



## The Belknap Foodshed Connecting Community through Local Food

Welcome to The Belknap Foodshed where our community comes together to:

- 1. Cultivate Food and Preserve Open Agricultural Land**
- 2. Facilitate Aggregation and Distribution plus Create Access to Retail Markets**
- 3. Incubate Local Food Companies**
- 4. Foster Business Development and Job Creation**
- 5. Create Educational and Training Opportunities**
- 6. Establish Locavore Retail and Restaurant Facilities**

The Belknap Foodshed is a food-based ecosystem: a community of interacting components within our shared physical environment. The vision for The Belknap Foodshed is to create a centrally located food-based maker space that operates like an ecosystem for making food and includes farming, aggregation, sales, shelf-stable food preparation, distribution, on-site restaurants, retail and education with a goal of strengthening food systems statewide. Being located in Belknap County will literally and figuratively fill the gap between existing food hubs and distribution efforts on the seacoast, the Monadnock region and in the north country, and will create the necessary overlap to make meaningful connections.

### **1. Cultivate Food and Preserve Open Agricultural Land**

Introducing regenerative agriculture will address best practices for adapting to the impacts of climate change and also incorporate planned diversity, targeted crop selection and a sustainable supply of ingredients for on-site café, restaurant and production needs as the first goal. This will ensure that the land is farmed with a goal of sustainably providing for the needs of The Belknap Foodshed and the future needs of the larger community and region. Incorporating a greenhouse will create agricultural opportunities and also serve as a training venue.



### **2. Aggregate, Distribute and Create Access to Retail Markets**

The location in central NH is pivotal in creating connections with all the corners of the state and not only supporting, but supplementing, the current efforts to aggregate and distribute local food products state-wide. In addition to distribution off-site, farmers and food companies will have the opportunity to access the retail market directly at The Belknap Foodshed, as well as the opportunity to have their foods featured in on-site restaurants. The first step is already underway with the launch of a virtual farmer's market in May 2020. This provides the opportunity for local producers to connect with the community and the community to purchase local food safely, selecting either contact-less curbside pick-up or home delivery in Meredith, Laconia and Gilford.



### 3. Incubate Local Food Companies

Genuine Local has been making it easier for food companies to make clean food since January 2016. Access to the right equipment, assistance navigating the specialized regulatory world of food production and belonging to a network of fellow business owners, with increased access to suppliers and resources results in greater success no matter how large or small the producer. Expanding production services will increase the scope of entrepreneurs who will benefit, which will also enhance the diversity of local food offerings for retail and wholesale markets.



### 4. Foster Business Development and Job Creation

The Belknap Foodshed will foster business growth, job creation, economic diversity and enhancement of a sustainable food system, both directly and indirectly. In addition to a resident farmer(s), there will be business development opportunities, small plot intensive farming (SPIN Farming), greenhouse operations, educational and training programs, potential market access through on-site retail and restaurants, as well as space available for hosting on-site events.



### 5. Create Educational and Training Opportunities

Education is key to the collective success and will support existing programs plus create new educational and training opportunities. The offerings will cover all aspects of life at The Belknap Foodshed – training in production, best practices, FSMA compliance, entering retail and wholesale markets, costing and exploring the benefits of value-added production.



### 6. Establish Locavore Retail and Restaurant Facilities

The end game for producing and preparing food is to get clean food into our community – and establishing retail and restaurant space will bring the efforts full-circle. On-site retail space will offer not only fresh produce, flowers and herbs but also feature locally made food and food related items. Additionally, two restaurants are planned – each of which will have local at its heart. All three of these enterprises will offer opportunities for producers at The Belknap Foodshed to be featured for sale or on the menus.



As this vision becomes reality – everyone in our community (*do you eat food? – then you're part of our community!*) is invited to participate. Participation can take many forms and all are needed – time, thought, expertise, resources, labor, investment, hope and vision.

For more information, please give Gavin or Mary Macdonald a call at 603/279-8600 or send an email to [connect@belknapfoodshed.com](mailto:connect@belknapfoodshed.com). More information will be posted on the [belknapfoodshed.com](http://belknapfoodshed.com) website as well, and you can always sign up for our mailing list. Thank you for your support – it just takes “one person, one moment, one conviction, to start a ripple of change!” *Donna Brazile*