



## DECLARATION OF COOPERATION

### **Lane County Food Distribution Project**

**March 6, 2009**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Lane County Food Distribution Project is to assist institutional buyers in Lane County (schools, colleges, hospitals) in sourcing more food from local farms.

#### **Background**

The Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) is working to keep the land of the McKenzie River Valley in agriculture as a means of protecting drinking water quality. Fostering local food systems is seen as a way to enhance the profitability of local agricultural enterprises. Local food systems include farmers markets, community supported agriculture, farm-to-chef, and farm-to-cafeteria (schools, colleges, hospitals) efforts.

For several years EWEB and others have sponsored conversations with the goal of increasing markets for locally-produced food, including by institutional buyers. The Willamette Farm and Food Coalition has worked to connect farmers and consumers for the last decade, and in the past three years has conducted outreach to institutional buyers in the context of their Farm to Schools programs. In spite of great interest for institutional purchase and use of locally-produced food, progress to date has been modest due to a number of very real challenges including: cost, quantity requirements, seasonality, labor and other limitations of cafeterias, lack of local processing facilities, transportation and delivery, convenience, the difficulty of making connections, and food safety and insurance requirements.

Recognizing these challenges and the accompanying opportunities if the challenges can be overcome, EWEB and Ecotrust asked Governor Kulongoski to designate the Oregon Solutions Lane County Food Distribution Project. The Governor designated the project and appointed Senator Floyd Prozanski and Rick Wright, CEO of Market of Choice as co-conveners of the project.

The mission of Oregon Solutions is to develop sustainable solutions to community based problems or opportunities that support economic, environmental, and community objectives through partnerships between government, business, and non-profit organizations. The Governor assures participation of his staff and appropriate state

agencies with other partners through the designation of an Oregon Solutions project. The Oregon Solutions Team is charged to make efficient use of available resources, overcome potential impediments early on, raise awareness of the project on a statewide level and bring effective partners to the table. The Team commits resources and time to an integrated action plan focused on a successful, sustainable project outcome.

### ***Goal***

**The goal of the Lane County Food Distribution Project is to increase the amount and value of locally-produced food that is purchased by Lane County schools, colleges and hospitals.**

The project team recognizes that farm-to-cafeteria programs face more challenges than other parts of the local food system. By focusing on and addressing the challenges of the most complex part of a local food system, the team aspires to not only increase the channels of access and availability for institutional purchases, but to also create knowledge and opportunities for other parts of the system.

### ***Action Areas***

The project team will focus its work in two areas:

1. Team members will explore possibilities for local aggregation, minimal processing, storage, and distribution resources for the 2009 growing season to serve farmers, institutional buyers, and others.
2. Team members will compile information about what products local school districts need as well as information about what local products farms and distributors have available. This information will be provided to distributors, farms and school districts this year and will be included in local and statewide databases serving institutional buyers and sellers in the future.

In addition, team members will:

- Include Lane County farmers in an ODA survey of farmer interest in direct sales to institutional buyers.
- Pursue farm-to-school funding from Oregon Commodity Commissions.
- Connect Lane County schools with the Federal Fresh Fruit and Veggie Program.
- Connect Lane County schools with farmers having surplus products and crops from land that is transitioning to organic.

### ***Cooperative Activities***

To carry out the goal of the project, we the undersigned cooperating partners agree to:

- **Cooperate** in the activities of the two agreed upon action areas,
- **Monitor** progress as the 2009 growing season unfolds, and
- **Reconvene** in December to assess progress, capture what has been learned, and plan next steps.

## ***Declaration***

### **Institutions**

#### **Bethel School District**

Nutrition Services has purchased apples, carrots, peaches, potatoes, pears, watermelon and cantaloupe directly from three Lane County farms and one other local farm.

Nutrition Services will pursue direct purchase from these farms in 2009 and will engage in conversations with additional Lane County farms. To expand its purchases of Lane County food products, Nutrition Services is interested in purchasing crops produced on land that is transitioning to organic, exploring forward contracting possibilities and investigating purchases of locally processed foods.

Nutrition Services will provide information to Willamette Farm and Food Coalition about which products they anticipate they will need in the 2009-2010 school year, so that this information can be provided to local farms and distributors as needed.

Nutrition Services will also investigate purchasing more locally grown produce through Emerald Fruit and Produce Company as a complement to direct purchasing. Nutrition Services and Emerald Fruit and Produce will conduct a pilot program for summer school 2009 with the goal of purchasing more than 50% local, giving priority to Lane County.

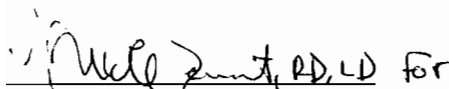
  
Jennie Henchion, *Nutrition Services Director*

#### **Eugene 4J School District**

The Eugene 4J School District Wellness Policy states:

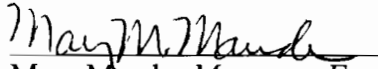
The district will look for opportunities to integrate local, organic foods into the meals served to students by the Eugene School District, based on availability, acceptability and price.

Eugene 4J Nutrition Services will look for opportunities to purchase produce from Lane County farms beginning in Fall 2009.

  
Chad Williams, *Director of Nutrition Services*

### **Sacred Heart Medical Center**


Sacred Heart Medical Center food service management team will discuss the possibilities of expanding our utilization of locally and regionally produced products in our food service operation. We will work with our produce suppliers to identify locally and regionally grown products and purchase when appropriate.



Mary Maude, *Manager, Food Service Department, University District*

### **University of Oregon**

Housing Food Services will continue to pursue opportunities to expand our use of locally and regionally produced products in our dining and catering program. As we evaluate products in terms of quality, cost and availability we will also take into consideration the place of origin as an additional factor in making purchasing decisions.



Tom Driscoll, *Director of Food Services, University Housing*

### **Lane Community College**

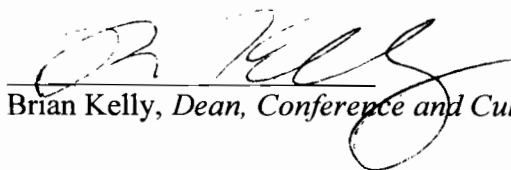
Lane Community College will coordinate with Willamette Farm and Food Coalition about potential products they will need in the 2009-2010 school year.

Lane Community College will work with our produce suppliers to identify local and regional products and purchase when availability, acceptability and competitive prices are present.

Lane Community College will continue to aggressively explore opportunities to purchase produce from Lane County farms

Lane Community College will continue to support and integrate product from the student supported and operated Leaning Garden on campus.

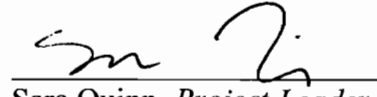
Lane Community College will continue to educate students in the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management programs about the benefits of purchasing product and supporting local farms.



Brian Kelly, *Dean, Conference and Culinary Services*

## **Project Tomato**

Project Tomato, a team of University of Oregon students, will process tomatoes grown by local farms in the fall so they can be stored and used by the University of Oregon's Dining Services during the school year.

  
Shelley Bowerman, *Project Leader*  
Sara Quinn, *Project Leader*

## **Farms**

### **River Bend Farm**

River Bend Farm and Honor Earth Farm have partnered to provide food from their farms to local institutions.

Honor Earth Farm plans to provide 200 lbs. of tomatoes to Project Tomato by late August (weather permitting). Students involved with Project Tomato will process the tomatoes so they can be used by the University of Oregon's Dining Services.

River Bend Farm has sold produce to SCAR/ Japer Mountain in the past and plans to continue this arrangement and hopefully increase the amount of local produce sold to the organization. River Bend Farm will communicate with the Pleasant Hill School District with the goal of providing the School District with fruit in the fall and winter months. River Bend Farm will also communicate with Lost Valley Educational Center with the goal of providing the Center with fruits and/or vegetables from River Bend and/or Honor Earth Farm.

  
Annette Pershern, *Owner/ Manager*


### **Wintergreen Farm**

Winter Green Farm will continue to make surplus crops available to local school districts. Surplus crops are those that we cannot market to our customers because we have produced more than we can sell. In 2008, we had surplus carrots and potatoes which were both sold to the Bethel School District. This arrangement worked well and if there is a similar surplus of these or other crops in 2009, we will make them available to schools.

  
Jabrila Via, *Owner/ Manager*

### **Groundwork Organics**

In 2009 Groundwork Organics will plan for growing transitional crops for local school districts for 2010. Groundwork Organics has land which is transitioning to organic and will be available for planting in Spring 2010. Groundwork Organics will communicate with Willamette Farm and Food Coalition's (WFFC) Farm to School Program and/or local school districts to identify crops that the schools need.

  
Gabe Cox, *Owner*

### **Cattail Creek Lamb**

Cattail Creek Lamb will work to increase direct sales of our products to institutional buyers in 2009.

Cattail Creek Lamb currently has excess capacity for refrigerated delivery and other marketing services for packaged meat, dairy products and other items. We are willing to discuss proposals from interested growers and distributors.

  
John Neumeister, *Owner*

### **Thistledown Farm**

Thistledown Farm is willing and able to plant crops in Spring 2009 for sale to local school districts in Fall 2009 as long as the quantities needed make it profitable. These crops will be sold to local schools through Emerald Fruit and Produce. We will determine which crops to plant and in what quantity, based on information about what the schools need, which will be provided by the Farm to School Program.

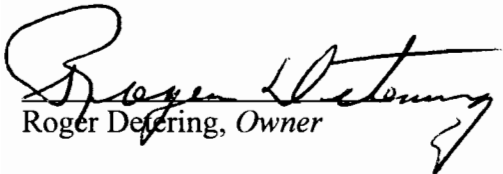


Randy Henderson, Owner

### **Detering Orchards**

Detering Orchards will continue to make our apples and other crops available to schools and any other interested institutions in Fall 2009 and beyond.

In Fall and Winter 2008 we sold apples to the Bethel School District for use in the school lunch program. This arrangement worked well for us and we plan to make our apples available to the Bethel school district again next Fall. We are interested in expanding to other school districts or any other institutions and will offer other crops as they are available.



Roger Detering, Owner

### **Youth Farm, FOOD for Lane County**

FOOD for Lane County's Youth Farm intends to work with Springfield Public School Nutrition Services, Emerald Fruit and Produce, and Willamette Farm and Food Coalition to plan for and to grow one or two vegetable crops for Springfield Public Schools for use in their school lunch program this fall.



Jennifer Anonia, Gardens Program Manager

## Distributors

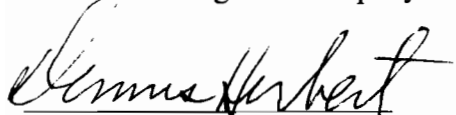
### **Emerald Fruit and Produce Company**

Emerald Fruit and Produce Company is proud to support the Oregon Solutions Food Distribution Project and the Farm to School Program. Emerald Fruit has been serving the local community and the Willamette Valley for 47 years as a local family owned and operated business. We believe that supporting local farms benefits the whole community. Emerald Fruit is pleased to assist local schools, universities and hospitals in purchasing from local farms.

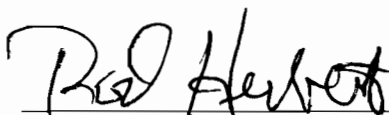
Emerald Fruit is currently supplying Springfield schools for the Farm to School Harvest of the Month program and recommends the program to other school districts. Emerald Fruit is seeking new items for the program from local farms, trying to offer a larger selection for a longer period of time throughout the year.

Emerald Fruit will assist local farms as needed by offering refrigerated storage space and delivery to local institutions included with its own deliveries. To help reduce congestion at institution loading docks, Emerald Fruit is willing to deliver non produce items.

Emerald Fruit will actively seek additional local growers who need assistance to supply local institutions, determining what they have to offer and making that information available through the company's newsletter.



Dennis Herbert, *President*



Rod Herbert, *Sales Manager, Local Buyer*

### **Hummingbird Wholesale**

Hummingbird Wholesale will continue working with farmers in the Willamette Valley and Oregon to grow organic bulk commodities, specifically grains, beans, nuts and seeds and to distribute them to customers in Oregon, Washington and California. A specific goal is to source all of our garbanzo, pinto and black beans from Oregon sources in 2008.

Hummingbird Wholesale is willing to share information on their successes and challenges in contracting and sourcing beans, grains, and seeds in Oregon.

Hummingbird Wholesale will work with Tom Driscoll at the University of Oregon to explore the feasibility of arranging to meet their needs for dried beans with Oregon grown product in the 2009-2010 season.



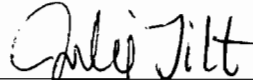
Hummingbird Wholesale will continue to explore ways to feature and promote Oregon grown commodities in its products and sales efforts, including point of origin labeling of locally produced products.

Hummingbird Wholesale will continue to align itself with and offer resources to local organizations active in promoting local foods.

Hummingbird Wholesale will organize a meeting and provide up to \$500 in funding for assistance to Megan Kemple in creating an efficient database management system for her role as Farm to School Program Coordinator.



Charlie Tilt, *Co-Owner*

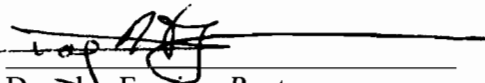


Julie Tilt, *Co-Owner*

### **Eugene Local Foods**

As an aggregator and online marketplace of locally grown and produced food, Eugene Local Foods supports the Lane County Food Distribution Project. Eugene Local Foods serves local farmers by providing marketing, selling, packaging, and delivery services for their produce and prepared foods. Eugene Local Foods serves buyers, including institutional buyers, by providing fresh, healthy, locally grown and produced food in a cost-effective manner on a weekly basis.

Eugene Local Foods will support the project by encouraging and helping new and existing local growers and processors to grow their businesses and to meet the needs of institutional buyers.



Douglas Frazier, *Partner*



Mazzi Hernandez, *Partner*

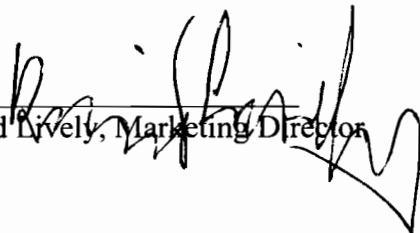
### **Organically Grown Company**

OGC will continue to coordinate production with and provide marketing and other support services to the dozens of Oregon-based organic farms that it has developed relationships with over the past 26 years.

These services and efforts include determining market demand and making plans to meet (but not exceed) it; developing quality standards that meet the highest of expectations for organic produce; providing assistance in the purchase of packaging; arranging shipping

of products from farms to local market outlets in ways that reduce distribution carbon footprints as much as possible; promoting farms, their products and sustainability initiatives; serving retailers, wholesalers, restaurants and institutions seeking organically grown produce; and insuring that growers are paid within an appropriate timeline.

OGC will continue to work with the various elements of the organic trade and local community to develop the infrastructure that will be required to feed citizens in an era that offers fewer resources and more challenges to farming enterprises located throughout the Pacific Northwest (and beyond).



David Lively, Marketing Director

**State Agencies**

### **Oregon Department of Education**

The Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program assists school districts in utilizing Oregon food products. The program also promotes food- and garden based-educational activities in school districts.

The Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program will provide technical assistance to Lane County school districts working to increase their local food purchases. A policy memo detailing legal requirements for purchasing local foods, written by the Oregon Department of Education in consultation with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, is available online.

The Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program will work with the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition to develop seasonal materials that school districts can use to promote local food in their school cafeterias and in their classrooms.

The Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program will provide information to Lane County school districts on how to apply for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and on how to incorporate local, seasonal fruits and vegetables into the program.

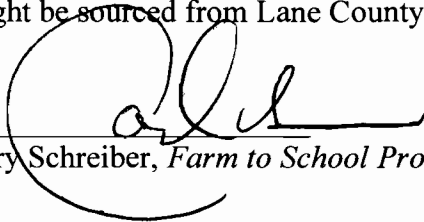


Joan Ottinger, *Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program Coordinator*

## **Oregon Department of Agriculture**

The Farm to School Program Manager in the Oregon Department of Agriculture will design and conduct a survey of over 200 Oregon Farms, targeting all geographic regions of the state including Lane County. The survey will identify farms that have the capacity and an interest in selling to schools. The survey will also gather information about the challenges and opportunities associated with selling to schools.

The Program Manager will work within the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network to pursue funding from Oregon commodity commissions, such as the Oregon Potato Commission, for the purchase of Oregon-grown products, including products that might be sourced from Lane County Farms.



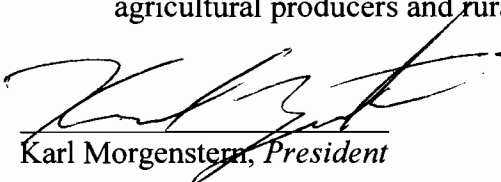
Cory Schreiber, *Farm to School Program Manager*

## **Organizations**

### **Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development**

Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, Inc., a regional 501c3 non-profit organization serving Benton, Lane, Linn, Lincoln, Polk and Marion counties remains committed to supporting sustainable agriculture, local foods and rural jobs. We make the following commitment toward the 2009 Lane County Food Distribution Project.

- Continue to hold the Local Food Connection event held annually at Lane Community College connecting food producers with food buyers.
- Provide assistance on grants that support the development, marketing and distribution of local foods such as Value Added Producer Grants and Rural Business Enterprise Grants.
- Provide assistance on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for agricultural producers and rural businesses.



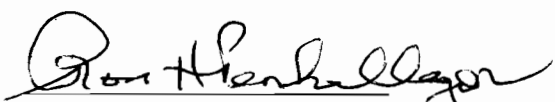
Karl Morgenstern, *President*

## **Oregon State University Extension Service in Lane County**

The OSU Extension Service in Lane County is involved in the education of county residents with research-based information and is very involved with those who grow food in Lane County and the region.

The Extension Service will continue to provide research-based information to clients, partners and local farmers.

The Extension Service will continue to make on-farm visits to assist farmers in providing high quality food and produce and will work with new farmers wanting to become involved in the growing, distribution and marketing of fresh, local food.



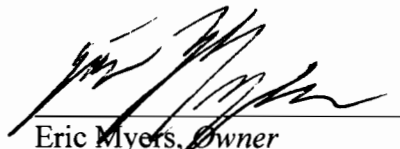
Ross Penhallegon, *Extension Horticulturalist*

## **Cascadia Longboards**

I will continue researching and investigating local potentials and opportunities to support the aggregation, minimal processing, storage, and distribution sectors of the local food infrastructure related to institutional local food purchasing.

I will maintain and further develop existing partnerships within the community while increasing public awareness about the need for an efficient and well functioning local food system.

I will continue my active membership with the Saturday Market Board of Directors, the Lane County Fair Board and the OSU Extension Service Master Gardeners and represent the goal of the Oregon Solutions Lane County Food Distribution Project in my discussions concerning growing, processing, distributing and advocating for an efficient local food system.



Eric Myers, *Owner*

## **Mud City Press**

I have spent much of the last two years studying, researching, and writing about the revitalization of food production in Willamette Valley agriculture as a way to increase

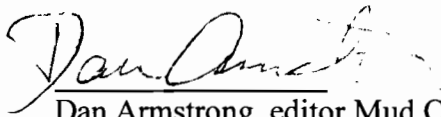
economic stability and food security in the region. Part of that research has been a systematic assessment of the regional food system.

As my commitment to Oregon Solutions, I will continue to assess the capacity and viability of food system infrastructure in the Willamette Valley with the specific purpose of facilitating the increased use of locally grown food products in institutional cafeterias in Lane County.

I will also continue to use my website as a food security forum with articles on why we need a strong regional food system, how buying local supports and maintains that food system, and how this Oregon Solutions project can play a critical role in stimulating food production in the Willamette Valley and in strengthening the regional food system.

I will also use my position on the Lane County Food Policy Council to communicate with Eugene and Lane County policy makers about the importance of revitalizing the regional food system and the part institutional buying can play in helping with that revitalization.

I am also part of a citizen group promoting the remodeling of the Lane County Fairgrounds and converting it into a community resource center that embodies the principles of sustainability. One goal in this project is to have a year-round farmers market, grain storage, and a minimum food processing and distribution warehouse incorporated into the fairgrounds site. I will continue to pursue this fairgrounds project with the hope that the fairgrounds can one day become a critical piece in the regional food system infrastructure—a food hub, if you will—with the capacity to make locally grown products more accessible to the public and to institutional cafeterias in Lane County.



Dan Armstrong, editor Mud City Press, member Lane County Food Policy Council

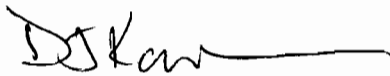
## **Ecotrust**

Ecotrust is fully committed to developing FoodHub. This web-based wholesale direct trading platform will facilitate the consumption of regional food by providing a suite of tools to buyers and sellers allowing them to conduct business efficiently and effectively.

FoodHub will be developed with the specific needs of diverse audiences in mind, including farmers, ranchers, fisherman, food processors, restaurant chefs, retailers and institutional purchases such as public schools, hospitals and food service providers on college and corporate campuses.

Ecotrust's FoodHub is committed to working closely with partners such as the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Willamette Food and Farm Coalition, the Eugene Water and

Electric Board, and the Oregon Department of Education's Farm to School program. These partners will inform the development of the tool while also providing outreach to their members, and within their networks so that the tool is utilized to its fullest potential.



Deborah J. Kane, *Vice President, Food & Farms*

### **Willamette Farm and Food Coalition**

Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (WFFC) will work within the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network and Oregon Department of Agriculture to pursue funding from Oregon commodity commissions, such as the Oregon Potato Commission, for the purchase of Oregon-grown products for schools, with a specific focus on any products that might be sourced from Lane County Farms.

WFFC will work with the Oregon Department of Education's Farm to School and School Garden Program, to secure federal funding from the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program for Lane County Schools.

WFFC will work to connect farms that are interested in selling to schools (such as Wintergreen Farm, Groundwork Organics, FOOD for Lane County's Youth Farm, Detering Orchards and Thistledown Farm) with Food Service employees at Lane County Schools.

- WFFC will assist Eugene 4J District in purchasing from Lane County farms for the first time, through Emerald Fruit and Produce.
- WFFC will assist the Bethel School District in securing produce for their summer school program from Lane County Farms via Emerald Fruit and Produce, in addition to assisting with the district's purchasing of locally processed products.
- WFFC will assist Springfield Public Schools in purchasing dry beans from Hummingbird Wholesale, frozen berries from local farms, and produce from FOOD for Lane County's Youth Farm.

WFFC will create a document summarizing the opportunities for farms in selling to school districts and will provide this information to local farms, OSU/Lane County Extension Service, as well as posting on WFFC's website.

WFFC will compile information about what specific products local school districts are looking for and provide that information to distributors (Emerald Fruit and Produce, McDonald Wholesale, Organically Grown Company) and farms (Wintergreen Farm, Groundwork Organics, FOOD for Lane County's Youth Farm, Thistledown Farm, Detering Orchards and River Bend Farm.)

WFFC will compile information about what local products farms and distributors have available and provide this information to school districts. (WFFC will work with Hummingbird Wholesale to develop a database for managing this information.)

WFFC will communicate with Emerald Fruit and Produce about new Lane County farms that may be interested in contracting with Emerald.

WFFC will communicate with Ecotrust to ensure that the developing FoodHub is designed to serve schools, so that purchases of Lane County products can be facilitated by use of the on-line tool.



Lynne Fessenden, *Executive Director*



Megan Kemple, *Farm to School Program Coordinator*

### **Eugene Water & Electric Board**

For the reasons outlined in the background section of this Declaration of Cooperation, the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) commits to taking the following steps in 2009 as part of the Lane County Food Distribution Project:

Donate \$10,000 to the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (WFFC) to support their commitments as outlined in this Declaration of Cooperation.

Donate \$20,000 to Ecotrust to be used to develop the FoodHub on-line tool to connect local food buyers and local growers.

Continue sponsorship of the Local Food Connection event held annually at Lane Community College in coordination with Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development for 2010.

Continue to work with Good Company to provide on-going staff support for the following three projects:

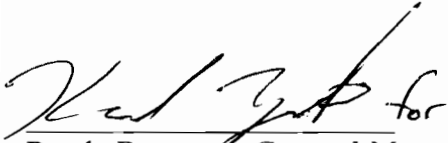
- Oregon Solutions Lane County Food Distribution Project;
- Ecotrust's FoodHub Project; and,
- Local Food Connection event.

Make available research and information collected to date associated with food buyer interest and barriers to buying local.

Provide meeting space at EWEB, as available and needed, for projects related to local food initiatives.

Promote and encourage support for finding solutions to increasing the economic viability of farmers through gaining access to local food markets among the organizations where EWEB has a board presence, including:

- The Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District
- Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development
- Oregon Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils



*Randy Berggren, General Manager*