



# Leveraging Food System Change for Community Health Outcomes



A Partnership of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin  
and the Medical College of Wisconsin with support  
from the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program

# System Change



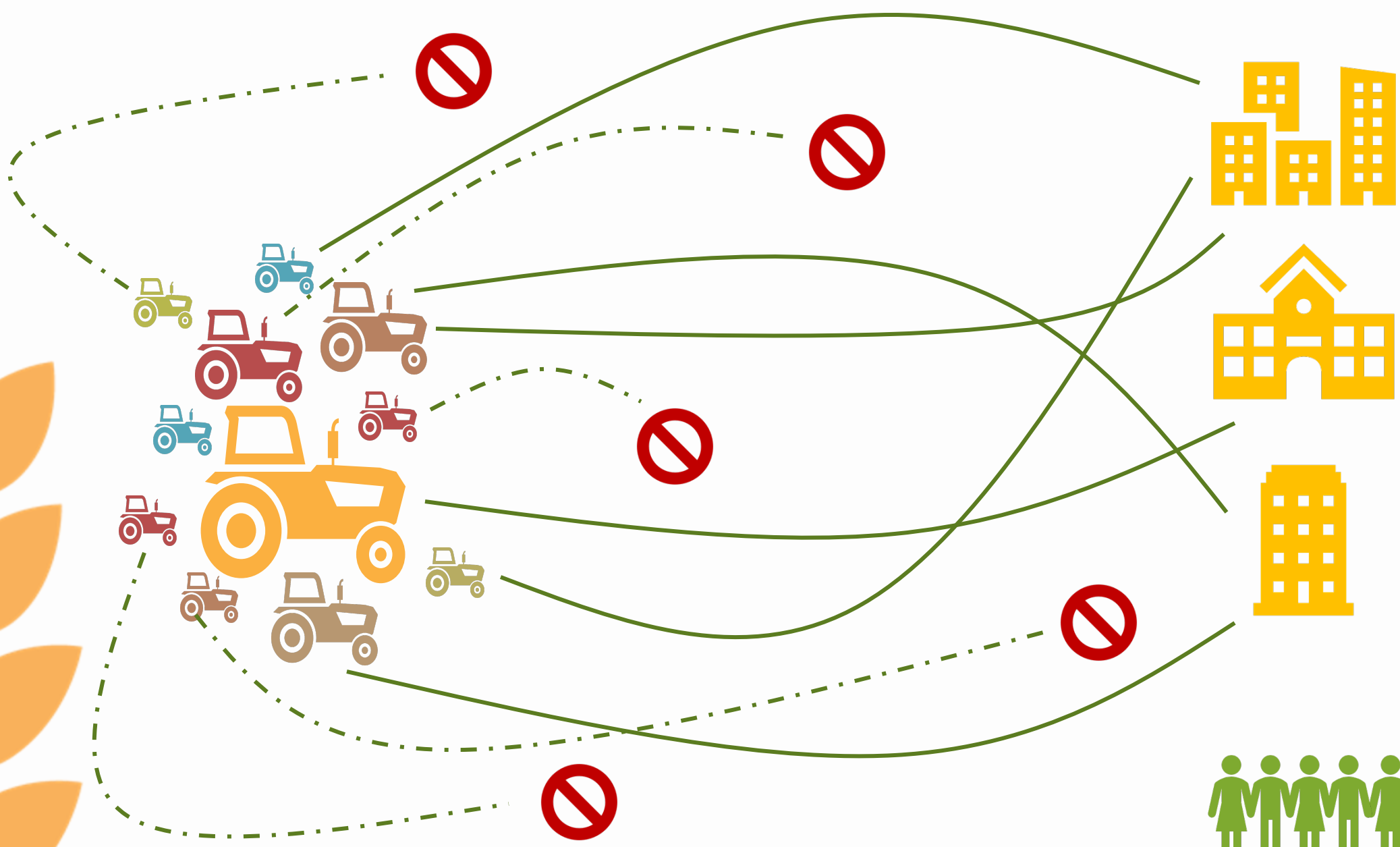
- By defragmenting the food system and increasing local food options, we will:
  - Impact community health and the health of those facing hunger.
  - Improve community food security
- Improving offerings for disparate groups requires increased food access through market-based solutions, fostering an equitable food system, and a focus on economic development.
- Food Banks work with underserved populations and have existing food-related infrastructure and may represent an ideal setting to support community Food Hubs that can repair the fragmented food system.

# Food System



A food system is the path that food travels from field to fork. It includes the growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food. It also includes the inputs needed and outputs generated at each step.







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— farm  link



# What is Farm Link?



- Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin (FAEW) is a food bank
- Farm Link is a food hub housed at FAEW
- Farm Link:
  - Is a virtual marketplace that connects farmers with buyers
  - Is designed to ease of upload and purchase of local food products
  - Is a platform for farmers, buyers and hunger relief agencies to connect
  - Is a mechanism for understanding food system leverage points in hunger relief
- Who are Farm Link “buyers”?
  - Schools, hospitals, restaurants, small grocers, and other institutions

# Steps in our Process

1. Establish Farm Link
2. Develop Farm Link to be responsive to the needs of farmers, buyers, and hunger relief agencies
3. Learn from farmers, buyers, and hunger-relief agencies
4. Document lessons learned during implementation of Farm Link
5. Make adjustment and repeat system





# Indicators of Success



- The Food Hub is fully incorporated into FAEW standard operating procedures.
- Increase in the volume of high quality produce delivered to food hub agencies and hunger relief programs.
- Increase and strengthen the types and number of community partner agencies.

# Lesson Learned (so far)...

- Features of a successful Farm Link
  - Coordinating purchases and distribution of local foods may provide wider access to buyers and retail markets
  - Higher volumes of local produce may be able to be accessible to the network of hunger-relief partners
  - Farm Link could create an increased access to fresh healthy food and health equity for our most vulnerable populations
- Farm Link messages need to be simple and focused on:
  - Online Marketplace
  - Distribution
  - Storage
- We see a need to identify a unified belief system(among all stakeholders) that honors a:
  - Food system that is just
  - Food system that is transparent
  - Food system that is mindful of quality and cost



# Challenges



- Unique challenges when engaging a wide number of community stakeholders, including the project partners
- Barriers when designing complex systems around multiple beneficiaries
- Measuring possible health implications between local food system development and community health

# Research Activity



- Form small groups of 2-5 and introduce yourselves. Discuss and identify research question(s) for the organization you represent. After 5-10 minutes we will discuss your questions as a group.
- Introduction: If we were to engage your organization in this project, what would you be interested in studying with us?
- Feeding America Example: How can local food system development benefit those facing hunger?