



Growing Our Local Food Economy

Rural Grocery Summit 2026

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Why do you care about local food?



Why did we care? Local food is **at risk.**



<u>Farms in Washtenaw County</u>			
	<u>1950</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>% change</u>
# of farms	2,884	1,236	-57%
<u># of farms with:</u>			
Milk	1,232	25	-98%
Orchards	1,659	39	-98%
Pigs	1,407	48	-97%
Cattle	2,079	161	-92%
Poultry	1,686	148	-91%
Vegetables	181	109	-40%
Honey	26	16	-38%
Michigan	155,589	52,194	-66%
Indiana	166,627	58,695	-65%
Ohio	199,359	75,462	-62%
Nation	5,382,162	2,109,303	-61%

- Average age of a farmer is 58
- 40% of agricultural land in the US will transition in ownership within 20 years
- Once farms are lost, they are hard to replace

Data Sources: USDA Census of Agriculture 1950, 2012; American Farmland Trust

Farmers make **little money.**

Farm Share
\$0.15



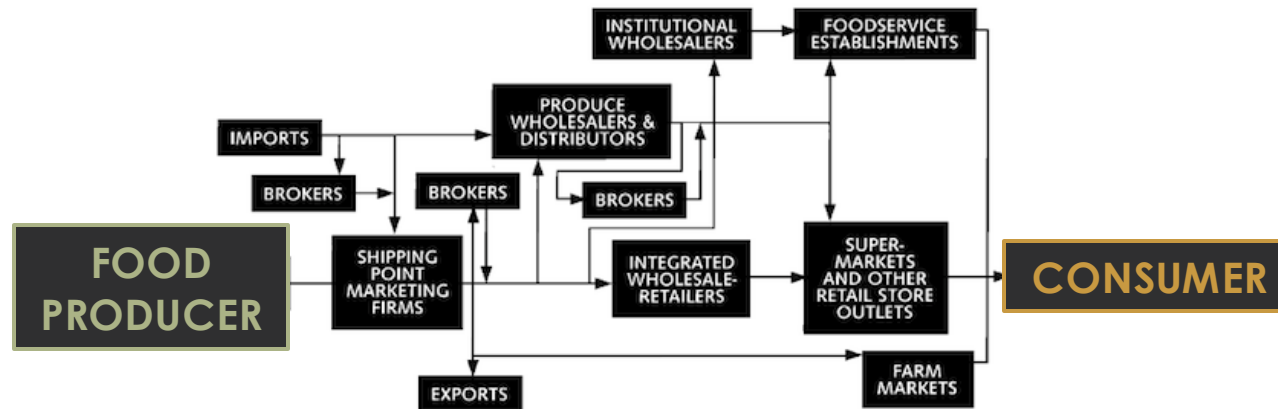
Marketing
Share
\$0.85

- Selling through traditional channels, farmers receive **only 15 cents** per dollar.
- Middlemen and distributors **take 85 cents** per dollar in shipping, receiving, and markup costs.

Data Source: USDA Economic Research Service, 2022

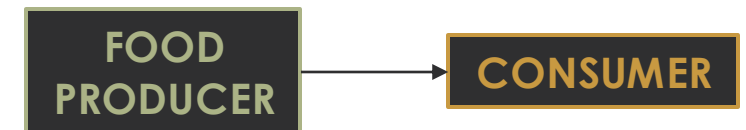
The US food system favors huge, **non-local** producers.

99.3% Indirectly Purchased



- Food travels long distances – on average 1500 miles
- **Our food system is vulnerable** to climate change, oil shortages, aquifers, and other disruptions (like COVID-19).

0.7% Directly Purchased



- **Direct** connection between producer and consumer
- **Producers make more money**, because there are no middlemen or distributors

How can we make it easier to shop local?

FARMERS' MARKETS

- Farmers receive most of the sale
- Local, fresh, and in-season
- Authentic
- Educational
- Builds community

+

GROCERY STORES

- High quality refrigeration and display
- Convenient
 - Open year-round
 - Offers one-stop shopping

=

FARM STOPS

- Combining the best of both shopping experiences
- Amazing local products for customers
- Sustainable margins for local farms



What is a Farm Stop?

1. Brick & Mortar

2. Majority Consignment /
Direct to Consumer

3. Mission Driven

An Everyday Market & Café

As Local As Possible

Produce Forward

What is a Farm Stop?

Brick and Mortar store

- Everyday market stocked exclusively with only local products
- Single checkout line to purchase from all farms at once
- Most farms selling at farm stops continue to sell through farmers markets



What is a Farm Stop?

Direct-to-Consumer sales from farms and producers in a retail setting (a.k.a. consignment)


- Breaks traditional grocery paradigm
- Customers understand the math (e.g. 70% paid to farms). Farms paid 4-5 times the national average.
- Builds community and mutual trust
- “Ultra Local” model highly differentiated from traditional grocery.
- Very low food waste; High farmer satisfaction



What is a Farm Stop?

Mission-directed to Grow Local Food Economies

- Argus is organized as a L3C entity (mission-driven LLC)
- Other Farm Stops have formed as L3C's, cooperatives or non-profits.



Membership
You can help make a difference.

Local Roots is a cooperative comprised of passionate citizens, just like YOU, who support local growers, makers, and creators.

If you haven't already, join us with a \$50 annual membership.

[Read More](#)

Cooperative

A LOCAL NONPROFIT 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION

Donate to The Wild Ramp

Our market started as a grassroots effort to combat the rising climb of obesity in our area by making fresh local food accessible to all.

[Donate Now](#)

Non-Profit



Argus Farm Stop
GROWING OUR LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

L3C
(Mission-Directed LLC)

Farm Stops in Rural Communities

Of the 30 farm stops currently open across the country, 80% meet USDA rural classification

	All local?	Transport	Daily txns & basket size	Staffing and volunteers	Annual Sales	Grants?
Ranch and Root LLC Ohio Pop. 1,500	Majority local	90% delivered	35 txns \$35 avg basket	2 staff Vendor volunteers	\$300K	Sales only
Clatskanie Farmer Collective 501c3 Oregon Pop. 1,800	Yes	Mix of delivery and pickup	29 txns \$39 avg. basket	4 staff Volunteers	\$300K	Mix of grants and sales
Meadowlark Market and Kitchen 501c3 Wyoming Pop. 7,500	>85% local	All delivered	45 txns \$35 avg basket	5 staff	\$375K	Mix of grants and sales
Local Roots Market Coop Ohio Pop. 27,000	Majority local	90% delivered	240 txns \$28 avg basket	22 staff Few volunteers	\$2.3M	Sales only Grants for capital improvements



**Farm Stops create
a community
tapestry.**



Farm Stop Perspectives:

Farms & Producers

- Application and product mix curation
- Communication
- Product Drop off & Coffee time
- Sales reporting and Payments



Customers

- Incredible experience for shopping in season and supporting local farms



Staff

- Career path focused on local food



Argus Impact

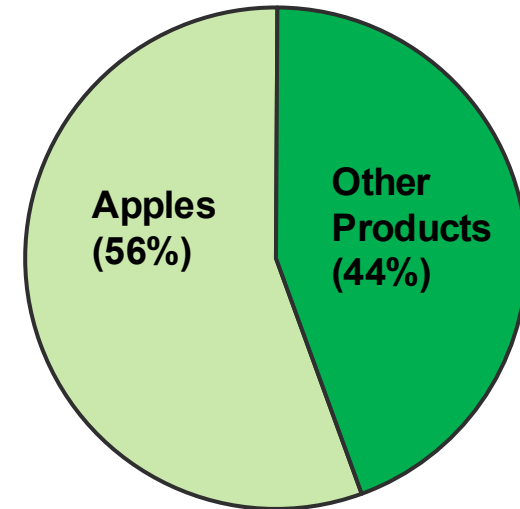
- We opened in August 2014 with 40 producers and have grown to over 300 today.
- We have grown to three locations with an online grocery and subscription service
- 2024 another year of growth
 - \$6.9 million in sales
 - Top 75 farms received over \$44,000 on average
- Argus has paid out over \$30 million to local farms and food producers since 2014.



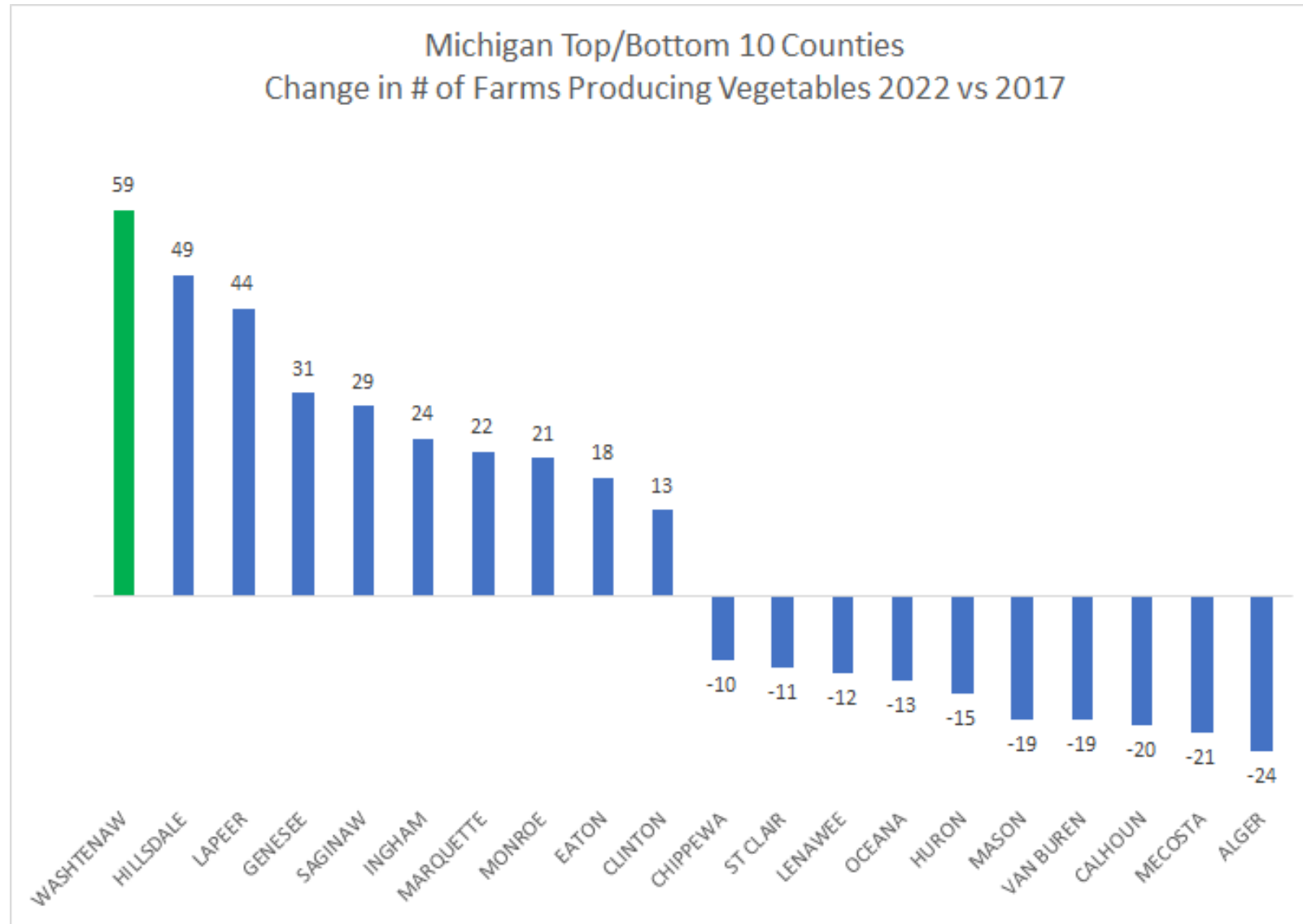
Apple farmers sell more than apples

Argus Farm Stop - All sales from Apple orchards - 12 months ending June 30, 2025*

	Liberty	Packard Market	Online Sales	Packard Cafe	Grand Total
KERRY ORCHARDS	\$17,497	\$15,878	\$2,329	\$1,960	\$37,664
KERRY_APPLES_VARIOUS_LB	\$6,752	\$3,743	\$1,927	\$923	\$13,345
KERRY_APPLES_EVERCRISP_LB	\$3,825	\$3,604	\$44	\$141	\$7,614
KERRY_PEA_NUT_BUTTER_16OZ	\$1,249	\$1,724	\$23	\$0	\$2,996
KERRY_CIDER_HGAL	\$637	\$1,467	\$22	\$6	\$2,131
KERRY_CHERRIES_SWEET_QUART	\$965	\$699	\$0	\$180	\$1,844
KERRY_CIDER_GAL	\$608	\$520	\$19	\$257	\$1,403
KERRY_CHERRIES_SWEET_PINT	\$631	\$627	\$0	\$90	\$1,347
KERRY_PEA_NUT_BUTTER_ORGANIC_8OZ	\$498	\$618	\$35	\$12	\$1,163
KERRY_POTATOES_5LB_BAG	\$25	\$1,027	\$40	\$0	\$1,092
KERRY_ALMOND_BUTTER_8OZ	\$418	\$576	\$35	\$12	\$1,041
KERRY_BLUEBERRIES_QT	\$564	\$365	\$0	\$0	\$929
KERRY_CASHEW_BUTTER_8OZ	\$350	\$321	\$0	\$0	\$670
KERRY_CIDER_PINT	\$373	\$0	\$20	\$274	\$666
KERRY_BLUEBERRIES_PINT	\$365	\$222	\$0	\$30	\$617
KERRY_POTATOES_LB	\$14	\$305	\$164		\$484
KERRY_CASHEW_BUTTER_SALTED_8OZ	\$155				\$155
KERRY_APPLES_HONEYCRISP_LB	\$21	\$3	\$0	\$38	\$62
KERRY_PEA_CH_SECONDS_LB	\$44	\$1			\$45
KERRY_CIDER_HGAL_DISCOUNT	\$4	\$31		\$0	\$35
KERRY_POTATOES_FINGERLING_LB		\$25			\$25




Washtenaw County is #1 in Michigan for Growth in Number of Farms Producing Vegetables



Source: USDA Ag Census 2022 and 2017

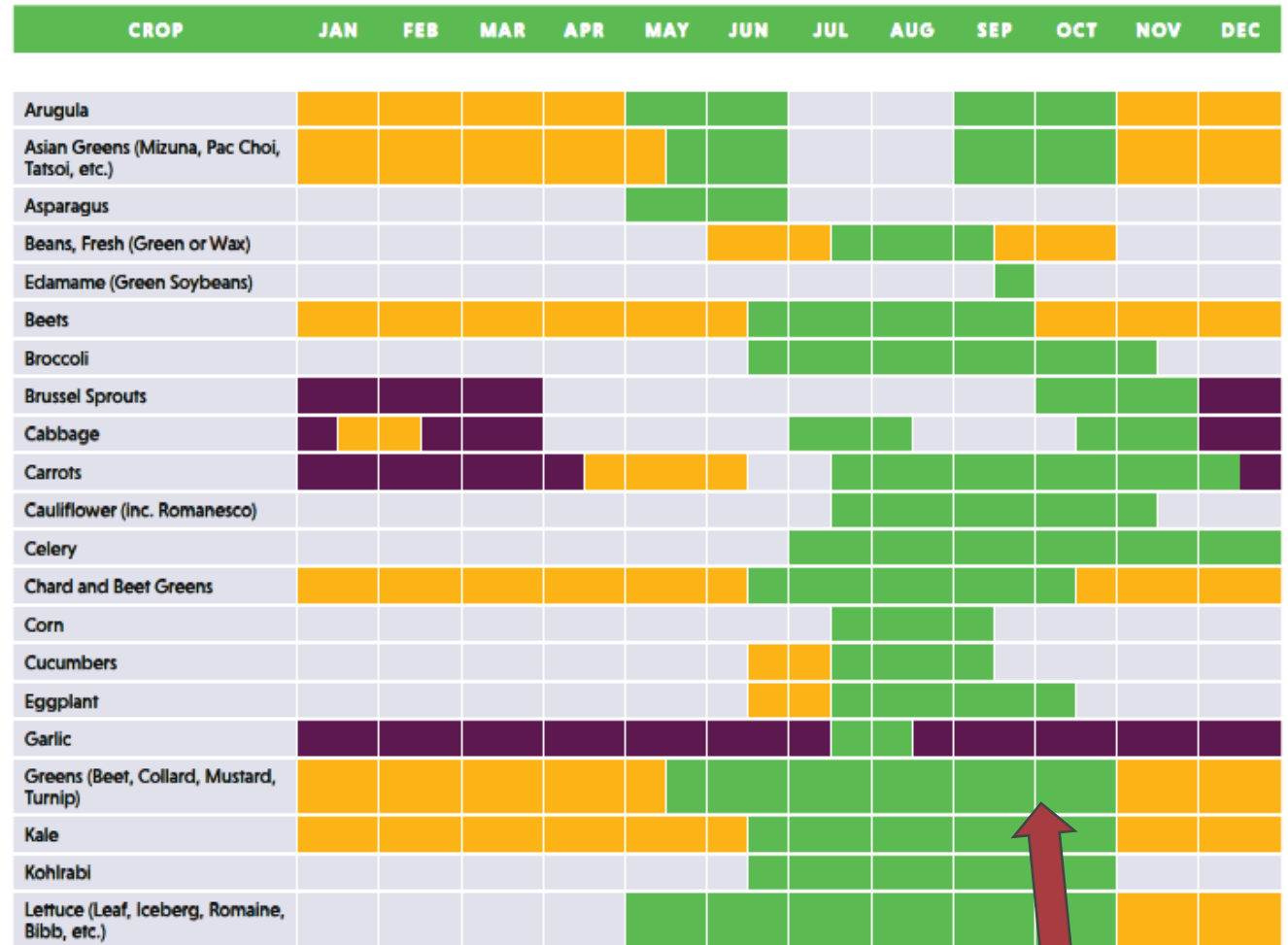
Farm Stops provide year-round income for farms and extend seasonality

Yellow  = "extended season"

Purple  = "storage"

- Farm Stops have reliable & comfortable year-round shopping
- Expanded use of cold weather growing and storage techniques
- **36% of Argus annual produce sales take place from January - May.**
- Expanded retail outlets encourage new products

MICHIGAN PRODUCE AVAILABILITY



Source: MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

"Typical" MI farmer's market season



Farm Stops Can Expand Food Access

- Farm Stops solve the biggest hurdle facing most local food communities: *the logistics of getting products from local farms to customers.*
- Farm Stops are well positioned to grow food access in conjunction with funding partners
 - Double Up Food Bucks (Fair Food Network)
 - Funding organizations like Rotary, and state/regional orgs
 - Customer donations (round up at the register)
 - Local farms now economically stabilized – and in a position to help.

“Are there ever customers that come in the store looking for food, but unable to pay? Part of why we are in food is to feed the hungry, so please load them up with Pine Ridge Organics food and send them on their way with my blessing.”

The Farm Stop model is gaining momentum

The New York Times

What if a Grocery Store Was More Like a Farmers' Market?

A farm stop in Ann Arbor, Mich., has found success with its local-first approach. But is the model replicable?



National Farm Stop Conference
February 12 – 15 2026, Ann Arbor MI
farmstops.net

FOOD & WINE

NEWS > LIFESTYLE

Searching for Community and Fresh Local Produce? You Should Know What a Farm Stop Is

This brick-and-mortar spin on a farmers market is a new model for shopping local.



Farm Stops Create New Markets for Small Farms

These brick-and-mortar consignment businesses support farmers and bring fresh, locally grown food to their communities.

BY PAGE HODDER • AUGUST 12, 2024



CONSUMPTION - EXPLAINER

Is the Farm Stop Revolution Upon Us?

A hybrid between a farmer's market and a co-op store, farm stops are popping up across the country, helping customers access local food year round.

#Access #Business #Food & Drink

by Steven Corso · May 14, 2024





FARM STOPS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Des Moines, IA

Grayslake, IL

Chelsea, MI

Empire, MI



Ann Arbor, MI



Wooster, OH

Marquette, MI

Philmont, NY



Clatskanie, OR



Lander, WY



Ash Grove, MO



Omaha, NE



Springfield, MO



Madison, IN



Bloomington, IN



Bloomington, IN



Greensburg, IN



Jonesborough, TN



Lancaster, OH



Madison, WV



Ripley, OH



Caryville, NY



State College, PA



Montclair, NJ



Wheeling, WV



Huntington, WV

How can we help?

Farm Stop Education

customizable consulting, training, and education on the farm stop model

Public courses available!

- **Welcome to Argus Farm Stop**
(free, monthly webinar)
- **How to Start a Farm Stop**
(3 day virtual deep dive)
- **Merchandising**
- **Online Operations**
- In store **shadowing**

Private consulting available!

- Initial conversations to outline support plan
- Reasonable hourly rate, flexible scheduling
- Argus can provide scope of work, can include letter of support for grant applications
- Determine timeline, kick off!

→ farmstops.net/education ←

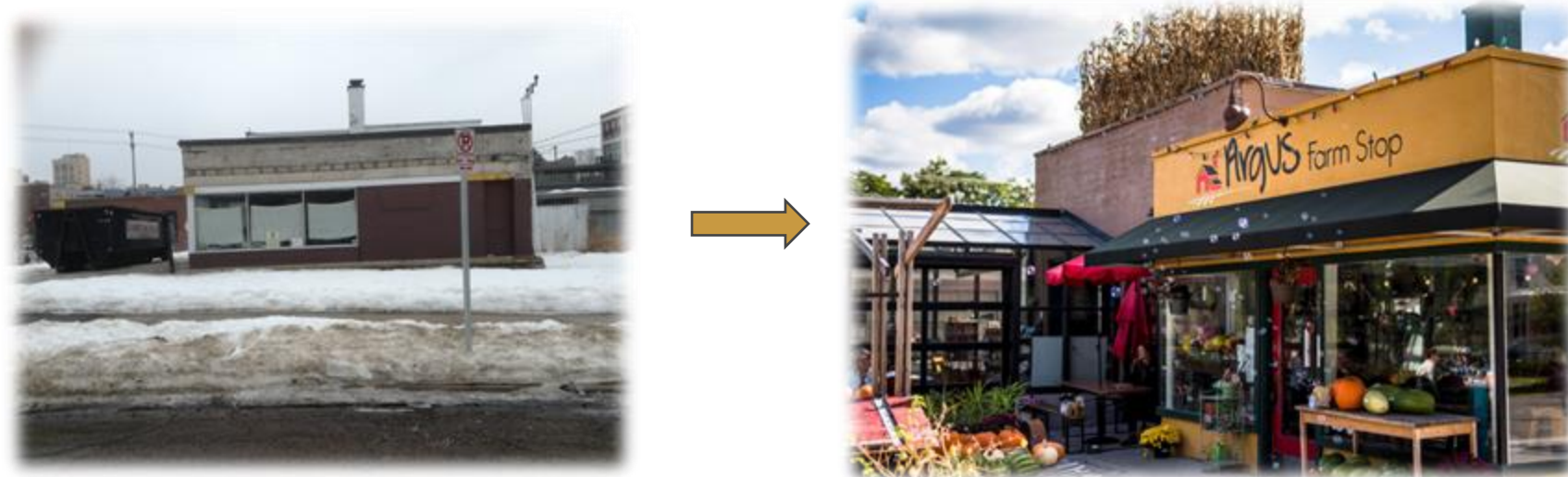
Please reach out to me about ANYthing, stay in touch!

info@farmstops.net

The Farm Stop Model: 1,2,3

Communities with an existing farmers market are ideal. Demonstrates that there are local farmers/producers and customers. Can be rural/urban, affluent/lower income.

1. Need a leadership team
2. Need a store location (2,000 - 4,000 ft²)
3. Need funding (~\$350k to renovate and open)



Take-aways

- **The pendulum has swung too far in the direction of industrial agriculture**, where food is produced far away, and economics are stacked impossibly against small-to-medium sized farms.
- Innovative approaches are needed to **make shopping local easier** in ways that economically sustains farms.
- Argus and similar “farm stop” stores represent a **breakthrough economic model** that super-charges local food economies.