

Feral Foods: Revolutionizing Outdoor Nutrition through Personalized Freeze-Dried Backpacking Food

by

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A THESIS

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This thesis presents a comprehensive business plan for Feral Foods, a start-up company that aims to bring the experience of eating a high-quality homemade meal to the outdoors through the creation of personalized AdventurePacks. The research, conducted through over 200 customer interviews, provided insights to inform the development of the business model and product offerings. The interviews were conducted through a combination of in-person interviews at outdoor retail shops and outdoor enthusiast clubs, employee and shop owners, suppliers, and online surveys. The findings indicate a strong demand for convenient and high-quality outdoor food options. The plan includes a market analysis, a detailed business model canvas, and a 2-year financial forecast. Feral Foods aims to fill this gap in the market by providing backpacking food that is of homemade quality, with a focus on personalization to enhance the outdoor eating experience, including fresh side dishes, desserts, and options tailored to individual taste preferences and dietary restrictions. The thesis also serves as a portfolio of the deliverables developed during the process of building a successful outdoor food company, including a fully functioning e-commerce website, and a summary of customer interviews and how they impacted the development of the business model canvas.

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Problem

Many outdoor enthusiasts tend to set low expectations for freeze-dried backpacking food currently on the market, justifying the quality by stating that "it is what you would expect for being in nature" (See Appendix A, Value Proposition). Some backpackers are forced to sacrifice their preferred dietary choices, such as a vegetarian lifestyle, in order to participate in a week-long backpacking trip. However, should we really have to compromise on quality, taste, texture, and dietary preferences for the convenience that these meals offer? The current freeze-dried backpacking food options prioritize high protein and calorie content, but often fall short in terms of taste, texture, and accommodating different dietary needs and preferences. This results in a limited and repetitive selection that fails to provide a satisfying outdoor eating experience. There's a need in the market for customizable, well-rounded, and premium freeze-dried backpacking meals.

Solution

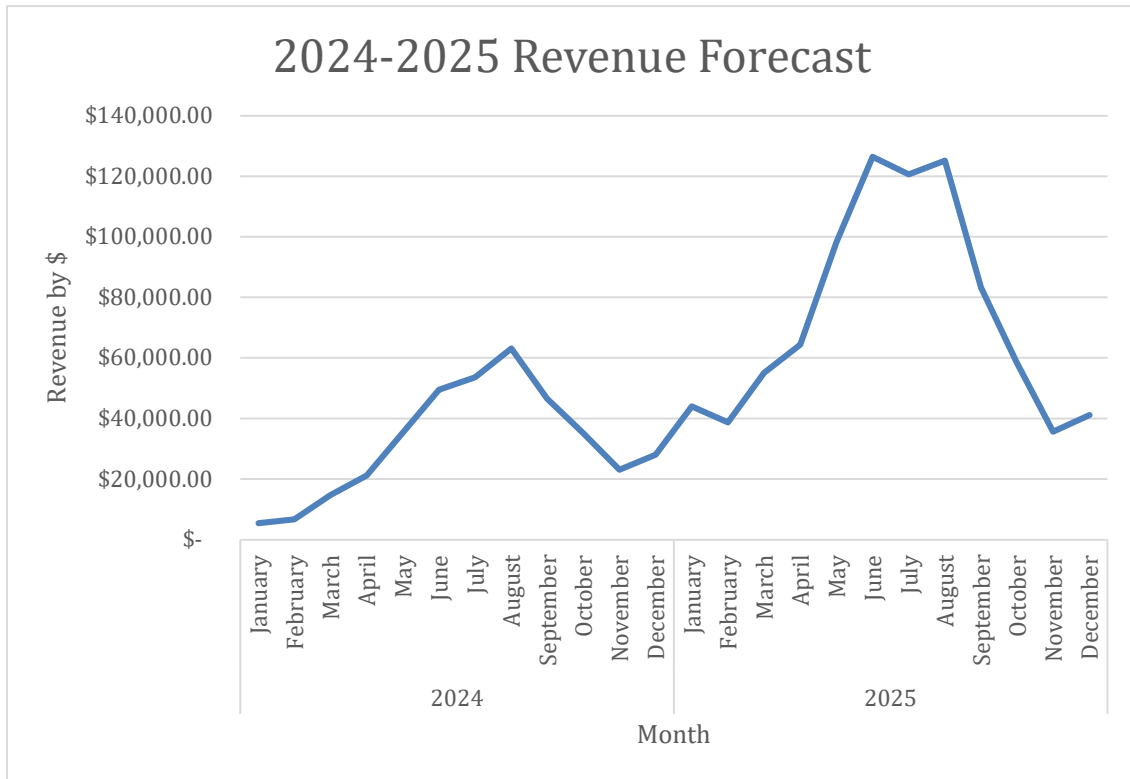
Feral Foods aims to transform the outdoor meal experience with the customizable AdventurePack product line. These freeze-dried meals offer a customizable selection of proteins, toppings, condiments, spices, and sides, enabling outdoor enthusiasts to personalize meals according to their taste preferences and dietary restrictions, including vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, and gluten-free diets. Our website's personalized interface saves preferences, fostering a deeper connection with customers while offering tailored content. Premium taste and texture quality are prioritized in AdventurePacks, setting Feral Foods apart from competitors.

AdventurePacks will be available as pre-packaged options in retail stores and customizable orders via in-store tablets, retailers' websites, and Feral Foods' website, ensuring flexibility and accessibility for a wide range of customers.

Market Opportunity

Feral Foods targets outdoor enthusiasts and retail businesses in the outdoor industry who value convenience, nutrition, taste, and lightweight meals. Research and customer development indicate a strong demand for Feral Foods' innovative approach to the backpacking food market, benefiting both outdoor retailers and backpacking food consumers. Retailers are constantly seeking new products that their employees would use themselves, and Feral Foods' in-store tablets provide an opportunity to increase profit margins without the risk of holding inventory (see Appendix A, Detailed Description of Customers, B2B). Moreover, outdoor food consumers are already personalizing their meals through various methods, showcasing a clear need for Feral Foods' customizable offerings (see Appendix A, Detailed Description of Customers, B2C). With a projected profit of \$65,124.37 in year one and \$264,687.87 in year two, and a required loan of \$72,000, Feral Foods presents an exciting opportunity for growth and success in the outdoor food market.

Figure 1



Company Description

Vision

Feral Foods envisions revolutionizing outdoor nutrition by providing customized, premium freeze-dried meals that inspire adventure, foster sustainability, and celebrate diverse dietary preferences for an unparalleled wilderness experience.

Mission Statement

Feral Foods passionately empowers outdoor enthusiasts by providing exceptional freeze-dried meals, tailored to diverse dietary preferences and embracing taste, convenience, and sustainability. We celebrate the spirit of adventure, enabling people to cherish the outdoors while staying true to their values, and fostering a purpose-driven, unique experience for all.

Values

- **Quality:** We believe that high-quality ingredients, recipes, and processes are essential to delivering the best freeze-dried food to our customers.
- **Sustainability:** We strive to minimize our environmental impact by using sustainable packaging materials and sourcing ingredients from eco-friendly suppliers.
- **Innovation:** We embrace creativity and innovation to constantly improve our products and processes, and to stay ahead of the competition.
- **Customer Satisfaction:** We are committed to providing exceptional customer service and ensuring that our customers are satisfied with their Feral Foods experience.
- **Adventure:** We believe that outdoor adventures are essential to a healthy and fulfilling life, and we are passionate about providing the fuel for these adventures through our freeze-dried meals.

Business Objectives

Short-Term

- Secure a spot and fully equip a certified incubator commercial kitchen in the Seattle area to establish Feral Foods' operations, streamline production and meet FDA regulations.
- Complete the packaging design and obtain FDA approval to ensure that Feral Foods' products meet all health and safety standards.
- Build relationships with popular online backpacking media blogs to raise brand awareness and reach Feral Foods' target audience effectively through guerrilla marketing techniques.
- Launch a user-friendly website with an e-commerce platform to provide customers with a seamless shopping experience and attract potential customers to Feral Foods' products.
- Develop and launch a social media marketing campaign to increase brand visibility, foster customer engagement, and build a loyal customer base for Feral Foods.
- Obtain a minimum of \$30,000 in funding.

Long-Term

- Increase production capacity by investing in a larger freeze dryer to meet growing demand and expand product offerings.
- Optimize operations to improve efficiency and reduce costs by streamlining processes, minimizing waste, and leveraging technology.
- Expand brand awareness and market presence by developing strategic partnerships, advertising campaigns, and social media engagement to increase sales in markets beyond the Pacific Northwest.

- Recruit and retain talented employees by fostering a positive and supportive work environment, providing competitive compensation and benefits, and investing in ongoing training and development.
- Foster sustainability and ethical practices throughout the supply chain by sourcing ingredients and packaging from responsible and eco-friendly suppliers, reducing waste and carbon footprint, and supporting local communities.

Principal Members

Bretten Farrell - Founder

Nathan Lillegard- Advisor

Legal Structure

Feral Foods plans to become an LLC incorporated in whichever state it begins to sell product in.

Market Analysis

Industry Overview

Feral Foods will join the camping food industry. There are several different markers that show the camping industry is growing. As seen in Figure 1 in Appendix B, there was an 11% increase from 46% in 2015 to 57% in 2020 of North Americans planning to increase their camping trips (Koa, 2021). Additionally, younger generations are more interested in camping than their predecessors (Appendix B, Figure 2). In 2021, 37% of North American campers had a household income over \$100,000 (Figure 3, Appendix B), 3.2% higher than the North American average. According to a KOA survey, 66% of North Americans use tents as their primary camping accommodation (Appendix B, Figure 4), making freeze-dried meal kits a convenient option since they only require hot water.

Detailed Description of Customers

B2C

Feral Foods targets Adventurers directly and via outdoor retailers. An online poll reveals 85.7% of seven backpacking food customers would consider online orders if meal customization was possible (Appendix A, Customer Segments/Channels, B2C). Emilia, a store manager at a small outdoor retail store, revealed customers often modify and reseal backpacking meals for customization.

Around 74.1% of respondents buy freeze-dried food for backpacking, and 51.9% for camping (Appendix C, Figure 1). Marketing will primarily target these activities. Reasons for using

freeze-dried food include ease of use (76.9%), long shelf life (42.3%), and rich nutrient content (38.5%) (Appendix C, Figure 2).

Potential market gaps were identified by asking participants about desired improvements in current freeze-dried meal kits. Responses included less expensive (70.4%), more flavor (55.6%), better taste (48.1%), and accommodating more diets (37%) (Appendix C, Figure 3).

Most respondents (65.4%) were aged 20-29, which could explain the cost concern. This age group represents 48.8% of Pacific Crest Trail backpackers (Mac, 2018). More insights on freeze-dried meal kit users are in Appendix A.

B2B

During the initial stages of Feral Foods, partnering with small outdoor retailers is a more feasible approach, as they are more flexible and localized. As the company grows and scales, collaborating with larger outdoor retailers like REI will become more viable.

Phone interviews were conducted with owners of small outdoor retail stores, such as Mountain Sports, Eugene Backcountry Gear, and Grand Ave. Outdoor Store. These businesses were selected for their smaller, localized nature, making them easier to cater to compared to larger outdoor retailers like REI. The interviews aimed to understand their openness to incorporating in-store tablets for customers to order customized AdventurePacks, their interest in offering a wider selection of freeze-dried food options, and their willingness to carry new products.

Overall, small outdoor retail store owners expressed interest in having an in-store tablet for ordering customizable freeze-dried food, as they are always looking for new products to add to their inventory (see Appendix A, Customer Segments/ Channels, B2B). Mountain Sports mentioned the difficulty of finding good vegetarian food options, and Backcountry Gear noted their preference for selling products they would use themselves.

An interesting insight gained from Eugene Backcountry Gear was that most of their business is conducted online. This finding suggests that Feral Foods should consider integrating AdventurePacks not only into in-store tablets but also into retailers' websites

Interviews with REI and Backcountry Gear provided insights into scaling, expected profit margins, and order specifications. It was discovered that the average retail backpacking food order typically comes in a case of 6 meals (See Appendix A, Key Partners). For smaller businesses, the average cost of a typical order for a few cases is approximately \$750-\$3,000, depending on restocking requirements. In comparison, larger companies such as REI typically purchase large orders at around 50% market value, with varied quantities.

In conclusion, the insights gained from the interviews with small outdoor retail store owners indicate a strong interest in incorporating in-store tablets for customizable freeze-dried food orders. These retailers appreciate the prospect of expanding their product offerings and meeting the diverse needs of their customers. The realization that smaller retailers, such as Eugene Backcountry Gear, conduct most of their business online has led to the consideration of integrating AdventurePacks into their websites as well. Focusing on partnering with small

retailers in the initial stages of Feral Foods' development will enable a more manageable growth trajectory before venturing into larger markets like REI. This strategic approach will allow Feral Foods to establish a solid foundation and refine its manufacturing processes to accommodate the larger volumes demanded by major retailers in the future.

SWOT Analysis

Figure 2



The Competition

Currently, there is a wide range of pre-packaged freeze-dried meal kits available in the market. However, there is no brand offering personalized recipes. Some of the most popular brands in this space are Backpacker's Pantry, Mountain House, and AlpineAire, who primarily focus on

providing satiating meals for a lower price, averaging at 69.9, 54.6 and 65.8 calories per dollar (Switchback Travel, 2022). These companies offer meal kits in varying quantities to appeal to outdoor enthusiasts and preppers. Mountain House even has government contracts with the US military. Good To-Go is another prominent brand, specializing in premium meal kits with improved flavors and healthier ingredients.

Currently freeze-dried meal kit brands differentiate themselves by specializing their products to meet the needs of a particular target market. By allowing for personalization, Feral Foods is granted the privilege of reversing the product design process. Rather than designing products to specifically meet the needs of a target market, we allow people to tweak the product to meet their needs. This enables Feral Foods to provide value to a wider range of customer segments.

Despite the variety of active freeze-dried meal kit brands, there are still gaps in the market. The minimum price of a freeze-dried meal kit is around \$7, which can quickly become expensive when sampling different meals to find the most suitable flavor. Additionally, there is a lack of variety in meal options, with most brands offering common staple recipes such as curry, mac and cheese, chili, and biscuits and gravy. Moreover, companies often fail to provide variations of their meals, such as vegetarian alternatives.

Outdoor enthusiasts and preppers (people who stockpile food for a catastrophic disaster) have resorted to two approaches to address the lack of personalization, both of which present considerable pain points. Some people purchase individual freeze-dried ingredients and rely on blog articles for recipes. However, this method often results in long lead times, poor ingredient quality, and high costs. Moreover, finding specific ingredients can be challenging, and the

flavors may not blend well since the ingredients were cooked and freeze-dried separately.

Conversations with an REI employee and customers have revealed that people are already trying to create their own custom backpacking meals. The REI employee mentioned that many individuals pair freeze-dried salmon with another freeze-dried meal, while some customers expressed being tired of the limited options available and prefer to pack overnight oats with their choice of toppings. This highlights the existing demand for more personalized and diverse meal options in the freeze-dried meal market.

Another approach involves purchasing a personal freeze-dryer to create custom freeze-dried meals. While this method can yield high-quality meals, the initial investment of around \$3,000 and the need for regular maintenance make it too much of a commitment for most individuals.

Many customers feel dissatisfied with the taste and quality of existing meal kits, often finding them to be high in sodium and overly processed. However, this shouldn't be the case, as freeze-dried food typically retains 97 percent of its nutrition due to the cold vacuum process used to extract water (Howard, 2016). Freeze-drying doesn't change the appearance or taste of the food and requires no additional processing, as it can store for 25+ years without losing quality or nutritional value, while dehydrated food only lasts 1-3 years (Ashley, 2022). According to my own research, many people have come to set low expectations for food while in nature. Feral Foods aims to redefine the outdoor dining experience for enthusiasts by offering personalized, high-quality, and nutritious freeze-dried meals that not only meet their dietary preferences but also challenge the notion that outdoor meals must compromise on taste and quality.

Feral Foods seeks to bridge the gap in the market by offering personalized freeze-dried meal kits without the complications of existing solutions. The objective of this business plan is to determine if there is sufficient market demand for a personalized freeze-dried meal kit business to establish itself profitably.

Company Advantages

Feral Foods aims to transform the camping food industry by offering an experience where customers have greater control over their meal selections. Instead of spending money experimenting with numerous pre-designed meals or settling for the least disliked option, customers can order through the Feral Foods website and personalize their AdventurePacks to better align with their taste preferences and dietary restrictions. This customization feature encourages customers to create Feral Foods accounts to save their unique meal creations, fostering a more personalized and satisfying outdoor dining experience.

Regulations

Feral Foods is required to obtain a Food Processing and Warehouse License from the Oregon Department of Agriculture. This will require Feral Foods to produce and store food in a commercial kitchen. Further, most small retailers will require Feral Foods to have a Certificate of Liability Insurance with one million dollar single limit per occurrence. Larger retailers will require two million dollar single limit per occurrence.

Marketing Plan

Price

Feral Foods intends to implement a dynamic pricing model for its AdventurePacks, allowing customers to select their preferred protein, toppings, condiments, and sides. This pricing strategy ensures that each meal is tailored to the customer's preferences while still maintaining a premium price point. Initially, the average meal will cost around \$16, reflecting the high-quality ingredients and customization options available.

Product

Feral Foods offers a unique product line called AdventurePacks, designed to cater to outdoor enthusiasts. The first four AdventurePacks that Feral Foods plans to launch include the Burrito Bowl AdventurePack, the Tiki Massala AdventurePack, the Thai Curry AdventurePack, and the Chili AdventurePack. These packs provide customers with a diverse range of flavors and the ability to customize their meals, setting Feral Foods apart from competitors in the market.

Promotion

To keep marketing costs low, Feral Foods will employ guerilla marketing tactics. This approach involves reaching out to outdoor food blogs and outdoor enthusiasts to try and review the AdventurePacks. By generating buzz and word-of-mouth recommendations, Feral Foods can effectively promote its product line without incurring excessive marketing expenses.

Place

Feral Foods aims to create a seamless and accessible purchasing experience for its customers by adopting a multi-channel sales approach. Initially, Feral Foods will collaborate with small retailers to sell AdventurePacks through various avenues, including:

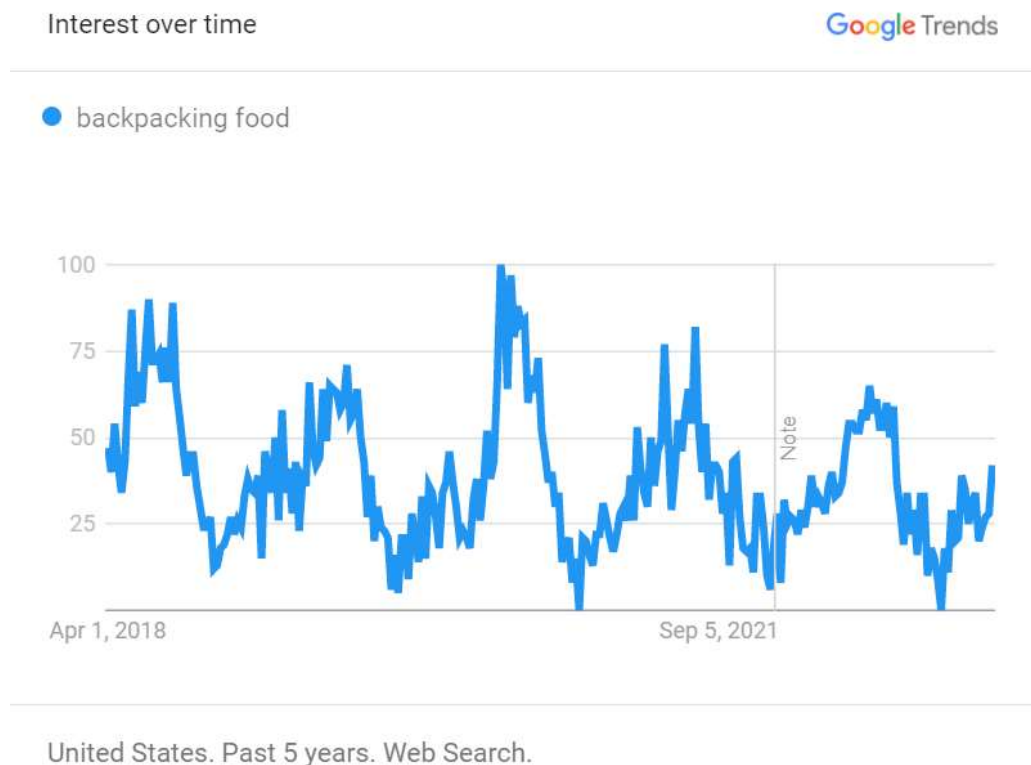
- Pre-packaged meals on shelves: Feral Foods will provide a range of pre-packaged AdventurePacks, offering customers the convenience of purchasing ready-made meals directly from the store shelves.
- In-store tablets: To enhance the customization experience, Feral Foods will equip partner retailers with in-store tablets. Customers can use these tablets to personalize their AdventurePacks and place orders on-the-spot, ensuring a tailored meal that suits their preferences.
- Retailer websites: Feral Foods will work closely with its partner retailers to integrate its product line into their websites. This strategy allows customers to conveniently order AdventurePacks online and have them shipped to their desired location or picked up in-store.
- Feral Foods' website: In addition to partnering with small retailers, Feral Foods will sell AdventurePacks directly through its own website. This platform will offer customers the same customization options and ease of ordering as the in-store tablets and partner retailers' websites.

By offering multiple sales channels, Feral Foods ensures maximum accessibility and convenience for customers while establishing a strong presence within the niche market of outdoor enthusiasts.

Financial Plan

Sales Schedule

Figure 3

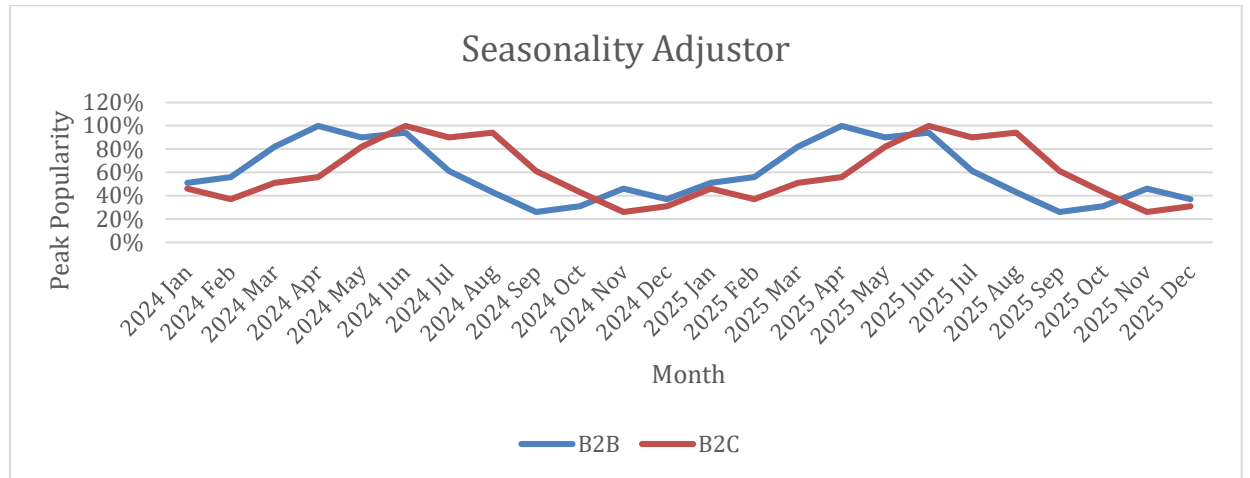


The demand for backpacking food exhibits distinct seasonality. This trend was found by checking how often "Backpacking Food" was searched on Google over the past five years (see Figure 3).

To create a Seasonality Adjustor for Feral Foods Sales Schedule the google trends data was categorized by month, pinpointing the peak search value for each period. In order to establish a realistic seasonality adjuster for Feral Foods' B2B sales schedule, a two-month lead time has been integrated into the model. This adjustment accommodates the typical lead time outdoor

retailers require for their purchases. The Seasonality Adjustor used in Feral Foods B2B and B2C models can be seen in figure 4.

Figure 4

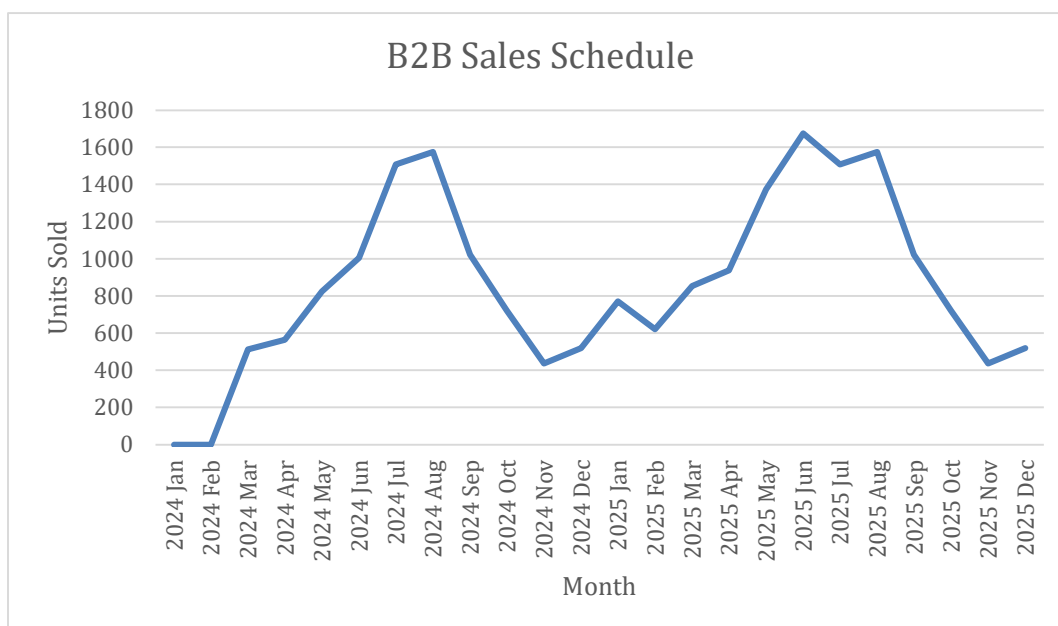


B2B

Month	Retailers Acquired	Units Sold
2024 Jan	0	0
2024 Feb	0	0
2024 Mar	3	513
2024 Apr	3	563
2024 May	3	824
2024 Jun	3	1005
2024 Jul	5	1508
2024 Aug	5	1575
2024 Sep	5	1022
2024 Oct	5	720
2024 Nov	5	436

2024 Dec	5	519
2025 Jan	5	771
2025 Feb	5	620
2025 Mar	5	854
2025 Apr	5	938
2025 May	5	1374
2025 Jun	5	1675
2025 Jul	5	1508
2025 Aug	5	1575
2025 Sep	5	1022
2025 Oct	5	720
2025 Nov	5	436
2025 Dec	5	519

Figure 5



Monthly B2B units sold by Feral Foods are projected based on peak sales data from small outdoor retailers. For example, Chico Mountain Sports, a small outdoor retail store, orders approximately 203 units or \$3,248 worth of product in peak months, as reported by their manager, Emilia. They sell about 20 meal kits daily in June and July, totaling 608 kits per month, and currently stock two brands: Mountain House and AlpineAir.

Assuming Feral Foods captures an even market share, it would sell 203 Adventure Packs in peak months per retailer. The projected number of retailers partnering with Feral Foods is based on discussions with Kim Johnson, owner of Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen, and Feral Foods' own targets.

Units sold are determined by multiplying the anticipated number of retail partners, estimated peak monthly demand per retailer, and the seasonality adjuster. Feral Foods is set to commence operations in January 2024.

B2C

Month	Growth Adjuster	Units Sold
2024 Jan	10%	345
2024 Feb	15%	416.25
2024 Mar	20%	765
2024 Apr	25%	1050
2024 May	30%	1845
2024 Jun	35%	2625
2024 Jul	40%	2700
2024 Aug	45%	3172.5
2024 Sep	50%	2287.5
2024 Oct	55%	1773.75
2024 Nov	60%	1170
2024 Dec	65%	1511.25
2025 Jan	70%	2415
2025 Feb	75%	2081.25
2025 Mar	80%	3060
2025 Apr	85%	3570
2025 May	90%	5535

2025 Jun	95%	7125
2025 Jul	100%	6750
2025 Aug	100%	7050
2025 Sep	100%	4575
2025 Oct	100%	3225
2025 Nov	100%	1950
2025 Dec	100%	2325

Figure 6

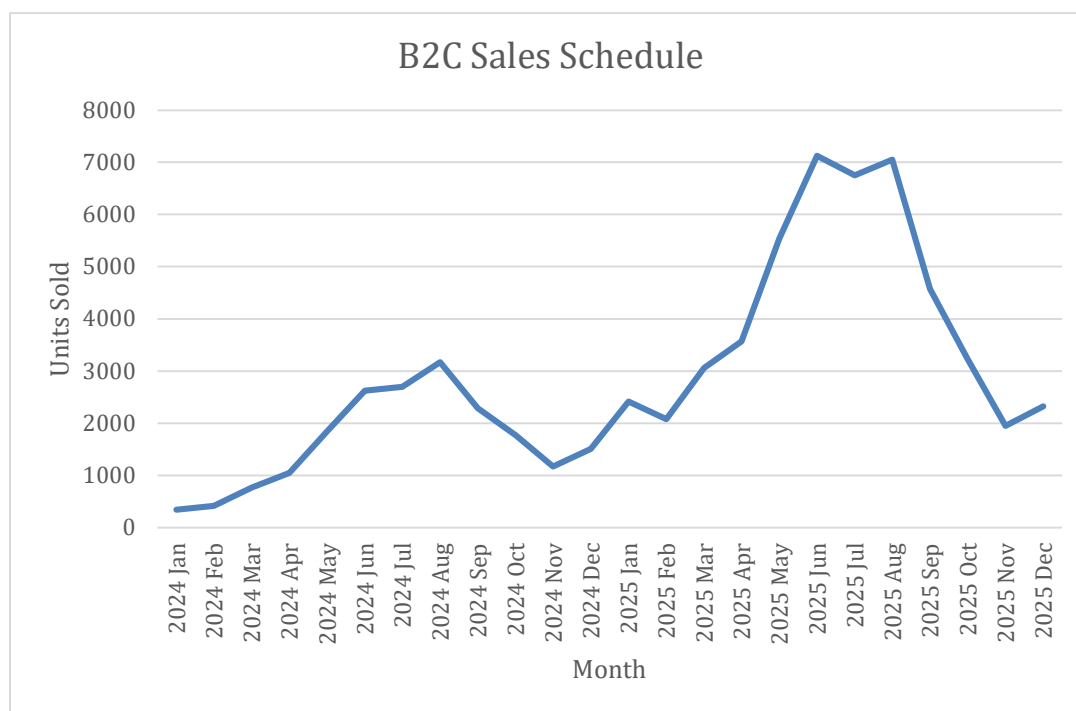
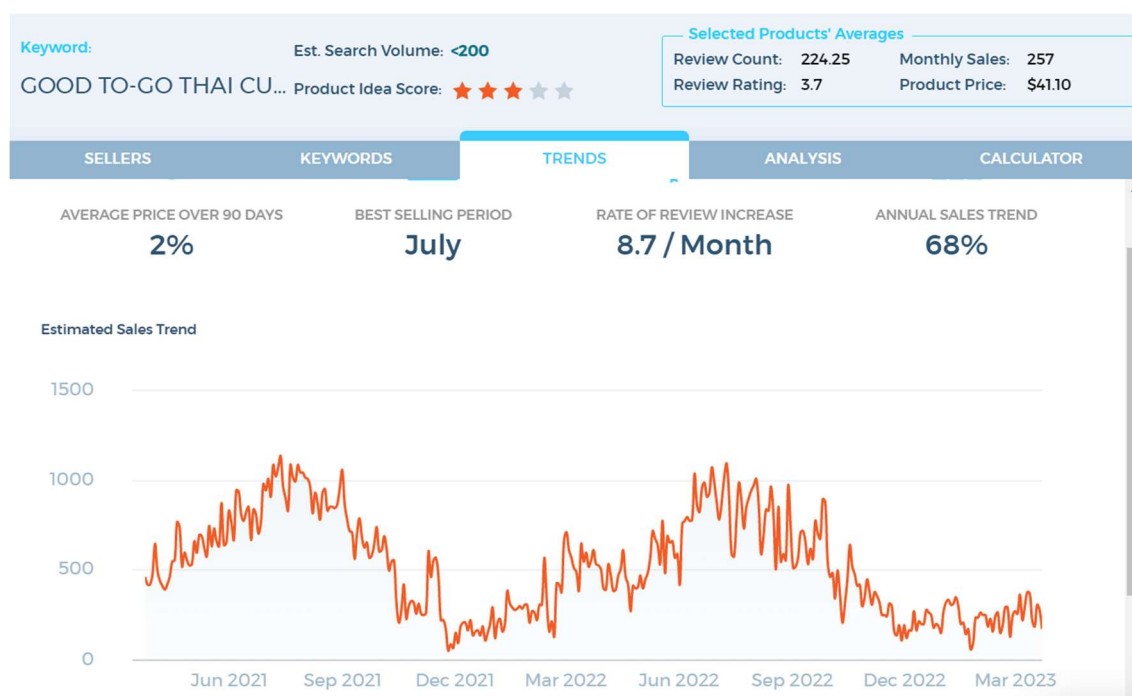


Figure 7



The estimated peak monthly demand online was estimated using the online Chrome extension Viral Launch. Viral Launch estimated that Good-To-Go, during their peak month of July, sells

1,086 units valued at \$41.10 each, and \$44,671 total of their Thai Curry Meal Kit every month through www.amazon.com (see figure 7). Their total peak month dollar sales were then multiplied by three to account for all three base AdventurePacks that Feral Foods plans to launch and divided by the average unit price of \$16.00, resulting in approximately 7,500 units. The growth adjuster was derived from intuition.

Production Costs

Cost of Production	
Materials	\$1.50
Packaging	\$1.00
Total Cost of Production	\$2.50

The materials cost per unit is a careful approximation using the ingredient costs found in the local Eugene area (see Appendix A, Key Activities, Key Resources, Cost Structure, Interviewee Quotes & Website Information). Packaging costs were estimated using Wallaby's MRE Pouches available on www.amazon.com for \$0.70 per pouch. The additional \$0.30 was added to account for the packaging's label costs.

Operating Costs

Operating Costs	
Monthly Commercial Kitchen Rental Costs	\$1,020.00
Monthly Adjustment for Additional Needs from Commercial Kitchen	\$1,000.00
Monthly Insurance, Inspection, and Licenses	\$109.00

Shipping Cost Per Unit	\$2.74
Monthly Marketing	\$1,500.00
Credit Card Fees	2%
One-Time Website Development Fee	\$500.00
Monthly Website Maintenance	\$399.00

It is assumed that Feral Foods will be able to handle the necessary tasks and obligations with a smaller team. Therefore, Feral Foods will have only one employee on payroll for the first year and two employees on payroll for the second year. Employees will work 40 hours per week, with an hourly fixed rate of \$30 per hour, and every employee will take an equal split of the 5% commission of overall sales.

Other operating costs include monthly commercial kitchen rental costs, which were drawn from Seattle Commissary Kitchen's Pricing page. The additional adjustment is designed to cover the additional fees that will be incurred for space and electricity for the freeze-dryer. Marketing costs are expected to be \$1,500 per month, which will be spent on trade shows and media campaigns. Credit card fees are 2%. It is expected that the website development will cost \$500 because it is conservatively above the average website development price on Fiverr (see Appendix A, Key Activities, Key Resources, Cost Structure, Interviewee Quotes & Website Information). Monthly website maintenance costs are expected to be \$399, as that is the advanced Shopify fee.

Capital Expenditures

Equipment	
Freeze Dryer	\$40,000.00
Office Furniture & Equipment	\$5,000.00

The price of the freeze dryer is based on conversations conducted with KEEMOLO (see Appendix A, Key Activities, Key Resources, Cost Structure, Interviewee Quotes & Website Information). KEEMOLO explained they are willing to work with start-ups with a budget of \$30,000. Their base model outputs 50 lbs of freeze-dried product every one-and-a-half-days. The estimated actual freeze dryer expenditure is expected to be closer to \$40,000, with the hopes of purchasing a larger model.

Income Statements

Figure 8

Income Statements		
	Year 1	Year 2
Sales	\$ 352,224.32	\$ 852,800.40
Cost of Sales	\$ 60,916.98	\$ 142,347.00
Gross Profit	\$ 291,307.35	\$ 710,453.40
Employee Expenses	\$ 59,482.22	\$ 118,111.02
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 122,336.34	\$ 220,930.56
Depreciation	\$ 4,083.33	\$ 4,000.00
Operating Expenses	\$ 185,901.89	\$ 343,041.58
Operating Income	\$ 105,405.46	\$ 367,411.82
Interest Expense	\$ 18,865.88	\$ -
Income Before Taxes	\$ 86,539.58	\$ 367,411.82
Income Taxes	\$ 25,961.87	\$ 110,223.55
Net Income	\$ 60,577.71	\$ 257,188.28

Balance Sheets

Figure 9

Balance Sheets		
	Year End 1	Year End 2
Cash	\$ 51,044.53	\$ 366,684.60
Receivables	\$ 1,201.76	\$ 1,201.76
Inventory	\$ 30,767.55	\$ 65,187.30
Current Assets	\$ 83,013.84	\$ 433,073.66
Equipment	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
Accumulated Depreciation	\$ 4,083.33	\$ 8,083.33
Net Equipment	\$ 40,916.67	\$ 36,916.67
Total Assets	\$ 123,930.50	\$ 469,990.33
Accounts Payable	\$ 4,915.81	\$ 7,125.69
Accrued Liabilities (Wages)	\$ 2,475.11	\$ 4,875.11
Income Taxes Payable	\$ 25,961.87	\$ 110,223.55
Loan	\$ -	\$ -
Total Liabilities	\$ 33,352.80	\$ 122,224.34
Owners Equity	\$ 90,577.71	\$ 347,765.98
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 123,930.50	\$ 469,990.33
Proof	\$ -	\$ -

Progress

Minimal Viable Product

AdventurePacks

Tikka Masala AdventurePack

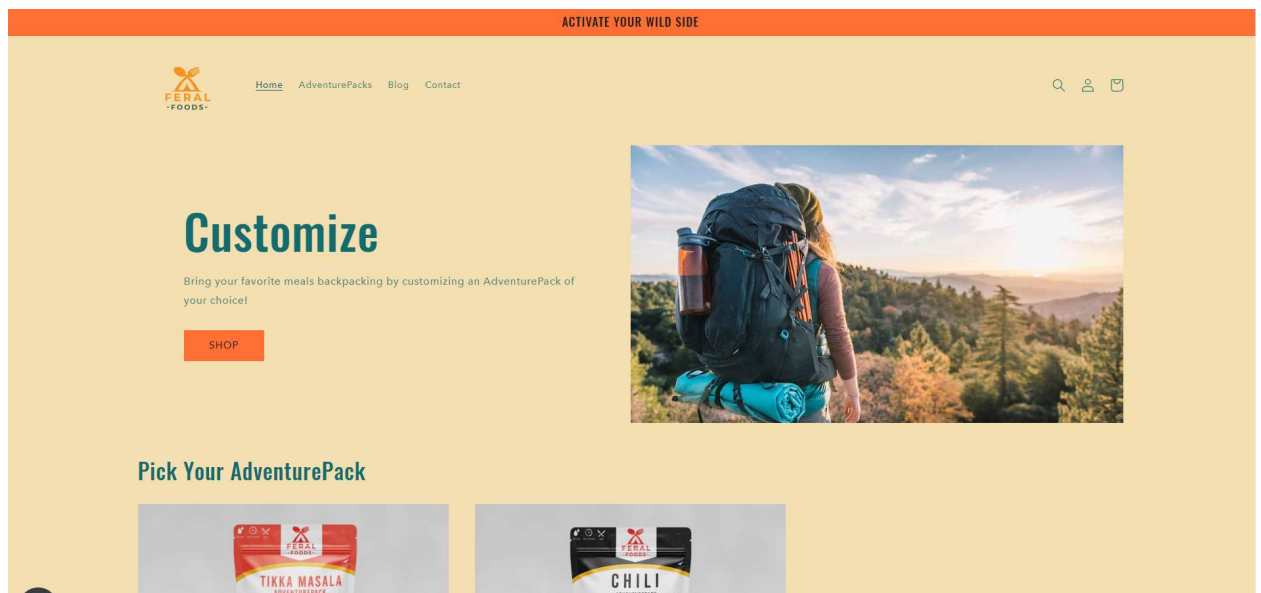


Chili AdventurePack

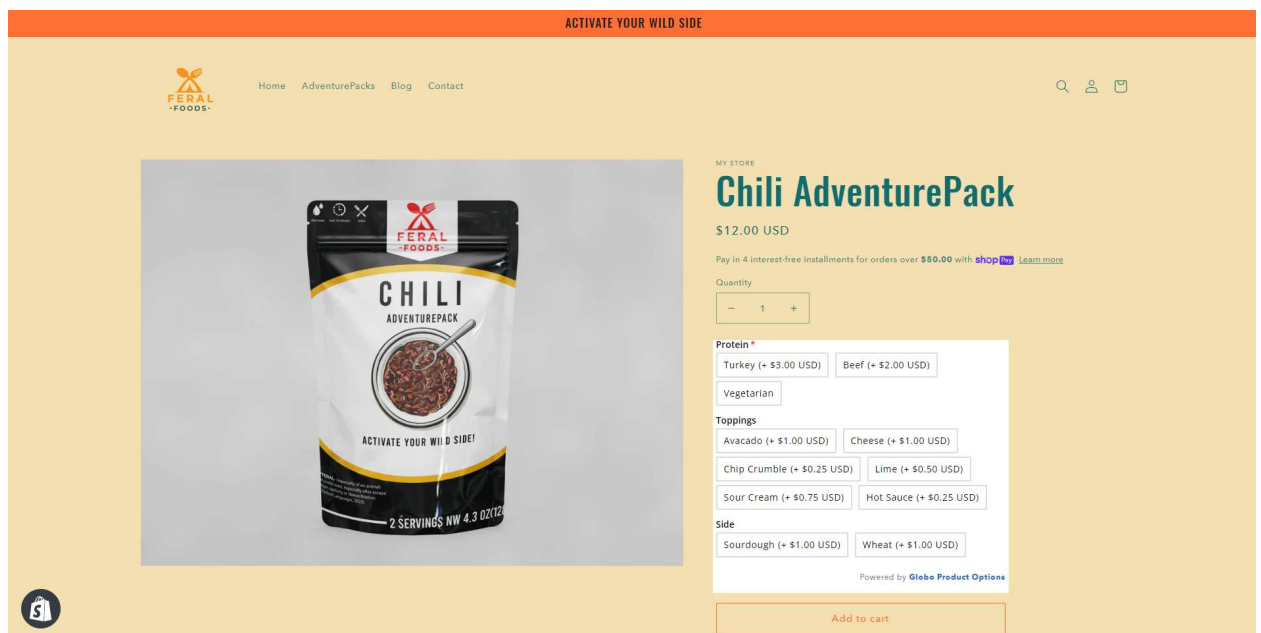


Website

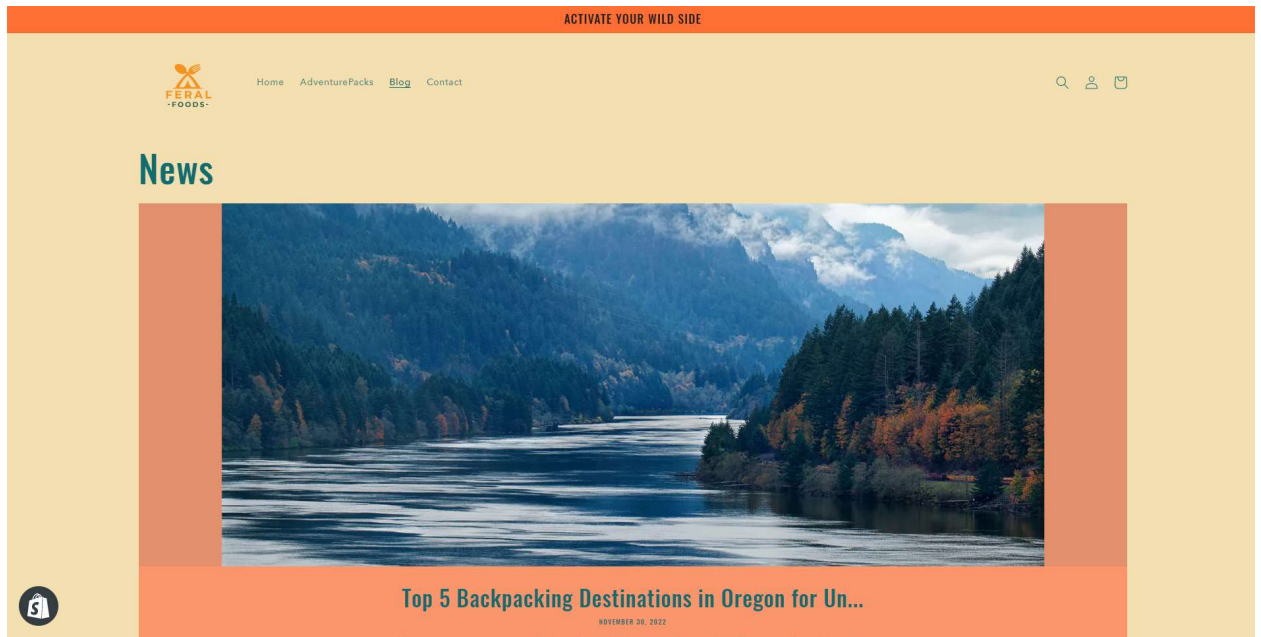
Home Screen



Product Page



Blog Page



Branding

Feral Foods Logo



Value Proposition

Value Proposition Feral Foods began September of 2022 with the following initial hypothesis:

- A significant number of freeze-dried backpacking food consumers believe that current freeze-dried meals in the market lack the quality, taste, personalization, and texture of a home-cooked meal. Introducing freeze-dried backpacking food that meets these standards could prove to be a project with scalable growth potential.

To test this hypothesis, 12 backpacking consumers were interviewed outside of REI, and an additional 6 backpacking consumers were interviewed via Google forms (see Appendix A, Value Proposition). One assumption that was confirmed during these interviews was that 9 out of the 12 participants responded that they bring additional food along with their meals. One REI employee mentioned that he himself, as well as other customers at REI, sometimes even pair freeze-dried salmon with other ready-to-go freeze-dried meals. Other participants mentioned they avoid freeze-dried food altogether, bringing overnight oats instead to have full control over their meal ingredients. These insights affirm the assumption that there is a demand for personalized backpacking food.

One of the most interesting insights from these interviews was that while a majority of the participants felt it was challenging to find freeze-dried backpacking meals that align with their taste preferences, backpacking consumers unanimously felt that the flavor, texture, and overall quality of freeze-dried food did not compare to a typical home-cooked meal. This was an important realization to align Feral Foods' communicated value proposition more effectively with the target market. Feral Foods' goal should no longer be solely focused on matching taste preferences and restrictions. Instead, Feral Foods aims to create a more "homemade" experience

by improving the flavor, texture, and customization options of AdventurePacks. Feral Foods will place higher priority in communicating that AdventurePacks bring the more wholistic dining experience of a home cooked meal.

Customer Segments & Channels

Feral Foods entered week 4 of Fall Term 2022 with the following initial hypotheses related to customer segments and channels:

- Customers are willing to purchase AdventurePacks online through personal devices or in-store tablets, despite the longer wait time associated with shipping and ordering.
- Outdoor retailers are amenable to providing in-store tablets for customers to order customizable AdventurePacks and have them shipped directly to their homes.

To test these hypotheses, seven backpacking food consumers were interviewed outside of REI, in addition to 3 outdoor retailers (Mountain Sports, Eugene Backcountry Gear, and Grand Ave. Outdoor Store) (see Appendix A, Customer Segments/ Channels). Our assumption that customers are willing to purchase AdventurePacks via personal devices was affirmed by 85.7% of the participants stating that they would be interested in ordering backpacking supplies online if it gave them the ability for customization. However, 57.1% of the participants indicated that they valued time efficiency over customization. As a result, it is crucial for Feral Foods to strike a balance between customer preferences by ensuring an extremely smooth and convenient ordering and delivery process. Moreover, all participants reported that they currently buy their backpacking food in-store. This reinforces Feral Foods' assumption that it is essential to offer both pre-packaged meals on shelves and in-store tablets. By doing so, the company aims to cater

to outdoor enthusiasts' current shopping habits while also familiarizing them with a more virtualized approach to ordering backpacking food.

Interviews with small outdoor retail store owners showed interest in having in-store tablets for customers to order customizable freeze-dried food, and they were open to adding new products to their stores. The owner of Eugene Backcountry stated, “We definitely are always open to new products, especially ones that we like to use ourselves and can better sell to our customers.” The owner of Eugene Backcountry also noted that a significant portion of their business is conducted online. This indicates potential for incorporating AdventurePacks into retailers' websites and may even be a necessity for working with certain retailers who primarily operate through online sales. For more information on Feral Foods B2B model please review the Market Analysis, Detailed Description of Customers, B2B and Appendix A, Customer Segments/ Channels, B2B.

Customer Relationships

Feral Foods' initial expected customer relationships was based on the following initial hypotheses:

- Customers are most inclined to develop a positive and ineffaceable relationship with Brands that have a strong and memorable identity with packaging that provides maximum efficiency to meet their needs.
- Email campaigns, adventure blogs, and YouTube videos will help form a large enough community it is worth devoting necessary the resources to producing them.

To evaluate these hypotheses, 8 backpacking food consumers were interviewed outside of REI, and an additional 10 backpacking consumers were interviewed via Google forms (see Appendix A, Customer Relationships). From the REI and online interviews, it became apparent that backpacking food consumers typically do not demonstrate loyalty to any particular brand. Instead, their purchasing decisions are based on factors such as price, flavor, dietary restrictions, and packaging. It seemed that there are very low switching costs between brands exist, which presents Feral Foods with an excellent opportunity to establish relationships with customers and potentially achieve a dominant market share.

A notable difference between online and REI interviewees was observed. Most online respondents affirmed an interest in receiving promotional email and watching outdoor adventure YouTube content, while all REI interviewees did not express interest in these activities. This discrepancy may be attributed to the age difference between the two groups, as younger online respondents may be more inclined to engage with internet-based activities. Several participants mentioned signing up for adventure email lists to receive deals and updates on new products. Additionally, some interviewees watch adventure-themed YouTube channels, ranging from travel and backpacking to extreme sports. Feral Foods could benefit from featuring a dedicated host to create engaging outdoor adventure videos, fostering a sense of community and brand voice. A considerable portion of online respondents also reported reading adventure blogs for various reasons, including locating camping spots and entertainment.

The name "Feral Foods" evokes mixed reactions from backpacking meal consumers. While some, especially younger individuals, find it adventurous and exciting, others, particularly older

generations, perceive it as unattractive and reminiscent of a stray animal. Regardless, the name provokes a reaction, which is vital in a competitive market. However, effective branding execution is crucial to maximize the name's potential and mitigate potential risks.

Interviewees provided several suggestions for enhancing backpacking meal packaging. Recommendations included incorporating clear fill lines, designing compact and easily storable bags, utilizing more environmentally friendly materials, and ensuring a visually appealing presentation.

Revenue Models

Feral Foods' initial revenue model was based on the following assumptions:

- Customers are willing to pay an average of \$16 for higher quality, customizable AdventurePacks.
- Adventurers are open to signing up for an AdventurePack subscription plan for discounted meals.
- Customers will pay more for meal kits with personalization options compared to standard meal kits.
- Customers will not mind fluctuating meal-kit prices depending on their custom order.
- Customers are willing to pay extra for their preferred protein, toppings, or sides.

These assumptions were assessed through 15 online interviews via a Google survey (see Appendix A, Revenue Models). In the research, 14.3% of respondents spent about \$200 per backpacking trip, 42.9% spent \$100-\$125, 28.6% spent \$30-\$40, and 14.3% spent \$20. It is important to note that the interviewees were primarily college-aged students, which may have

influenced the results. The participants were also asked, "How would you feel if a brand allowed you to add proteins, toppings, or condiments for an additional fee and subtract ingredients for a reduction in price?" Responses were divided, with some expressing interest and others feeling it could overcomplicate the process.

Customers were asked, "Would you pay \$16 for a backpacking meal kit that includes a main dish, side dish, and dessert? Explain your reasoning." Almost all respondents answered yes, citing convenience and value as reasons. To assess demand for a freeze-dried meal kit subscription plan, participants were asked, "Would you pay an annual or monthly subscription for discounted freeze-dried/non-perishable meal kits?" 14.3% of respondents said yes, while 85.7% said no (see Appendix A, Figure 2). These findings suggest that offering a subscription plan could be worthwhile, as it has minimal cost for the company and could generate significant repeat sales if 14% of customers sign up.

These findings highlighted the need for Feral Foods to simplify the personalization process. Customization should add value to the product without introducing unnecessary complexities. Additionally, it is crucial to educate customers about the pricing structure, so they perceive it positively rather than negatively.

Partners

Feral Foods' initial expected partnerships were based on the following assumptions:

- Outsourcing the freeze-drying process to Oregon Freeze Dry would be cost-effective and enable Feral Foods to scale up more quickly.

- An Incubator Commercial Kitchen would provide Feral Foods with cost-effective equipment, knowledge, and a network to establish themselves as a valuable partner.
- Large outdoor retailers, such as REI, would be viable when Feral Foods reaches a higher level of maturity, while smaller outdoor retailers like Backcountry Gear are more suitable for an earlier business phase.

To test these hypotheses, interviews were conducted with a store manager at REI, Eugene Backcountry Gear, and the owner of Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen. These interviews led to significant pivots in Feral Foods expected partnerships. Previously, it was assumed that Feral Foods could rely on Oregon Freeze Dry to outsource the freeze-drying process. However, after failing to establish contact with the company, I explored new options, ultimately considering in-house freeze-drying. An interview was eventually conducted with a company named KEEMOLO who specializes in manufacturing custom freeze dryers for startups and small businesses.

Reaching out to Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen opened my eyes to how integral a relationship with an incubator kitchen can be to the success of Feral Foods. I toured Bohemia Food Hub's kitchen space and they had an abundance of commercial grade cooking equipment. Notably, the kitchen has an industrial soup boiler that stands 5 feet tall and is more than capable to helping us meet capacity at the younger stages of the business while reducing fixed costs. Kim Johnson, the owner of Bohemia Food Hub said, "Currently we have more than enough availability for you to come in and do the things you need to every day." This is important because many Commercial Kitchen are extremely booked out, however Bohemia Food Hub will have the flexibility to operate around Feral Foods' timetable.

Interviews with REI and Eugene Backcountry Gear confirmed the plan to work with smaller retailers during the early stages of the business, eventually transitioning to larger retailers like REI. Typically, the average backpacking food order comprises six meals, and for smaller businesses, the average cost of a typical order for a few cases ranges from \$750 to \$3,000 (depending on restocking needs). It is anticipated that REI would place larger orders; thus, Feral Foods plans to start with smaller retailers to solidify operations and increase working capital. An REI employee outlined the application process, called the Greenlight, which requires applicants to submit a video explaining the product and brand. The employee also mentioned REI's preference for local brands, an advantage for Feral Foods as a Pacific Northwest-based company.

Resources, Activities, & Costs

During week 8 of the Fall term 2022, Feral Foods operations during the early stages of the business were reevaluated, focusing on key resources, activities, and costs associated with a new configuration. KEEMOLO was consulted to determine the cost of a custom-built freeze dryer. Ingredient costs and retailer onboarding setup costs were investigated to understand variable costs, and a quote for refrigerated freight was obtained. The initial hypotheses were as follows:

- Oregon Freeze Dry and refrigerated freight services are affordable enough to make them the best options for Feral Foods in the early stages of the business, allowing the company to avoid large overhead costs.
- The variable costs of AdventurePacks are low enough to wholesale at \$8 per meal kit while maintaining a profit margin of 50%.

- The cost to onboard new retail clients is minimal enough to justify installing in-store tablets and integrating Feral Foods' products into their websites, resulting in a positive NPV project.

Feral Foods pivoted from outsourcing freeze drying to performing it in-house. Transporting approximately ten days' worth of product via refrigerated freight from Bohemia Food Hub to Oregon Freeze Dry was quoted at a minimum of \$388 one-way. In addition to the high cost, outsourcing freeze drying would significantly complicate Feral Foods' operations compared to in-house freeze drying. KEEMOLO informed Feral Foods that they typically work with businesses that have a budget of at least \$30,000. To freeze dry in-house, Feral Foods would also need space for the freeze dryer, which is estimated to cost around \$6,500 per month in rent (Loopnet, 2023). Ultimately, pivoting to in-house freeze drying is believed to be worthwhile in order to reduce variable costs and increase the quality and flexibility of Feral Foods' operations. It was discovered that the total cost for retailer onboarding would be approximately \$1,350 to \$1,375. Macklocks can provide a branded tablet stand for about \$400, while a high-quality tablet can be found online for roughly \$900. Feral Foods anticipates website integration costs to be between \$50 and \$75 based on website developer pricing on Fiverr, a freelance service website. There may be opportunities to reduce these costs, potentially by utilizing the retailer's current website development team or sourcing used tablets. These expected onboarding costs solidified Feral Foods' plan to install in-store tablets and integrate its website with retail partners.

The variable cost of ingredients was derived by finding ingredient prices at local Eugene supermarkets and using the recipes' required ingredient quantities and serving sizes. Overall, the variable costs were significantly lower than expected. The variable costs without taking the

protein, topping, and sides into consideration for the Burrito Bowl AdventurePack is \$1.01, the Chili AdventurePack is \$.79, and the Thai Curry AdventurePack \$1.16 (see Appendix A, Figures 4-6) This analysis supports the initial hypotheses, indicating that Feral Foods can effectively manage costs while offering competitive pricing for its products and maintaining a healthy profit margin.

Working Hypotheses

Below is a list of our current working hypotheses, organized by categories related to the Business Model Canvas.

Customers:

- A significant number of consumers feel that current freeze-dried meals in the market lack the qualities of a home-cooked meal, making the provision of freeze-dried backpacking food that meets these standards a financially viable project.
- Feral Food's target market is more likely to develop a positive and lasting relationship with our brand if we provide maximum efficiency and a good experience with our packaging.

Suppliers:

- An Incubator Commercial Kitchen will provide Feral Foods with cost-effective equipment, knowledge, and the network to make themselves a valuable partner.
- Bohemia Food Hub's kitchen space enables Feral Foods to produce and package a capacity of 50 kg of AdventurePacks at an hourly rate that derives to a per-unit variable cost of \$0.75 or less.
- Purchasing an industrial freeze dryer will have a large upfront cost; however, it will be a cheaper investment in the long run as opposed to working with Oregon Freeze Dry indefinitely.

Market:

- Enough customers would be willing to spend \$16 on a meal-kit, if the meal kit was of higher quality.

- A dynamic pricing model where the price of the food depends on the ingredients the customer adds or subtracts would appeal to enough customers to cover the costs of implementing such a system.
- Large outdoor retailers, such as REI, will be viable when Feral Foods reaches more maturity, while smaller outdoor retailers like Backcountry Gear are more realistic for a younger business phase.

Channels:

- Outdoor retailers are okay with having in-store tablets and/or integrating our website with theirs for customers to order customizable AdventurePacks.
- The cost to onboard new retail clients is minimal enough to install in-store tablets and integrate our products into their website, making it a positive NPV project.
- Outdoor retailers will be an important partnership to develop in order to sell and advertise our product at an efficient rate.

Marketing and Branding:

- Email campaigns, adventure blogs, and YouTube videos will help form a large enough community that it is worth devoting the necessary resources to producing them.
- The name 'Feral Foods' initiates conversations among the outdoor community and provides a strong brand identity.

Pricing and Revenue:

- The variable costs of AdventurePacks are low enough to wholesale at \$8 per meal kit and still achieve a profit margin of 50%.

- Enough customers are willing to opt into a meal kit subscription plan for it to be worth providing.

Appendix A: Interview Summaries

During the fall term of 2022, I took a course named Lean Launchpad where we focused on evaluating each component of the business model canvas. Through this process, Feral Foods underwent several changes. This section outlines my initial assumptions for each component, the individuals interviewed, the questions posed, and the insights gained. It is important to note that some of the direct quotes from the interviews have been recorded from memory and may not be 100% accurate.

Value Proposition

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made with Feral Foods' initial value proposition:

- Current meal kits do not align with the taste preferences and dietary restrictions of outdoor enthusiasts.
- Outdoor enthusiasts find that current meal kits lack good flavor.
- Outdoor enthusiasts desire the ability to customize their meals.
- Outdoor enthusiasts would like more toppings and condiments included in their meal kits.

List of Interview Participants

- *12 customers at REI, all with prior experience with freeze-dried backpacking meals*
- *6 viable respondents from an online survey of 12 participants, with prior experience with freeze-dried backpacking meals.*

Questions Asked

1) Have you used freeze-dried backpacking food before?

- a) This question was used to assess the suitability of the prospective interviewee as a source of valuable information. (If the answer was no, the interview was terminated)

2) Do you find it challenging to locate freeze-dried meals that align with your taste preferences and dietary restrictions? If so, why?

- a) This question was designed to determine the extent to which current companies cater to the specific needs of the customer.

3) Have you ever supplemented your freeze-dried meals with additional food while backpacking? If so, what kind of food?

- a) This question aimed to validate the answers provided in response to the previous question and assess what measures the interviewee takes to enhance the taste and accommodate their dietary restrictions while backpacking.

4) Do you find value in a meal kit option that allows you to personalize your freeze-dried meals? For example, choosing the type of meat or sides with a burrito AdventurePack. Can you explain why or why not?

- a) This question aimed to gauge the interviewees' interest in a product that is tailored to their preferences and needs.

5) How would you compare the flavor, texture, and overall quality of freeze-dried food to a typical home-cooked meal you eat?

- a) This question aimed to assess the perception of freeze-dried food in terms of taste, texture, and quality, with the intention of understanding how Feral Foods can improve its offerings to better resemble high-quality home-cooked meals.

Interview Quotes

Question 1

All participants responded affirmatively.

Question 2

1. "Yes; It seems that the market is getting better."
2. "Yes; I am not too picky- I tend to eat anything/everything."
3. "Yes, I am not too picky."
4. Strongly shaking his head, "I like to pack own food."
5. Laughing: "Yeah, lol I usually bring along canned food"
6. "No for taste; but for diet, yes"
7. "No for taste; but for diet, yes" (6&7 were a couple)
8. "For backpacking-yes"
9. "No, no, no - vegetarian is hard to find. All I can eat is mac n cheese."
10. "Sometimes, best pairs with other foods though"
11. "I usually am pretty disappointed no matter what I get."
12. "Yeah you know, it's what you would expect."

Question 3

1. "I actually like to bring overnight oats on my backpacking trips. I add berries, brown sugar, chia seeds."
2. "Yeah, usually I bring those little tuna pouches with me because they work as a great snack and I sometimes like to add them to my meals."
3. "I'm typically pretty short on time so usually I just bring the meals as is. But I definitely like to bring beef jerky and trail mix when I can!"
4. "I think the meal kits always taste like mushy baby food, so I always bring a good bottle of hot sauce to add to them. That way I get the subsistence I need and its slightly more enjoyable."

5. "I often pair the backpacking meals together. Like I will try to find some sort of rice or quinoa meal and pair it with the Patagonia salmon. I have seen a lot of our customers do similar this too man."
6. "Eh not really. The meals always suit my needs fine."
7. "Most the time I actually dehydrate my own food. I dehydrate a huge can of bean and add some good fajita veggies and spices in there, its great man you really should try it. I'll occasionally add a REI meal kit to the back when I am running low on time though."
8. "I always bring peanuts, nuts, and cliff bars."
9. "I hate how protein dense the meals are, so I bring lots of vegetables like lettuce and tomatoes to make them healthier and more enjoyable. I like to bring seasoning to improve their not-so-great flavor."
10. "I like to bring smoked fish from home to pair with the meals to make them feel more healthy and homemade."
11. "I bring nice side snacks like tuna, cliff bars, and trail mix." I also usually bring limes and lemons too."
12. "I carry some healthy topping with me usually. After awhile the Mountain House meals start to just taste like mush. The veggies bring in a more complex texture."

Question 4

1. "Of course, having the ability to personalize my meals would allow me to better control the taste and nutritional content."
2. "Absolutely, being able to choose my own ingredients would make the freeze-dried meals taste much better."

3. “I feel like that would be awesome! I already do try to supplement certain parts, so being able to do it from the get-go would really simplify things.”
4. “I feel like that may overcomplicate things. I know what I like and I grab it right off the shelf.”
5. “Yeah I like the sound of that. I think it would make finding a vegetarian option much easier.
6. “Ooooo a burrito flavored meal, that sounds nice. They need to change up the types of recipes that are offered, they always have the same ones. I think personalization would be nice.”
7. “As long as it’s a pretty seamless process I could see myself maybe getting used to it. I usually pick up my food right before my trip.”
8. “I am celiac, so if there were to be some sort of gluten-free button I can press it would be game changing.”
9. “That’s great. There is usually some ingredient I am not the greatest fan of, so more preference would definitely preferred.”
10. Yeah, we already freeze dry our own food and it really works great. None of those preservatives in it.
11. “Yeah man, maybe include some sauces too. I live out in a more rural area and eat freeze dried food from the church pretty much every day. They have zero flavor, so I always need to drench the food in sauce to enjoy it.”
12. “Kind of like Chipotle? I really like that, it would need to be easy though.”

Question 5

1. “The real deal is always better.”

2. “It doesn’t even compare; it always has a mushy consistency, and the taste is not comparable.”
3. “Pretty good- it is edible.”
4. “There is 0 comparison”
5. “Does not constitute a regular meal, the consistency is not the same nor is the flavor. It is too salty.”
6. “Freeze dried food in comparison to regular food on a scale 1 to 10 is a 4, I find it simply works when you are in a pinch.”
7. “Home cooked is way better! Better flavor, freshness, more variety.”
8. “Typically, we don’t buy freeze dried because of the taste, but dehydratable tastes pretty homemade.”
9. “If the water is right.”
10. “No.”
11. “Not even comparable, but that’s unfortunately what to expect.”
12. “Compared to a home cooked meal, its definitely no great.”

Findings

Based on the 12 customer interviews conducted at REI, our value proposition of customizable meal kits has shifted. Only 3 out of the 12 interviewees expressed difficulty in finding meal kits that cater to their taste preferences and dietary restrictions. On the other hand, 9 out of the 12 participants revealed that they bring additional food along with their freeze-dried meal kits. Some even shared that they dehydrate their own meals. This indicates that our target market still values customization, even if they have found freeze-dried meals that align with their preferences and restrictions. The consensus among the interviewees was that homemade food

and freeze-dried food are incomparable in terms of flavor, texture, and taste. Many mentioned how freeze-dried food is too salty and lacks the taste and feel of homemade food.

Our goal should no longer be solely focused on matching taste preferences and restrictions. Instead, we aim to create a more “homemade” experience by improving the flavor, texture, and customization options of our freeze-dried hiking meals. Our value proposition now includes not just customizing the entrees but also offering a selection of protein, toppings, condiments, and sides. One interviewee even suggested adding a cookie to the packaging for a more complete and satisfying meal. Overall, our findings suggest that offering better customization options and a more “homemade” feel will better serve our target market.

Customer Segments/ Channels

The customer segment/ channels section of the appendix will be divided into two parts, to reflect the B2B and B2C sales expectations for Feral Foods' AdventurePacks.

B2B

Assumptions

- Stores are open to incorporating a tablet for ordering AdventurePacks
- Retailers are interested in offering their customers a wider selection of freeze-dried food options
- Retailers are comfortable with customized AdventurePacks being shipped directly to their customers
- Smaller retailers are amenable to expanding their freeze-dried product offerings with AdventurePacks.

Interview Participants

I conducted phone interviews with the owners of the following small outdoor retail stores that carry freeze-dried backpacking food. These businesses were selected as they are smaller, localized, and easier to cater to compared to larger outdoor retailers such as REI.

1. Mountain Sports
2. Eugene Backcountry Gear
3. Grand Ave. Outdoor Store

Questions

1. **Do you currently sell freeze-dried food products?**
 - a) This question was asked to confirm that the interviewee sells freeze-dried food.
2. **What is your opinion on having an in-store tablet for customers to create custom meal kits that would be shipped to their homes?**
 - a) This question was asked to gauge the interviewee's comfort with having a tablet in their store and their perception of customers customizing their meal kits.
3. **How would you like the pricing to work for meal kits purchased through the tablet?**
 - a) This question was asked to understand the interviewee's perspective on offering pricing based on the customer's selected add-ons, as well as their expectations for revenue sharing since they would not have to carry inventory.
4. **Are you open to selling a new brand of freeze-dried food?**
 - a) This question was asked to determine the interviewee's willingness to try new products and their criteria for selecting new products to sell.

Interview Quotes

Question 1

All participants responded affirmatively.

Question 2

1. "I think that idea is rad. I could especially see there being tablets in larger stores like REI"
2. "Hmmm that is interesting for sure. It kind of like the reverse of our current business model because most of our business is done online"
3. "That is an intriguing idea. A lot of customers ask us if we carry gluten-free meal kits and so if there was any method to meet more customers need we would appreciate that."

Question 3

1. "50% profit margins sound good" They also stated that they don't mind having the price of the product depend on the Add-ons the customer selects."
2. "You know I'm not 100% sure how that would work, I'd have to give it a bit more thought."
3. "Yeah, I think probably splitting the revenues 50/50 would be most likely how it would work. I wouldn't mind the fluctuation in pricing from the customer selecting different add-ons."

Question 4

1. "I think that is something we need to do already. It's especially been hard to find food that is food and vegetarian."
2. "We definitely are always open to new products, especially ones that we like to use ourselves and can better sell to our customers."

3. “We are always open to testing out new products.”

Findings

Overall, it seemed like smaller outdoor retail store owners were very interested in the idea of having an in-store tablet to order customizable freeze-dried food. They explained how they are always looking for new products to add to their store. Mountain Sports even said, "I think that is something we need to do already. It's been especially hard to find food that is food and vegetarian." They went as far as even referring to the idea as “rad.” Backcountry Gear said how they like to sell products that they would use themselves. We hope by really figuring out our value proposition for our product, retail owners and employees will see its value.

One interesting piece of insight we learned from talking to Eugene Backcountry Gear is that most of their business is done online. They said that they were interested in the idea but explained that it is the opposite of their current business model because they sell mostly online. This was surprising to us because we thought most of smaller retailers' demand would be localized and we didn't expect them to be doing their best online. With this newfound knowledge, we are considering not only using in-store tablets but integrating AdventurePacks into retailers' websites too.

B2C

Assumptions

- Customers are willing to order custom AdventurePacks online or via tablets even with longer wait times associated with shipping and ordering.
- Customers are willing to order AdventurePacks in advance of their backpacking trips.

Interview Participants

Survey of 15 Backpacking Food Customers Conducted via Google Forms

Questions

- 1) **Do you prefer to buy your backpacking meals online or in-store? Explain your reasoning.**
 - a) Asked to understand customers shopping habits and preferences for convenience and accessibility.
- 2) **What stores do you typically shop at for backpacking meals and what day as well as time do you tend to go?**
 - a) Further evaluates customers' shopping habits and identifies potential retail locations for Feral Foods to distribute products.
- 3) **What do you value more, in regard to purchasing backpacking meals? Time efficiency or ample customization?**
 - a) This question evaluates participants' priorities.
- 4) **If there were an option to purchase your backpacking meals online where you would have the ability to customize certain aspects of your meal (ex: protein choice) would you consider ordering online as opposed to in-store?**
 - a) This question is designed to evaluate if participants are pen to online customization options for their meals and to gauge potential interest in Feral Foods' proposed business model.

Interviewee Quotes

Question 1

- “I always do in-store. I like to look at the wide selection at outdoor stores like REI and pick out which ones I want to take on specific trips.”
- “In store, I like to see what I am buying.”
- “I never do online for meal kits. I don’t have to worry about shipping issues because I usually buy meals right before the trip.”
- “I am usually last minute. I like to be able to get them at REI the day before.”
- “Oh, always store. I am a quick in and out. Sometimes right before the trip.”
- “I definitely prefer in-store because it’s easier that way.”
- “I like to go in-store and explore REI a little bit. I’ve never thought about ordering online.”

Question 2

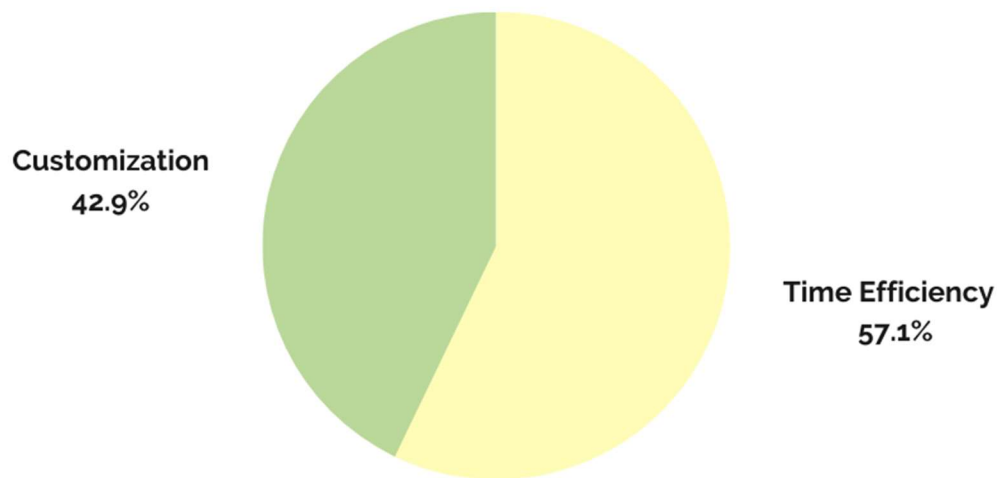
- “My boyfriend and I go to REI on the weekends.”
- “REI, it varies on the time.”
- “REI or dry goods sections in the regular grocery stores. Usually late in the day when I am scrambling to pack up. Fridays typically.”
- “I usually pick up my food from REI whenever I plan I taking a trip in the near future.”
- “REI is my go to, there is never a specific day and time.”
- “REI is my favorite spot. I usually just go whenever free.”
- “I always get my food from REI because they have so many options. I go whenever I need meals for a trip, usually later in the day.”

Question 3

- “Time efficiency is more important from these two choices but the most critical is taste.”

- “I would say time efficiency for myself but I do think that if I were to have dietary restrictions I may have a different answer.”
- “Ample customization for sure. I am picky.”
- “I am an extreme last minute backer, so efficiency for me.
- “I value both, but if I could make a meal that fits my diet a bit better I prefer that.”
- “I prefer customization.”
- “I am usually pretty disappointed with the way those meals taste so probably customization.”

Figure 1

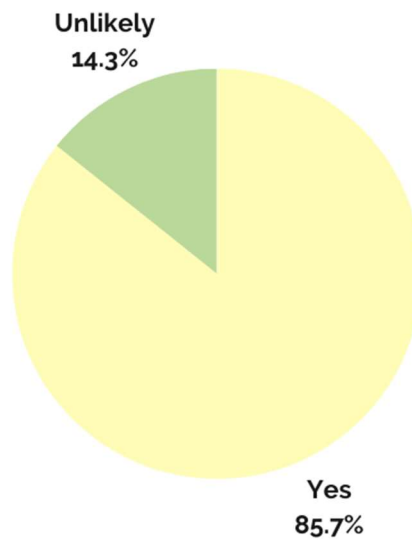


Question 4

- “Yes, absolutely!”
- “Unlikely. I am not that organized to plan that far ahead. Unless I'm going out for more than five nights, I don't really need prepackaged meals.”

- “Yes, I think it is one of those things where you don’t know how great it is until you try it.”
- “Yeah you know I’m always looking for new meals to try and I have had pretty much all the ones at REI.”
- “Yeah, I feel like it is usually difficult to find a meal that resonates with me.
- “Potentially. I usually am pretty last minute, but if I liked the meals more I definitely would.”
- “That’d be a cool concept. I’d give it a try!”

Figure 2



Finding

The interviews suggest that most backpacking food customers prioritize efficiency and purchase meals closer to their trip date. Although all participants preferred in-store shopping, some are open to alternative methods if they allow for customization. Six out of seven expressed

interest in switching to online channels for customization, and three out of seven preferred customization over efficiency. To balance customer preferences, Feral Foods will need to make the ordering and delivery process extremely smooth and time-efficient. All participants primarily shop at REI, likely due to the limited availability of other retailers selling backpacking food in the local Eugene, Oregon area.

Customer Relationship

Assumptions

- Our target customers are likely to be interested in receiving news and promotions through our email list
- A significant portion of adventure enthusiasts consume content on adventure-themed YouTube channels
- A significant portion of backpacking food customers follow outdoor outing blogs for information and inspiration.

Interview Participants

8 REI Customers

This was an excellent location to conduct customer interviews as many of REI's customers were about to or have purchased freeze-dried backpacking meals in the past. We ended up interviewing 8 backpackers that had experience using freeze-dried meal kits.

10 Google Form Interviews

After conducting in-person interviews at REI, I realized that the customers we spoke to were predominantly older and not as active on the internet. To gain insights from a younger audience of backpacking food consumers, I decided to conduct online interviews in addition.

Questions

1. Are you loyal to a specific brand of backpacking food? If so, what factors contribute to your loyalty?

- a) The purpose of this question is to determine the level of brand loyalty among backpacking food consumers and what factors influence their brand choice.

2. Do you subscribe to promotional emails for backpacking food companies? If so, what draws you to sign up for them?

- a) The purpose of this question is to assess the effectiveness of email campaigns by backpacking food companies and the factors that motivate consumers to sign up for them.

3. Do you watch outdoor adventure channels on YouTube? If so, which ones do you follow?

- a) The purpose of this question is to gauge the popularity of outdoor adventure channels on YouTube among backpacking food consumers and to identify the channels that resonate with them.

4. Do you read outdoor adventure blogs? What information do you look for in these blogs?

- a) The purpose of this question is to evaluate the popularity of outdoor adventure blogs among backpacking food consumers and the information they seek from these blogs.

5. What is your initial reaction to the name "Feral Foods"?

- a) This question aims to gauge customers' first impression of the company name and see if it has any emotional or psychological impact on them.

6. Would the name "Feral Foods" influence your decision to purchase a backpacking meal product?

- a) This question seeks to determine if the name of the company has any impact on customers' buying behavior.

7. What, if anything, do you think could be improved in terms of the packaging of backpacking meals to enhance your personal experience?

- a) This question aims to gather information about customers' opinions and experiences with the packaging of backpacking meals, and identify any potential areas for improvement.

Interviewee Quotes

Question 1

- “No because it all taste the same.”
- “Anything cheap.”
- “No I normally buy whatever is on sale.”
- “No, I’m a college student and just get whatever is cheapest.”
- “No, only backpack occasionally”
- “I am loyal to the Mountain House brand because of their high quality taste and high protein levels as well.”
- “I buy whatever flavor seems the most tasty to me!”
- “The most important thing is the ingredients.”
- “Its been awhile, but I would just pick what looked best at the moment.”
- “I’m a creature of habit, but I’m semi-vegetarian and look at the flavor.”
- “I don’t make a rational decision. It’s more just about what’s in it.”
- “I choose based off the price and the taste.”
- “I have used Backpacker’s Pantry because I liked the packaging, it was less intense than Peak, and didn’t have an insane amount of protein.”

Question 2

- “No”
- “A few fly fishing emails.”
- “No”
- “REI Bc their coop group gives a ton of good discounts on great gear.”
- “Yes, I am on quite a few to make sure I’m not missing any potential promo’s.”
- “Yes, gotta get those promotions and sales.”

Question 3

- “No.”
- “No.”
- “Nope.”
- “I watch Geoguessers adventures and a few other random videos about people backpacking and surviving. I also like watching Alone and Survivor Man.”
- “Yes! Too many to list but I love watching them. I also think brands with YouTube are cool, GoPro is a great example!”
- “Mak Shea Smith, GoPro, Red Bull, Patagonia”
- “Yes, no one in particular I just browse”
- “I don’t watch YouTube much”

Question 4

- “No.”
- “No.”
- “Hunting tips and tricks.”
- “I enjoy finding good spots and hikes but no blogs.”

- “Just geoguessers blog”
- “Yes, usually when I’m planning a trip somewhere”
- “I will read snow reports as well as bear reports for interest and safety”
- “Sometimes. Just to get some other perspectives”
- “Yes, to get recommendations for hiking and backpacking trips”

Question 5

- “I will say, try again.”
- “Hahaha I think that is rad!”
- “Mmmm, my reaction would depend mostly on the packaging.”
- “Food for the wild ones!”
- “That isn’t my favorite name in the world.
- “Hahaha, that’s great. It definitely would catch my eye.”
- “I think of somebody being wild in the outdoors.”
- “It definitely stands out to me as fun and wild, but I am not too sure what others may think of it.”
- “Disgusted lowkey.”

Question 6

- “I like the name! If you nail the packaging, it's clever.”
- “It would probably catch my eye, so yes.”
- “I think the words may catch my eye a little more. I would avoid using intense packaging with dark colors. Those always tend to scare me away.”
- “Yeah, I can see some situations where it may give me a good laugh and purchase it but others where I avoid it.”

- “No, I usually base my decision on the recipe and try to meals that look fulfilling but don’t have too much protein.”
- “Honestly I think I usually make a pretty last-minute decision based off if I think the meal sounds good.”
- “Yeah, I think it would motivate me.”
- “It definitely would stand out. All those meals looks pretty much the same to me.”
- “Maybe, I usually buy based on how the brand looks and it's reputation.”

Question 7

- “I feel like the packaging takes up way too much room and feels wasteful. I like to save mine and use it for other things.”
- “Its really annoying how most meal kits do not have a fill line and require you to have a measurement device yourself. I also wish it was not so wastful.”
- I feel like the bags are always so big and there is way more than I can eat.”
- “I can never add the right amount of water. It always way to watered down.”
- “I don’t know if the packaging is recyclable, but I hope that it is. Also I wish there was a fill line.”
- “Brands like Peak Refuel always scare me away. They just look way too intense for me.”
- Yeah I would appreciate a fill-line so I don’t feel like I’m just guessing. I also feel like sometimes some of the instructions are not very easy to understand.”
- “The bags are just so big and bulky. I like how heavy duty they are, but they are really hard to pack, especially for longer trips. A water line would definitely enhance the experience for me too.”
- “A water line would be a nice improvement.”

Findings

From both the REI and online interviews, it seemed that backpacking food users are not loyal too any brand. Most people said that they make their purchasing decision based on price, flavor, dietary restrictions, and packaging. Very few had any form of relationship with any company, and therefore there is very minimal to zero switching costs between brands. This is an excellent opportunity for Feral Foods to build a relationship with customers and eventually emerge having a dominant market share.

Most of the online respondents answered yes to questions 2-4, however all of the REI interviewees said no. I believe this may be because all of the REI interviewees were older, while the online interviewees were younger and more likely to spend time on the internet. People explained that they were signed up for adventure email lists for deals and new products. For question 3, four out of the seven respondents said that they watch adventure YouTube channels. Some of these channels involved travel, backpacking, and geocaching and others were more extreme sports like GoPro and Red Bull. I believe if Feral Foods had a dedicated host to film extreme outdoor adventures YouTube videos it would help a community and brand voice. Six out of eight online respondents said that they read adventure blogs. Some said they read blogs for tips on finding camping spots or hunting and others read blogs for entertainment.

The name "Feral Foods" generates mixed reactions among consumers within the backpacking meal industry. Some associate it with a sense of adventure and excitement (particularly younger generations), while others see it as unappealing, reminding them of a stray animal (particularly older generations). Despite this, it is important to note that the name elicits some kind of

reaction, which is crucial in a highly competitive market. However, it is essential to ensure that the branding is effectively executed to make the most of the name's potential and minimize any potential risks.

The interviewees offered several suggestions for improving the packaging of backpacking meals. They emphasized the need for clear fill lines, compact and easily storable bags, more environmentally friendly packaging, and a visually appealing presentation.

Revenue Models

Assumptions

- There is a market for higher quality, customizable AdventurePacks at an average price point of \$16.
- Adventurers may be incentivized to sign up for an AdventurePack subscription plan if it provides a discount on meals.
- Customers may be willing to pay a premium for meal kits with personalization options compared to standard meal kits.

Interview Participants

Survey of 15 Backpacking Food Customers Conducted via Google Forms

Questions

- 1) **How do you feel about the idea of customizing your backpacking meals by adding proteins, toppings, or condiments for an additional fee or reducing the price by subtracting ingredients?**
 - a) This question evaluates customer interest in a dynamic pricing model for meal customization.

- 2) **What is your average spending on freeze-dried backpacking food? Would you be willing to pay \$16 for a meal kit that includes a main dish, side dish, and dessert?**
 - a) This question aims to gather information on customer spending habits and their willingness to pay for a higher quality, customizable meal kit.
- 3) **Would you be interested in signing up for a subscription plan to receive discounted meal kits on a regular basis?**
 - a) This question evaluates customer interest in a subscription service for meal kits.
- 4) **How much do you typically spend on food during a backpacking trip?**
 - a) This question aims to gather information on customer spending habits during backpacking trips.
- 5) **Would you be willing to pay \$16 for a backpacking meal kit that includes a main dish, side dish, and dessert? Please explain your reasoning.**
 - a) This question aims to gather more information on customers' willingness to pay for a higher quality, customizable meal kit.
- 6) **Would you be willing to pay an additional \$2-3 for the option to select your preferred choice of protein in your meal kit? Please explain your reasoning.**
 - a) This question evaluates customers' willingness to pay more for meal customization options.

Interviewee Quotes

Question 1

- “I would love that.”
- “I like the concept, but I wouldn’t want to order the food beforehand. I like to go to the store and purchase the options there not online.”

- “I like the simplicity of boiling water and dumping into a bag... no addition/subtraction needed.”
- “I like that, it would make the product more appealing.”
- “I’m not that picky.”
- “That would be pretty cool.”
- “I personally would probably just use the original meal, but if sounds like a good option for people with dietary restrictions, since a lot of backpacking food has meat/dairy/allergens.”
- “I like the idea of dynamic pricing and would be willing to pay more for specific options.”

Question 2

- “\$7-\$10? and it would depend on what is included into the kit”
- “10-14 dollars is kind of my average. I would be willing to spend 16 if it has an insane amount of calories like close to 2k”
- “Probably not \$16. Most likely anything under \$11.”
- “\$8-12, I would spend 16.”
- “8-10. For 16 I would expect two meals.”
- “Yeah, but maybe only bring one with me at a time. Like a special treat one night.”
- “About \$10, and it depends how big the meal is.”
- “The freeze-dried meal kits I currently buy run from \$10 to \$13. If the quantity or taste was better than what I currently purchase, I would spend \$16 for a freeze-dried meal kit.”

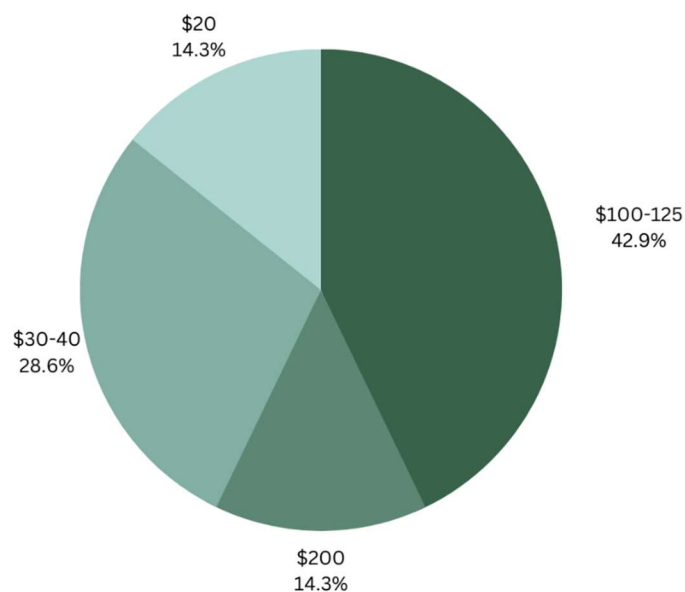
Question 3

- “Yes”

- “Yes”
- “If I go camping/ hiking more than yes”
- “No. I don’t always use freeze dried food for backpacking.”
- “Maybe if I could do like a 2 pack every month for \$30 or something like that.”
- “No”
- “I’m not sure if I use freeze-dried meal kits enough to sign up for a subscription. Perhaps I would consider it seasonally when I would use them more.”

Question 4

Figure 3



Question 5

- "Sure! Sounds like a good deal."
- "Yes, I live in Seattle and thats about the same cost for a meal here."
- "probably not, still feels a bit pricey."

- "Yes, for convenience!"
- "Yes! Convenience and because I would not have to prep anything."
- "Yes, I typically grab snacks that raise the price of the meal included. Trading that for a pre-made kit would save energy and space."

Question 6

- "Nope."
- "it depends on the size because If i got more then definitely."
- "I would pay more, only if it meant that I got more protein."
- "No, protein should not cost more."
- "Most likely I would just choose a packaged meal that has a protein I would like."
- "No, that's too expensive."
- "Absolutely, more customization would be really nice."

Findings

Based on customer feedback, while the concept of dynamic pricing was generally well-received, customers prioritized convenience and simplicity. Therefore, I am reconsidering the in-store tablet idea and exploring the possibility of a self-service meal kit dispenser similar to grocery store coffee dispensers. Additionally, it appears that most customers expect to pay less than \$16 per meal kit, so we will need to keep the average price around \$12-13 to appeal to the majority of freeze-dried meal kit users. Many customers found an AdventurePack Subscription appealing, largely due to the accompanying discount. However, it will be important to structure the subscription service in a way that incentivizes customers to stay subscribed for a longer period of time rather than simply taking advantage of the initial discount.

Key Partners

Assumptions

- Feral Foods can establish a partnership with Oregon Freeze Dry
- Oregon Freeze Dry's services will provide a cost-benefit for Feral Foods
- The collaboration with Oregon Freeze Dry will not compromise the quality of AdventurePacks
- Bohemia Food Hub has kitchen availability and is interested in collaborating with Feral Foods
- Bohemia Food Hub has the necessary equipment to produce AdventurePacks on a large scale
- The setup and variable costs associated with collaborating with Bohemia Food Hub are justifiable
- Focusing on supplying inventory to smaller retailers will be a more feasible approach for Feral Foods in its initial stages

Interview Participants

- REI
- Eugene Backcountry Gear
- Oregon Freeze Dry
- Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen

Questions

Oregon Freeze Dry

1) Can you describe your current operations and production process?

- a) This question aims to gather more information about their operations and production process in order to identify areas where Feral Foods can integrate or collaborate with their partner more effectively.

2) What is your lead time for processing freeze-dried food orders?

- a) This question will help Feral Foods to understand how long it takes for the partner to process freeze-dried food orders, which can impact production timelines and inventory management.

3) Can you provide details on your pricing structure for similar products?

- a) This question aims to gather more information about the partner's pricing structure for similar products in order to help Feral Foods make informed decisions regarding pricing strategies and competitive pricing.

4) What are your expectations for a successful partnership with Feral Foods?

- a) This question will help Feral Foods to understand the partner's goals and expectations for a successful partnership, which can guide Feral Foods' approach to collaboration and communication.

Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen

1) How does your pricing work? Will pricing be the same whether cooking or packaging?

- a) This question will give Feral Foods an understanding of the kitchen's pricing model.

2) How frequently is the kitchen currently available?

- a) This question will evaluate if the kitchen can operate at Feral Foods' timetable.

3) What equipment does the kitchen have? (tour of the kitchen)

- a) Touring the kitchen will give Feral Foods an understanding if the equipment available will allow them to meet the necessary scale of demand.

4) What are your visions for the kitchen?

- a) This question will give Feral Foods an understanding if the kitchen will continue to operate down the road in a way that is cohesive to their vision.

5) What are the next steps for Feral Foods to join the kitchen?

- a) This question will evaluate the set-up costs and logistics for Feral Foods to join the kitchen.

REI & Backcountry Gear

1) Can you explain the process for applying to sell our AdventurePacks in your store?

- a) This question helps Feral Foods understand the requirements and steps necessary to sell our product in the retailer's store.

2) Could you provide some details about your typical wholesale order for backpacking food?

- a) This question helps Feral Foods understand the quantity and frequency of orders placed by the retailer, as well as any specific requirements for packaging or shipping.

3) What qualities do you look for in a good candidate for selling products in your store?

- a) This question helps Feral Foods understand the retailer's criteria for selecting products and brands to sell in their store, which can inform our sales and marketing strategies.

Interviewee Quotes

Oregon Freeze Dry

Various email attempts to Oregon Freeze Dry were left unanswered.

Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen

Question 1

- “Since packaging requires less equipment and kitchen space we will charge \$7-\$8 dollars per hour for packaging and \$15 per hour for cooking. Each rack of freezer space is \$15 a month, but since right now it is not being used we can negotiate.”

Question 2

- “Currently we have more than enough availability for you to come in and do the things you need to everyday.”

Question 3

During my tour of the facility, I found that it had all the commercial-grade cooking supplies that Feral Foods would need to meet our production requirements. The owner showed me one particular piece of equipment that she explained was worth over \$60,000. I was impressed by her extensive experience in the food industry, especially her success in creating her own packaged sushi burrito business that was adopted by Whole Foods stores nationwide.

Question 4

- “I plan on eventually expanding the space to have more kitchen space and on the front end of the building open three restaurants that can even partner with the food ventures in the incubator.”

REI & Backcountry Gear

Question 1

- “At REI we have created the Greenlight program to help business owners sell new products at our stores. There is an online application on the Greenlight website where you must submit a 3-minute long video. For founders of color we also have what is called the Path Ahead program where we help POC ventures kick-start through training, funding, and things of that sort.”

- “Generally, there are sales reps that will contact myself, or they will contact us via the contact email address on our website to get the buyer’s information. Then they would usually send me an email detailing the product that they are representing and why it would be a good fit for our store. If I feel like the product is something that would sell well to our customer base, then I will ask for more information such as; getting wholesale/retail pricing, determining margins/profitability, checking for any potential supply chain issues with the brand/product, and if there are any minimum order requirements.”

Question 2

- “Typically wholesalers provide us with a variable quantity (depends on the product) usually at a 50% retail value and we sell the product at market (retail) price. We also do Outlet sales which are for closeout, overstocks, special buys, and seconds”
 - **Closeouts:** discontinued colors/styles/sizes
 - **Overstocks:** Over-purchased REI brand products
 - **Special Buys:** items made specifically for an REI vendor or items REI obtained from a vendor at a discount
 - **Seconds:** Items offered at a discount due to minor imperfections or refurbished conditions
- “Most of the dehydrated food brands that we carry sell their meals by case quantity of 6’s. So when we place restock orders, we always order in quantities of 6’s. 6 meals equals 1 case. Some brands have a minimum dollar amount that you have to purchase, and some don’t. We tend to place larger orders (typically between \$750-\$3,000 for each purchase order, depending on the brand) during the months of May through September,

which is when we sell the most volume. We sell the majority of our dehydrated food through our online store, and during the May – September months we sell a total of about \$30,000 retail/\$18,000 wholesale.”

Question 3

- “We seek local brands that are innovative, sustainable, and strive to take action. If you look at the greenlight website, there are some featured brands that we are proud to say got the greenlight- check them out to learn more and gain some inspiration. REI has 154 stores across 36 states, we are pretty big! When vendors come in through us they must anticipate the need for a big increase in volume. While this is a great thing, REI may penalize you for delays in shipping and production so being prepared to increase manufacturing and production is important. There are 6 key steps towards getting a product place at REI being:
 - Start with the right questions
 - Be prepared for profit
 - Determine if REI is the right store for your product
 - Pitch to REI
 - Complete the REI paperwork
 - Anticipate a need for increased volume”
- “I would say that profit margin is the most important aspect for us when considering bringing in a new brand. If a product doesn’t have a 40% margin, then it’s typically not profitable enough for us when we choose to put the item on sale. We have to make enough on the product in order to keep reordering and make a profit from the products. Another important piece of determining if we want to bring in a brand or item, is product

availability. We need to know that the company will be able to fulfill our orders without production delays or long backorder timeframes.”

Findings

Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen

Feral Foods found Bohemia Food Hub Incubator Kitchen to be a highly advantageous partner, particularly in the early stages. The kitchen boasts equipment valued at over \$50,000 and would allow Feral Foods to scale significantly without incurring high fixed costs. Notably, the kitchen has a 5-foot-tall industrial soup boiler and a large freezer with ample availability. Pricing for kitchen use would be \$15 per hour for cooking and \$8 per hour for packaging. The kitchen is open every day, which is necessary to avoid potential loss of sales. Additionally, the owner indicated that they do not plan to take on many more clients in the future. To join the commercial kitchen, Feral Foods would incur setup costs of \$350 for a food inspector to assess operations and \$650 for bodily injury liability insurance, covering up to \$1 million in damages.

REI & Backcountry Gear

During the REI & Backcountry buyer interviews, Feral Foods obtained crucial insights regarding scaling, expected profit margins, and order specifications. It was discovered that the average retail backpacking food order typically comes in a case of 6 meals. For smaller businesses, the average cost of a typical order for a few cases is approximately \$750-\$3,000, depending on restocking requirements. In comparison, larger companies such as REI typically purchase large orders at around 50% market value, with varied quantities. Retailers such as Backcountry Gear have highlighted the importance of a 40% margin for profitability. Feral Foods is best suited to

work with smaller retailers such as Backcountry Gear to build a solid foundation and manufacturing plan before scaling to larger markets. It is important to note that REI requires vendors to be ready and able for large shifts in production and manufacturing due to the high volume of orders they receive.

Key Activities, Key Resources, Cost Structure

A majority of the research conducted for these three modules of the business model canvas entailed online research rather than in-person or phone interviews. Therefore, this section will be structured slightly differently. For example, some of the informat

Assumptions

- Oregon Freeze Dry is willing to work with us and is the best option available.
- Oregon Freeze Dry will offer services at a cost that is ultimately beneficial for Feral Foods.
- Collaborating with Oregon Freeze Dry will not lead to a deterioration in quality of AdventurePacks.
- Bohemia Food Hub has availability in their kitchen and is willing to work with Feral Foods.
- Bohemia Food Hub has the necessary equipment to create AdventurePacks at a substantial scale.
- Set-up and variable costs are minimal enough for Bohemia Food Hub to be worth collaborating with.

Variable costs per meal kit are minimal enough to make good profit margins off selling meal kits for a relatively typical price.

Interview Participants & Researched Companies

- Oregon Freeze Dry
- Kim Johnson at Bohemia Food Hub
- KEMOLO
- Macklocks
- R+L CARRIERS

General Questions

1) How much do the ingredients cost per AdventurePack?

- a) This will give Feral Foods an idea of how the variable costs will fluctuate depending on the AdventurePack.

2) How much does it cost to cook per-hour at Bohemia Food Hub and how much does it cost to package per hour?

- a) This question will evaluate how much Feral Foods needs to make per batch to minimize kitchen rental per unit variable cost.

3) Will Bohemia Food Hub's equipment allow Feral Foods to make 50 kg batches in each run?

- a) This will help Feral Foods find the bottleneck in their operation.

4) How much would it cost to transfer food in a freezer trailer from Bohemia Food Club to Oregon Freeze Dry?

- a) This question seeks to determine whether the transportation costs are feasible.

5) How much does it cost to purchase Feral Foods' own freeze dryer?

- a) This evaluates how expensive Feral Foods' fixed costs would be if they freeze-dried in-house.

6) How expensive is it to install Feral Foods' kiosks into retail stores?

- a) This will give Feral Foods an idea of the set-up costs when onboarding a new retail client.

7) How expensive is it to integrate a customizable AdventurePack interface into retailers' websites?

- a) Similar to question 3, this question will evaluate how much the set-up costs are when onboarding a new retail client.

Interviewee Quotes & Website Information

Question 1

The per unit ingredient cost per AdventurePack was calculated by finding the cheapest option of each ingredient in supermarkets in the local Eugene area using both Google and Instacart, then multiplying the price per fluid ounce by the number of ounces used in each recipe and dividing by the number of servings, resulting in a per unit ingredient chart for the Chili Adventure Pack, the Curry AdventurePack, and the Burrito Bowl AdventurePack.

Figure 4

Chili AdventurePack Ingredients	Price Per AdventurePack
Olive Oil	\$ 0.05
Yellow Onion	\$ 0.08
Garlic Cloves	\$ 0.05
Kidney Beans	\$ 0.18
Black Beans	\$ 0.15
Diced Tomatoes	\$ 0.08
Tomatoe Paste	\$ 0.09
Water	\$ -
Chili Powder	\$ 0.05
Ground Cumin	\$ 0.02
Cayenne Pepper	\$ 0.00
Garlic Powder	\$ 0.01
Onion Powder	\$ 0.00
Brown Sugar	\$ 0.01
Salt	\$ 0.01
Black Pepper	\$ 0.01
Total	\$ 0.79
+Add-Ons	
Ground Beef	\$ 0.79
Ground Turkey	\$ 1.00

Figure 5

Curry AdventurePack Ingredients	Price Per AdventurePack
Olive Oil	\$ 0.05
Yellow Onion	\$ 0.08
Garlic Cloves	\$ 0.07
Fresh Ground Ginger	\$ 0.01
Ground Coriander	\$ 0.04
Coconut Milk	\$ 0.47
Shredded Carrots	\$ 0.26
Red Thai Curry Paste	\$ 0.14
Kosher Salt	\$ 0.01
Freshly Ground Black Pepper	\$ 0.01
Lime Juice	\$ 0.01
Total	\$ 1.16
+Add-Ons	
Diced Chicken	\$ 0.33
Pork	\$ 0.20
Tofu	\$ 0.27

Figure 6

Burrito Bowl AdventurePack Ingre Price Per AdventurePack		
Black Beans	\$	0.15
Cumin	\$	0.02
Chili Powder	\$	0.05
Garlic Powder	\$	0.01
Onion Powder	\$	0.01
Cayenne Pepper powder	\$	0.01
Rice	\$	0.64
Heredez Verde Salsa	\$	0.13
Total	\$	1.01
+Add-Ons		
Shredded Chicken	\$	0.33
Shredded Pork	\$	0.20

Question 2

Katherine from the Bohemia Food Hub incubator kitchen said, “We charge \$15 per hour for cooking and \$7 to \$8 per hour for packaging because it requires less space.”

Question 3

Katherine from the Bohemia Food Hub incubator kitchen said, “The soup boiler has a capacity of whatever you can fit in it. I have definitely put about 75 kilograms of soup in it before. Currently no one is using our freezer is using our freezer space so there is a lot of room and I am willing to negotiate a price within your budget.”

Question 4

R+L CARRIERS quoted that one shipment of 1000 pounds worth of AdventurePacks from Bohemia Food Hub to Oregon Freeze Dry would cost a minimum of \$388 one-way.

Question 5

KEEMOLO answered over the phone, ““We typically work with business that have a budget of at least \$30,000.” They also mentioned, ““Our smallest freeze-dryer we offer has a capacity of

50 kg before the freeze-drying process removes the water weight. We also install a rail system into the freeze dryer to allow for easy access of the food.”

Question 6

The Macklocks website offers a heavy-duty, brandable, universal tablet mount priced at \$384. Affordable tablets are also available on the market for around \$130, based on online pricing.

Question 7

To estimate the cost of integrating the ability to customize AdventurePack into retailers' websites, we researched freelance website development costs on Fiverr. Based on the prices listed on the Fiverr website, it is roughly estimated that integrating the AdventurePack interface into retailers' websites would cost at most \$300.

Findings

AdventurePack Ingredients

I was surprised by the high cost of ground turkey and beef. This has led me to consider alternative options, such as grinding the meat ourselves or finding a contracted supplier, to potentially reduce this cost. I will take into account the relative per unit cost when pricing the AdventurePack.

Bohemia Food Hub

Taking into account the cost of Bohemia Food Hub's kitchen rental at \$15 per hour, cooking 110 pounds of food (about 50 kg) in 3 hours would result in a cost of only 40.9 cents per unit.

Bohemia Food Hub is an ideal starting point for Feral Foods due to its affordability and high availability.

Concerns with Outsourcing Freeze-Drying to Oregon Freeze Dry

There are significant concerns regarding the cost implications, logistics, and food quality associated with outsourcing freeze-drying to Oregon Freeze Dry. AdventurePack's superior quality is one of Feral Food's key value propositions, and using Oregon Freeze Dry as an outsourced freeze-dryer could result in reduced control over product quality and potentially higher variable costs. Additionally, transportation to and from Oregon Freeze Dry could significantly complicate Feral Foods operations.

Implications of freeze drying in-house

With the high transportation costs associated with outsourcing freeze-drying, in-house freeze drying seems like an appealing option. KEEMOLO offers a base model freeze dryer with a capacity of 50 kg (about 110 pounds) and is willing to work with start-ups with a budget of at least \$30,000. This provides Feral Foods with the opportunity to have full control over operations and reduce variable costs with a relatively low budget.

Integrating AdventurePacks into Retailers' Framework

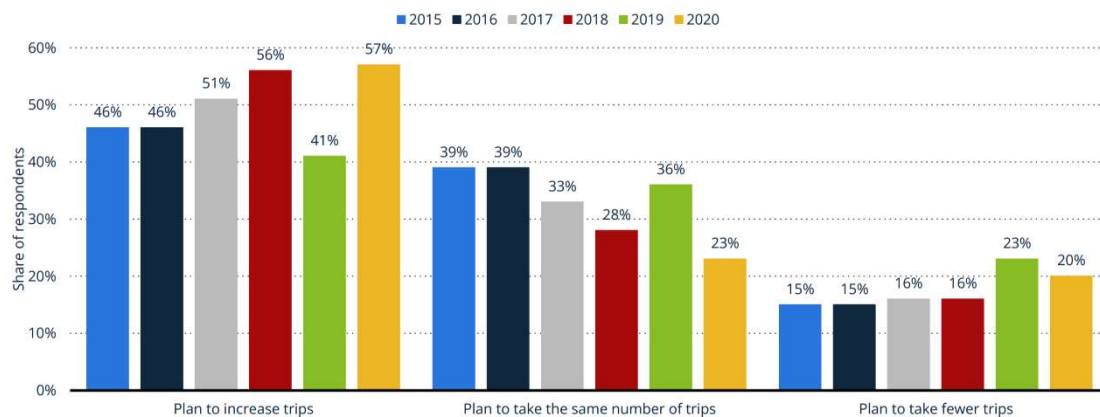
The expected cost of integrating customizable AdventurePacks into small retail stores is relatively low, estimated at \$644 for both online and in-store integration. However, the costs may vary depending on the expectations and current development team of each retailer. Overall, with the low cost and potential for increased sales, this integration could be a promising opportunity for both Feral Foods and small retail stores.

Appendix B

Figure 1

Frequency distribution of camping trips planned by North Americans from 2015 to 2020

Frequency of camping trips planned by North Americans 2015-2020



Description: This statistic shows the frequency distribution of camping trips planned by North Americans from 2015 to 2020. In 2020, 57 percent of the respondents surveyed stated that they planned to increase camping trips. [Read more](#)

Notes: Canada, United States; 2015 to 2020; 3,936 (total; 19 years and older); Respondent base: United States: 2,436; Canada: 1,500.

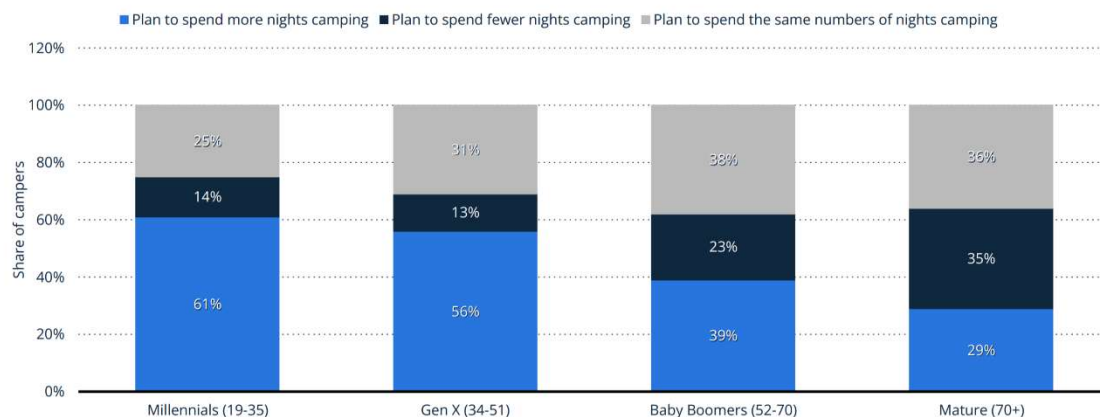
Source: Cairn Consulting; KOA.

statista

Figure 2

Frequency distribution of camping trips planned for 2018 in North America, by generation

Camping frequency of planned camping trips among North Americans 2018, by generation



Description: This statistic shows the frequency distribution of camping trips planned for 2018 in North America, by generation. During the survey, 61 percent of Millennials stated that they plan to spend more nights camping in 2018. [Read more](#)

Notes: Canada, United States; 2018; 19 years and older; Respondent base: United States: 2,400; Canada: 500.

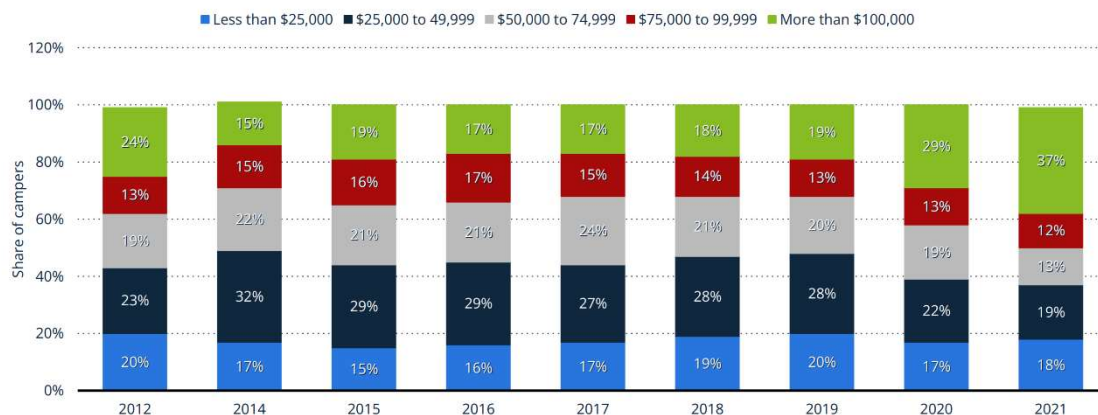
Source: Cairn Consulting; KOA.

statista

Figure 3

Income distribution of campers in North America from 2012 to 2021

Income distribution of campers in North America 2012-2021



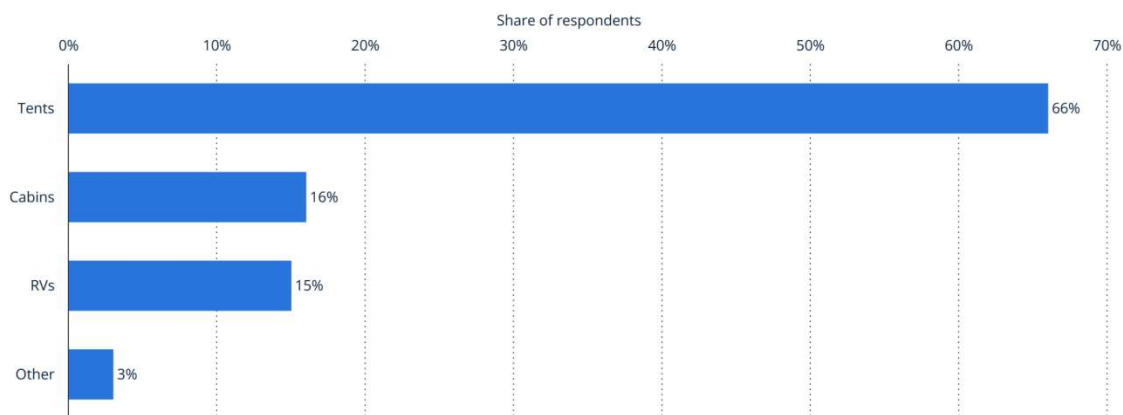
¹² **Description:** The share of North American camping households reporting an income of greater than 100,000 U.S. dollars annually increased significantly in 2021 over the previous year. Among the total number of camping participants, 37 percent had an annual household income of greater than 100,000 U.S. dollars in that year. Campers with annual household earnings between 50,000 and 74,999 U.S. dollars constituted a smaller share of the total number of campers in the region in 2021 compared to 2012. [Read more](#)
Note: Canada, United States; 2012 to 2021; Respondent base: United States: 2,945; Canada: 1,200.
Sources: Cairn Consulting; KOA

statista

Figure 4

Most popular camping accommodation types in North America in 2021

Most popular camping accommodation types in North America 2021



⁵ **Description:** In 2021, the majority of campers in North America identified tents as the ideal accommodation type for their recreational activity. Specifically, 66 percent of survey respondents said that their primary accommodation while camping was a tent. By contrast, only 15 percent preferred RVs over tents. [Read more](#)
Note: Canada, United States; 2021; Respondent base: United States: 2,945; Canada: 1,200.
Sources: Cairn Consulting; KOA

statista

Figure 5

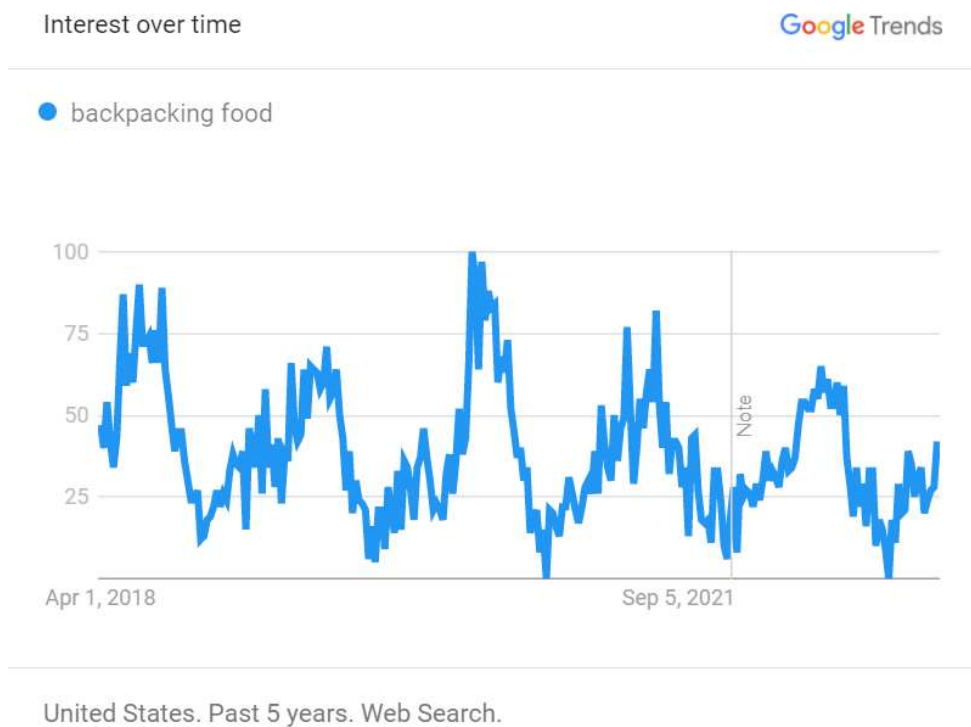


Figure 6



Appendix C

Figure 1

For what purpose or activities do you purchase the freeze-dried food for? (Select all that apply)

27 responses

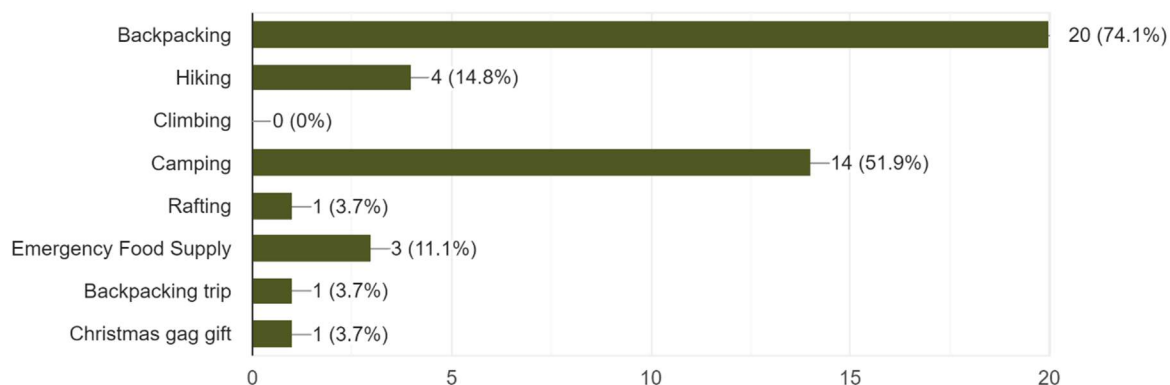


Figure 2

Why do you use freeze-dried food?

26 responses

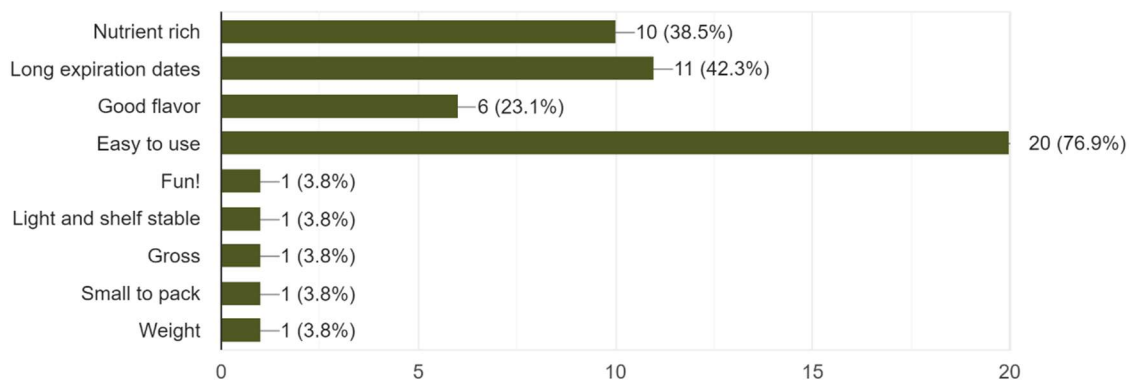
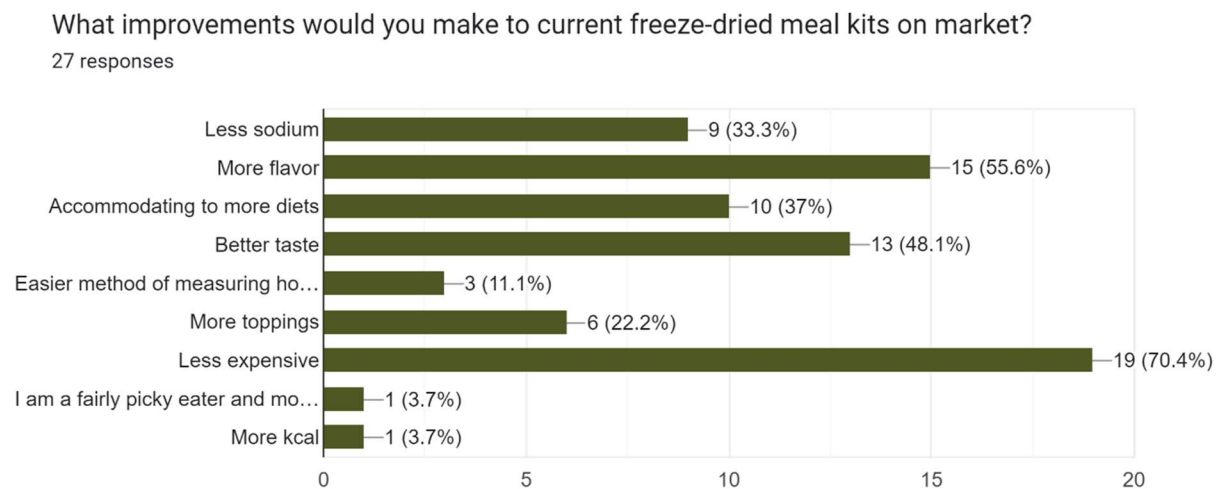


Figure 3



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