

Breakout Session One

Food as Medicine



Stephanie Hodges

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The Nourished Principles



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Food as Medicine: Aligning Research, Programs, and Policy

Farm Foundation Round Table

June 17, 2026

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Agenda

- What is Food as Medicine?
- Why Food as Medicine?
- FAM Key Players
- State Landscape
- Research Findings and Opportunities
- Federal Landscape & Policy Implications
- What's next for Food as Medicine?



History of Food is Medicine



Food & Friends,
Washington,
DC – Founded
in 1988



Open Hand (formerly Project
Open Hand), Atlanta, GA –
Founded in 1988

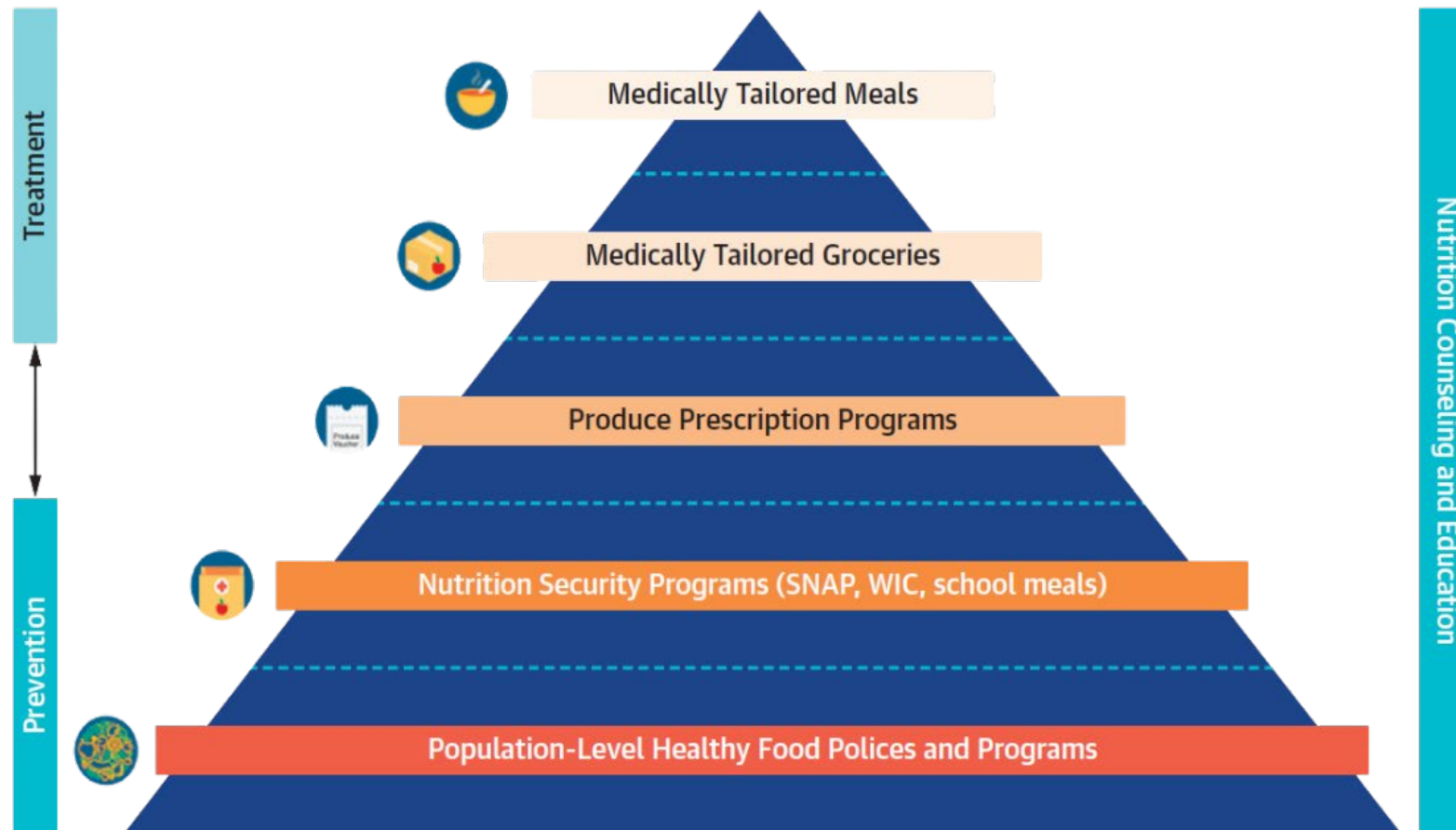


God's Love, We Deliver, New
York, NY – Founded in 1986



Project Angel Food, Los
Angeles, CA – Founded in 1989

What is Food is Medicine?



Why Food is Medicine?

Age-standardized share of the U.S. experiencing chronic diseases

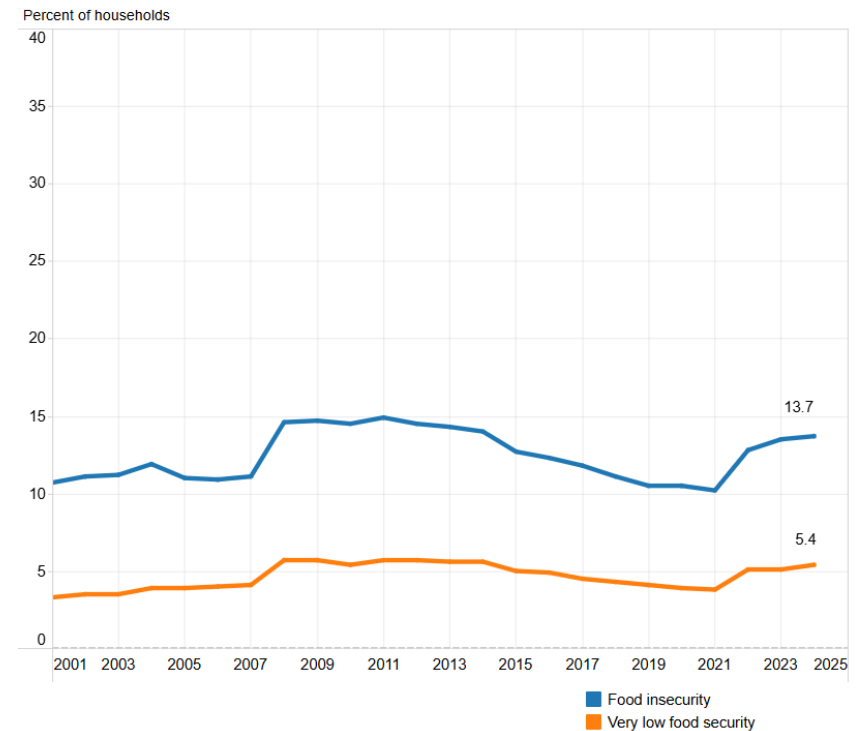


¹2022, ²2019, ³2021

Source KFF analysis of [World Health Organization data \(WHO\)](#) and [Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation \(IHME\) Global Burden of Disease data](#) • [Get the data](#) • [PNG](#)

Peterson-KFF
Health System Tracker

Trends in the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in U.S. households, 2001–24



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements data.

Cardiovascular diseases affect nearly half of American adults, statistics show

By American Heart Association News



HEALTH

Nearly 1 in 3 teens have prediabetes, CDC finds, in 'wake-up call'

Why Food is Medicine?

Costs from cardiovascular diseases are projected to hit roughly **\$2 trillion** by 2050.

The cost of cancer care continues to rise and is expected to reach more than **\$240 billion** by 2030.

90% of the nation's \$5.3T in annual healthcare expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.

In 2022, the total estimated cost of diagnosed diabetes was **\$640 billion** in medical costs and lost productivity.

Obesity costs the U.S. health care system nearly **\$173 billion** a year.

Food as Medicine: Key Players

- Rockefeller Foundation committed \$100M to advance Food as Medicine
- American Heart Association Healthcare By Food
- Tufts Food is Medicine Institute
- Harvard Law School, Center for Health Law & Policy Innovation (CHLPI)
- Food is Medicine Coalition
- National Produce Prescription Collaborative
- Milken Institute



State FAM Landscape

- Section 1115 Medicaid Demonstration Projects, Health-Related Social Needs
 - 12 states approved: AR, CO, DE, HI, IL, MA, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OR, WA
- In-Lieu-of-Services (ILOS)
- State FAM Legislation

State	Pricing guidance
Michigan's ILOS pricing guidance document (April, 2025)	◦ MTM (14/wk): est \$698 Per Member Per Month ◦ Healthy Home delivered meal (14/wk): est \$632 Per Member Per Month ◦ Health Food pack (weekly): est \$396 Per Member Per Month ◦ Produce Rx (weekly): \$225 Per Member Per Month
From North Carolina's Healthy Opportunities Fee Schedule (July, 2024)	◦ Fruit and Vegetable Prescription: \$248 Per Member Per Month ◦ Healthy Food Box: \$97 - \$177 per box (depending on box size and pickup vs delivery) ◦ Healthy Meal: \$7.10-\$7.70 per meal (depending on pickup vs delivery) ◦ Medically tailored home-delivered meal: \$7.92 per meal
California's Non-Binding Pricing Guidance (December 2025)	◦ Delivered Meal: \$7-\$12 per meal ◦ Weekly Grocery Box: \$52 - \$81

Research & Opportunities: National Projects

GusNIP Produce Prescription Projects, Results from Year 5 (2023-2024)

- Overview of PPR:
 - 101 projects, 1,882 sites, 21,648 participants (eligible for SNAP or enrolled in medical assistance (e.g., Medicaid) & at risk for a diet-related health condition)
 - 75.2% of sites only allowed fresh FVs
 - \$8,707,544 distributed to participants, \$6,755,133 redeemed (77.6%)
 - 425 project sites offered one or more nutrition education activities
 - Clinically and statistically significant improvements in HbA1c and blood pressure

Figure 23. Percentage of PPR Participants Who Reported Household Food Security Increased from Baseline to Follow-up (2023-2024; n = 1,861)*

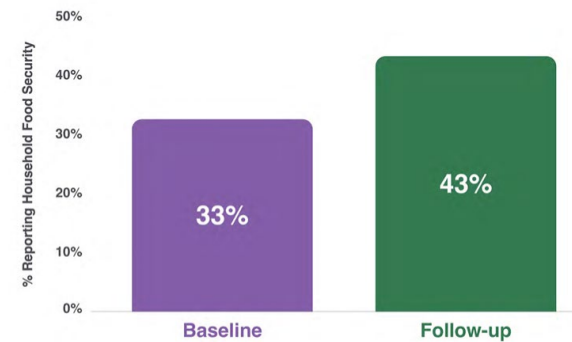
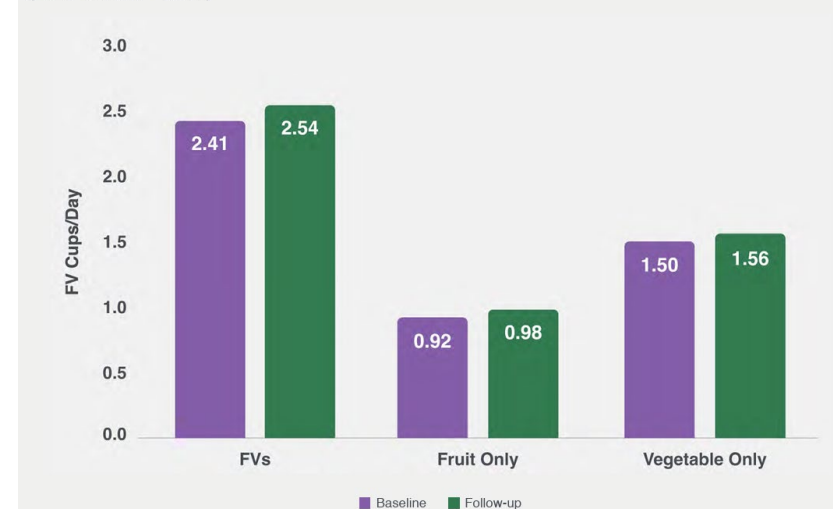


Figure 24. Average Daily FV Cup Equivalents Among PPR Participants at Baseline and Follow-up (2023-2024; n = 1,740)*



Research & Opportunities: State Pilots

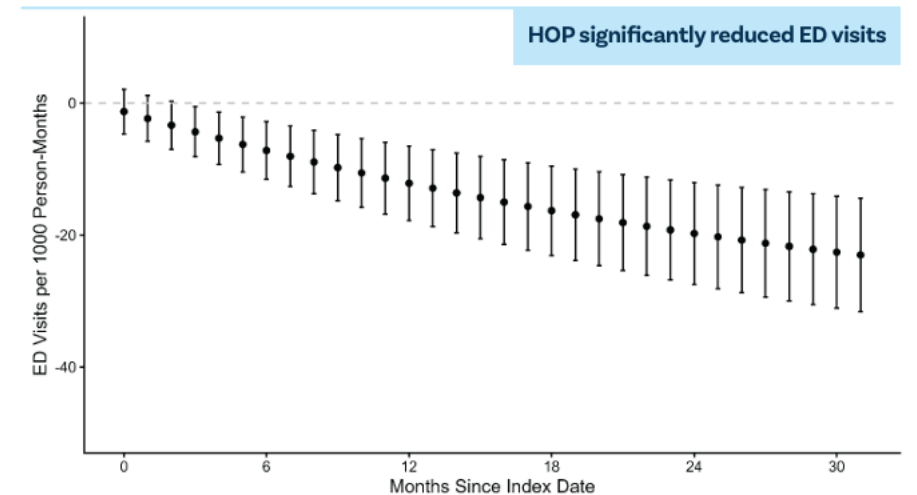
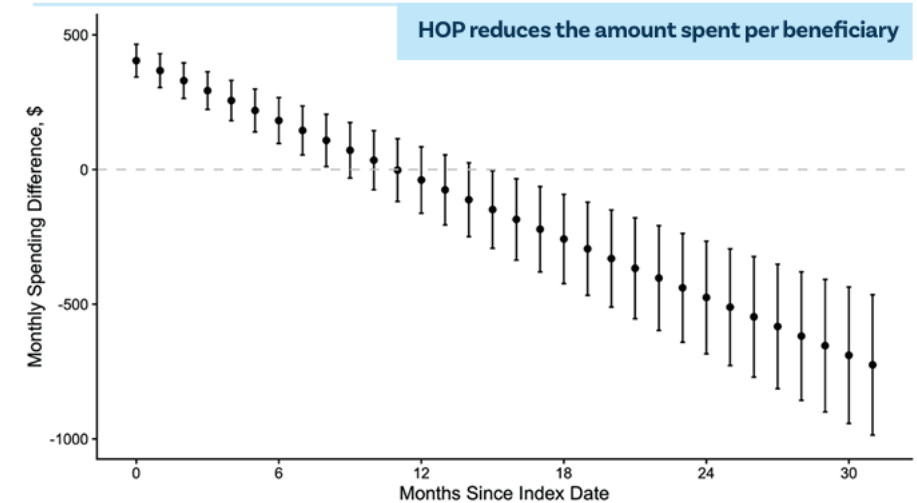
Medically Tailored Meals Receipt and Healthcare Utilization and Costs in Massachusetts' Medicaid Demonstration

- Methods: 1,866 MTM recipients with diet-related conditions and food insecurity from 2020-2023 across 11 health systems in MA; 10 meals plus snacks tailored by RDs and delivered once per week (mean receipt: 6.7 months)
- Analyzed changes in hospitalizations, ED visits, and healthcare costs
- Results:
 - 31% fewer hospitalizations
 - 20% fewer ED visits
 - \$3,433 lower total healthcare costs (net cost-saving among participants with CVD, chronic kidney disease, depression, diabetes, or high comorbidity)
 - Healthcare cost reductions offset 98% of the MTM program costs during the enrollment period

Research & Opportunities: State Pilots

North Carolina Section 1115 Demonstration Project (Healthy Opportunities Pilot) Monitoring Results

- Methods: adults aged 21+ with > 2 chronic conditions, pregnant individuals, children; multiple referral pathways. Between March 2022-Nov. 2023, 50,585 screened → 11,074 actively enrolled across services (food = 86% of services). Mean amount invoiced per service = \$183.12
- Results:
 - Medicaid spending decreased by an average of \$164/person/month
 - More cost-effective care (fewer ED visits and hospital stays & more outpatient visits)
 - Lower rates of food insecurity
 - Improved quality of life (self-reported)



Research & Opportunities: Local Programs

Healthy Pregnancy Program, Hennepin Healthcare & Open Arms, Minnesota

- Methods: 55 participants eligible based on pre-existing conditions, risk factors, or medical history; prepared meals or groceries (90% selected groceries) during pregnancy + postpartum (4 weeks); nutrition screening and counseling offered
- Resource connection with SNAP and WIC
- Results: cohort members had significantly higher social risks compared to the comparison group, yet the groups' birth outcomes were similar

Figure 17 Impact on Overall Health

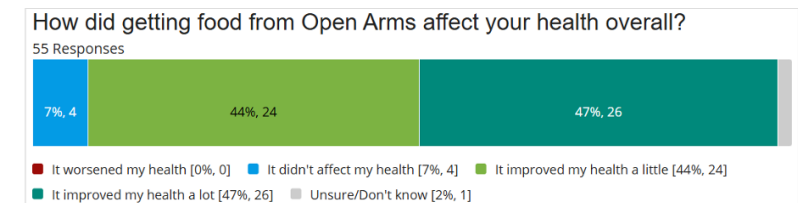


Figure 19 Access to Healthy Foods



Figure 18 Access to Food Resources



Research & Opportunities: Local Programs

Medically Tailored Meal Delivery for Diabetes Patients with Food Insecurity: a Randomized Cross-over Trial

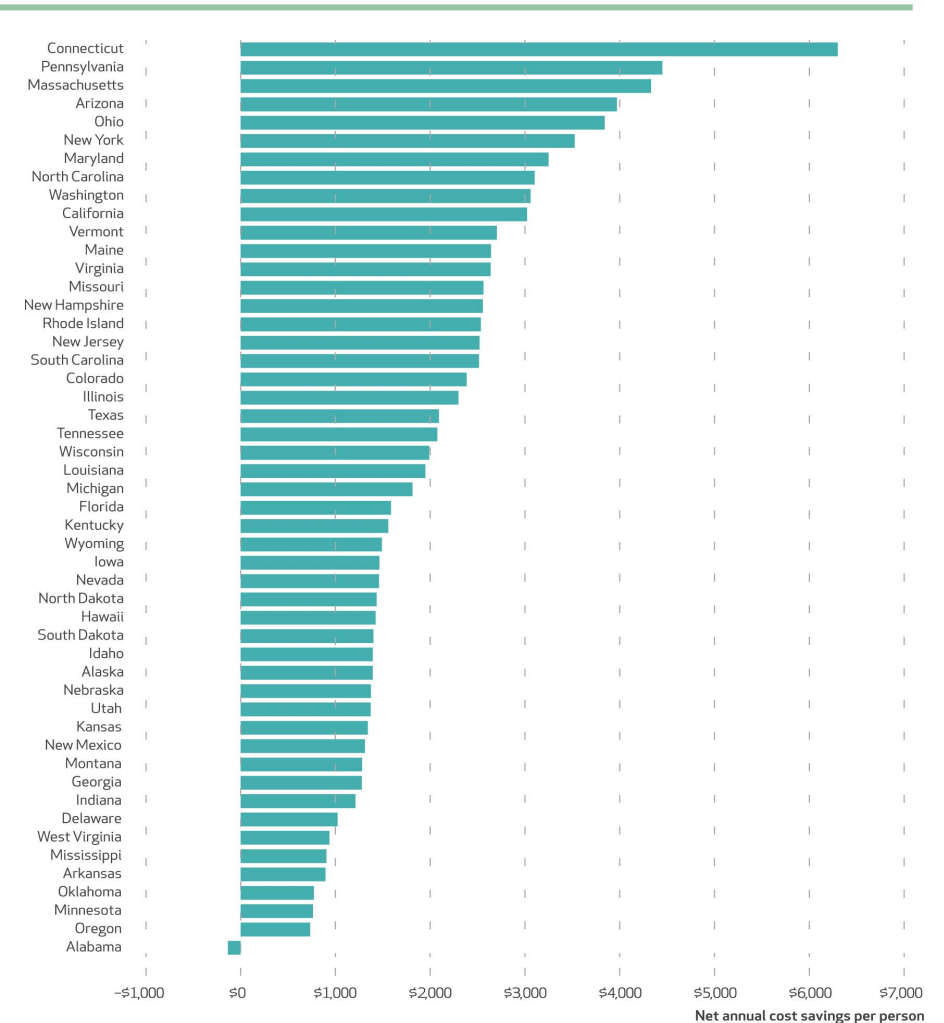
Methods: 44 adults with diabetes, hemoglobin A1c > 8.0%, and food insecurity; home delivery of 10 meals/week for 12 weeks ('on') or 12 weeks usual care and a MyPlate brochure ('off')

Results:

- Improvements in almost all sub-categories of the Healthy Eating Index score (diet quality) with increased consumption of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; decreased solid fats, alcohol, and added sugar
- Lower food insecurity (62% to 42%)
- Less Hypoglycemia (episodes dropped from 64% to 47%)
- Fewer days where mental health interfered with quality of life

Research & Opportunities: Cost-Savings

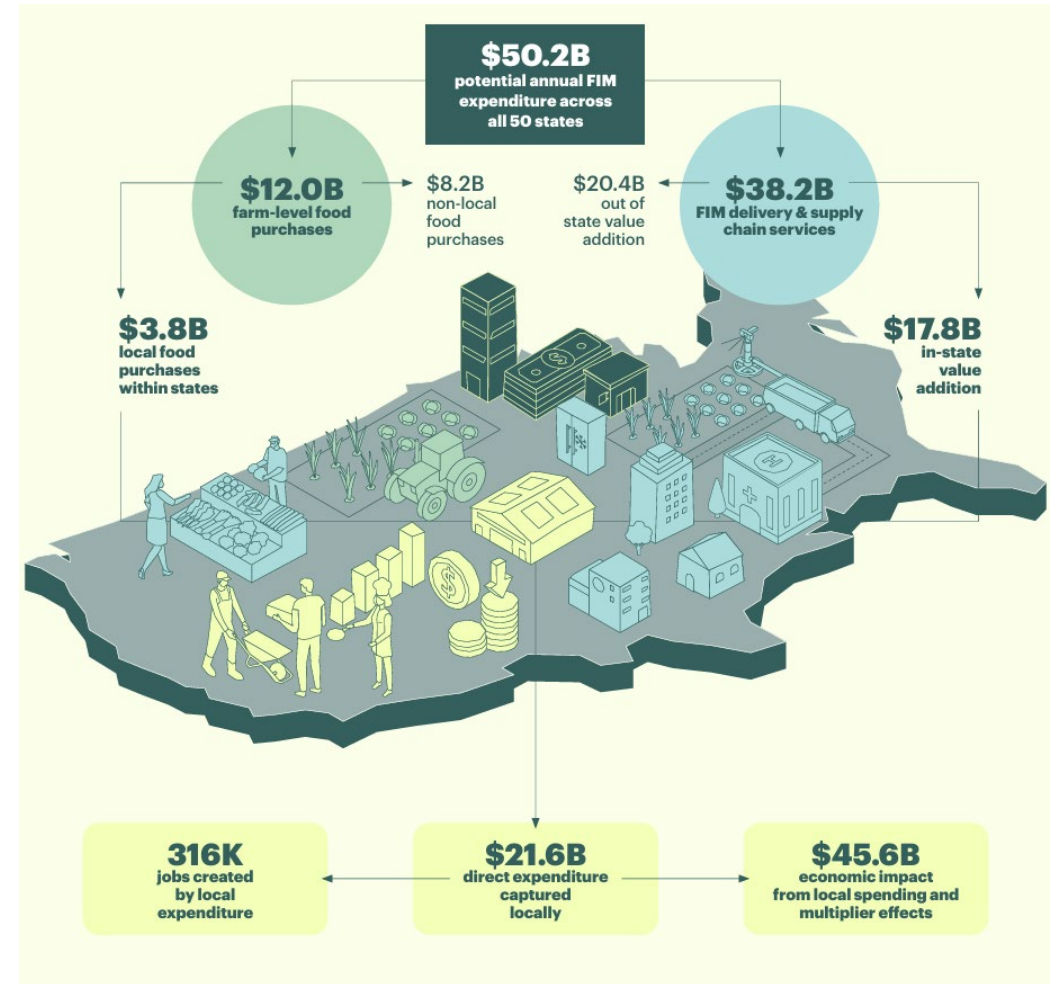
- Simulation model: state-level medically tailored meal coverage among Medicare, Medicaid, and privately insured patients with diet-related conditions and IADL limitations
- Assuming 100% uptake of eligible individuals
- Results (after intervention costs):
 - Cost savings in all states except Alabama – cost neutral
 - Estimated to save \$23.7B with CT saving \$6,299 per patient (most)
 - Avert 2,607,200 hospitalizations across states



Estimated 1-year impact of medically tailored meal (MTM) treatment on per person health care costs, by US state

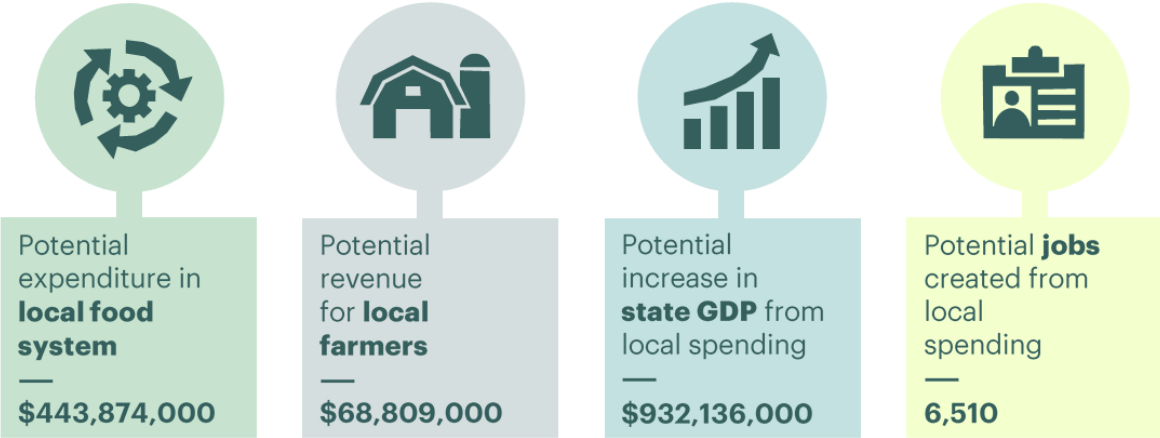
Research & Opportunities: Industry Impact

- Rockefeller Foundation Farm to Food is Medicine Report, March 2026
- 43 million eligible Americans; increase annual demand for healthy food by up to \$50.2B
- \$5.6B in annual revenue for small and mid-sized farms, creating meaningful income for 56,000 farms; 316,000 jobs supported
- State impacts vary: Alaska = \$4.5M; California = \$510M



Research & Opportunities: Industry Impact

State		
Missouri	Total population	6,245,000
	FIM-eligible population ¹	902,000
Date of Analysis: 2026	Annual FIM expenditure at scale	\$1,062,348,000



Impact of locally sourced FIM on Missouri’s farmers

Revenue for local farmers	Revenue for local small and mid-sized farmers	Number of small and mid-sized farms supported	Acres impacted by FIM
\$68,809,000	\$55,475,000	560	233,000

Breakdown of potential FIM spending by type

FIM intervention type	Total expenditure	Expenditure on locally sourced food	Expenditure in local food system (food, processing, logistics, fulfillment)
MTMs	\$252,511,000	\$13,302,000	\$169,431,000
MTGs	\$342,936,000	\$30,711,000	\$150,994,000
PRx – Vouchers	\$211,232,000	\$1,901,000	\$10,878,000
PRx – Boxes	\$255,669,000	\$22,896,000	\$112,571,000

State health demographics

Population	Size (% of total population)
Population with diet-relevant chronic conditions	3,129,000 (50%)
Population with food insecurity	793,000 (13%)
Population with diet-relevant chronic conditions, at or below 185% FPL	902,000 (14%)

Insured populations

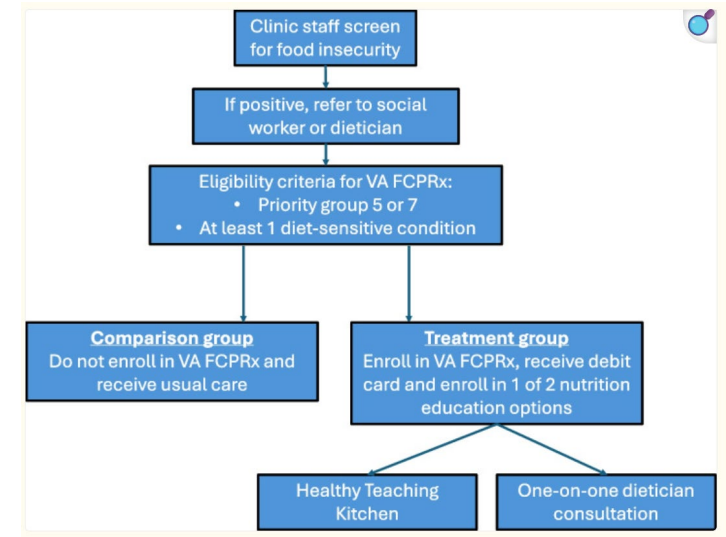
Insurance type	Size (% of total population)
Medicaid	1,105,000 (18%)
Medicare	1,055,000 (17%)
Private	4,272,000 (68%)

Farm demographics

Population	Number / index
Small family farms	76,600
Mid-sized family farms	4,900
Total farms	85,700
Acres of farmland	26,900,000
Availability of locally sourced food	38.32 / 100
Agricultural commodity diversification	28 / 76
Expected agricultural capacity for local sourcing ²	30%

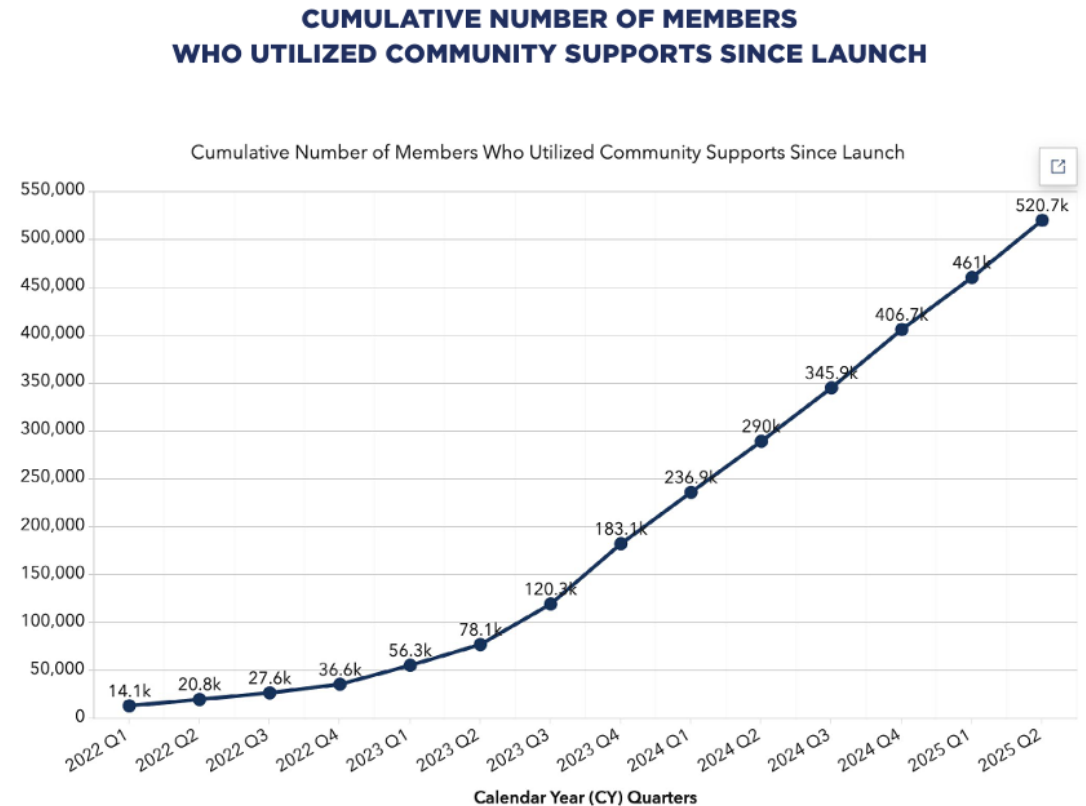
Federal Landscape & Policy Implications

- CMS Guidance
- Veterans Affairs FreshConnect Produce Prescription Program: Salt Lake City & Houston locations (partnership with Rockefeller Foundation)
- Indian Health Services Produce Prescription Pilot Program (P4)
- Federal Legislation
 - FOOD for Health Act
 - Medically Tailored Home-Delivered Meals Program Pilot Act
 - Accountable Produce is Medicine Act of 2026
- Rural Health Transformation Grants



FAM Headwinds

- Reaching Eligible Individuals
- Sustainability of program impacts
- Updated CMS Guidance
- Section 1115 Renewals
- Budgetary Environment (state, federal, private)
- Over-medicalization of food
- One-size-fits all approach
- Lack of nutrition education supports
- Focus on growing practices & origin



What's Next for Food as Medicine?

- Continue to build the evidence/implementation science
- Policy and advocacy activities
- Funding and grant opportunities

Food as a Medicine Market to Reach US\$11.51 Billion by 2031, Driven by Chronic-Disease Nutrition Innovation | DataM Intelligence

Booker, Marshall Urge CMS to Issue Clear Guidance on Allowable and Non-Allowable Foods for Medicare Advantage Nutrition Benefits

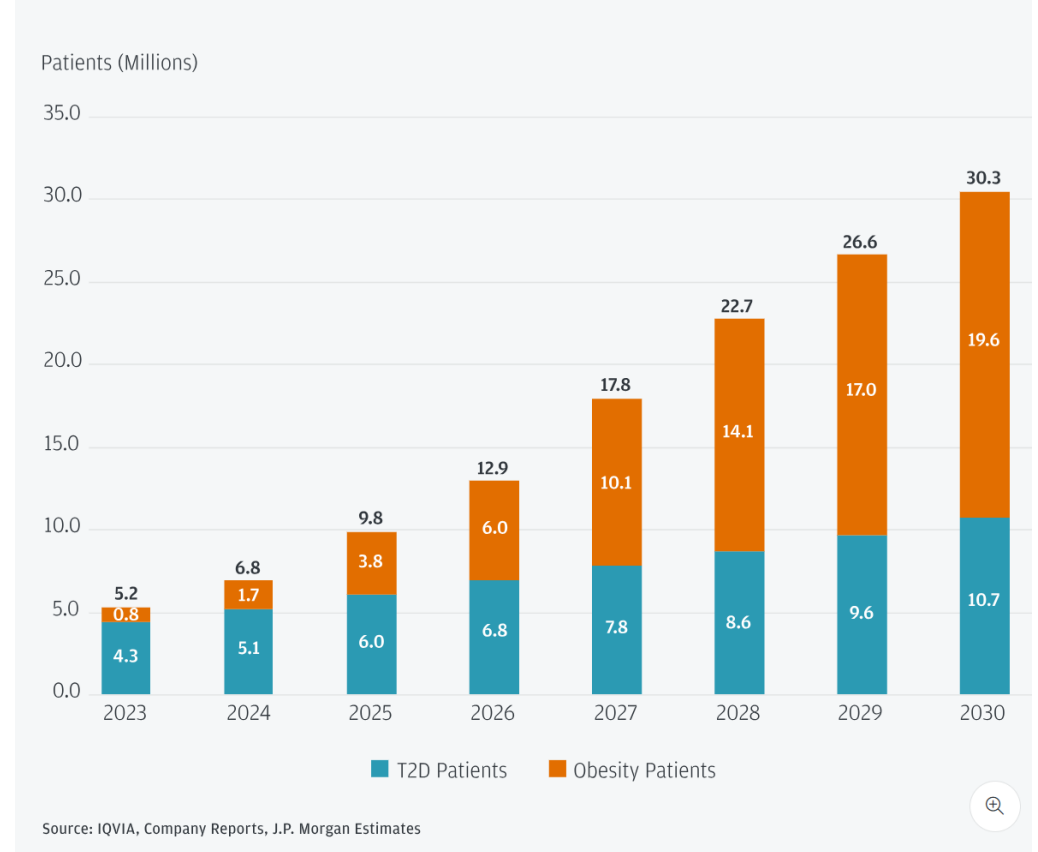
Critical Review

Perspective: Food Is Medicine: Hype or Hope?

What's Next for Food as Medicine? GLP-1s

- 12% of U.S. population currently taking them (1 in 8)
- Various uses: weight loss, manage diabetes
- Many users consuming < 800 kcals/day; up to 21% fewer calories
- Impact on nutrient intake
- Changes in food preferences, quantity, choices
- Within first 6 months of use, households reduce grocery spending by 5.3% (8% for high-income households)
- Food system sales could decline by \$30-55B
- Different impacts for different crops

The U.S. patient market for GLP-1s is projected to grow



References

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2. KFF Medicaid Waiver Tracker: [Medicaid Waiver Tracker: Approved and Pending Section 1115 Waivers by State | KFF](#)
3. Medicaid Food Security Network: [Calculating-the-Cost-FIM-2026-Interactive.pdf](#)
4. Massachusetts Section 1115 Demonstration Results, June 2026: [Medically tailored meals receipt and healthcare utilization and costs in Massachusetts' Medicaid demonstration | Nature Medicine](#)
5. North Carolina Section 1115 Medicaid Demonstration Pilot: Healthy Opportunities Pilot (HOP) Evaluation Report: [CMS Approved NC HOP Interim Evaluation Report.pdf](#)
6. GusNIP NTAE Year 5 Impact Findings: [GusNIP NTAE Impact Findings | Nutrition Incentive Hub](#)
7. Healthy Pregnancy Program: [2024-Healthy-Pregnancy-Program-Final-Report.pdf](#)
8. [Medically Tailored Meal Delivery for Diabetes Patients with Food Insecurity: a Randomized Cross-over Trial | Journal of General Internal Medicine | Springer Nature Link](#)
9. Estimated Impact Of Medically Tailored Meals On Health Care Use And Expenditures In 50 US States: [Estimated Impact Of Medically Tailored Meals On Health Care Use And Expenditures In 50 US States | Health Affairs](#)
10. Rockefeller Foundation, Farm to Food is Medicine Report: [From Farm to FIM: The Economic Impact of Local Food is Medicine | RF](#)
11. Michigan State The Impact of GLP-1 Drugs on the Agri-Food System: [GLP1.pdf](#)



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Farm-Fresh Produce Delivered to Your Home

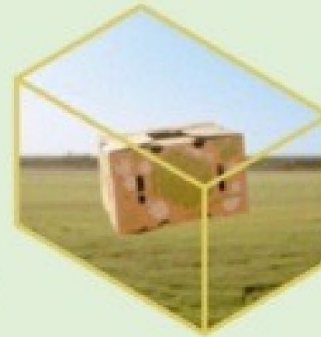
01

PROVIDERS refer their clients to SunTerra Produce for a medically-tailored grocery box benefit



03

The client is virtually assessed by our **REGISTERED DIETICIAN** to determine the most suitable box solution



05

A medically-tailored grocery box uniquely designed for the client is **DELIVERED** to their home



FARM

BOX

HEALTH

PEOPLE

02

The client is onboarded by our **MEMBER SUCCESS TEAM** to gather all delivery and contact information



04

Our experienced **PRODUCE PACKING TEAM** fulfills each unique grocery box with precision and care















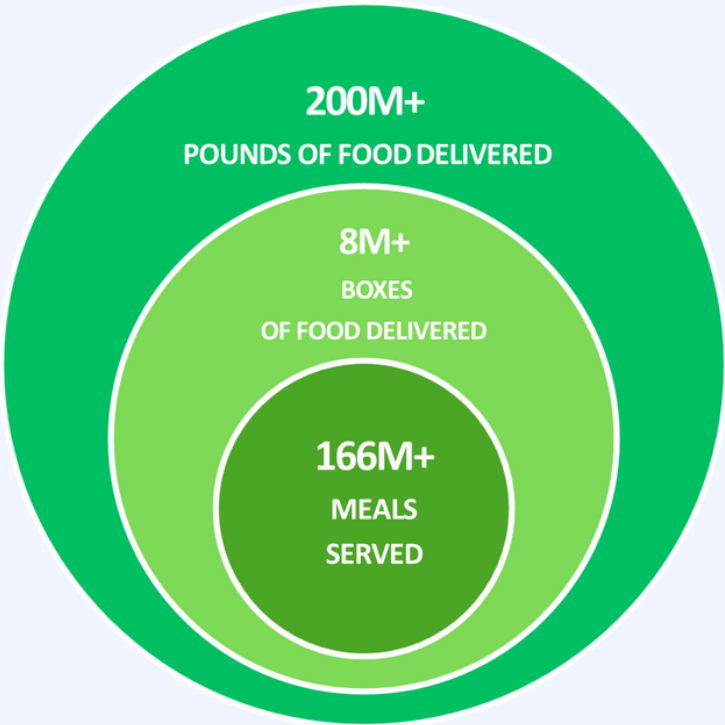
Reforming Food and Healthcare





Mission

At Project FoodBox, our mission is to empower individuals to live healthier lives through innovative, data-driven nutrition solutions that improve health outcomes, enhance well-being and bridge the gap between food and medicine by delivering personalized meals, fresh produce, and tailored educational support.

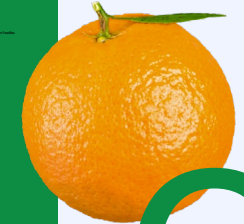


Mission

We partner with exceptional farmers who grow the most nutritious and flavorful crop varieties. Through these collaborations, we connect consumers directly to their food sources by sharing transparent information and inspiring stories about the farmers, methods, and places behind what they eat.

Rooted in the soil and guided by a "Modern Old School" philosophy, we blend traditional farming wisdom with innovative technology. This approach helps independent farmers expand their reach and grow their businesses while maintaining the quality and integrity that sets them apart.





Our work at Project Food Box



Real Results: UCI Health Diabetes Program



UC Irvine Health



Project FoodBox collaborated with UCI Health's Group Medical Visits (GMV) to support Latino patients with uncontrolled diabetes through culturally tailored education and produce delivery.

- Combined nutrition classes, diabetes education, and weekly produce boxes over 8 weeks.
- Patients saw an average A1C reduction of 1% — from 8.5% to 7.5%.
- Demonstrated a 40% reduction in complication risk and increased member engagement.
- This pilot reinforces our evidence-based, scalable model for Food as Medicine programs.

**Average A1C
Drop**

8.5% → 7.5%
over
5 months

40%

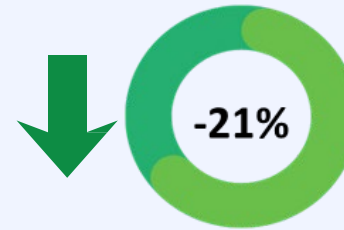
Risk Reduction in
Complications

CAL-AIM Medi-Cal Community Supports Are Delivering on Their Promise

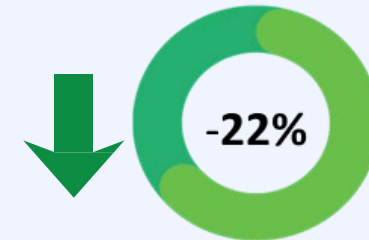


Medically Tailored Meals/Medically Supportive Food served more than **156,000** members in 2024 and were associated with:

- Reduced inpatient use



- Reduced emergency department use



United Way Childcare Summer Produce Box Program



Fresh Produce Delivered Weekly by the Numbers

1200 Produce Boxes Distributed	10+ pounds of Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables	125+ Latin Heritage Families Helped
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90% of families spent less on groceries.

75% reported their children were more interested in fruits and vegetables



Impact on families:

"I am very grateful because you provided us with fresh food, especially now with inflation. It was a great help for our households."

Our
work at
Elevated
Foods





Advancing Markets for Producers: USDA Grant Work

This program streamlines USDA resources to farmers so they can focus on growing food. **Participants commit to at least *one conservation practice*, soil sampling, and sharing data with Elevated Foods twice yearly in exchange for financial incentives** and support in reaching new markets. We also offer an Elevated Grower program for those interested in additional opportunities.

15 Million dollars in grower incentives

120+ Growers enrolled in program by 2027

Calculating Nutrient Density: Partnership with Edacious

Elevated Foods has partnered with Edacious to provide comprehensive nutritional testing for farm-fresh produce. This collaboration ensures growers and consumers have access to precise data on the nutrient content of their food, creating transparency from field to table.

Together, we're building a system where the true nutritional value of fresh produce is measured, shared, and celebrated.

Pilot Program:



10 growers in our network will have their products tested in 2026 for:

- Carbohydrates
- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Heavy Metals
- Proteins
- Fats



We will then share results and add it to our marketing efforts. Reporting will be done in late 2026.



Markets and Sustainability

Elevated Foods is launching an **e-commerce, farmer focused product line** that will give individuals more transparency into the farms that feed them, as well as nutritional quality insight in the produce they are eating.

Elevated Foods is also pursuing becoming a Benefit Corporation and is taking steps to have full transparency over their carbon footprint.

We work directly with farmers to help them improve their soil quality, communicate their practices, and find market opportunities to continue making improvements.

The Rooted Journal



The Rooted Journal is a food-centric channel that informs, entertains, and connects advanced farmers, processors, consumers, and innovators through stories exploring the journey from soil to table. **We spotlight exceptional farmers, innovative practices, and traditional methods often ignored elsewhere, championing resilient and nutritious food grown through climate-smart, collective practices.** Grounded in tradition and powered by curiosity, we're cultivating a regenerative future focused on "Food, Farmers, Family & Future."



GROWING HOMES

In the wake of the Lahaina wildfire, Eddy Garcia's regenerative farm is nourishing a rebuilding community with fresh food and innovative housing solutions.



The SOCIETY of SOIL

Farmer's Footprint stands 10 toes down on building the regenerative farming community through storytelling.



The REGENERATIVE TABLE

Transformative products that lead the way in climate-smart agriculture rejuvenating ecosystems, promoting biodiversity, and building a resilient future.

THANK YOU

Project Food Box
website - check in
to see how to help!



Let's stay connected!



Elevated Foods
LinkedIn-
Stay up to date on
news and
programs



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Food as Medicine

Question and Answer



Stephanie Hodges

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