



REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTERS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WEBINAR NOTES

Meeting Details

Date: 11/21/2024

Time: 1:00pm ET

[View Our Presenter Slides.](#)

[View Our Webinar Recording.](#)

Meeting Purpose and Overview

This webinar explored strategies for supporting recovery and resilience of local and regional food systems in the face of natural and man-made disruptions. Panelists Erin Bradley (Freshlist Food Hub), Sommer Sibilly-Brown (Good Food Virgin Islands), and Chloe Diegel (Robinette Farms) shared insights and lessons from past, current, and future-looking initiatives that highlight the interconnected efforts required to build resilient food systems.

The webinar explored resilience in local food systems as a dynamic, relational, and evolving process rather than a fixed goal. This concept emphasizes that community strengths and vulnerabilities shift across time and place, necessitating flexible and inclusive approaches to preparedness and response.

Below is an overview of the key takeaways from the discussion:

Overview of Key Topics Discussed

Redefining Resilience

- Resilience is framed as an ongoing process, incorporating equity and justice to avoid perpetuating systemic inequities.
- The interactive and web-based [Local and Regional Food Systems Resilience Playbook](#) developed by the team integrates high-level analysis with real-world, actionable case studies to provide practical guidance.

Core Focus Areas of Resilience

- 1. Equitable Response and Recovery:**
 - Emphasizes coordinated distribution of resources, leveraging financial assets, and community collaboration to address immediate needs.
- 2. Securing Supply Chains:**
 - Aims to safeguard physical and human infrastructure for local and regional food systems.
- 3. Maintaining Markets:**

- Highlights innovative solutions to sustain food movement through marketplaces, ensuring accessibility and market viability for producers.

Key Frameworks and Practices

Actionable Resilience Framework:

- Designed to guide stakeholders integrate local food systems into disaster response efforts.
- Features case studies, interviews, and interactive tools to translate strategies into actionable insights.

Five Practices for Resilient Food Systems:

- Encourages regular community dialogue, identifying systemic barriers, and collaboration across scales to create robust networks.

Panelist Contributions

Three panelists shared their insights and experiences in fostering resilience in diverse contexts:

1. Erin Bradley (Charlotte, NC):

- Discussed Freshlist Food Hub's pivot from restaurant sales to food access programs during COVID-19 and recent hurricane recovery efforts.
- Emphasized the value of diversifying market channels and leveraging networks for disaster response and policy advocacy.

2. Chloe Diele (Martell, NE):

- Highlighted the power of farmer-to-farmer connections through initiatives like "Farmer Coffee," which foster deeper relationships and collaborative problem solving.
- Advocated for logistical support to farmers and building relationships across the food system to enhance resilience.

3. Summer Sibley Brown (US Virgin Islands):

- Shared how partnerships, like those with local banks for tree distribution post-hurricanes, support community and farmer-level recovery.
- Stressed the importance of long-term recovery planning, place-based meetings, and leveraging concentric networks for resilient food systems.

Strategies and Lessons Learned

- **Leveraging Networks:** Both local and national networks play a critical role in pooling resources, knowledge, and support during crises.
- **Shared Information:** A centralized repository of strategies and best practices minimizes redundancy and expedites response during disasters.
- **Human Connection:** Simple, low-cost initiatives such as community gatherings or shared meals can foster meaningful relationships that strengthen collaborative resilience.

Interactive Elements and Next Steps: The webinar concluded with stories of resilience and invited panelists to share photographs and narratives illustrating resilience in action. The discussion emphasized the role of partnerships, proactive communication, and the collective action necessary to navigate future disruptions.

This framework and the associated [Local and Regional Food Systems Resilience Playbook](#) aim to empower stakeholders across sectors to harness local food systems for more equitable and effective disaster responses.