“The Food & Farming Program gives the value and vibrancy of local farms and businesses a steady presence in the minds of local consumers and decision makers. Their steady focus and active promotional works greatly magnifies the hard, but not always visible work of our local farms and small businesses.”
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.

2019

- 747 business consultations for food & farming businesses
- 75,000 consumers engaged
- $1.5 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.

Eat Local First Food Atlas

1st full year of the Eat Local First Food Atlas, a new online interactive map making it easy for our community to find local food & farms.

Eat Local First Campaign

Helped to expand the Eat Local First campaign with partners to the Olympic Peninsula & Seattle regions.

Whatcom County Farm Tour

Hosted 1800 attendees for the Whatcom County Farm Tour.

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
- 20,000 Eat.Drink.Explore. Tourism Maps distributed year-round to Seattle and lower B.C. areas promoting NW WA farms + food businesses

89% 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.

12 Chefs visited local farms on the Chef’s Farms Tour
95 Attendees at Farmer Chef Meet & Greets
185 Attendees at the Farm-to-Table Trade Meeting
$1.1 MILLION In new sales as a result of the Trade Meeting

“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.

On January 1, 2019 we officially 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.

67 new farmers supported.
82% still successfully farming today!
$110K in local food donated to food banks & shelters.

“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
Many thanks to our Eat Local First and Program Sponsors who help support this important work!

2019 BY THE NUMBERS

Of food & farming businesses say they see the market for their products or business growing or remaining stable.

94%

Of food & farming businesses anticipate growth in their business for 2020.

78%

Of buyers at restaurants & food biz’s increased their purchases of local products in 2019.

62%

Of producers increased their connections with wholesale buyers in 2019 (and 0% decreased).

54%

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

Sara Southerland
Food & Farming Director

Alex Smith
Outreach Coordinator

Maressa Valliant
Marketing Coordinator

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

EAT LOCAL FIRST SPONSORS

Whatcom Community Foundation

Bellingham Farmers Market

Haggen

FOOD & FARMING PROGRAM SPONSORS

Mt. Baker Care Center & Community Wellness Center

City of Bellingham

Sprocket Cycle

Scratch & Tent