



# welcome + purpose

how do we get local, sustainable pre-cuts into institutional buyers?

This convening = a **co-design + thinking** space with buyers, food hubs, advocates, + a processor

We're building infrastructure **with** farms and food hubs to figure this out:

- Food hub-driven processing initiatives
- CalFIC's emerging role

# Agenda

- 1 setting the table
- 2 poll #1
- 3 food hub lightning talks
- 4 CalFIC
- 5 comparing scenarios
- 6 breakout discussion

# setting the table

## (infra)structural change

We are here to catalyze a **revolutionary project**: a network of farms and food hubs that delivers processed local + sustainable food to institutions across California.



### the problem

- **Corporate contracts and market consolidation** block farmers and food hubs from selling to institutions
- Institutions have **severe labor constraints** and need much more **pre-cut and value-added foods** than whole and fresh produce
- They also need **stable volumes, competitive pricing** and **clear reporting** to achieve their sustainability goals

### the solution

- **Consolidate back:** Processing all values-based farms and food hubs can use, to compete with large suppliers at scale
- **Product development that solves problems:** create pre-cuts, sauces, condiments, and more that are local, sustainable labor saves
- **Coordinate production** with local farmers to stabilize price, volume, and embed values-based data through the chain



# what pieces do we have now?

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## **food hubs have existing sales relationships with school districts**

several are experimenting with local processing partners

struggle to gain entry into bigger institutional markets

## **some UCs work directly with food hubs, others want a streamlined, networked solution**

new produce contract policy enables new sourcing efforts

current suppliers don't offer enough local/sustainable pre-cuts

## **Marcellus Foods is an emerging values-based processor**

opening facility operations in 2025-2026

pledged interest from multiple K12, university, and hospital buyers

exploring collaboration with farms and food hubs across CA





poll #1

# Food Hub Lightning Talks



**Spork Food Hub**

*Sacramento  
Region + beyond*



**FEED Sonoma**

*Sonoma County  
/ North Bay*



**Coastside Local**

*San Mateo /  
Central Coast*



## What is CalFIC?

- Temporary name: **California Food Infrastructure Collaborative (CalFIC)**
- Represents the collaborative effort to build a statewide processing solution connecting farms + hubs to institutions
- Operator = **Marcellus Foods**, a woman/LGBT-owned processor
- Separate from Yolo Food Hub Network but complementary
- This RFSP grant funded initial business + operational modeling for this effort



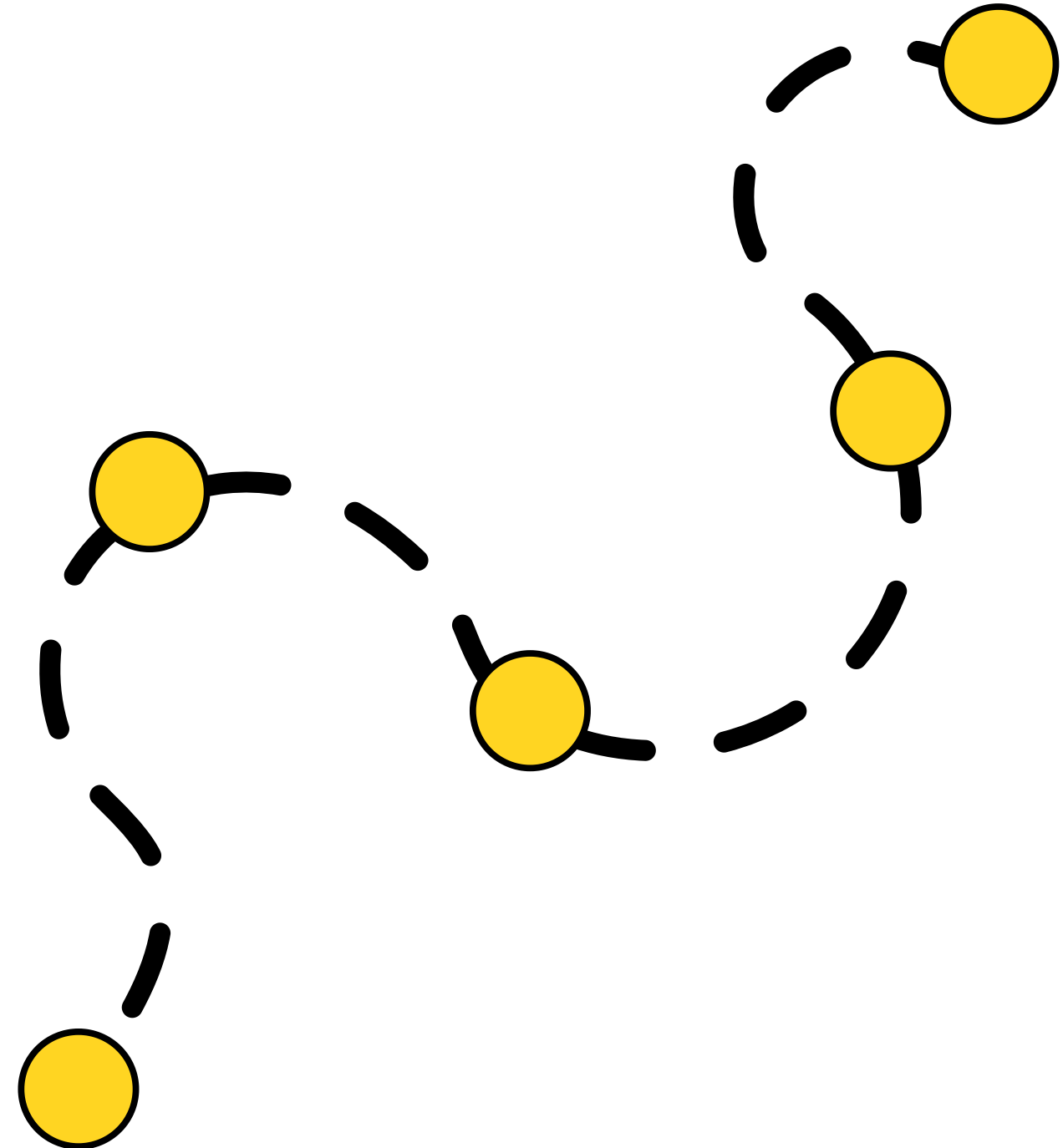


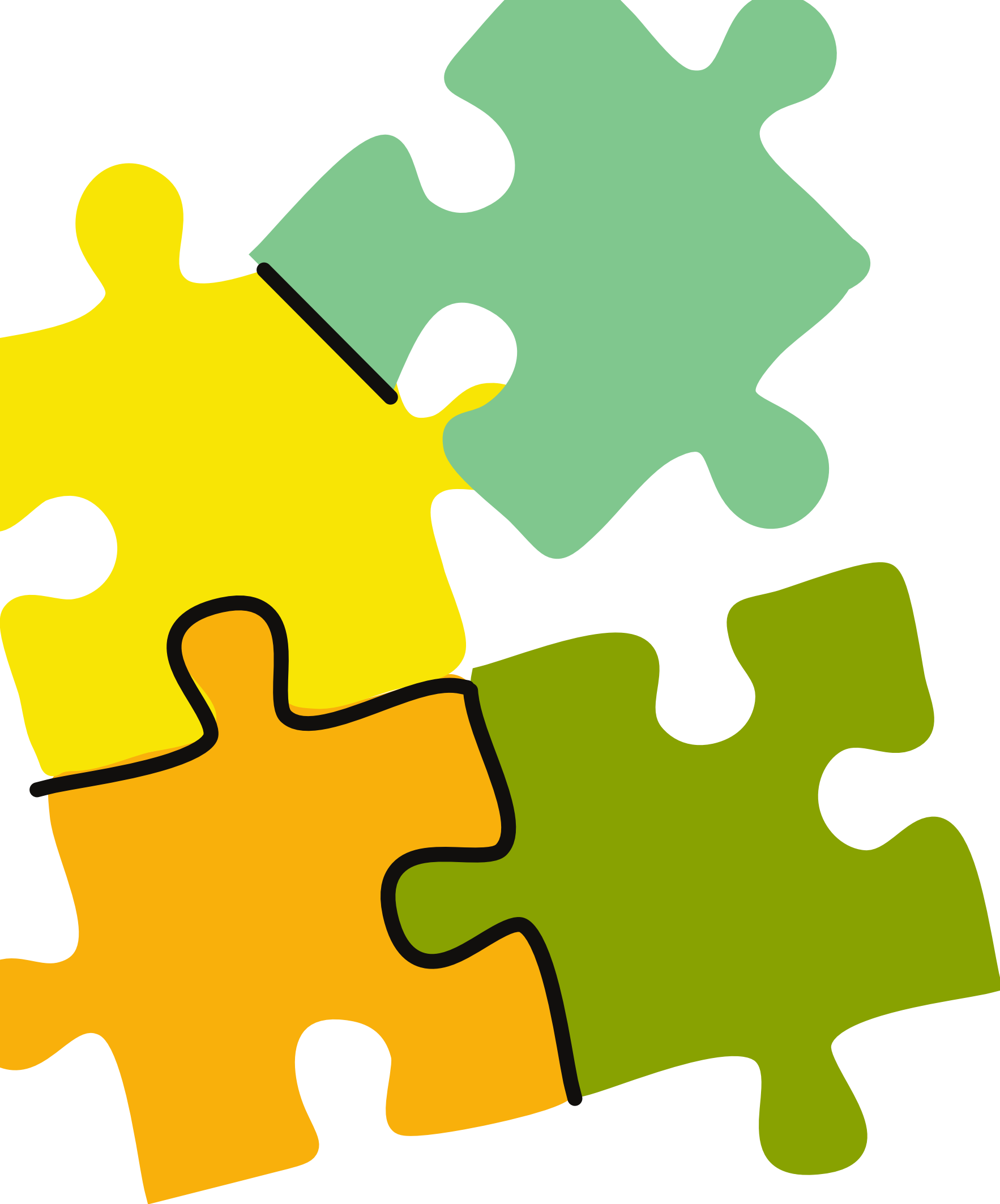
## relationship with YFHN

- YFHN and Marcellus Foods remain *strategic allies*
- YFHN will keep building the barn site with existing funding
- Both projects will update each other regularly with project advances + explore future collaboration

# facility progress

- Multiple facility pathways under negotiation
- Working towards a near-term operational site for 2025
- Flexibility is key - many routes to success





# putting the pieces together

**Success = coordinating 4 moving  
systems at once**

- farmer + aggregator network
- buyer network
- facility + operations
- funding

all moving at different speeds -  
*timing is everything*



## what Marcellus will do

- own customer relationships when buyers **require it**
- serve as processor + sales entity for partner farms/hubs
- build scalable infrastructure + back-end operations (co-manufacturing, fee-for-service, pass-through models if enough demand)

## what Marcellus won't do

- won't own customer relationships when hubs **want to keep them**
- won't replicate hub functions that are already working
- won't build anything that doesn't have demand, collaborative trust + planning built in

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# sales drive solutions

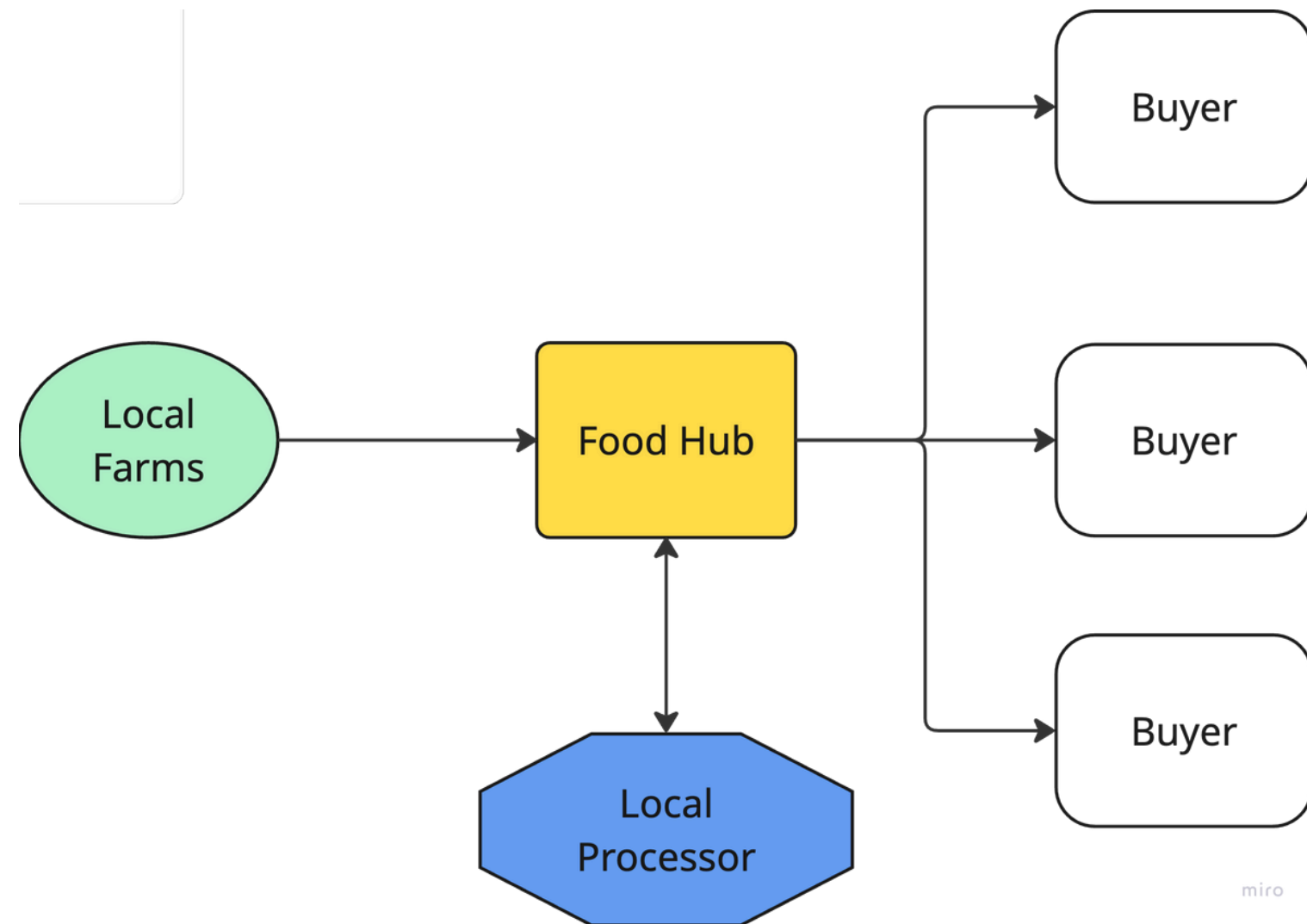
sales model is the linchpin - we have to figure out how the sales relationships flow together between **farms**, **processors**, and **food hubs**

**BUYERS:** tell us what you need → we shape the infrastructure accordingly



# emerging scenarios

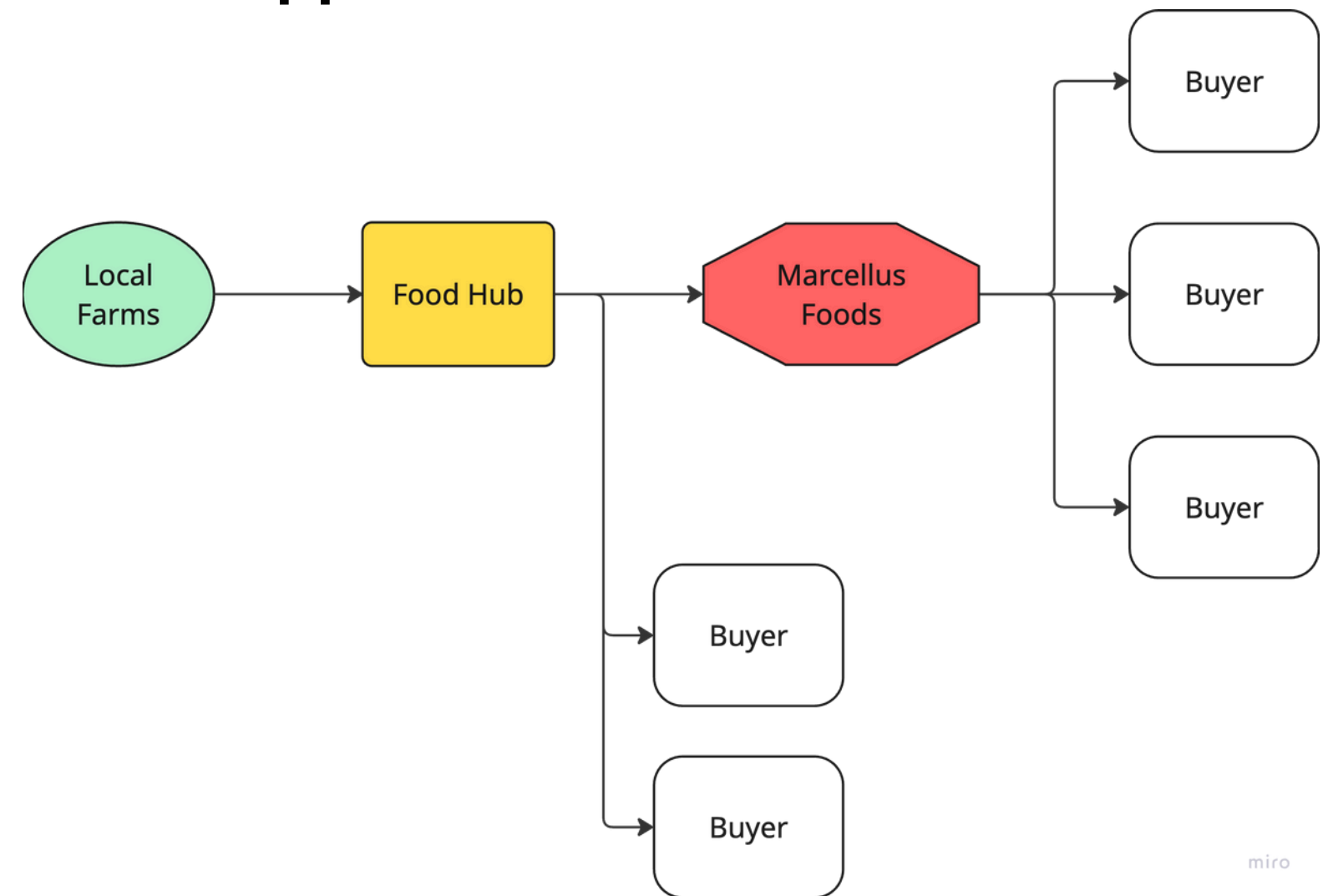
## Food hub-driven



**Pros:** Maximum food hub autonomy, less complex

**Cons:** Lower volumes, higher cost

## CalFIC approach

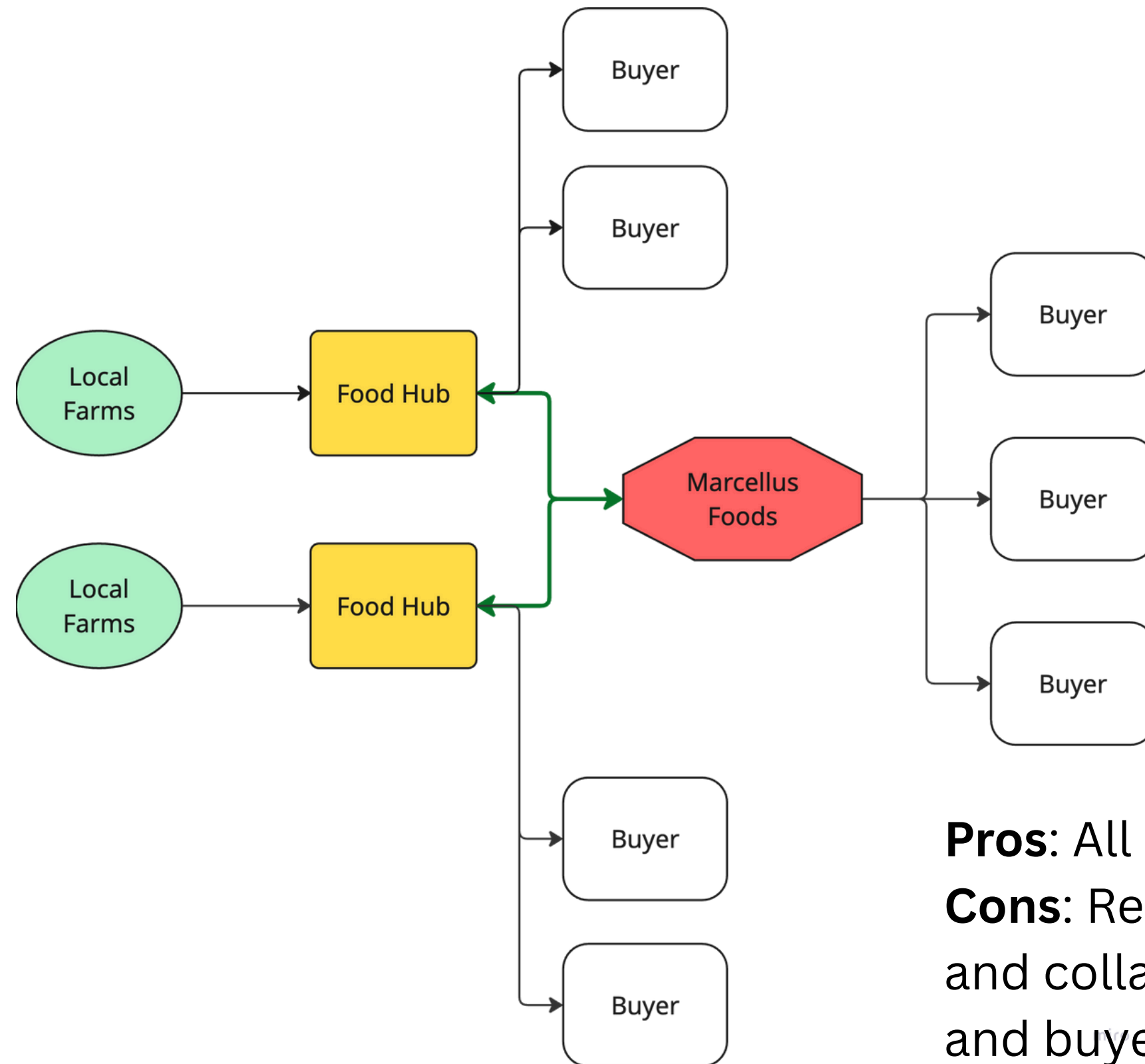


**Pros:** Higher volumes, lower cost, larger assortment

**Cons:** More complex, requires extensive planning + coordination



# emerging scenarios



## Potential CalFIC Future State

- Food hubs use CalFIC as a sales channel for buyers who prefer the higher-volume, streamlined model
- Food hubs keep their own smaller customers (+ expanded catalog)
- CalFIC enables a food hub trading network

**Pros:** All benefit from an expanded catalog + better pricing

**Cons:** Requires extremely high cooperation, governance, and collaborative design/decision making with hubs, farms, and buyers

# Breakout discussions

## Groups

**Room 1:** Spork Food Hub, Diana Flores, Anthony Pangelina, Christina Lawson, Shannon Illingworth (Facilitator: Carli)

**Room 2:** Coastside Local, Karen Luna, Breanna Van Otterloo, Kristin Hilleman, Eve Cohen, Nicole Meschi (Facilitator: Jenifer/Eve)

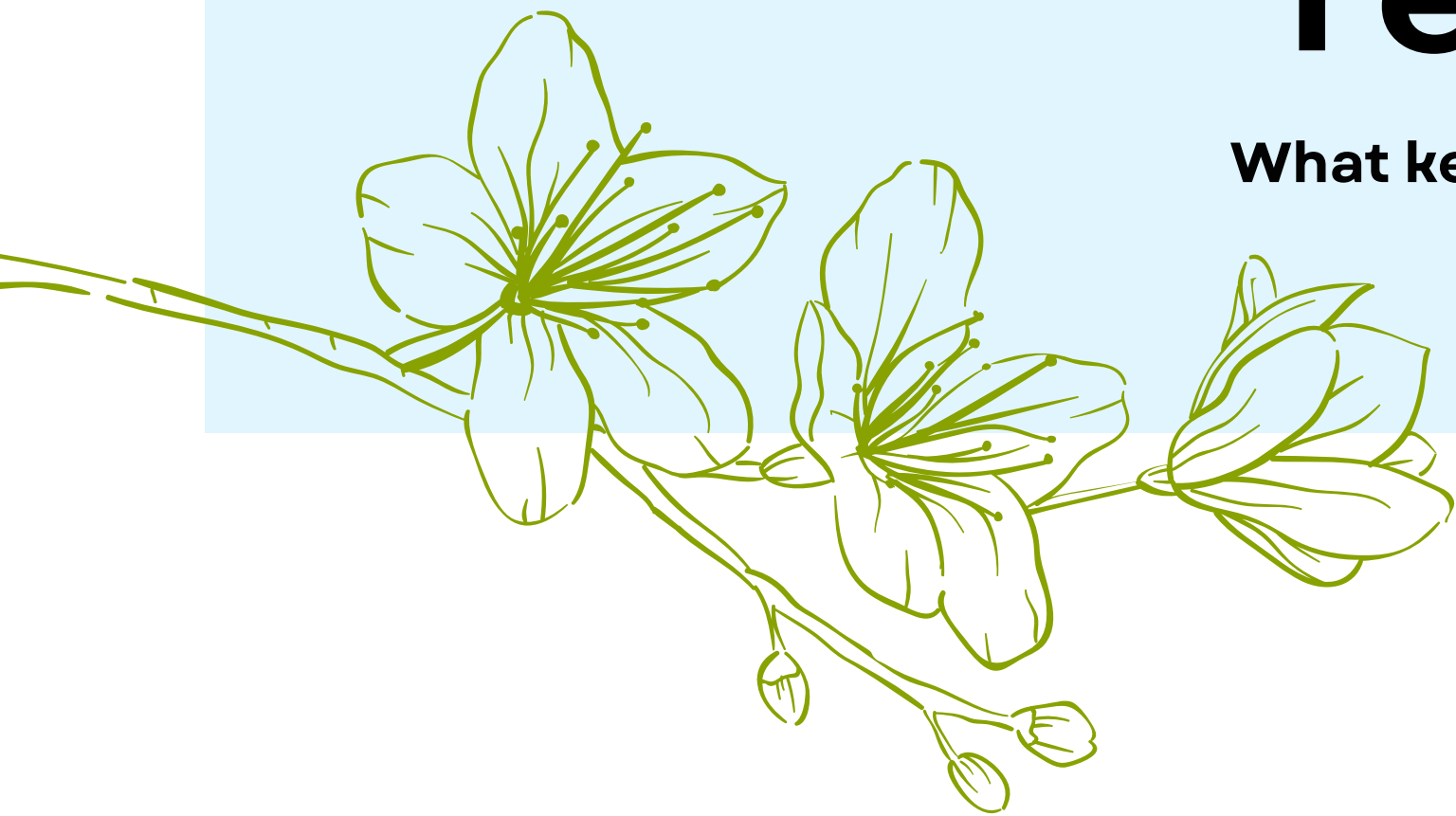
**Room 3:** FEED Sonoma, Alex Emmott, Madeline Sublet, Vanessa Zajfen, Matt Di Ionno, (Facilitator: H)

## Guiding Questions

- **Quick intros:** Name, role, organization
- **What are your current challenges in sourcing/selling local + sustainable processed items** (e.g., pre-cuts)?
  - Availability? Cost? Labor? Vendor complexity?
- **How do you want to access processed products?**
  - Direct from food hubs? Through your distributor? Both?
- **What would build your trust in a shared processing model?**
  - Transparency? Pricing? Reliability? Governance?
- **How involved do you want to be in shaping the offering?**
  - Co-design assortment? Or test plug-and-play products?
- **What are your non-negotiables or red flags?**

# report back!

**What key themes and insights came up?**



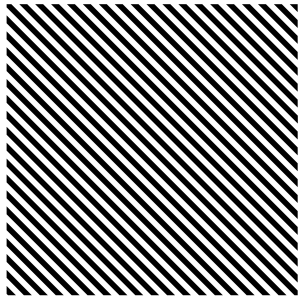




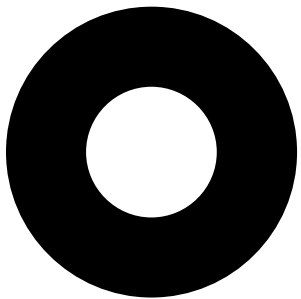
**poll #2**

# how to get involved

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**reach out to us!** we'll start calling in interested farm, food hub, and buyer partners for more planning sessions as facility work progresses



contacts

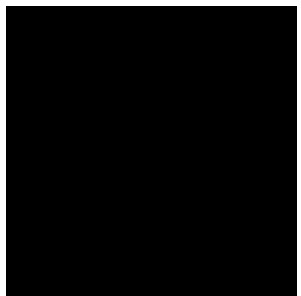
Spork Food Hub - [sporkfoodhub@gmail.com](mailto:sporkfoodhub@gmail.com)

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Eve Cohen - [eve@marcellusfoods.com](mailto:eve@marcellusfoods.com)



*optional deep dive workshop next week - **June 10<sup>th</sup>, 9-10:30am***

check your email or email Carli Yoro ([cyoro@emeraldcities.org](mailto:cyoro@emeraldcities.org))