



Appalachian Center for Economic Networks



USDA'S 100TH ANNUAL

AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK FORUM

CULTIVATING THE FUTURE



Expanding Market Access through Urban-Rural Networks

Presenter: Leslie Schaller Director of Programs

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Rural Images & Rural Stereotypes





Supporting Rural People & Places



USDA 100th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum – February 2024



Supporting Rural People & Places





Sustaining Rural Livelihoods





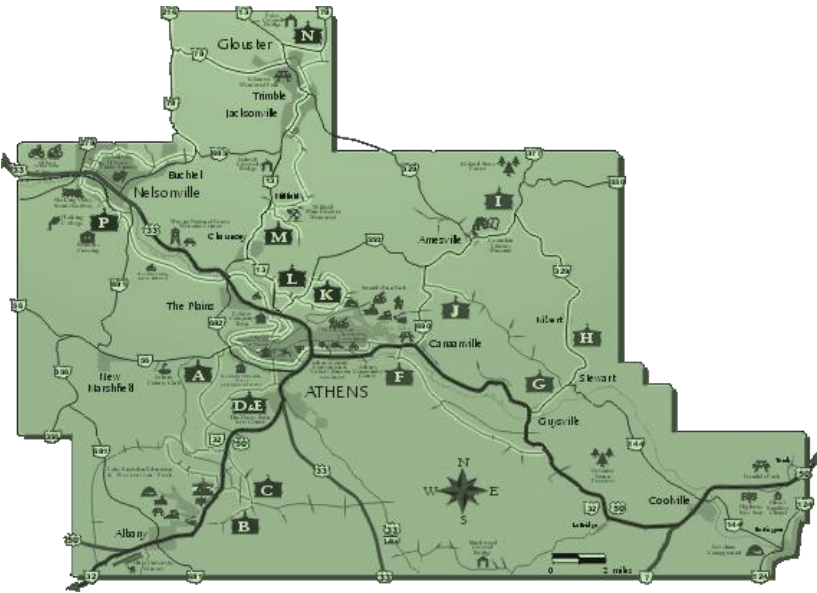
ACENET'S MISSION

The Appalachian Center for Economic Networks
is a regional entrepreneurship and economic
development organization located in Athens, Ohio.

ACEnet builds the capacity of communities to
network, work together and innovate to create a
dynamic, sustainable regional economy with
opportunities for all.



The ACEnet Community at a glance



Based in Athens County



Serving Appalachia Ohio



**Collaborating in
Central Appalachia**



ACEnet Approaches

- ▶ **Microenterprise Focus**
- ▶ **Entrepreneurial Networks**
- ▶ **Sector Specific Incubation**
- ▶ **WealthWorks Framework** www.wealthworks.org
- ▶ **Value Chain Coordination for Food Sector**
- ▶ **Regional Collaborative Projects (CAN & ARFBC)**
- ▶ **Contracts & Field Offices**



The Power of Networks





Network Weavers Bridge Rural-Urban



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Working for a more just and sustainable Appalachia.

The Central Appalachian Network (CAN)'s mission is to develop and deploy economic strategies that build wealth in local communities, conserve natural and cultural resources, and empower marginalized communities. We work in collaboration across sectors, partnering with other non-profits, community groups, funders, educational institutions, local government, and private business. CAN actively pursues economic transition in Central Appalachian communities through a variety of economic sectors and market-based strategies, and currently focuses on:





Aligning values within a Rural-Urban Continuum

Upending some of our misconceptions—*big shout out to Brian Dabson Rural Policy Analyst & Researcher*

- **Within food systems: rural – urban relationships are changing**
- **Small rural places bringing local food to urban markets can act as a bridge to underscore similarities --- not divides**
- **Rural strategies are evolving – food value chains can be a critical driver**



Leveraging Shared Infrastructure





ACEnet Food Infrastructure



Food Ventures Center



The Food & Farm Enterprise Center



Leveraging Shared Infrastructure



Chesterhill Produce Auction



Farm 2 School Processing Options





Farm to School Value Chains





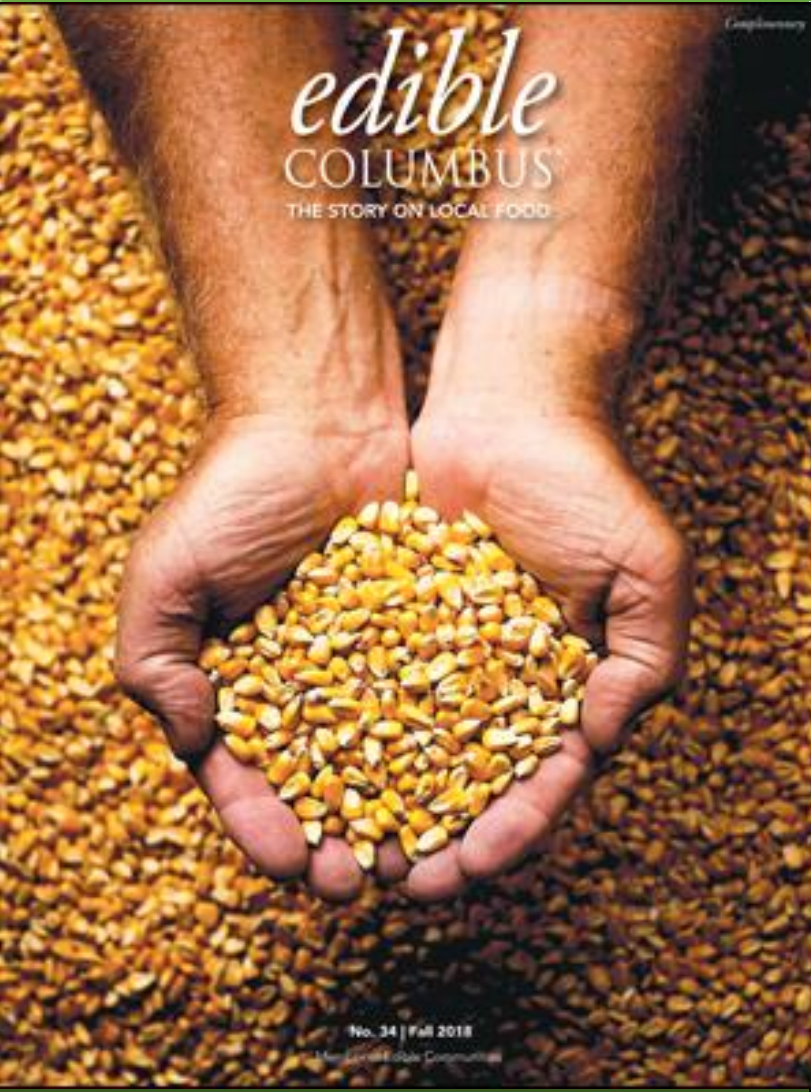
Network Weavers Bridge Rural-Urban

Amplifying Local/Regional Food Value Chains





Value Chain Connecting to Markets





Value Chain: Shagbark Seed & Mill



Paul Schmitmeyer



**JOIN
THE STAPLE
FOOD REVOLUTION!**





Value Chain Connecting to Markets





Connecting to Urban Markets

SUPPORT LOCAL! **SHAGBARK SEED & MILL** OHIO MADE & GROWN!

LOOKING FOR OUR CHIPS?



CHECK OUT GIANT EAGLE MARKET DISTRICT, FRESH THYME, AND ACME FRESH MARKET!

Support small businesses like ours and locally sourced products!



WHOLE FOODS MARKET

Now at ALL Ohio Stores
SHAGBARK CORN TORTILLAS

SHAGBARK SEED & MILL

OHIO GROWN  ORGANIC CORN



Value Chain: Snowville Creamery





Value Chain: Snowville Creamery





Value Chain: Snowville Creamery





Value Chain: Snowville Creamery





Innovators within value chains

WHOLE WORLD GOURMET, LLC

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[MILO'S WHOLE WORLD GOURMET](#) > WHOLESALE

WHOLESALE

Custom Programs to Help Businesses Succeed

Brownwood Farms offers a strong direct wholesale program, as well as a robust private label program. To learn more, please **contact:**

Maryjane Burch



Milo's Whole World Gourmet

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PARTNERING WITH YOU

To create a successful brand

APPLY NOW





Private Investment Leveraged



What's New at Milo's? Big Expansion!

October 19, 2022

Posted: October 8, 2022 by ACEnet at
**Big Expansion News with Milo's Whole World Gourmet –
ACEnet (acenetworks.org)**

ACEnet Food Ventures tenant Milo's Whole World Gourmet, LLC, is a fast-growing manufacturer of branded and private label specialty foods located in southeast Ohio. Founded in 2003 by Jonathan Leal and his team, Milo's ...

READ MORE



Private Investment Leveraged





Supporting Appalachia Distribution



**SUPPORTING
APPALACHIA**

*Through Regional
Food Partnerships*



USDA Investment in Value Chains

**Providing Access from
Rural to Urban Markets**

Recipient: Appalachian Sustainable Development

Award Amount: \$999,968

*Expanding Food and Agriculture Value Chains in Central Appalachia
by Creating a Multi-Stakeholder Cooperative*



“

Moving local food to schools takes more than a plan. It requires partners committing to transform a conversation into action.



”



Recipient: Appalachian Sustainable Development

Award Amount: \$429,946.85

Building a Local Beef Value Chain in Central Appalachia



Recipient: God's Pantry Food Bank, Inc., Lexington

Award Amount: \$465,658.56

SE KY Health and Education Farm-to-Institution Program



Recipient: Tri-State Local Foods dba The Wild Ramp

Award Amount: \$464,136.00

*Implementation of an Online Ordering Platform in Response to COVID 19,
Expanding the Availability of Local Agricultural Products*



Recipient: Grow Ohio Valley, Inc.

Award Amount: \$240,727.00

The Public Market: Growing Regional Agriculture with a Year-Round Farmers Market



Recipient: Appalachian Center for Economic Networks

Award Amount: \$88,641.75

Planning to Advance Mobile Meat Slaughter and Processing in Ohio and Central Appalachia



NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Survey dynamics:

- Distributed electronically from May 13, 2021 to August 14, 2021
- 231 responses received from 50 Ohio counties.
- 142 identified primarily as consumers, 81 as producers, 8 as processors.
- 13,413 total acres represented, an average 172 acres per producer.



MOBILE MEAT OPINIONS Among All Respondents

- 67.2% believe mobile meat slaughter would alleviate regional processing bottleneck.
 - Uncertainties around staffing, volume, and capacity
- 54% had no concerns about introducing mobile slaughter to region.
 - Concerns include zoning,

Advancing Mobile Meat In Appalachia

LFPP PROJECT 2020-2022

CONSUMERS

- Strong preference for local meat
- Value supporting local farmers and local economics
- Preference pasture-raised, non-GMO feed, and grass-fed and finished growing practices
- Top barriers are high prices and inconvenient markets
- 90.78% of respondents likely or very likely to purchase if more local red meat was available

PRODUCERS

- Current practices engaged in by producers: 1) Pasture-raised (50%) and Grass-fed and finished (50%), 2) Non-GMO feed (21%)
- Very few producer certifications: Humane (8%), Naturally Grown (4%), Organic (3%)
- Highest impact barriers: 1) Significant wait times for slaughter dates, 2) Distance to processor too far, 3) Managing logistics of multiple processors
- Most producers would send more animals to market with fewer barriers

PROCESSORS

- Limited response rate symptom of core issue: processors operating at full capacity and lack employees
- No processor considered the introduction of a mobile slaughter unit as a negative
- Processors see mobile slaughter as the most impactful solution, with collaborative cold storage as a

Advancing Mobile Meat In Appalachia

LFPP PROJECT 2020-2022

CHALLENGES

- Farms need infrastructure (handling, offal, waste water)
- Farmer co-op momentum difficult to secure
- Additional logistics require extra management
- Limited to one location per day to meet throughput needs
- Follow-on cold storage & processing streams
- Lack of successful examples in region
- Employee retention & inspector workload issues remain

OPPORTUNITIES

- Mobile solves a specific problem (geography, zoning, land use, etc)
- Possible start-up or test business
- Could answer workload issues?
 - Preferred by slaughter & inspection personnel
- "Innovation" demand = investment potential
- More scalable, flexible than brick and mortar
- Meets both consumer and farmer mandate for humane slaughter
- May result in higher quality carcass according to studies

MOBILE MEAT FINDINGS

The Project Team conducted focus groups, interviews, and stakeholder summits to determine the benefits and concerns related to introducing a mobile meat slaughter unit to the Ohio and Central Appalachia region. The team also visited Bay Area Ranchers Co-op (CA) and Island Grown Farmers Co-op (WA) to learn directly from mobile meat slaughter unit operators.



For final project deliverables and project team contact information, visit:

ACENETWORKS.ORG/LFPP

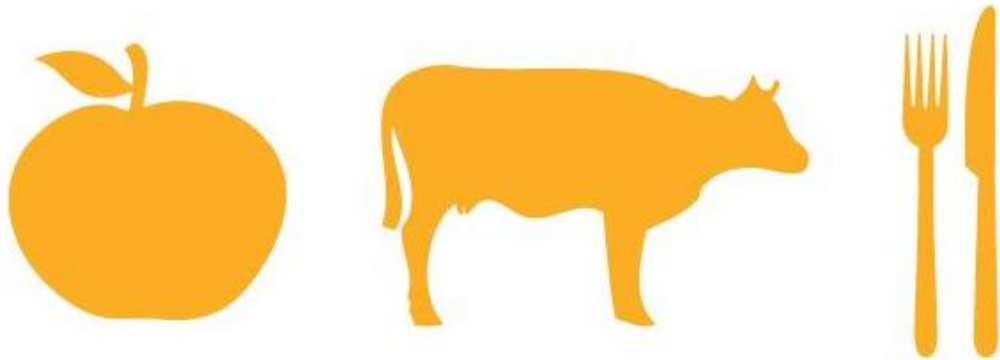
Funding for this project was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant AM200100XXXX090. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not

Recipient: Natural Capital Investment Fund

Award Amount: \$456,000.00

Adapting Value Chain Coordination to Enhance Market Opportunities

Value Chain Cluster Initiative

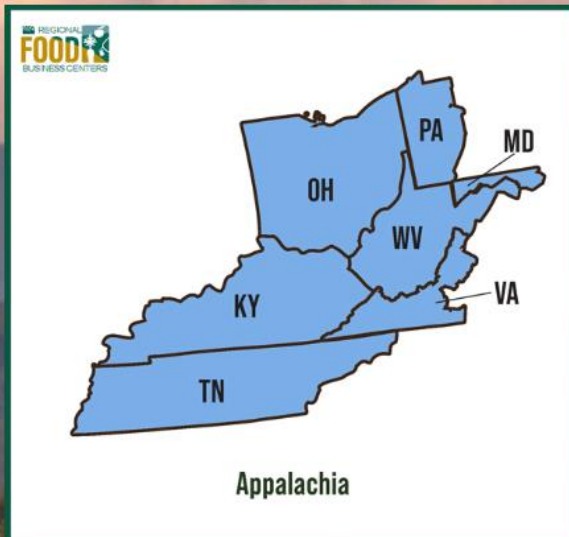




And Onward: ARFBC

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Appalachia Regional Food Business Center



The Appalachia Regional Food Business Center will support a more resilient, diverse, and competitive food system throughout all of Appalachia. Our Center will support producers by providing localized assistance to access local and regional supply chains, provide the technical assistance needed to access new markets, and assist small- and mid-sized producers in overcoming barriers to market access, with a focus on underserved farmers and food businesses.

With a long-standing commitment to the farms and food businesses in the region, the Appalachia Regional Food Business Center will work to foster a more robust, equitable, and sustainable food economy that benefits business owners, stakeholders, and consumers throughout the entire region.



MORE FROM ACENET!



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