer's markets and CSAs provide access to not only foods but also "how-to" knowledge, as do community and demonstration gardens. Indeed, all of the ways people participate in *Small Ag* provide opportunities for various degrees of social engagement – and social engagement enables knowledge sharing. The importance of this social dimension also extends to interactions between home or private gardeners. Private gardens play an important informal role in providing interested people with opportunities to learn about growing food through "over-the-fence" consultations, as well as receiving food through trading produce.

In addition to producing and consuming local food, I identified a third modality of *Small Ag* participation that I label *facilitatory*. This is the most loosely defined category. It refers to actions that connect or coordinate various *Small Ag* activities. Although individuals can act as facilitators, this category usually involves organizations - or at least collaborations - that support involvement in *Small Ag*. For example, organizations like food banks that, together with restaurants, make connections between various growers to encourage donations. A second example consists of community outreach efforts that act as a third-party, offering education and connecting people together. A third example is a farmer's co-op which aggregates the output of small-scale farmers to help make their products more appealing to a chain grocery store.

Although production, consumption, and facilitation can be sorted out as categories, they usually overlap. I learned that the majority of interview participants, and most survey participants, engaged in both production and consumption, and these activities, in turn, can overlap with facilitation. The only individuals who did not cross categories were some members of a CSA group accessed only through the survey.

Approximately half of these particular respondents stated that their only interaction with *Small Ag* was through their paid CSA membership. So, although they buy local food, they do not participate in growing local food.

Getting into Small Ag: The Meaning of Success

Now that we have a sense of the activities that are related to *Small Ag*, we turn to the question of how individual practitioners of *Small Ag* become involved in the first place, and why they persist. From the survey and interview data, I identified a constellation of themes that were articulated by nearly every persistent, successful participant in *Small Ag*.

Persistence refers to engaging in *Small Ag* across multiple growing seasons - allowing for occasional interruptions due to life events, like moving or having a child. *Success* is harder to define. In discussing success, participants identified shared themes. Two observations stand out. First, success refers to reaching personal goals, such as consistently producing the quality and quantity of food they aspire to produce, year after year. Importantly, a second indicator of success relates to social influence - such as being sought out by others as a source of knowledge. Success then, is not just about growing food, it is also frequently about increasing knowledge in a community.

Shared themes also emerged when participants explained their motivation for engaging in *Small Ag*. Many participants stated that they are involved in *Small Ag* simply because it has always been a part of their life. With continued questioning however, several additional themes emerged. Prominent among these themes was a feeling of connection and a desire to protect nature. Many *Small Ag* participants felt strongly that “mainstream” – industrial agriculture (Big Ag) – is a negative industry. Participants felt

strongly that Big Ag degrades ecologies and contributes to global climate change. A primary reason for buying local or growing one's own food was to support ecological sustainability or responsibility.

A second key theme centers on *transparency*. Participants emphasized the importance of knowing where their food comes from and how it was produced. But the greatest emphasis was placed on the quality of the foods produced by *Small Ag* methods. *Quality* refers to food that is healthy and culturally or subjectively appealing in both taste and aesthetics. Participants argue that the sustainable methods used tend to promote higher nutritional value in these foods compared to those produced by many industrial practices. Many farmers reported engaging in sustainable forms of agriculture specifically because they wanted to produce quality foods. Importantly, they put quality ahead of economic gain (though achieving/maintaining profitability is important to them). This concept is found in the literature as well. A recent study in Europe reports that *Small Ag* farmers choose to produce quality foods over methods that would be more economically beneficial to them, because those methods would require a marked reduction in the quality of their produce. The study also noted farmers' concern for and interest in protecting their local, ecological environments (Sonnino and Marsden 2005).

Life Histories: The Importance of Childhood Influences

My research points to a shared value system stressing sustainability, transparency, and quality food. Similarly, the motivations that spur individuals to engage in and persist with *Small Ag* involve shared social influences. Participants were asked about their close social interactions at various developmental points in their life history: Stage A: early childhood; Stage B: either young adulthood or the point in their life when

they first started engaging with *Small Ag* independently; and Stage C: when they established their mature practices. Stages of involvement after childhood do not necessarily correspond to a specific range of ages. I came to distinguish Stage B from Stage C based on how participants responded to questions about how they sought help, advice, and inspiration. For a person to be categorized as Stage C, they had to report passing beyond an earlier post-childhood learning period during which they sought support and information from peers or their network. In Stage C, participants state that they no longer seek out peer advice but instead provide advice to others. Rather than reach out to peers, individuals in Stage C said that they problem solve through reflecting on their own experiences along with searching Google or YouTube. Key exceptions to this pattern came from a few individuals who engage with *Small Ag* as educators or aspiring coordinators.

I will begin my discussion with Stage A. When I asked whether they had specific, direct, and frequent early childhood influences from close family and friends, 16 of the 21 participants in the semi-structured interviews confirmed that they had. Only one participant clearly responded “no” to this question. That “no,” however, reflected an interpretation of the question that limited childhood influences to direct family and friends. He went on to elaborate that his hometown was very heavily involved in a well-functioning *Small Ag* community, so there was a community influence in his childhood. Today this individual is a part owner of one of Boise's better known local farms. Three other participants did not clearly say “no” - however, in those interviews, this question was not clearly posed. Very similar results were produced by the surveys. My findings thus support the idea that childhood influences motivate later involvements in *Small Ag*.

Although the great majority of the individuals I interviewed and surveyed noted the importance of childhood experiences, I cannot say how many people with similar childhoods do not go into farming. It might be a large share. There are many obstacles from Stage A to Stage B and C, such as finding time to garden, or the space to do so.

Later Life-Histories: From Seeking Help to Offering Advice

For individuals in Stage B, peer networks were clearly important. The importance of peer networks might reflect the fact that more sustainable methods of agriculture are more labor, time, and knowledge intensive (Netting 1993; Norton, Penzenstadler, and Tomlinson 2019). This is particularly true in the initial stages of learning, especially when compared to gardens that rely on chemical inputs for success (Norton, Penzenstadler, and Tomlinson 2019; Netting 1993).

All *Small Ag* producers whose experience placed them in State B acknowledged peer support. Importantly, in describing these influences, respondents emphasized peers who shared an interest in gardening, farming, or related activities. In contrast, individuals in Stage C who were long-practiced or well-established², struggled to identify current social connections that may impact or inform their *Small Ag* behaviors. They could not quickly name others who they turned to for help. Instead, they generally stated

² One interesting finding that was not expected or built into this research came from the structure of the questions. As part of the original plan to generate social network mapping, that the maps themselves would be twofold, that is an ego network map of the individuals that an ego interacts with and the connections to organizations or entities that are not singular people but places of business, education, etc. However, it became very clear that interview participants did not easily differentiate these two ideas. In fact, it took sometimes substantial explanation and re-explanation to differentiate the two concepts for some interviewees. As this was the case with nearly all interview participants to some degree a new theme began to develop which suggests that interview participants do not delineate the difference between the individual person and the organizations that that person might own, represent, work at, etc. This may be due to the nature of the service these jobs and activities provide. Meaning, the organizations themselves are small-scale and local and may provide a sense of greater personal interaction as well as a sense of individuality in their singular location (e.g., a store that is not a chain).

that they knew enough to figure out solutions on their own which includes turning to the internet, rather than a peer, for any trouble-shooting needs they might require. However, they did recognize that earlier in their lives they did have a strong social network of peers who provided information, support, and encouragement.

We can see this with an example. One farmer detailed his journey. He started by working as a seasonal farm laborer, participated in farmer's markets, and generally embedded himself in a community of growers. Through this process, he became acquainted with established growers who became his role models. He noted that "they were on a whole other level, they were, like, so dedicated to the lifestyle ... seeing how they lived by their morals, like, so strongly, was a very powerful experience for me." While this statement expresses his progress through Stage B, he struggled to identify anyone who provides any problem-solving aid or motivation now, at least not overtly. However, I think it is likely that "established" individuals in Stage C are now so embedded in a network of individuals engaged in very similar lifestyles that it is hard for them to "see" their social influences. Thus, when asked about his social connections and influences in the present tense, he responded that his social sphere is primarily made up of farmers (or related). This sentiment was expressed by nearly everyone who qualified for Stage C and proved particularly true for *Small Ag* farmers.

It is also evident that participants in Stage C become experts for others to reach out to for help and advice. Those who were private gardeners commented on impromptu visits and queries from friends, family, and neighbors. Those who were farmers expressed a similar sentiment, and at least peripherally recognized their role in facilitating access to nuanced knowledge and offering encouragement. They also

expressed an interest in educating the general public, even though they did not always know how to achieve this goal.

Independence and Informality as Limits on Collaboration

Informality and independence – or self-reliance - emerged as two of the most central values expressed by research participants. These values influenced most of the preferred methods for learning to grow food, and who they connected with socially. Some research participants noted formal learning through agricultural programs or on the job training. However, nearly everyone emphasized informal learning, supplemented by peer advice, the internet, and occasionally books. Learning through independent “trial and error” stands out as the standard method for learning. Additionally, it was more likely for peer learning to be reported as the primary form of learning in the earlier stages, as noted above.

Almost all participants expressed an interest in increased community-wide options to learn about or engage with *Small Ag*; e.g., more growing spaces or buying options. However, the stress on independence and connecting informally might hinder those goals. Expressions favoring better connections with other producers, consumers, and the community at large include providing more growing space and increased access to purchase or otherwise acquire local foods. However, the high-degree of independence and predilection for informal forms of communication frequently hinder attempts to organize these efforts. This is often true even when individuals had websites, office numbers, and business email.

Several participants noted how “bad” they were at responding to emails or voicemails. They get busy and put responses off until they forget. It should also be noted

that farming is already more than a full-time job. However, this reduced the possibility of connecting, interacting, learning, or generating lasting collaborations. This was the situation especially among producers who are also the coordinators of collaborative and community outreach organizations. This is supported in part, by the fact that most of the organizations I identified in my research were non-responsive to my calls and emails. When I asked other's familiar with these organizations about how I might get in touch with them, I was frequently told that I would have to walk in and catch them at their place of employment; a difficult thing to do in the context of COVID limitations.

It became clear that networking and coordination and even outreach are performed mostly informally. Such interactions develop largely through personal social connections between individual growers. That said, there are a few instances in Boise, and elsewhere, of various attempts to generate greater and more consistent connection and coordination. These examples will be presented in the next chapter. It may be that this particular obstacle is in the process of being addressed by community members but for now it remains an active obstacle to increasing the capacity of *Small Ag* to support larger food systems.

The Upside to Independence and Informality

Independence and informality also have an upside. As behaviors, they support more robust and resilient forms of food production and acquisition because they are not reliant on one, overarching entity, to direct their actions. Another possible benefit is the sheer number of separate individuals and groups who maintain similar ideals and knowledge. If someone moves away or an organization shuts down, the knowledge remains elsewhere but is still available locally, even if some connections are lost. Thus,

independence and informal relations may confer a higher degree of adaptability and perhaps greater resiliency in *Small Ag*. For example, one gardener shared how much she enjoyed the incidental conversations with passerbys, which typically revolve around answering garden-related questions or offering advice. This sentiment was shared by many other research participants as well. Participants value and willingly engage in the sharing of information with other immediately accessible individuals through chance encounters. The frequency of this kind of comment suggests that at least some individuals in those chance encounters incorporate the advice into their own *Small Ag* practices. Social Network Theory suggests that, if the behaviors of *Small Ag* are viable solutions for food acquisition, then they will likely be adopted by others and continue to spread (Fowler and Christakis 2010; Granovetter 2019; Holgado Ramos 2016). There is certainly additional research necessary to determine if this is a successful behavior spreading through social networks. However, my research suggests that this may be happening, supporting the idea of *Small Ag* participation as a cultural paradigm.

Independence, Informality, and Community Buy-In

If independence and informality are foundational aspects of *Small Ag* participation, how can they be maintained if greater degrees of coordinated effort are also being sought? As I will discuss in the next chapter, a potential solution emerged. Of all the local organizations that seek to provide some degree of purposeful producer or community collaborations, only those organized by individuals who are not primarily food producers (often including restaurateurs and store or shop owners) were responsive to my calls or emails. In other words, if a person who was in charge was also primarily (by practice or training) an administrator, organizer, or some type of outreach personnel,

they not only responded to my inquiries, but their programs tended to stand out as relatively more successful in forms of community engagement compared to those that are run by individuals who are primarily producers. This strongly suggests that if a community wants to see greater access to the products or opportunities of *Small Ag*, then the individuals and organizations that seek to facilitate such access stand a better chance of success if the options to do so are informed by producers but facilitated/coordinated by others who have the time, interest, and training to organize collaborations.

While there is a great deal of individualism and self-reliance connected to ideals of engaging with *Small Ag*, participants were also community minded. The two concepts – self-reliance and community support – may appear fundamentally opposed. And as detailed above, they sometimes are. However, many *Small Ag* participants felt compelled to support their local community in terms of increased human health and local economic well-being. This sentiment was expressed by research participants who resided in nine different states (including Idaho).

A further indication that *Small Ag* represents a widespread cultural paradigm can be found in the high frequency of travel and relocation among participants, many of whom are not originally from Boise. It was common to find that an individual learned some aspect of *Small Ag* in one part of the country and then applied that knowledge after moving to Boise (or elsewhere). It appears that reasons for participating in *Small Ag*, methods of production, limitations to participation, options and concepts of problem-solving, were all similarly represented regardless of a participant's geographic location.

Most research participants expressed a belief that *Small Ag* should be prioritized as a mechanism for generating more resilient and sustainable food systems. They also

readily perceived broad, but general, barriers to reaching this goal. Concerns included limited space, time, resources, knowledge, and funding as the most commonly presented barriers. However, even while most of these problems were frequently recognized, few participants offered clear solutions. When solutions were offered, they tended to point towards local and federal government interventions. This generally translated to the idea that various levels of government, or other institutions, should provide funding to communities. This might take the form of either direct subsidies for sustainable food producers or indirect investments into public spaces and resources, such as large community gardens. This was paralleled by uncertainty about how to develop collaborations. The value of collective effort along with the uncertainty of how to best develop it was highlighted by one early interview with a long time, well established Boise farmer who said:

“...You cannot discount this (coordinated action) because no one else is doing it and we all are operating in these little niches doing something that...is not that important on the individual level but gosh, in contributing to a better food system that’s local, is really important ... identifying the actors and the needs are critical things. I’ve been at this for 30 years and you would think that this would be our time [referring to the idea of a more coordinated, well-functioning local food system], but it is not yet...”

She went on to speculate that the need for improved local food systems is not desperate enough yet, but she also described a “ground swelling” of local people who are interested in local food options and suggested that the system coordinating their actions is simply unclear to most.

Chapter 3 Summary

Participants in my research viewed success in relation to values that diverge from industrial agriculture. Most importantly, success means producing quality food that benefits a community. But although they viewed community as an ideal, an emphasis on informal connections and independent or self-reliant practices can sometimes be a barrier to greater coordination. I propose that the combination of a widely identified need for greater organization, along with a lack of specific solutions, points back to the need for more facilitators at the local level. Facilitators who can spend the time to research, ideate solutions, and provide connection and coordination while producers maintain their standards of operation. Until that is achieved, it will be difficult to increase the potential of *Small Ag* to contribute on a larger scale to resilient, community-level food systems. As I have begun to stress, facilitatory and institutional-level actions are needed to overcome these barriers, to act as coordinators and organizers. In the next chapter I will provide detailed examples of how *Small Ag* has been, and could continue to be, coordinated and organized to achieve goals of greater community impact while also sustaining the foundational ideals of individual and independent participation.

CHAPTER FOUR: GROWING SMALL AG THROUGH INCREASED COORDINATION

Research participants frequently expressed a desire to see *Small Ag* options more uniformly offered at the community-level. In this chapter, I focus specifically on how *Small Ag* activities can be coordinated to achieve increased community engagement, and provide examples of the barriers such collaborative and coordinated efforts face.

Barriers and Limitations to Increased Participation in Small Ag

As presented in the previous chapter, *Small Ag* participants value supporting the local community - economically, environmentally, and directly through food provisions. But participants also value independence and self-reliance, and prefer informal, individualized social relations. Thus, despite expressing support for the local community, the capacity to do so may be undermined by equally important values emphasizing individuality, independence, self-reliance, and informality.

Boise maintains a number of relatively successful *Small Ag* options, from farm-to-market farms and CSAs to community gardens. However, some participants felt there was a cap on the scalability of *Small Ag* in Boise. One of the most common issues presented by Boise local producers is an idea that “they” - the collective community of producers – want to encourage more participation. This can mean a number of things, from increased economic space for more farmers to establish practices or more public space for individuals to garden in. Although it was obvious early on that many well-established (Stage C) Boise local producers are sources of information, food, and social

influence, they do not always recognize the ways they can expand their influence. So, although scaling up the community-level impact of *Small Ag* is a common goal, how to do so is unclear. While many of the producers are successful in their individual practices, if the goal (as expressed by research participants) of *Small Ag* is to move from the periphery to the center of local food systems, some degree of increased coordination among producers is likely needed.

Solutions are most likely to be found by encouraging the facilitation of outreach and coordination by individuals and organizations who are not primarily engaged with production. This can be an inclusive, participatory process that builds on the guidance and experience of producers. This will allow producers to maintain their individual practices, while the extra work of scaling-up can be pursued by individuals who are not so heavily involved in production.

One example of this can be found in farmer co-ops, such as The Women's Agricultural Network). WAgN was founded in Virginia and subsequently expanded to other east coast states. It helps connect women in agriculture to one another. WAgN assists them with coordinating their public outreach and marketing. Among other things, coordination of marketing helps them compete with larger agriculture producers (Trauger 2016). This works because their products can be marketed as one large unit, which can then compete against the industrial scale produce at chain grocery stores. Farmer co-ops like WAgN are not the only example of successfully facilitated coordination with *Small Ag*. When connections across local participants are overtly facilitated, the goal of greater community support can be achieved.

While several organizations exist in Boise that attempt this, most are run primarily by producers. Those same producers value independence, self-reliance, informality, and - as importantly - are extremely busy for much of the year producing food. It should not be assumed though, that instances of successful collaboration and community outreach do not exist in Boise. There are a few promising organizations working towards this goal and it may simply be that it is only a matter of time before “success” is clearly seen. Examples from Boise and elsewhere demonstrate what successful producer collaboration and community outreach can look like and achieve with increased coordination or facilitation.

Possible Solutions from Emergent Themes as Presented in Boise and Supported by Comparative Examples

The solutions to the barriers outlined above point to increased collaborative and coordinated options that allow the informal and independent values of *Small Ag* to exist while providing a platform for increased coordination. One important aspect of this includes increased reliance on technology. For instance, social media was the most frequently mentioned method of outreach by farmers, managers, and educators, followed closely by text messaging. Beyond that, of course, is the ubiquitous use of Google, YouTube, and a great variety of apps as a primary problem-solving tool from *Small Ag* participants of all types. Technology is a resource for providing increased and alternative opportunities to participate in *Small Ag* for producers and consumers alike. This may have been particularly true with *Small Ag* during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local examples of this can be seen in the individual efforts of Boise farmers as well as from the Boise Farmers Market (BFM), which by all accounts has been largely

successful in turning to the internet during the pandemic. The BFM created an online pre-order system that allowed consumers to simply drive through the market on Saturday to pick up their already boxed/packaged order. This resulted in two particularly positive outcomes that may not otherwise have been possible without the BFM's overarching effort to coordinate³. First, the inclusion of online sales helped facilitate increased community access to *Small Ag* goods. Secondly, the shift to online and pre-scheduled ordering allowed farmers to be more accurate in their week-to-week harvest. Even though the primary reason was to maintain market operations during social restrictions, an added benefit was that farmers experienced less surplus in the form of food waste. Informants reported that, before the BFM's increased use of the internet for the 2020 season, a farmer would need to harvest more food than they thought would likely sell in a given week. This was because they could not know how many people might buy from them that week. To be as economically viable as possible, week-to-week, farmers needed to balance harvesting more than they would sell in one day, without harvesting so much as to lose more money through waste than what they would be able to earn from week-to-week sales. Once online however, farmers were able to develop a more accurate count of how much they needed to harvest in a given week, reducing waste. While this was not a perfect solution for all, it was an improvement over the standard methods for many, prior to the-pandemic. Additionally, the online option did not impinge on the independence of producers. For instance, farmers were not told to "harvest X amount each week to have

³ To be clear, the BFM also employs some of the proposed facilitatory actions of my thesis such as seating local farmers on the board who can provide accurate and applicable advice and guidance for the market as a whole.

ready for market.” Instead, consumers could search by farmer or product – leaving the farmer to operate under their own standards (so long as they filled orders of course).

In addition to allowing farmers to more accurately estimate weekly demand, the BFM’s use of the internet as a tool for scaling-up led to increased sales. One reason for this was increased access to the market by prospective customers who otherwise could not have shopped at the market due to personal time or schedule limitations. This category included families with young children that do not often shop at the farmer’s market due to conflicts in their schedules. In “normal times” the market simply requires too much time for many consumers. In Boise, the market is on a Saturday. Along with the standard mode of shopping which often involves a perusal through crowds, Saturdays are often busy with other obligations for potential customers like these families. While there are likely other causes, the online option developed during the pandemic allowed families to shop online, ahead of time, during the week, and quickly pick up their pre-ordered food on Saturday to or from their other Saturday activities. According to informants and because of the increased sales, the BFM plans to keep online ordering as a permanent option. The lesson here is that, through increased facilitation and coordination by the BFM through the internet, more members of the Boise community were able to access local foods.

Increased Coordination Could Also Provide Increased Opportunities for Local Growers

I discovered additional increases in *Small Ag* participation were produced by more purposeful efforts at coordination when growers adjusted how they market their wares and participated in more overt forms of collaborations. For example, a common

practice for most CSA memberships involves paying an upfront seasonal subscription (some offer volunteer work-for-trade as well). Upfront payments, however, can be prohibitively expensive, even though the week-to-week breakdown of that cost is often more affordable than what many might otherwise spend on similar items at a grocery store. Upfront membership fees average around \$500 for 6 months. For two people, that breaks down to roughly \$80 a month for two boxes of food each month. A “box” typically provides enough food to meet the produce needs for an adult couple. Averaged out, the cost is really quite reasonable. However, again, the cost can be prohibitively expensive when due in full, upfront.

One informant, who is also a local farmer and operates a CSA, has shifted his approach to providing memberships which offer several options for potential customers to buy his goods; particularly customers who might otherwise be unable to purchase an upfront seasonal membership. He still provides seasonal subscriptions, but also allows individuals to purchase by the week, and opt for delivery or pick up. He calls this his “Amazon model.” He maintains a website that allows customers to have more choices in how they buy-in, and what they buy. Similar to the BFM going online, these changes increased flexibility by expanding the options for participation. He noted that Boise has far more individuals who want to participate in *Small Ag* as farm-to-market and CSA producers than the current demand can support. He argued that if more farmers provided a greater variety of buying options, demand for local food would increase, and more farmers would then be able to join in.

What is lacking from this example is an effort to purposefully expand this option through coordination with other local growers. In fact, there are several examples of

other organizations - often affiliated through shared social connections - which have not quite found a solution to an issue that resonates with all of them: increasing access and participation in *Small Ag*. This lack of cooperation may stem from the emphasis on informal communications and independence in operational practice and decision-making.

An example of what solutions from increased coordination might look like comes from St. Louis, Missouri. Urban Harvest STL started out as a hyper-local neighborhood focused community garden and CSA program. It sought to develop garden space on inner-city rooftops to provide food insecure neighborhoods with direct access to affordable and nutritional foods. There are a number of added benefits to such programs such as increased local knowledge of how to garden or access healthy foods, as well as an increased sense of community well-being (Richards 2007; Okvat and Zautra 2011; Allen et al. 2008). Studies of Urban Harvest STL found that there were other pre-existing local St. Louis *Small Ag* operations. However, many were offering very similar services (e.g., education), often on the same day and time. Urban Harvest STL – as a result of efforts by individuals invested with local food but acting primarily as organizers and facilitators – was able to coordinate the actions of many organizations. This led to better scheduling and increased emphasis on the more unique services each had to offer (yoga in the garden for one group, compost making for another, and so on). Each organization experienced an increase in participants, and community members experienced greater opportunity to participate. This is a goal that many in Boise desire, but they have not quite found the right kind of facilitators to coordinate such an outcome.

Additional Boise Local Examples

There are a few promising examples of organizational coordination of *Small Ag* activities in Boise. Each often demonstrates some form of success. However, they all also recognized that greater community coordination was at once both critical to succeeding and one of the hardest goals to achieve. My conversations with them typically included both examples of their successful efforts, as well as uncertainty about how they might increase the reach and impact of their efforts beyond their particular group or sphere of influence.

One particularly unique Boise group is Global Gardens (GG). This organization acts as an incubator for refugee farmers to learn and perfect their agricultural skills and build business practices without taking on too much financial risk. Through this system they get to practice and learn while engaging with the community through CSA memberships and the BFM. GG organizers emphasize their interest in creating collaborations with farmers, gardeners, markets, restaurants, and any other *Small Ag* actors who might provide education, market opportunities, growing space, and other mutually beneficial collaborations. However - as is the case with nearly all the *Small Ag* forms I investigated - GG is frequently only able to build these relationships via word-of-mouth and other informal means of connection. While GG employs individuals who fill specific and purposeful roles of community outreach and cross-group coordination, their efforts are often one-sided. Their success is limited by the relative lack of this type of organization within the operations of others.

Another organization that clearly perceives the value of coordinated access to food comes from The Idaho Food Bank (IFB). Their operations are directed primarily by

administrators and organizers who are focused on facilitating connections between growers and communities in need all over Idaho. In fact, they put a particular emphasis on routing surplus goods from large- and small-scale farms, community gardens, and even private gardeners to their distribution sites. Through these efforts, the IFB was able to successfully coordinate the delivery of what would have otherwise been wastage during the pandemic. They were able to facilitate the delivery of foods from industrial-scale farmers to regional food banks and pop-up distribution centers. Visiting with them was revelatory, for several reasons. For starters, many of my *Small Ag* research participants perceived food banks in a negative light, as provisioners of unhealthy foods. However, despite their interest in doing just the opposite, the IFB was unaware of these negative perceptions. Moreover, as it turns out, the Idaho Food Bank – supplying the vast majority of food banks in Idaho - has engaged in a sincere effort of providing foods that stand up to national standards of health and nutrition (Health.gov 2021). They reported that 80% of their provisions met these standards during the past year.

Despite these laudable efforts, one thing is missing. The IFB is an organization that is in many ways the opposite of other local food organizations because they appear to have almost no producers – particularly *Small Ag*-oriented individuals - directly represented in their organizational efforts (e.g., on their board). I suspect that this particular issue is largely responsible for limiting what could otherwise be a more mutually beneficial relationship with *Small Ag* practitioners. While IFB values and seeks donations from and connections to *Small Ag*, their more successful connections appear to be with agricultural producers from the industrial categories. This is not a bad thing in

and of itself, but it does stand out as an opportunity for even greater community connection through *Small Ag*.

Importantly, my interviewees at the IFB were nearly the only individuals who specifically noted the need for an official person or group who could consistently act as a sort of “community liaison” between food banks and all of the different forms of *Small Ag* production. IFB proposed a partnership comprising several entities that could move uniformly across and through the various “jurisdictions” of food access and production.

Chapter 4 Summary

There are additional examples in the Boise area of organizations attempting to increase coordination of the various forms of *Small Ag*. The Treasure Valley Community Garden Co-op (TVCGCoop) is actively seeking to coordinate the efforts and outreach of local community gardens. The City of Boise is promoting health and well-being through outdoor public spaces. So, it may be a matter of time before their efforts bear fruit. What is important though, is how widespread the interest is in generating increased coordinated options for *Small Ag* across many different people and groups in Boise and elsewhere. Perhaps an aspect of the solution lies in what the Idaho Food Bank refers to as a “community food liaison.” Such an individual or group, acting as facilitators, could stitch together all the various parts that appear ready for an increased degree in collaborative action. A “community food liaison” could promote increased participation with all the many forms of *Small Ag* while also maintaining the informal and independent values of participation that otherwise often stand at odds against efforts to scale up *Small Ag*.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 created challenges, but it also motivated research on many topics, including food security. This thesis adds to the body of work aimed at not only understanding the issues the pandemic made visible, but also in helping to develop ways to avoid similarly widespread disastrous outcomes in the future.

My thesis initially sought to understand the relationship between social networks and persistent involvement in *Small Ag*. However, as is often the case with ethnographic research, engaging in the research revealed different questions and required different methods. I reoriented my research from mapping networks to developing a description of *Small Ag* as a system of social relations and values. As I learned about the values of participants in *Small Ag*, and how they came to be involved, a new emphasis emerged. *Small Ag* participants value supporting the local community - economically, environmentally, and directly through food provisions. But participants also value independence and self-reliance, and prefer informal, individualized social relations. I came to see how independence and self-reliance might be barriers to coordination. This is important because coordination is critical if *Small Ag* is going to be able to scale up and contribute more substantially to local food security. For *Small Ag* to be more successful at the community-level, increased coordination is needed, and this probably requires facilitation by other interested parties who are not primarily food producers.

Small Ag is moving into the cultural mainstream, and my research strongly suggests that all the parts needed to achieve the goal of scaling up *Small Ag* into a local

system capable of supporting community needs are already present, including an interest in doing so. Any effort to genuinely develop more sustainable food systems will have to find ways to incorporate all the many forms of food production that happen at the small, sustainable, and local scale. This starts with understanding the unifying and unique cultural, social, and behavioral aspects of *Small Ag* participation from the perspective of those who participate in it.

Small Ag Still Faces Hurdles in a Big Ag World

It became clear over the course of this research that at least one of the key elements needed to provide community-level food through local options is some degree of overt coordination of the many forms that *Small Ag* can take. In a very strict sense, it is the overarching process of coordination and organization of actions that allows industrial food production to dominate food systems in the U.S (Gray and Gibson 2013; Miles 2019). For the most part, research participants were all at least peripherally aware that the majority of food purchased in grocery stores is grown on the industrial scale. Participants consistently referred to the negative but pervasive – and convenient - options of mainstream agriculture. They did not always recognize that the primary advantage industrial agriculture has over *Small Ag* is its infrastructure enabling coordinated effort. Communities will need to achieve greater coordination if *Small Ag* is going to compete with industrial agriculture. However, it is clear that such coordination needs to be aligned with an ethos stressing informality and independent self-reliance. Future research should continue to seek to understand the values motivating and sustaining individual participation with *Small Ag*. This includes continuing to build insight into how or why individuals may seek to connect with others practicing similar behaviors.

Future Directions: Participatory Design, Network Analysis, and Non-Participants

Small Ag is limited by a gap between individual involvement and the coordination of individual efforts. This gap makes it difficult to increase opportunities for participating. To overcome this gap, I suggest developing a partnership organization that can act as a community food liaison and coordinate across the various “jurisdictions” of *Small Ag* activities. Such an entity would coordinate options ranging from increased opportunities of buying local to providing greater access to growing spaces and other resources. This will require continued effort to understand and seek the involvement of people who have the necessary knowledge. There are three areas of research and effort in particular that would benefit from increased study: engaging in participatory design, mapping social networks, and learning more about community members who do not engage with *Small Ag*, including large industrial producers.

Participatory design shifts the efforts of researchers from studying people to learning alongside them. The goal is not to do research “on” people, but rather to learn through co-creating “with” people who are affected by the research. This approach has great promise, but I was not able to pursue it in the context of the pandemic. In relation to more traditional research, I initially planned to map local social networks. Engaging participants in efforts to create better maps of the social connections among *Small Ag* participants could build support for a community food liaison.

Lastly, it would be valuable to learn more about individuals who do not participate in local foods as well as the large or industrial-scale producers. As I discussed previously, working with these categories was not feasible in this study, but knowing more about them would be helpful. For one thing, it can bring into view the constraints

they work under (Gray and Gibson 2013). There are, of course, other hurdles and questions that remain as obstacles on the path of both overtly combining and providing greater community food systems from local means. Continued research will certainly uncover additional unexpected aspects to the ideas and ideals of *Small Ag*. Through understanding and incorporating the perspectives, needs, and diverse skills of a given community, continued ethnographic research can aid in the process of designing best fit and adaptable options for resilient *Small Ag* community food systems.

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APPENDIX A

Re/Defined Terms and Definitions of Small Ag

Several terms referenced in this thesis have a combination of meanings or multiple uses therefore, I developed expanded definitions for them outlined below.

Food In/Security

Food security includes both access to affordable, edible foods, and healthy, nutritious foods. It also refers to having enough abundance to provide subjective security in the continued, daily access to that food (Pottier 1999; Reis and Ferreira 2016; McCabe 2014). The idea of *food security* has expanded to include the concept of *food sovereignty*. This refers to the right of a group to produce or access any type of food they deem most appropriate for their economic, ecological, nutritional, and cultural needs. Furthermore, these choices cannot negatively impact the *food sovereignty* of others (Beuchelt and Virchow 2012; Pottier 1999; Marchione 1996; Thompson and Scoones 2009). *Food security* also encompasses the concept of the right to adequate foods, thus, reinforcing the idea of available healthy foods in affordable abundance for any person/s or group/s without interruption (Pottier 1999; Beuchelt and Virchow 2012).

The absence of affordable, edible foods, and healthy, nutritious foods is termed as *food insecurity* (Kenneally, LeBlanc, and Arango 2020; Meenar and Hoover 2012; Gareau 2004). A person can also be *food insecure* even if they eat regular or large quantities of food (Gareau 2004; Beuchelt and Virchow 2012), due to the low nutritional value in that food; e.g., fast or junk foods. Additionally, the lack of control over or consistent predictability of affordable, available, culturally and environmentally appropriate foods can also refer to *food insecurity* (Beuchelt and Virchow 2012; Thompson and Scoones 2009). Typically, *food insecurity* in the U.S. is perpetuated by

the centralization of industrial agriculture. It is also due to limited or non-existent access to locally grown foods (Beuchelt and Virchow 2012; Thompson and Scoones 2009; Pottier 1999). These two concepts are often opposite sides of the same coin, and *access* is central to this issue.

Access

Access, or lack thereof, is an umbrella for several meanings. Typically, there is at least one of three general instances of *access* that is missing in the case of *food insecurity*: affordability access, physical access, and knowledge access (ability of how to grow or find foods) (Reis and Ferreira 2016; Gareau 2004; Lustgarten 2020; Meenar and Hoover 2012). When a population/s experiences nonexistent or scarce consistent access to healthy food it is typically due to one of these issues, and frequently a combination of them (Beuchelt and Virchow 2012; Thompson and Scoones 2009; Meenar and Hoover 2012). The geographic area/s of these population/s are commonly referred to as *food deserts* (Kenneally, LeBlanc, and Arango 2020; Meenar and Hoover 2012). *Food deserts* are places of any given population size that have no, limited, or inconsistent *access* to or control over nutritional and culturally appropriate foods. For example, pockets of inner-cities are often *food deserts*, even though they are a few blocks away from grocery stores, farmers markets, or garden space. Issues of transportation, costs, and time can isolate whole populations within a larger community from achieving *food security* (Androff, Fike, and Rorke 2017).

Centralized, industrial agriculture shares some of the blame, but small-scale and local food producers are limited in addressing the issue of unquestionable *access to food security*, regardless of socio-economic standing (Gray and Gibson 2013; Androff, Fike,

and Rorke 2017; Meenar and Hoover 2012; Campbell 2016). This is not because the means, tools, or the will does not exist among the local food producers, it is likely due to the absence of organized collaboration across the various growers, consumers, and the diverse skill-sets required to do so.

Sustainability, Sustainable Agriculture

The terms *sustainability* and *sustainable agriculture* appear to share a meaning. However, they have several definitions depending on who or what is seeking *sustainability* and who or what is referring to *sustainable agriculture* (Raynaut et al. 2007). Generally, both terms are used to refer to *ecologically sustainable* practices of the operation at hand, be that agriculture or otherwise. However, the word *sustainable* can also be co-opted by others who intend to capitalize on the fairly ubiquitous buzzword.

Currently, there is no single word that specifically refers to the idea of small-scale, local, environmentally sustainable agricultural practices (except perhaps in context with the use of *resiliency*). Therefore, the word *sustainable* refers to this conglomerated definition in which I subsequently incorporated into the term that I use throughout this thesis – *Small Ag*.

Resiliency

In relation to *food security*; *resilience* is used to capture all the interacting meanings of *sustainability*, particularly at the community-level. It refers to a given community's ability to create and/or maintain food systems that supply consistent access to quality foods in quantity. This is ideally true both in normal times and among disruptions (whether locally, nationally, or globally by natural or human means) (Reis and Ferreira 2016; Raynaut et al. 2007; Thompson and Scoones 2009).

Redundancy

In relation to *resilience*; *redundancy* is used to enforce the general means by which a community's food system might achieve and maintain resiliency. For example, through the combination of multiple systems of food production and access so that one system is never solely responsible for the entirety of food availability.

Local Foods and Acquisition

Defining what makes food "*local*" is particularly difficult and can be arbitrary given the storage and transport technologies as well as the global access (internet, shipping, etc.) to foods in today's world. Restaurants and business – when promoting a "locally grown" event – tend to stipulate local having been grown or produced (or related) within 100-mile radius of the locale (Le Velly and Dufeu 2016; Mount 2012; Low and Vogel 2012; Market 2021). However, the definition of *local foods* goes beyond the location of its production. According to the majority of my survey and interview participants, it also includes the methods and techniques used to produce the foods. There is also a general assumption of high nutritional value and flavor quality of the foods (Mendoza 2016; Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Market 2021; Low and Vogel 2012).

Quality Food/s

The term *quality food/s* refers to both the nutritional and aesthetic (look, taste, texture, etc.) value of a given food, particularly with the perspective of the culture(s) and community(s) consuming it/them (Goldschmidt 1947; Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Sage 2003; Beuchelt and Virchow 2012; Thompson and Scoones 2009).

Small-Scale Agriculture and Food Production

The USDA's definition of small-scale agriculture essentially boils down to any farm that grosses less than \$250,000 annually (MacDonald 2017). However, *small-scale agriculture* encompasses much variability in how food is grown, so the term requires a more nuanced definition. I was not able to come up with a succinct option or consistent definition, therefore I developed a set of definitions of activities that my primary evidence produced. There are likely additional activities that could be included in the following list that were not included, but can be investigated in future research.

Small-Holder, Farm-to-Market Farms

Regionally local and small-scale farms stand out as perhaps the most obvious form of local food production (if not the farm, then the farmer's market). Indeed, they are arguably the simplest in defining their role in local foods. They tend to consist of one or a small handful of owners – sometimes friends, sometimes as family farms – which can be distinguished from their lack of industrial or corporate ties. Small/local farms tend to fit the standards of ecological and economic suitability as outlined above. Their role is to produce the *quality* food consumers want, ideally at more affordable prices, while staying economically viable as an operation.

Local farms and farmers, when well-integrated into the greater community offer, (at least potentially), a great deal of knowledge as a resource. They are not only the provisioners of food but are also often the sources for in-demand local (“organic”) seeds (the ‘local’ is important here because seeds developed in a given location are likely to be more viable when used in the same relative area and climate). They also have the potential to supply some jobs not only for any laborers, but for any number of community

members. This later option refers to concepts of greater collaboration with organizers and facilitators. Additionally, is the greater ecological viability the collective actions of small-scale farmers can offer when their practices are sustainably-minded.

Community Supported Agriculture Farms (CSA)

This is typically one or a small group of famers/growers who manage and operate one or a few growing space(s) who provide food for members. While they are technically small-holder farms, the focus of a CSA is typically on providing more direct access to produce for the member who pays an annual subscription. Though there is overlap between farm-to-market farms and CSAs, members of CSAs tend to live ‘close’ to the CSA (measured in terms of a short drive) and buy-in either through monetary subscription or volunteer work for some aspect of the CSA (farm work, delivery, etc.). The ‘season’ itself is determined by a number of factors including the climate of the region, and the CSA’s operational means, e.g., season prolonging technologies like green houses, water, and labor⁴.

Community Gardens

Community gardens offer an interesting blend of producer and consumer overlap. On the surface, *community gardens* are a simple idea. They are places of indeterminate size – typically filling the space a group or organization can find – that provide a locale for members to grow food. Individual plot size can be variable, but typically a *community garden* will have plots averaging about 3x6 feet (or 1x3 meters). Individuals generally pay an annual fee. This fee is often nominal but can nevertheless be a limiting

⁴ As the reader can see, the definition of a CSA is highly variable but does have some loose, standard parameters. This should be considered as an example and normal for all things *local* and *small-scale* in terms of food production.

factor, one that is sometimes addressed by outside donations when the situation calls for it. The fee tends to support the maintenance and utilities of the general area (supplies, water, etc.). The garden – if successful – has a manager or collective management which oversees the allocation of funds, coordination of any work events, reinforcements of rules, and so on.

Community gardens offer increased options for interacting with and acquiring food on the *Small Ag* spectrum. Environmentally conscious techniques of gardening in *community gardens* appears fairly standard.

Community gardens play an important role in providing supplemental food for families (and often other members of the community via church or food bank donations). This is particularly necessary for those who do not have access to private growing space where they live. *Community gardens* also provide general educational awareness for the concepts of *local* and *sustainable*. They are, or can be, a bridge between farmers, educators, municipal interests, and the everyday consumer. This happens through hands-on, experiential learning and access to local quality foods, as well as buy-in to the community via participation with others from the community through a shared sense of accountability (Richards 2007; Allen et al. 2008). A key (potential) role of *community gardens* can be to teach, demonstrate, and supply the concept of community buy-in, particularly regarding quality foods and healthy communities.

Demonstration Gardens and Related Educators

Educators and *demonstration gardens* purposefully engage with others to present and increase knowledge regarding small-scale and local food options; production or consumption. *Educators* can include Master Gardeners, journalists, and school teachers.

A few participants in my research who fall into this category all expressed a shared interest in spreading the awareness of and/or access to participating in *Small Ag*. The Boise Urban Garden School (B.U.G.S.) is an excellent example of this.

Home, Private Garden/ers

This may be a fairly self-explanatory aspect of local foods, but there are many roles – not to mention forms – private gardens can take. In this thesis, this category refers to any personal growing practices in or on privately occupied space. A home garden can be in the yard, side, front, or back. It can also refer to balcony gardens, indoor gardens, and any scale or size of space that is producing food, privately. In other words, not for market. Though trade is centrally an aspect of private gardens.

Home gardens and community gardens share some common ground. There is no standard regulation of practice regarding maintenance, chemical application and so forth. The potential exists that far more home gardeners are engaged with less sustainable practices than their counterparts in community gardens are. This might be because their actions are less visible to others or because they are not interacting with a social group of growers, potentially altering their method of production.

Private gardeners not only supply various quantities of food to family, friends, and neighbors, but are also responsible for donating surpluses to organizations such as churches, food banks, and homeless shelters. Home gardeners may also be responsible for lots of informal behavior transmission and maintenance facilitated by the extra food they supply for others in their immediate social sphere. They also act as both a source of knowledge and encouragement (often incidentally) for others to begin, alter, or persist with their own gardens (or related).

Local Markets

Markets include stores that primarily provide resources in support of ecologically sustainable forms of growing and are also locally-owned. This means *markets* may be a farmer's market for the purchase of locally grown food, or a local garden store which supplies everything from soil to ecologically friendly additives. Farmer's markets, grocery stores, garden supply stores, and more can act as a bridge to accessing or participating with locally grown foods through both the resources they provide and the knowledge they make available.

Participation barriers exist and generally money is the principal gate keeper. Starting a garden for the first time (not to mention a farm) or buying only from the farmers market can appear, and often is, expensive, prohibitively so to many. However, if or when incorporated with all of the other forms of local food production, the issue of prohibitive costs would likely be mediated.

Beyond the continued search for routes around economic barriers, *markets* provide a place for locating local knowledge sources; particularly for information that is specific to the climate and region. Beyond knowledge, are the seeds, plants, and other resources needed to perpetuate the vast array of *Small Ag* production. Additionally, many of the owners and operators of the various *markets* are, consciously or otherwise appear to be connective tissue between many *Small Ag* participants; a concept presented by many interviewees.

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Number and Informed Consent Form

This research was conducted with the permission of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Boise State University, 041-SB20-193

Study Title: Community Food; Social Networks and Sustainable Food Systems, IRB # 041-SB20-193

Principal Investigator: Kendall House, PhD, faculty supervisor

Co -Principal Investigator: Evan Leacox, graduate student at Boise State

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Evan Leacox, a graduate student at Boise State University. The information he collects will be used as data to support his graduate thesis work. This consent form provides the information you need to understand this research project and why you are being asked to participate. It describes what your participation involves. It lists any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may experience while participating. Please ask questions at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will become a record that the activity was explained to you, and that you freely agreed to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

It is evident that local agriculture is alive and well in the Boise area. A vibrant, visible community of local food producers provide locally grown food to local people through varied outlets. This study represents an effort to map the social interconnectivity of these local food producers, to assess the role of social interconnectivity in their

persistence and success, in order to inform potentially valuable methods to support or increase their success. An effort will also be made to develop an estimate of the impact of local and alternative forms of agriculture on the food security and resilience of specific segments of the local community.

The research centers on conducting ethnographic interviews and collecting life histories from individuals who are involved in both the public and private production of food for the local community (including the creation and dissemination of knowledge about producing food or related service) as well as with those who do not participate or engage in forms of food production. This research has four products: (1) building a map of the social networks of local producers, making it possible to explore the interconnectivity of individuals within this food system; (2) using this map to better understand the impact of locally produced foods on the security and resilience of the Boise community, and (3) to identify factors that lead participants in all forms of local production to persist or advance, i.e. identifying the strengths and weakness of access to the information exchange in these social networks. (4) Lastly, the information gathered through these interviews will inform the utility and feasibility of future studies and research as well as to inform potential means and methods to enhance the positive effects of social connectivity among current and prospective producers and consumers of locally produced food.

You are being asked to participate because you are either (please check the appropriate line):

A. _____ A public producer who is either a past, current, or future vendor, manager, or otherwise publicly accessible participant in Boise's local and alternative food

sources, whose work exceeds the production of food for your private household alone. (e.g., a farmer, market vendor, community garden manager, or educator).

B. _____ A private individual who either has a past, current, future or no experience or interest or involvement in gardening to produce a portion of your household's food (e.g., a home gardener, stakeholder in a CSA program, or participant in a community garden).

(Please place a check or mark on the line next to either A or B to indicate which category best describes you.)

PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in the following exercise(s):

One audio and video recorded semi-structured interview of approximately 30 minutes, conducted either (a) remotely, through an online video meeting platform (such as Zoom), or in person, in an outdoor setting of your choosing where social distancing can be safely practiced (e.g., at your farm or garden). Additionally, if reasonable and feasible, I would also like a physical or virtual tour of your growing space or related activity(s) that I may also record, so long as such a space exists or is accessible at the time of the interview.

If you agree to participate, a time and location will be defined for you to meet with Evan Leacox. To safeguard the health of all participants, in-person meetings must be conducted outdoors or in a well-ventilated space that allows at least 6 feet of separation to be maintained during the interview. All participants will be required to wear a facemask if indoors as well as outdoors if 6 feet of separation cannot be maintained. If

Evan Leacox tests positive for Covid-19 within 14 days of in-person interviews, your name may be shared with the Boise State Public Health Committee.

Please initial or mark on the appropriate line to indicate that this interview is being conducted in a space and setting of your choosing. _____ Remote (Zoom)
 _____ At an outdoor setting⁵.

You are not obligated to allow recordings to be made of the interview or your property. If you would prefer not to have the interview recorded either visually or audibly, please mark here _____

This will not disqualify your participation.

RISKS

There is a possibility that your identity will become known. The student conducting this research will make every effort to protect your privacy during the interviews and any other interactions that may be used in reporting and in publications resulting from this project. There is a risk that the questions asked may upset you. In the event that any of the interview questions or other pertinent interactions make you uncomfortable, you may decline to answer. Should you experience discomfort after participating you are encouraged to seek support from your healthcare provider.

COMPENSATION

You will not be paid or receive incentives with monetary value for your participation in this exercise.

BENEFITS

⁵ This “outdoor setting” option was included very early in the ideation of this research. It quickly became clear that it was not a viable option though once research got underway.

By participating, you will help Evan Leacox fulfill requirements to complete his Master's degree. More importantly, you will help establish what may become the foundation for future research in understanding social food networks and their potential applicability to maintaining and supporting food security and resilience.

EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information gathered during the interviews, observations, training, work, and conversations confidential. Your name and identifiable information will not be shared in any report or publication, unless you expressly approve. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will be disclosed only if required by law.

However, you may choose to allow your interview to be saved for the sake of posterity as a collection of oral histories concerning the history and contemporary practice of local agriculture in the Boise area⁶. This collection may be used for future and publicly accessible works, including but not limited to further academic research, documentary presentations, and public education and outreach. This is not a requirement to participate in the study, however, should you choose to agree to this option, you will be waving your confidentiality. Please ask Evan if you have any questions regarding this option. You also retain the right to withdraw your agreement to this option up until the time your interview becomes integrated into published work. You will be contacted before that time. If you agree to this additional option, please initial on the line provided.

⁶ This was an idea from a much earlier version of my research. It was included during for the IRB but in reality, it proved to be too much additional work. In short, nothing came from this suggestion or idea, nor was any specific information or interview set aside for it. All interviews are only on the BSU private server approved by OIT.

The graduate student conducting the exercise, his advisor, and his committee will have access to the raw data. Reports based on the data will be shared with stakeholders in the project, the graduate students graduate committee, and other pertinent individuals or groups. Individual identifiers will be removed. Any materials containing your individual information will be anonymized and digitized and stored for three years on a secure Boise State server, as required by Federal law.

PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

You do not have to be part of this study if you do not want to. You are not required to do anything that makes you uncomfortable or feel unsafe. You may decline to answer any individual questions or end the interview as a whole at any time. If requested before completion of the study and the subsequent report made from it, any information you shared can be destroyed and excluded from the published results, without consequences of any kind. If you choose to fully withdraw, the full interview and any recordings pertaining to you will be erased or destroyed in a manner protecting your privacy (e.g., shredding of documents, erasure of recordings), and no information will be shared or retained in any form.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this project, even after it has ended, you may contact Evan Leacox, evanleacox@u.boisestate.edu, or his advisor and co-principal investigator, Dr. Kendall House, khouse@boisestate.edu.

DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT

I have read this form, and discussed it with the Principal investigator, Evan Leacox. I have had the opportunity to freely ask questions, and my questions have been

answered to my satisfaction. Based on that, I have decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, how it will be conducted, and any possible risks have been explained to me. I understand I can change my mind, and end my participation at any time.

Printed Name of Study Participant _____

Signature and Date of Study Participant _____

**Printed Name and Signature and date of Person Obtaining
Consent** _____

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Message for Publicly Accessible Potential Participants

BSU graduate student seeking interview participants for small-scale agriculture and gardening related thesis work

Hello and greetings!

My name is Evan Leacox, I am a graduate student at Boise State University working towards an MA in cultural anthropology. My research focuses on how agricultural information is exchanged through social networks. I am holding a series of interviews to help create a social network map which will in turn provide better insight into how local and alternative agricultural knowledge is both formally and informally exchanged along social lines. Ultimately, if these relationships can be better understood, then continued and future research could also help develop means and methods to support and even increase a community's ability to maintain and increase forms of resilient food security. I would be very grateful for the opportunity to speak with you regarding your potential participation in an interview process for my graduate work. The interview itself will be scheduled for 30-60-minutes, either in person (and respecting Covid-19 safety precautions) or through Zoom (thought at this point I'm more or less defaulting to Zoom only). If you would like to know more information in advance, I have provided an outline of my thesis work (below) which will help clarify what I am researching and how your participation would help. You may also simply reach out to me directly for more details regarding this research and any questions you may have, including the interview requirements and scheduling so as to find a time, day, even month, that works best for you.

Research Overview⁷:

I am researching the exchange, flow, and access to information regarding local agricultural “how-to” knowledge which I believe is at least in part disseminated through social networks; from backyard gardens to full-time farming operations. This is particularly relevant during Covid-19 because of the major disruptions we've seen in mainstream agricultural production. I propose that the healthier and more vibrant a community's form of local and alternative agriculture practices are, the more likely those communities are to have greater embedded food security resilience in the face of disruptions like those we've seen across the country (and indeed, the world). Furthermore then, the health and positive impact of a community's food production practices relies on strong and inclusive social networks which then exchange and provide a wealth of information - from where to find local food or how to start a garden, to support and problem-solving options for generational farmers.

The big picture is that this research may eventually lead towards methods to be better able to support community level food security and resilience by first understanding how information is accessed and exchanged in terms of food production knowledge, ability, problem solving, and more. This process will also help highlight where any barriers or gaps may be for individuals who would participate in local food production or support, but do not, as I hypothesize, because they may have too few connections or access to the pertinent network's social information exchange. I'd like to interview you for this work because of your participation and experience with local agricultural systems

⁷ This next section was extra information provided to the potential participant if they wanted to read more about my research.

in Boise and the Treasure Valley so as to inform the processes of mapping Boise's social network of information exchange pertaining to local food production.

I believe that Boise has a strong local social food network so by mapping its social network I can begin to create a model of what a resilient network of community level food production looks like. I will also be interviewing individuals who do not engage in growing, to then form as holistic a picture as possible of the successful aspects of Boise's local farm and garden network as well as where or how it might improve to increase its reach and inclusion to further promote not only local and alternative forms of food production, but to support resilient forms of food security for the community as whole.

This is a Boise State University approved thesis and has been reviewed and approved by BSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). All conversations are confidential and no private or identifiable information will be shared without your express consent. If you are at all interested or curious to learn more about this research, what it entails, and how the interview process would be structured, please reach out. I would be very grateful for your participation.

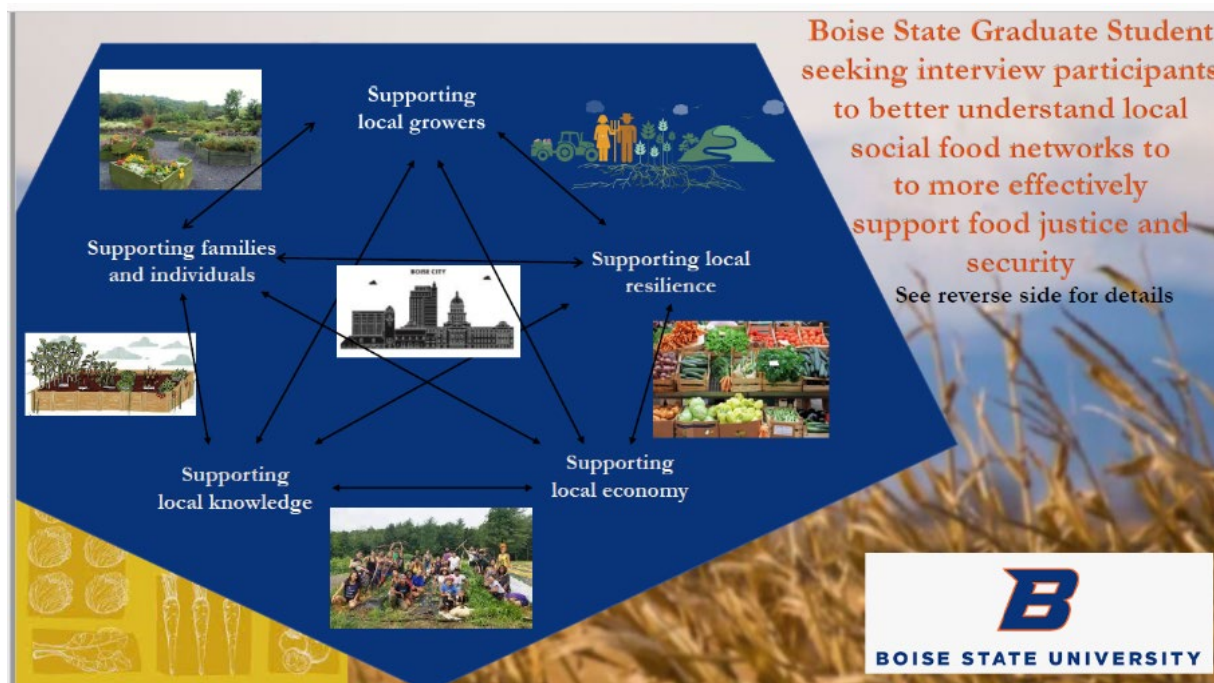
Kind Regards,

Evan Leacox

APPENDIX D

Recruitment/Survey Flyer Templates

Recruitment Flyer Front



Back of Flyer - Recruitment Message

Hello and greetings!

My name is Evan Leacox, I am a graduate student at Boise State University working towards my master's degree in Cultural Anthropology. My research focuses on the connection(s) between people and the exchange of "how-to" or problem-solving information through the social networks of local, small-scale farming and gardening. Through a series of interviews, I believe I will be able to create a social network map which will in turn provide better insight into how local and alternative agricultural knowledge is both formally and informally exchanged along social lines. Ultimately, if these relationships can be better understood, then continued and future research could

also help develop means and methods to support a community's ability to maintain and increase resilient forms of food security.

If you are, were previously, or are considering becoming a gardener, farmer, or grower of any

sort on any scale, or are in any way a participant in this network (such as a local vender, garden shop

owner, etc.) I would like to interview you for a roughly 30 – minute, semi-structured interview. Please see my contact information below and reach out if you are interested in learning more about the details of this research and to ask any questions you may have.

All conversations are confidential, no private information will be shared with anyone outside of

my thesis committee consisting of my advisor and two additional BSU professors.

This is a Boise State

supported graduate thesis research project and as such it has received ethical approval from the

university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you and I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Evan Leacox

Recruitment Flyer with QR code for the Survey

Supporting local growers

Supporting families and individuals

Supporting local resilience



Supporting local knowledge

Supporting local economy

BOISE CITY

Boise State Graduate Student seeking interview participants to better understand local social food networks to more effectively support food justice and security

See QR Code for details



B
BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX E

**Semi-structured Interview Template (There Is/Was No Unstructured Interview
Template)**

Questions for farmers (or public participants in local/alternative food production)

The questions below will be asked of individuals who are growers/farmers or otherwise public participants in Boise's local and alternative food production: the key criterion is that they make money or interact in some way that is related to local food production and their actions are not limited to private growing for their own family or sharing with close friends. This could include managers of community gardens, organizers of the Farmers' Market, etc.

1. Tell me about yourself. How are you connected to Boise's local agriculture community? a. What does your outreach look like/how do people learn about you or your "product" (the service or goods you provide?)

2. How did you get into farming (or related activity)? What's your genesis story? Did any person or group inspire you to start farming?

3. Who has influenced or inspired you to continue farming (or related activity) within the last year?

4. Who have you gone to for help within the last year if/when you encountered a problem in your practice of growing/farming (managing, or related)? a. (If not answered) where or from whom do you find information to solve problems?

5. (If this hasn't been addressed) Are you connected to any official groups or organizations related to agriculture (or related)? If so, what or who are they? a. (if unknown to me) What do they do?

6. As a thought experiment - If you had your choice, who or what organization, locally, would you choose to be able to work with, learn from, or partner with in some way? Why?

7. Is there anything I have not asked or that we have not covered that you would like to include? a. Do you have any other questions for me?

8. (if they didn't already tell me this) One last question for fun. What is your favorite thing to grow (or produce to eat)? Why?

Questions for gardeners or otherwise private practitioners of some form of small-scale agriculture

If the person is a private gardener. In other words, someone who participates in growing activities in a capacity that is for their own household benefit or friends and family without payment. They are not a public actor, even if they garden publicly, e.g., at a community garden or with a CSA.

1. Tell me about your current gardening activities (where do you grow, what do you grow, etc.)?

2. How did you get into gardening? What's your genesis story? Did any person or group inspire you to start gardening?

3. Who has influenced or inspired you to continue gardening (or related activity) within the last year?

4. Who have you gone to for help within the last year if/when you encountered a problem in your practice of growing/farming (managing, or related)? a. (if not answered) where or from whom do you find information to solve problems?

5. (If this hasn't been addressed) Are you connected to any official groups or organizations related to agriculture or gardening? If so, what or who are they? a. (if not already known) What do they do?

6. As thought experiment - If you had your choice, with whom or what organization, locally, would you choose to be able to work with, share with, learn from, or partner with in some way? Why?

7. Is there anything I have not asked or that we have not covered that you would like to include regarding your garden (or related) activities and the people and organizations you know, interact and share information with? a. Do you have any other questions for me?

8. (if they didn't already tell me this) One last question for fun. What is your favorite thing to grow? Why?

Private individuals who have either never or inconsistently gardened or practiced a related small-scale agriculture activity

If the person has never gardened but is thinking about it or wants to begin gardening (or related). This person also falls under the category of private gardener.

1. What attracts you to the idea of gardening? Did any person or group inspire you to start gardening?

2. What kinds of things would you like to grow? Why?

3. What would you say keeps you from starting?

4. What person or organization, do you think you might turn to, to find out more information about how to begin gardening?

a. (If any people or organizations are mentioned) what do you know about them?

5. (If none or very few are listed) Have you heard of or are you aware of any local farmers or gardeners? If so, who?

a. (if any are listed or mentioned) Please tell me about your perceptions of them or any interactions you have had with them.

6. (If none or very few are listed) Have you heard of or are you aware of any like local organizations like The Treasure Valley Food Coalition, FARE Idaho, the Boise Farmers Market, community garden options, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs or anything like these?

a. (if they have heard of them) What are your perceptions of them?

i. Have you ever interacted with any of them?

b. (If they have never heard of them) Offer a ready-made list of the organizations and their websites/contact info.

7. Is there anything I have not asked or that we have not covered that you would like to include?

a. Do you have any other questions for me?

Private individuals who once gardened or practiced a related small-scale agriculture activity, but no longer do

If the person once gardened, but no longer does. This person also falls under the category of private gardener. This person could also be both a person who quit gardening and wants to start again.

1. Why would you say you no longer garden?
 - a. (if I also wanted to start again). What attracts you to the idea of gardening?
 - i. What would you say keeps you from starting?
2. What kinds of things did you want to or like to grow (or would like to again)?

Why? Did any person or group inspire you to start gardening?

3. When you were gardening (or related), what organizations or people were your sources of information for 'how-to' or problem-solving questions?
4. If you were to start again, where, or to whom, do you think you might turn to for more information about how to garden (or related)?
5. (If none or very few are listed) Have you heard of or are you aware of any local farmers or gardeners?
 - a. If so, who? (if any are listed or mentioned) Please tell me about your perceptions of them or any interactions you have had with them.
6. (if none or very few are listed) Have you heard of or are you aware of any like local organizations like The Treasure Valley Food Coalition, FARE Idaho, the Boise Farmers Market, community garden options, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs or anything like these?
 - a. (if they have heard of them) What are your perceptions of them?

i. Have you ever interacted with any of them?

b. (If they have never heard of them) Offer a ready-made list of the organizations and their websites/contact info.

8. Is there anything I have not asked or that we have not covered that you would like to include?

a. Do you have any other questions for me?

APPENDIX F

Survey and End of Survey Recruitment Templates

Survey Consent From

Community Food; Social Networks and Sustainable Food Systems

Start of Block: Block 1 everyone's gotta start somewhere⁸

Q0 Boise State University Survey Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Survey: Community Food; Social Networks and Sustainable Food

Systems IRB # 041-SB20-19 Principal Investigator: Dr. Kendall House **Co-principal**

Investigator: Evan Leacox

DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY This

survey is meant to inform the thesis research regarding the connection between social relationships of food producers of all scale and skill including networks of information exchange and how those networks' potentially impact an individual's willingness and ability to persist in personal food production, acquisition, or other related small-scale agricultural activities. This thesis theorizes that if this connection exists then there may well be a greater connection between resilient community level food security and strong local and alternative agriculture networks. Beyond collecting some simple but valuable data this survey is also meant as an outreach mechanism. I am seeking participants for a final round of interviews. If you are interested in participating further you will be provided with more information at the end of the survey. The survey does not obligate you to any further participation if you are not interested in doing so. **WHAT WILL**

MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE? A 10 to 15-minute survey to better understand the general break down of the how farm and garden behaviors may be transmitted through

⁸ Some lines like these are just internal notes/labels that are visible here but were not visible to the survey participant.

social networks and to better understand perceptions of the values of and interests in various forms of food production. **ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?** You may find some questions uncomfortable; remember you can skip any you don't want to answer and/or you may stop entirely at any time. There are no other risks. **ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?** There are no direct benefits to participating in this survey, however your participation will help inform ongoing research regarding farm and garden activities, ultimately including issues of food security. **WILL I BE COMPENSATED FOR MY PARTICIPATION?** This is no compensation for participation. **HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?** Your privacy is important and all of your information will be treated confidentially. None of your private identifying information will be collected nor will your specific individual responses be published. Your responses will be collected and counted as quantitative data points. Only the principal investigator and the thesis committee will have access to the raw data. All data is stored on a secure Boise State University server. **WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?** If you have any questions or concerns about your participation, even after it has ended, you may contact Evan Leacox, evanleacox@u.boisestate.edu , or his advisor and co-principal investigator, Kendal House, khouse@boisestate.edu . **AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SURVEY** Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may stop the survey at any time. **Please click the "Continue to Survey" button to certify that you are 1) a agreeing to take the survey and 2) at least 18 years old.**

Continue to Survey (1)

No Thanks (2)

Skip To: Q1 If Boise State University Survey Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Survey:... = Continue to Survey

Skip To: End of Survey If Boise State University Survey Participant Information and

Consent Form Title of the Survey:... = No Thanks

Skip To: End of Survey If Boise State University Survey Participant Information and

Consent Form Title of the Survey:... != Continue to Survey

Beginning of Survey

(This survey may be difficult to follow in this format. It was developed on the Qualtrics platform and as such the built skip logic and survey flow that automatically route survey participants through the survey are represented here in text)

Q1 Do you live in Boise or the Treasure Valley?

No (1)

Yes (2)

Skip To: Q11 If Do you live in Boise or the Treasure Valley? = Yes

Q10 If you do not live in the Treasure Valley, please select from the options below.

In Idaho, but not Boise or the Treasure Valley - Please indicate the General Area/Region below (1) _____

Not in Idaho, but in the United states - Please indicate the City or Region and State (2) _____

Not in the United States - Please indicate the City and/or Region and Country (3) _____

Page Break

Q11 What definition or ideas come to mind when you hear the term "Mainstream Agriculture?"

Page Break

Q93 How did you learn or hear about this survey?

- Facebook/LinkedIn (1)
 - Lindemann Gardens CSA (2)
 - TVCGCoop (3)
 - Boise Farmers Market (4)
 - Other - Please specify (5)
-

Page Break

Q2 Do you farm, garden, buy, or in any way participate or interact with any form of locally grown goods? For the sake of this survey, we will set the boundary to the definition of “locally grown foods” as foods being grown within roughly a 100-mile radius of where you live.

- No (1)
- Yes (2)
- Maybe/unsure (3)

Skip To: Q6 If Do you farm, garden, buy, or in any way participate or interact with any form of locally grown go... = Yes

Skip To: Q3 If Do you farm, garden, buy, or in any way participate or interact with any form of locally grown go... = No

Skip To: Q10 If Do you farm, garden, buy, or in any way participate or interact with any form of locally grown go... = Maybe/unsure

Page Break

Q10 If you selected maybe or unsure - Do you produce or participate in some level of food production? For example, do you farm at what is often considered the "large-scale" or industrial level?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Other - Please explain (3)
-

Skip To: End of Block If If you selected maybe or unsure - Do you produce or participate in some level of food production?... = Yes

Page Break

Q3 Did you once garden or otherwise participate in some form of local or small scale agriculture , but no longer do, OR are you interested in starting a garden or otherwise participating in forms of local food production?

- No, I never have and I am not interested in gardening or participating in other forms of small scale food production (1)
- No, I never have but I am considering starting my own garden or otherwise participating in alternative forms of local agriculture (2)
- Yes, I have previously gardened or otherwise engaged in local and alternative forms of agriculture but I am no longer interested in doing so (3)
- Yes, I have previously gardened or otherwise engaged and would considering doing so again (4)

Skip To: End of Block If Did you once garden or otherwise participate in some form of local or small scale agriculture , b... = No, I never have and I am not interested in gardening or participating in other forms of small scale food production

Skip To: End of Block If Did you once garden or otherwise participate in some form of local or small scale agriculture , b... = No, I never have but I am considering starting my own garden or otherwise participating in alternative forms of local agriculture

Skip To: End of Block If Did you once garden or otherwise participate in some form of local or small scale agriculture , b... = Yes, I have previously gardened or otherwise engaged in local and alternative forms of agriculture but I am no longer interested in doing so

Skip To: End of Block If Did you once garden or otherwise participate in some form of local or small scale agriculture , b... = Yes, I have previously gardened or otherwise engaged and would considering doing so again

Page Break

Q6 Which of the following best describes your primary and current form of food production or acquisition?

- I have a private home garden, including indoor or balcony containers and their like (1)

- I have a plot in a community garden (2)
 - I pay into or volunteer for a local CSA (community supported agriculture) (3)
 - I own or operate a local CSA (4)
 - I own or am a part owner of a small farm (5)
 - I work on a small farm (6)
 - I manage or help organize a community garden (7)
 - I am a buyer or vender of locally grown goods (beyond personal household needs)
(8)
 - I grow, farm, or operate at what is often considered the "large-scale" or industrial
level (10)
 - Other - Please describe (9)
-

End of Block: Block 1 everyone's gotta start somewhere

Start of Block: Block 8 P+ large scale/others

Q11 Of the next 13 questions, 9 will ask you to provide short answer responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey and for your thoughtful responses. – Please briefly describe your food production, agricultural or related work/activities.

Page Break

Q12 Roughly how many years have you been farming or otherwise participating professionally with agriculture or related work/activities?

- < 6 months up to 1 year (1)
 - 1 up to 5 years (2)
 - 5 up to 10 years (3)
 - > 10 years - Please specify (5)
-

Page Break

Q13 As a child, were you commonly around family members or friends who consistently kept gardens, farms, or other forms of food production?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Other - Please clarify (3)
-

Page Break

Q14 In your own words – what led you towards eventually growing or participating with food production (or related) on a professional level, whether full time or otherwise?

Page Break

Q15 Please describe how you learned and problem solved over the course of time from being a perspective farmer or related to establishing your own practice.

Page Break

Q16 In thinking back over that time – briefly describe the makeup of your social group.

Generally speaking, what were your common interests and activities?

Page Break

Q17 Now, in the present tense – What or whom are your sources of general food production information, inspiration, and/or problem solving?

Page Break

Q18 Again, please briefly describe the makeup of your social group now in terms of common interests and activities. Please select one or both.

Pre-Covid - Please describe (1)

Respond here if there have been any significant changes since the above, aside from diminished in-person social interaction? - Please describe (2)

Page Break

Q19 What (if any) are the most successful or useful resources available to you for selling or marketing your food or product (or related activity)? Why?

Page Break

Q21 Conversely, what limitations (if any) do you find you or others face in selling or marketing your food or product (or related activity) and why?

Page Break

Q22 Do you have any suggestions as to how this/these problems(s) might be addressed or remedied?

Page Break

Q26 Last two questions – What other forms of food production do you participate in (if any)? Please select all forms that apply.

- I have a private home garden, including indoor or balcony containers and their like (1)
- I have a plot in a community garden (2)
- I pay into or volunteer for a local CSA (community supported agriculture) (3)

- I own or operate a local CSA (4)
- I own or am a part owner of a small farm (5)
- I work on a small farm (6)
- I manage or help organize a community garden (7)
- I am a buyer or vender of locally grown goods (beyond personal household needs) (8)
- I grow, farm, or operate at what is often considered the "large-scale" or industrial level (10)
- Other - Please describe (9)
-
- None/Not Applicable (11)

Q88 Last question – If applicable, please provide a rough estimate of how much of your household food is produced locally (whether by your or others ~ within 100 miles).

- Less than 1% (1)
- less than 10% (2)
- 10% - 20% (3)
- 21% - 30% (4)
- 31% - 40% (5)
- 41% - 50% (6)
- 50% - 90% (7)
- nearly 100% (8)

End of Block: Block 8 P+ large scale/others

Start of Block: Block 2 P+

Q28 Of the next 12 questions, 8 will ask you to provide short answer responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey and for your thoughtful

responses. -- Roughly how many years have you been farming or otherwise participating professionally with locally grown foods?

- < 6 months, up to 1 year (4)
 - From 1 year, up to 5 years (5)
 - From 5 years, up to 10 years (6)
 - > 10 years - Please specify (7)
-

Page Break

Q39 As a child, were you commonly around family members or friends who consistently kept gardens, farms, or other forms of food production?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Other - Please specify (4)

Page Break

Q38 In your own words – what led you towards eventually growing or participating with food production on a professional level, whether full time or otherwise?

Page Break

Q37 Please describe how you learned and problem solved over the course of time from being a perspective farmer or related to establishing your own practice.

Page Break

Q36 In thinking back over that time – briefly describe the makeup of your social group. Generally speaking, what were your common interests and activities?

Page Break

Q35 Now, in the present tense – What or whom are your sources of general food production information, inspiration, and/or problem solving?

Page Break

Q34 Again, please briefly describe the makeup of your social group now in terms of common interests and activities. Select one or both.

Pre-Covid - Please Describe (1)

Respond here if there have been any significant changes since the above, aside from diminished in-person social interaction? Please describe. (2)

Page Break

Q33 What (if any) are the most successful or useful resources available to you for selling or marketing your food or product (or related activity)? - Why?

Page Break

Q31 Conversely, what limitations (if any) do you find you or others face in selling or marketing your food or product (or related activity) and why?

Page Break

Q29 Do you have any suggestions as to how this/these problems(s) might be addressed or remedied?

Page Break

Q27 Last two questions – What other forms of food production do you participate in (if any)? Please select all forms, including your previously selected primary form.

- I have a private home garden, including indoor or balcony containers and their like (1)
- I have a plot in a community garden (2)
- I pay into or volunteer for a local CSA (community supported agriculture) (3)
- I own or operate a local CSA (4)
- I own or am a part owner of a small farm (5)
- I work on a small farm (6)
- I manage or help organize a community garden (7)
- I am a buyer or vender of locally grown goods (beyond personal household needs) (8)
- I grow, farm, or operate at what is often considered the "large-scale" or industrial level (10)
- Other - Please describe (9)
-
- None/Not Applicable (11)

Page Break

Q25 Last question – Please provide a rough estimate of how much of your household food is produced locally (whether by your or others ~ within 100 miles).

- Less than 1% (1)
- less than 10% (2)
- 10% - 20% (3)
- 21% - 30% (4)
- 31% - 40% (5)
- 41% - 50% (6)
- 50 - 90% (7)
- nearly 100% (8)

End of Block: Block 2 P+

Start of Block: Block 3 PG

Q41 Of the next 11 questions, 8 will ask you to provide short answer responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey and for your thoughtful responses. -- Roughly how many years have you been gardening or otherwise participating with locally grown foods?

Page Break

Q58 As a child, where you commonly around family members or friends who consistently kept gardens, farms, or other forms of food production?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Other - Please specify (3)

Page Break

Q57 In your own words – why do you garden, grow, or otherwise participate in a related activity of your food production/consumption – to whatever degree and amount that you do?

Page Break

Q56 Please describe how you learned and problem solved over the course of time from being a novice or first-time gardener (or related) to now.

Page Break

Q55 In thinking back over that time – briefly describe the makeup of your social group. Generally speaking, what were your common interests and activities?

Page Break

Q54 Now, in the present tense – What or whom are your sources of general gardening (or related) information, inspiration, and/or problem solving?

Page Break

Q53 Again, please briefly describe the makeup of your social group now in terms of common interests and activities. Please select one or both.

Pre-Covid - Please describe (1)

Respond here if there have been any significant changes since the above, aside from diminished i-person social interaction? Please describe (2)

Page Break

Q52 What limitations (if any) do you find you or others face in gardening (or related) and why?

Page Break

Q50 Do you have any suggestions as to how this/these problems(s) might be addressed or remedied?

Page Break

Q40 Last two questions – What other forms of food production do you participate in (if any)? Please select all forms, including your previously selected primary form.

- I have a private home garden, including indoor or balcony containers and their like (1)
- I have a plot in a community garden (2)
- I pay into or volunteer for a local CSA (community supported agriculture) (3)

- I own or operate a local CSA (4)
- I own or am a part owner of a small farm (5)
- I work on a small farm (6)
- I manage or help organize a community garden (7)
- I am a buyer or vender of locally grown goods (beyond personal household needs) (8)
- I grow, farm, or operate at what is often considered the "large-scale" or industrial level (10)
- Other - Please describe (9)
-
- None/Not Applicable (11)

Q89 Last question – Please provide a rough estimate of how much of your household food is produced locally (whether by your or others ~ within 100 miles).

Less than 1% (1)

less than 10% (2)

10% - 20% (3)

21% - 30% (4)

31% - 40% (5)

41% - 50% (6)

50% - 90% (7)

nearly 100% (8)

End of Block: Block 3 PG

Start of Block: Block 4 Consumers Only

Q43 Of the next 11 questions, 8 will ask you to provide short answer responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey and for your thoughtful responses. -- Roughly how many years have you bought, traded, or otherwise participated with/consumed locally grown foods?

Page Break

Q66 As a child, where you commonly around family members or friends who consistently kept gardens, farms, or other forms of food production?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Other - Please specify (3)
-

Page Break

Q63 From your perspective, what is the definition of locally grown food?

Page Break

Q65 In your own words – Why do you purchase, consume, or otherwise participate with locally grown foods – to whatever degree and amount that you do?

Page Break

Q64 Please describe how you learned about or were introduced to the idea of acquiring locally grown foods to any degree that you do?

Page Break

Q62 How many (just a rough percentage) of those in your social sphere do you think currently acquire some of their food from locally grown options? This could include purchasing or growing.

Page Break

Q61 If applicable, if you experienced (or currently are experiencing) a transition towards acquiring more of your food from local means, what or who aided, inspired, or encouraged you do so?

Page Break

Q60 Conversely, what limitations (if any) do you find you or others face in accessing or acquiring locally grown foods (via purchase, trade, growing, or otherwise) and why do you think that is?

Page Break

Q94 Do you have any suggestions as to how this/these problems(s) might be addressed or remedied?

Page Break

Q42 Last two questions – What other forms of food production do you participate in (if any)? Please select all forms, including your previously selected primary form.

- I have a private home garden, including indoor or balcony containers and their like (1)
- I have a plot in a community garden (2)
- I pay into or volunteer for a local CSA (community supported agriculture) (3)
- I own or operate a local CSA (4)
- I own or am a part owner of a small farm (5)
- I work on a small farm (6)
- I manage or help organize a community garden (7)

I am a buyer or vender of locally grown goods (beyond personal household needs) (8)

I grow, farm, or operate at what is often considered the "large-scale" or industrial level (10)

Other - Please describe (9)

None/Not Applicable (11)

Page Break

Q90 Last question – Please provide a rough estimate of how much of your household food is produced locally (whether by your or others ~ within 100 miles).

Less than 1% (1)

less than 10% (2)

- 10% - 20% (3)
- 21% - 30% (4)
- 31% - 40% (5)
- 41% - 50% (6)
- 50% - 90% (7)
- nearly 100% (8)

End of Block: Block 4 Consumers Only

Start of Block: Block 5 never has never well

Q45 Of the next 9 questions, 7 questions will ask you to provide short answer responses.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey and for your thoughtful responses. – As a child, where you commonly around family members or friends who consistently kept gardens, farms, or other forms of food production?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Other - Please Specify (3)

Page Break

Q72 From your perspective, what is the definition of locally grown food?

Page Break

Q95 How many (just a rough percentage) of those in your social sphere do you think currently acquire some of their food from locally grown options? This could include purchasing or growing.

Page Break

Q71 What causes you to find locally grown foods as a non - option?

Page Break

Q70 If applicable or not already answered, are there any limitations or barriers you find that you or others face in accessing or acquiring locally grown foods as an option for a portion of your or their household consumption?

Page Break

Q69 If applicable and/or not already addressed, what do you think causes these limitations or barriers?

Page Break

Q68 Do you have any suggestions as to how this/these problems(s) might be addressed or remedied?

Page Break

Q67 If these issues were remedied, do you think you would incorporate locally grown foods into your household diet?

Yes (1)

- No (2)
- Uncertain - If applicable, please elaborate (3)
-

Page Break

Q92 Building on the previous question, if applicable, in what ways would you participate in local or small-scale food production? Please select all that apply.

- I would like to have a private home garden (including indoor or balcony containers and their like) (1)
- I would like to have a plot in a community garden (2)
- I would like to pay into or volunteer for a local CSA (community support agriculture) (3)
- I would like to own or operate a CSA (4)

- I would like to own or be a part owner of a small farm (5)
- I would like to work on a small farm (6)
- I would like to manage or help organize a community garden (7)
- I would like to buy more local foods or become a vender of locally grown goods (beyond personal household needs) (8)
- Other - Please specify (9)
-
- None/Not Applicable (11)

Page Break

Q91 Last question – Again, building on the previous question and if applicable, please provide a rough estimate of how much of your household food you think could be reasonably produced or procured locally (whether by your or others ~ within 100 miles).

- Less than 1% (1)
- less than 10% (2)
- 10% - 20% (3)
- 21% - 30% (4)
- 31% - 40% (5)
- 41% - 50% (6)
- 50% - 90% (7)
- nearly 100% (8)

End of Block: Block 5 never haves never well

Start of Block: Block 6, never have but interested

Q46 Of the next 8 questions, 5 will ask you to provide short answer responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey and for your thoughtful responses. – As a child, where you commonly around family members or friends who consistently kept gardens, farms, or other forms of food production?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Other - Please specify (3)

Page Break

Q79 From your perspective, what is the definition of locally grown food?

Page Break

Q78 How many (just a rough percentage) of those in your social sphere do you think currently acquire some of their food from locally grown options? This could include purchasing or growing.

Page Break

Q77 If applicable, if you are thinking about a transition towards acquiring more of your food from local means (for example, gardening or shopping at the farmer's market), what or who aides, inspires, or encourages you do so?

Page Break

Q76 If applicable, what limitations or barriers (if any) do you find you or others face in accessing or acquiring locally grown foods (via purchase, trade, growing, or otherwise)?

Why do you think that is?

Page Break

Q74 Do you have any suggestions as to how this/these problems(s) might be addressed or remedied?

Page Break

Q47 Last two questions – What forms of food production do you think you'd like to participate in (if any)? Please select all forms that apply.

- I would like to have a private home garden, (including indoor or balcony containers and their like) (1)
- I would like to have a plot in a community garden (2)
- I would like to pay into or volunteer for a local CSA (community supported agriculture) (3)
- I would like to own or operate a local CSA (4)
- I would like to own or be a part owner of a small farm (5)
- I would like to work on a small farm (6)
- I would like to manage or help organize a community garden (7)

- I would like to buy more or be a vender of locally grown goods (beyond personal household needs) (8)
- I would like to grow, farm, or operate at what is often considered the "large-scale" or industrial level (10)
- Other - Please describe (9)
-
- None/Not Applicable (11)

Page Break

Q92 Last question – Please provide a rough estimate of how much of your household food you think could be reasonably produced or procured locally (whether by your or others ~ within 100 miles)?

- Less than 1% (1)
- less than 10% (2)

- 10% - 20% (3)
- 21% - 30% (4)
- 31% - 40% (5)
- 41% - 50% (6)
- 50% - 90% (7)
- nearly 100% (8)

End of Block: Block 6, never have but interested

Start of Block: Block 7 Have previously but currently do not

Q49 Of the next 10 questions, 6 will ask you to provide short answer responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey and for your thoughtful responses. – Roughly how many years, or attempts, have you attempted participating in food production, for example, gardening, buying locally grown goods, or related?

Page Break

Q86 As a child, were you commonly around family members or friends who consistently kept gardens, farms, or other forms of food production?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Other - Please specify (3)
-

End of Survey Recruitment Message

Hello and greetings,

Thank you again for taking the time to fill out the survey. Your effort is greatly appreciated.

As an additional element to these surveys, I am also holding semi-structured interviews which allow me to better understand and discover nuances regarding how people make and interact with local food options and choices (or not). If

you're interested, I am looking for more interview participants and would love to schedule a time with you to do so (likely via Zoom). The interviews last roughly 30-60 minutes (depending on your time, interest, etc.)

For privacy reasons you will have to initiate contact, this survey does not collect any contact or personally identifiable information.

Please see my contact information below to reach out if you are interested in learning more about the details of this research, what the interview process will entail, and to ask any questions you may have.

All conversations are confidential and private. This is a Boise State approved graduate thesis and as such it has received ethical approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you and I look forward to talking with you further.

Kind Regards,

Evan Leacox

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