

News Release
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**THE NEW APPALACHIAN FARM AND RESEARCH CENTER SEEKS INPUT
FROM WV FARMERS AND FARM FAMILIES**

The New Appalachian Farm & Research Center (NAFRC) is examining producers' interest in farm expansion and the feasibility of siting regional food hubs here in West Virginia.

NAFRC, with the assistance of Downstream Strategies, is conducting a study to assess the feasibility and propose location(s) for creating regional food hubs in WV. A food hub is a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution and marketing of food products sourced locally and regionally for the purpose of satisfying larger buyers such as schools, grocery, and retail outlets. "The absence of regional local food hubs is a major barrier to agricultural growth in West Virginia," says Rob Hinton of NAFRC. "Food hubs can address many of the challenges that West Virginia producers face and can provide more sales outlets to new and existing farms."

NAFRC is seeking input from WV farmers and farm families about their interest and challenges in expanding their farm operations. With their help, the New Appalachian Farm and Research Center and its partners will be able to collect critical information and guidance from state producers to help identify the best locations for these added markets about how to support increased production.

If you are a producer that is interested in growing more products or if you know producers that may be interested, please sign up to fill out our producer survey at the following link:

<http://goo.gl/nE4229>.

The information that you share can be completely confidential if you prefer. The survey will be administered later in the spring by the NARFRC with assistance from Downstream Strategies. Participants will receive a \$10 thank you gift card for completed surveys.

Farms that sign up also have the option to be listed in a producer directory for buyers in WV. This information will be separate from your survey answers and will include your contact, location, certifications, and product information only. This project will connect farms with more buyers and customers who demand the high quality products West Virginia farmers produce.

Infrastructure, marketing and information are some of the major barriers limiting growth of local and regional agriculture within West Virginia. When opportunities are created to connect farms with consumers, farms grow and both farmers and consumers can benefit. Please take the time to sign up yourself or encourage any producer who may be interested in providing input to sign up for the Production survey and more information about this project.

If you have any questions please contact: Rob.NAFRC@gmail.com, (330) 703-0328 or check out www.newappalachian.org for more information.