“The Sustainable Connections’ Food & Farming Program is unmatched in their leadership and support in making connections in the local food system. We have not heard of anything in the country that works so well.”
Sustainable Connections’ Food & Farming Program
works to develop a vibrant and sustainable local food economy by supporting farmers, creating new market opportunities, and encouraging our community to always Eat Local First.

2018

550 business consultations for food & farming businesses
65,000 consumers engaged
$1.2 million in local sales generated as a result of the program

Public Education
Tools for consumers to connect with local food, why it matters, and the businesses that provide it.

Launched the Eat Local First Food Atlas
A NEW online local food portal for community members & food businesses in Whatcom & Skagit counties.

Re-branded the Eat Local First Campaign
THE trusted community brand for identifying truly local food.

Hosted the Biggest Farm Tour Yet!
With 2,000 Whatcom Farm Tour attendees.

AS WELL AS...

- 22 Local food cooking demos
- 30+ Farm Fresh Workplace participants connecting local farmers with employers
- 18 Eat Local Month restaurants
- 25,000 Food & Farm Finders printed & distributed to 350+ locations
- 17,000 Culinary Maps distributed year-round to Seattle and lower B.C. areas promoting NW WA farms + food businesses

Supporting Whatcom Farm-to-School
Monthly Harvest of the Month materials, NEW Farm-to-School t-shirts, and getting farmers in schools for tasting days.

92% Rated Eat Local First and the Food & Farming Program valuable in terms of increasing sales of locally produced food.
B2B CONNECTIONS

Creating a relationship-based economy and bringing more local food into the marketplace.

Chefs visited local farms on the Chef’s Farms Tour 11
Attendees at the Farm-to-Table Trade Meeting 185
Attendees at Farmer Chef Meet & Greets 70

In new sales as a result of the Trade Meeting $350,000

“FABULOUS EVENT! THE CONNECTIONS I MADE WILL BENEFIT ME, THE GROWERS, AND OUR COMMUNITY. A WIN-WIN-WIN.” – F2T TRADE MEETING ATTENDEE

FARMER TRAINING

Growing a sustainable food system from the ground up, starting with the next generation of farmers.

As of December 31st 2018, we have merged with Cloud Mountain Farm Center! This partnership creates an opportunity to offer even more value to the community.

“SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS HAS BEEN INVALUABLE IN GROWING OUR FARM SALES. WE COULDN’T HAVE DONE WHAT WE HAVE WITHOUT THEM.” - LOCAL BUSINESS MEMBER

FOOD TO BANK ON

Giving beginning farmers the tools and resources they need to succeed.

8 business training workshops
11K in fresh local food donated to local food banks
100% of participants would recommend the program, have increased their farmer network, and report that Food To Bank On has helped the farm community.

“Sustainable Connections’ Food and Farming Program has, by far, given our small new farm more support and leverage than any other community resource. We are so grateful for the help they have given us in launching our business and aligning us with new customers.” - Blanchard Mountain Farm
2018 BY THE NUMBERS

- 94% Of food & farming businesses say they see the market for their products or business growing or remaining stable.
- 82% Of food & farming businesses anticipate growth in their business for 2019.
- 65% Of food & farming businesses are seeing the demand for local food increase.
- 60% Of buyers from restaurants and grocers account “customer demand” as one of their top reasons for purchasing local food.

YOUR FOOD & FARMING TEAM
We’re here to help!

Sara Southerland
Food & Farming Director

Alex Smith
Outreach Coordinator

Maressa Valliant
Marketing Coordinator

Diana Meeks
Communications Specialist

MANY THANKS TO OUR EAT LOCAL FIRST AND PROGRAM SPONSORS WHO HELP SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT WORK!

EAT LOCAL FIRST SPONSORS

FOOD & FARMING PROGRAM SPONSORS