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**SPEAKERS**

Participant 214, Interviewer, Interviewer 2

**Interviewer 2** 00:00

All right. All right. So thanks for your permission to record today the recordings now on. So your participation is voluntary. And you can choose me at any time not to answer any of the questions or even withdraw from the research at any time will keep the recording confidential within our team, research team. And we won't use or share your name or any other identifying information in any of the research results. However, please be mindful in the space where you are, that there might be somebody in the room nearby able to hear your comments so you can protect your own, you know, confidentiality. When we complete the interview, if you should have additional questions or thoughts or comments, otherwise, you have Chris's email, she'll be your primary point of contact, please feel free to reach out to her. So your consent is demonstrated by your continued participation in the interview. Do you have any questions? Amy, before we move forward?

**Participant 214** 01:07

I do not I'm I'm all good with this. I'm I'm excited.

**Interviewer 2** 01:13

Great, great. Great. Well, I'm about to ask you the hardest question, I'm going to ask you this whole interview. Okay. How would you describe your role or experience with local food systems? And in particular in Flint as well? Oh, that

**Participant 214** 01:28

is a hard one. How would I describe my role? Well, let's see. Um, to do it in a short way. I would say my, I am a connector. And so I am on several different food systems committees in Flint and Genesee County. And I also find my vocation I work in organics, diversion, and composting. So, my, my role in the food systems in Flint is connector, Leadership Board members, member and processor over bionics and educator of use of soil amendments. Is that good? I mean, is that oh, yeah,

**Interviewer 2** 02:39

absolutely.

**Participant 214** 02:41

And I love food. I'm a lover of food, you grow it and prepare it. How's that?

**Interviewer 2** 02:48

Okay, that's awesome. Awesome. Amy, thank you. Thank you, thank you for that. Um, as I said, we're focusing in on the localized food system as well as the land so we want to go over a few definitions. Are you able to see the screen okay? Yes. Okay, wonderful. So we're going to work on five different sectors focusing on five different sectors in the food system the first is production, the growing of crops and raising of livestock and at any scale whether it's out your backyard, your back door in your yard all the way up to larger you know producers and the Secondly, we couple processing and packaging together. So this sector where things are washed and packed and or turned into value added products like this lovely tomato becomes this amazing salsa over here because we add ingredients to it the third sector with the wholesale and reselling of products so those who take the things that are created those products and goods and then sell about the retailers where sector where the food is actually sold to us in general community. So we're including the grocery stores, the convenience stores, the farm stands, the farmers market, produce boxes, restaurants, catering, all the places where you know food is sold directly to customers. And then the last sector we everything's not edible and nor do we eat everything. So in this way sector we're looking at ways in which waste is managed. So whether it's composting or also as we know food gets rescued and in move to other people as well. Do you have any questions about these or anything to add, you know, to these definitions,

**Participant 214** 04:45

and know if you'd like me to add on the waist and there is an ad facility in Genesee County that serves the city of Flint's To

**Interviewer 2** 05:00

anaerobic digestion, yeah. Um,

**Participant 214** 05:03

it, it does. It does some food residuals as well. Not all coming from the city of Flint. It's, it does handle the biosolids for the city of Flint.

**Interviewer 2** 05:17

Okay. All right. Well, definitely, we'll put that there. Thanks for that. Alrighty, so So based on, you know, the roles that you have, and as you look at these sectors, where do you where do you see yourself having the the most expertise?

**Participant 214** 05:37

Well, probably the waist except I do I do have experience in. in pretty much all all of them. All of them. Okay. Yeah. Maybe not as much as in the retail sector? Oh, no, maybe? Maybe I do. Because I work with? Yeah, probably all of them. Okay. Most experience is in probably production, processing and waste.

**Interviewer 2** 06:08

Okay. All right. Wonderful. That's perfect. That's a great place to start. So what we'll do now is, Chris is going to refresh your memory around the mental modeling process.

**Interviewer** 06:22

Yeah. So um, it'll be the same process as we did in our last interview. But as it's been a year, about a year, since then, we'll just do a quick example. I just want to say from the top that, even though I'll be the one I'm, you know, adding in the concepts and making connections between them, it is very much your map. So, like, go ahead and correct me and say, you know, I wouldn't connect it like that, I wouldn't word something like that. So I'm really trying to map your understanding or expertise. So feel free to jump in and tell me that I did it wrong, because I want to know that information. Okay. Okay. Awesome. So, um, for a quick, you know, refresher example, if we're building out our understanding of the system, and we're trying to understand what impacts traffic, I might draw connection between the number of cars to traffic. And so then I basically have two decisions after I've decided on a connection. The first is if it's positive or negative, which doesn't mean, you know, good or bad, it just means if one goes up, does the other one also go up? Or does it go down. So for cars and traffic, if there's more cars, more traffic, it both go up, it's a positive connection, and we'll end up with a blue arrow. Public transportation might be more of a negative connection, if we had more public transportation or a better public transportation system. And there would be less traffic as more people are, you know, riding a bus, or maybe it's a big city and have like a subway or something that doesn't go on the streets. So we'd have a negative connection, and we will have an orange arrow. So that's positive and negative. And my last decision was how strong the relationship is. So how impactful or influential is one thing on another, so cars to traffic might be a really strong relationship, that if, for some reason, tomorrow, everyone decided to stop driving their cars, we wouldn't really have a traffic problem. So it's pretty influential, whereas public transportation might be more of a medium connection. Because while it can be really influential on how much traffic there is, you know, there's always going to be those those edge cases, right, those people who love driving their car, or maybe they live or work somewhere that it's just really inconvenient to get on public transportation. So you know, more of a medium connection than a strong connection. A weak connection might be something like the number of cyclists. So if we like, had a program to promote people biking to work or something, we could impact traffic, maybe a little bit, but it's not like a solution to the problem. Like, you can't really carry your groceries or like move a couch on a bicycle. So it's not going to be a huge influence on the traffic problem, but still some influence. So any questions on that process?

**Participant 214** 09:13

I don't know. I just remember, I'm very grateful that that part is your part because being very complicated, and I'm glad you understand that.

**Interviewer** 09:26

I love systems. This is the way my brain works. So we'll definitely like really will ask you questions, I'll build out sort of what you tell me and then we'll pause and say, Okay, here's how I've mapped out this dynamic that you talked about. Is that accurate to your understanding? So we'll definitely like have moments where we can check in and double

**Participant 214** 09:45

check stuff. Okay. And then I just have one more question. And all of my answers and all of the conversation is centered around city of only right okay.

**Interviewer** 10:00

Yeah, so we focused on local food. But if there are things that are influential, like, I don't know, like, pretend this is in Flint, specifically, like we're looking at traffic, but it's like, oh, well, this federal policy is really influential on, you know, the fact that we don't have good public transportation, we would want to bring in those concepts.

**Participant 214** 10:20

Right. Okay. Okay. Yeah. And yeah, just to be clear, to, like, you know, my expertise is gonna be in the waste sector, but I, you know, in the producers and, and evaluative processors chain. Yeah, can we get

**Interviewer 2** 10:39

great? Yeah, so all of the, all the sectors, you can see them now, here's where we got them placed on the map. And essentially, Amy, in this conversation, similar to like, before, we'd like to just talk out loud to us about how you would see and draw your involvement between these different, you know, sectors, and even between the sectors themselves, you know, as you know, from your experience, both in plant and other, you know, local systems, how are they connect it, so, okay, you can start anywhere you like, and I know you, like you said, your, a lot of your experiences in composting and production and processing. So just start chatting to us about how you see that, and interest will map as you go.

**Participant 214** 11:28

Okay. I think I'll start with production and producers. The city of Flint has a lot of potential for production, that is not fully used to the maximum of its capabilities, there are a lot of urban gardens and farms within the city of Flint that are underutilized. I'll start by that. So there are producers that are in production in the city of Flint, and much of that produce is staying local within the city of Flint and pretty much right in the general area of its production. Now, that is different in the case where where we are, down in the composter area, or at least where [Business Name] is because we are growing- we are in production of greens in particular salad greens, that are going not only into the city of Flint into the food hub, which is very close to within six miles of of [Business Name]--but it's also going to the Detroit market, too. So the endpoints in different places. So there's, you know, the transport of that is going to be bigger. But within that the composting part of it. We are also doing some work within the city, so it's not that the produce is going to the city of Detroit or points towards the city of Detroit. There's some back and forthness of it. There's some circularity in it, I guess I should say, if that's helpful. Going back to production again, most of the produce that is being produced on the from the urban scale in the city is staying local. Some of those-do you want some of those venues that its going to, or does that matter?

**Interviewer 2** 14:11

Yes, uh huh. Yes, where it's going.

**Participant 214** 14:14

Okay. From the Edible Flint farm in particular, that food-much of it is going local, as in right there on the farm and local residents-people right in that neighborhood-are actually picking it up there. And then also, a significant portion of the food grown on the Edible Flint farm goes to the Hurley food... it's a food pharmacy is what it's called. Hurley food pharmacy. Well, you probably know that right? You guys probably know. Okay, so that food that is produced on the Edible Flint farm is going local, right in the neighborhood, and then a big portion is going to Hurley food pharmacy there, which is just across town. Much of the food that is being produced over on the north east side-within-there are like 15 high tunnels over there, which you probably know of too and that's going within the food systems over towards that way and staying fairly local within that, so there's not a lot of traffic involved in that. I think some of it might be going to the soup kitchen on the north end-to the north end kitchen. So that's staying very close. Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, which is on the Central East Side is accepting some food I think from those producers as well, but not very much of it. But I can talk about that in regards to processing too because the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan does have food processing there. They have kitchens for food processing there as well. I'm not sure where that food is going that is being processed. They used to have a contract with the city of Flint schools and I don't know if that's still in effect because of COVID. I'm not 100% sure what's happening there. But they do process whole foods or produce within those kitchens, if that if that's helpful. Also, the food hub-Flint Fresh Fresh food hub is processing there as well. Do you want me to tell you where those are, or do you know where those are? Okay, that's also-the food hub is on theCentral East Side as as well, and we take some of our greens from [Business Name] does go there too, and they are processing and then they do a food distribution through the food boxes that they get out into the city as well. They do processing there and I know that they have contracts with various entities and I don't think it's the school but I'm not 100% sure. There could be some small institutions within the city of Flint, but I think for the most part everything from the food hub is staying local within Flint. As far as the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, that is a very big space or coverage area, I think from the tip of of the Lower Peninsula on the east side down to the Flint area. So that's a very big space or big geographic area that they cover. Where am I? Should I move to a different...?

**Interviewer 2** 18:57

No, just keep just keep talking. Just keep talking. Okay.

**Participant 214** 19:03

Alright. I'm not going to look at these lines because that makes me think, oh my gosh. Pardon me?

**Interviewer 2** 19:13

That's your beautiful brain.

**Participant 214** 19:14

Oh well thank you. So then as far as production goes too, I think there was something about food-wash pack stations and all of that kind of stuff. I mean, I know that for us being [Business Name] as a producer, we have the ability to do wash pack at our site and because all of the produce that is being grown in our high tunnel-inn our aquaponics system is going off site-it will be good to get a real farmer in there that is able to do all of that stuff properly. And I guess I should mention that our facility [Business Name] composting and aquaponics is not within the city of Flint. It is in Burton, but it is, you know, right across the street from us, is the city of Flint at that top line. So when you're referring to production, when we meet you up here at the top, just like on one side, you talk Edible Flint. On this left side is actually all [Business Name] is what you're discussing over there. Yeah, and in that case, I'm talking about production, food production. But just making sure that because it is both sides of things, but also the fact that the facility is not located in the city of Flint, but just across the street from the city of Flint.

**Interviewer 2** 21:04

Right. Sounds great. Thank you.

**Participant 214** 21:12

So going back to the wash pack stations. You know, I know that Edible Flint has their own-they have everything that is clean and new and bright. And they have the processing of food down there, and the same with the food bank with Central Eastern Michigan, anything that comes into there from the farm is processed-either has been processed on the farm as far as wash pack stations, and then they're taking it to the next step in those kitchens there. As far as what's going out in those, I think I covered that, as far as how it goes out in food boxes from Flint Fresh with those food boxes, and then also the contractual-contracts that they have, that it goes out through as well. As far as going into retail situations, that part I do not know, other than-I know some of the food grown in Flint does go to a couple of retail operations one being the local grocer, which is a store there in Flint downtown, and they do processing of-I should say preparation-food prep-they have a fresh food area, and you can pick up to-go foods there, too. I know that they also accept food to sell as they're wholesale buying and then retail selling...

**Interviewer 2** 23:24

Mhmm. And they're doing the value added processing. Yeah, taking things and making product out of it. Right. So we've got a value added process there.

**Participant 214** 23:36

Yes, they are. Yeah. I'm trying to think of who else is a value added processor. I I know out here there's some that does make it's way to the city too but I think just trying to keep focused on the city of Flint, because there are now-three that I'm aware of, I guess you call ready made meals-but those are not in the city of Flint, but some of the food is making its way to the city of Flint if that's helpful, and then some of the produce is making its way out to those but that's outside.

**Interviewer 2** 24:34

Let's-yeah, let's, I think [Interviewer] has got a map here, some of the food is, you know, selling produce outside of Flint, so hopefully that captures that. But then you said some of the food that's being both prepared is also making its way back to Flint making its way back to Flint, where?

**Participant 214** 24:55

It is, as far as residents that are buying the food.

**Interviewer 2** 25:00

Okay, okay residents in stores.

**Participant 214** 25:03

Yes. So they're buying, for instance, ready-already prepared meals. There's a company called Fuel Up Fresh here that actually has-that's in Fenton-I guess what I'm saying is some of the products that they use are coming out of production-being grown in Flint, but it's a small amount. But then some Flint residents are buying that food. If they work out here, and they're buying ready made food, and it's going back to their homes, and that's probably a fairly small number, but it is part of the system, though, too.

**Interviewer 2** 25:53

Okay. All right. Directly to the residents. Okay.

**Participant 214** 25:57

Directly to the residents, or, I don't know,citizens, I don't know what the word is.

**Interviewer 2** 26:05

That they have customers.

**Participant 214** 26:06

Okay, customers that are going to-

**Interviewer 2** 26:08

Customers in Flint. Yeah. Customers in Flint. Okay.

**Participant 214** 26:13

Correct. And that is the same, there's two other ones that I'm aware of that are very similar. They prepare food, and so it's ready made meals, and then you just buy them and take them home and then eat them. So that's happening through a bit throughout the county. But again, a portion of that is making its way back to city residents too. Jumping to let's see... I'm trying to think of where to move to. Residents, I'm sorry, restaurants... Restaurants, there is some purchasing of local foods into restaurants now, and some of that is going just outside of the city of Flint into I know Grafted Root, which is in Grand Blanc, is buying as much produce as they can, from for instance, the Flint Food Hub. So they're going out to a restaurant, there, going into what the restaurant would serve, and that is just outside of Flint, in Grand Blanc. And I know that Flint Fresh does have several restaurants that they sell to that buy local-as locally grown as as they can, and they use that within their offerings at the restaurant.

**Interviewer 2** 28:09

And those are restaurants, both in Flint and outside of Flint, is what you're saying.

**Participant 214** 28:15

Yes, I would say yes, because I know Cork on Saginaw buys local, when they can as well, andthey're buying some-she's buying some I think from the Flint Fresh Food Hub, as well. I have to say I don't think there's a lot of it going out that way. But there is-that is part of this system. And it could be improved, I'm sure. But it is part of-AND it is part of the system, I guess I should say not, but. It is part of the system that I'm sure that we would really like to develop, because I think that's really particularly important. And I think that the food hub, Flint Fresh Food Hub, does have that potential for sure to supply more food. But of course it needs to be grown, and at the very beginning I had said you know, we're under utilizing our ability to grow. We have high tunnels in the city that are not growing anything, a couple are blighted as well. So we have more potential, I guess I should say. There are a couple fairly new gardens in the city of Flint that are becoming more known and that food is staying, I believe they have food boxes for sale or they're a CSA I guess I should say, and so they have customers within the city of Flint, and those are farms in the city of Flint that are [inaudible]. Okay. And I would say some that food its way to [inaudible] also. Going back to waste or management of spoils, some in the city of Flint are coming out to us in the form of... Like Flint Fresh, we collect from Flint Fresh. So that's coming out to [Business Name]. And then I know that... I'm trying to think of what other restaurants we have in Flint; we've got some out here that the food from restaurants, the food scraps are going back to our composting facility, along with cardboard, as well, but I don't know if you want to map that because it's out here.

**Interviewer 2** 31:34

Yeah, I think with this map, we know that the compost-because you're making reference to a number of things that are coming in and out. Like, you know, the restaurants or some outside of Flint, but the food is coming in, and those operations are external to Flint, but serving Flint, you know.

**Participant 214** 31:55

And then, for instance, at the Flint Farmers Market, some of the vendors have an agreement with Iris waste diversion specialists, so their scraps, and in particular the kitchen-the incubator kitchens there at the farmers market-and three of the vendors, I think, have an agreement-and their food scraps are collected and picked up by Iris, and so that's going outside of the city, but it is being managed in the a worm farm-vermacomposting operation.

**Interviewer 2** 32:47

And we could make the distinction there, [Interviewer], that it's going-because we're missing the-Iris is like the hauler, the organization that does the hauling-to the compost operation. You know, between the two is the hauling. Yes, and then adding to that, that processor of the food scraps is outside of the city, it's outside of the county, too.

**Interviewer** 33:17

If you were to-what would be your best estimate of how much composting is happening inside of Flint versus outside of Flint?

**Participant 214** 33:27

And are we only talking food?

**Interviewer** 33:33

Let's say agricultural food, but also could be agricultural composting. So like maybe not cardboard and other things that can be composted. So like food systems specifically related, but it could be at different scales as well.

**Interviewer 2** 33:51

Like from the farms, [Participant 214], you know how we find-when you pick up the farm waste on the farm-the place things are being grown, as well, or once food once it hits the system.

**Participant 214** 34:03

Yes, well any farms residue cannot go out through-is not legally able to go out-to the landfill. So anyone who is farming or gardening within the city or within anywhere in Michigan, those materials have to be diverted to to a processor, a composter. I don't know how much is happening on farm in those places. I know that at for instance at Edible Flint, some of the residuals there are staying on farm-at this moment, pretty much everything is staying on farm there. Although they have a difficult time managing that because we're just not set up for it. And you know, that's a fairly significant farm in the city. And the same with the farm, and I, for some reason the name is escaping me. The farms that are associated with the church over on the east side, Asbury, geez, how can I forget that, I mean, I didn't forget about them, I forgot the name. I think Asbury is keeping everything on site there, too. I don't think they're managing it, but I think that their residuals are staying on site there. And so, [Interviewer] your question to me was, how much is going out to be processed, right?

**Interviewer** 35:52

Yeah. So how much is... of things that are composted, how much of it is taken away from Flint and processed, and how much of it is processed in Flint, I guess?

**Participant 214** 36:04

Well, anything going out of Flint would be coming-as far as a yard residuals, which would include garden and garden residuals- unless it's staying on the farm-it would be coming to us, because Priority brings their-Priority Waste, which has the contract with Flint-we're processing their organic residuals. Gotcha.

**Interviewer 2** 36:33

So what if you think of it like this, [Participant 214],would you say that more is going outside of Flint than is staying inside of Flint, or is more of it being composted in Flint versus outside of Flint?

**Participant 214** 36:47

Well, if you count us outside of Flint, I mean, we are outside of Flint. Yes. By across the street, most of it is outside.

**Interviewer 2** 36:58

Okay. All right. So the majority of us going outside as opposed to inside Flint.

**Participant 214** 37:03

Okay, unless they're managed on their farm.

**Interviewer 2** 37:07

So you mentioned a couple of things about capacity to manage. You made reference to the fact that that while Edible Flint and Asbury have the capacity to compost, you said that they're having difficulty managing that capacity. So what are the variables? What are the things that are impacting their ability to actually manage compost operations?

**Participant 214** 37:37

People capacity and for instance, [Interviewer 2], you'll know this. [Name] and myself did an education on farm, composting in October on the Edible Flint farm, and we set up their on farm composting there. The challenge there as the same with Asbury is that people capacity to actually do it. That they have the knowledge and to be able to spend the time doing that. That's definitely a barrier, and the same at Asbury, it's two big farms. And then I would definitely surmise though that on the smaller scale of things,I'll say spoilage and I would say on the urban farms that are producing in the city for outside use, most of that is probably-the spoilage is probably staying on farm. But as far as once they pull those garden residuals in the fall, those are probably going into the yard waste and going out outside of the city.

**Interviewer 2** 39:10

Okay, so. So you're saying-let's break that down. So the residuals you said are-so basically these are the things that are spoiled, don't get harvest on the farm itself. You're saying that they stay there and then they get moved out with the composted-with the materials that are moving outside of Flint?

**Participant 214** 39:32

I would say that the spoilage you know, during the season is probably staying on, and they're probably managing that.

**Interviewer 2** 39:42

Okay, gotcha. So it's a part of it.

**Participant 214** 39:45

Like tomatoes or summer squash or whatever it is that is spoiled on the farm, is probably staying on. But then once the season is over and those garden are cleaned up, and then much of the spring stuff too, is probably taken off site.

**Interviewer 2** 40:08

Okay, okay. And that's basically the garden prep. Okay, so [Interviewer], [Participant 214]'s breaking that down a little bit that any of the food that doesn't get harvest is definitely staying on the farm and they're composting it, versus the actual agricultural waste in terms of those plants and stuff like that are going out at the end of the season. Okay, that's helpful.

**Participant 214** 40:50

And I would say, [inaudible] on Franklin, and [Name]'s farm, which I can't remember the name of it, you probably know the name of it, it doesn't matter-but that is in the city of Flint, too. I think that they are managing it, it's staying on farm, so pretty much everything on their farm is staying on farm. It's not managed properly, or too you know, but they're using it on site on their own site as well. So it's, they're using their compost on site.

**Interviewer 2** 41:31

So, when you say not managed properly, what are you speaking to, in terms of the compost process itself? So you've talked about people with their knowledge and time, you talked about, the infrastructure and in, in and out, but you made a point of saying that a couple of times, not managed properly.

**Participant 214** 41:49

Yeah. And that's probably not the best words to use. They're not being managed to-to reaching time and temperatures-that's not managed to...

**Interviewer 2** 42:02

Best practice.

**Participant 214** 42:04

Best practices. Good. That's a much better word. Okay. Not processed using best management practices.

**Interviewer 2** 42:12

Okay. Okay. So that ties to the people capacity.

**Participant 214** 42:16

That has to do with capacity and knowledge and...

**Interviewer 2** 42:19

Right. Okay. Yeah. That's perfect. Mm hmm.

**Participant 214** 42:27

Thank you for having better words.

**Interviewer 2** 42:30

Oh, no, no, we just been hanging out a while, so I could see your brain looking for it.

**Participant 214** 42:37

That's the thing with working with somebody who does understand that part of it too, so that's good. Yeah. So, where am I?

**Interviewer 2** 42:47

So you were talking about composting.

**Participant 214** 42:50

Okay. So, as far as what's made on the compost products that are made, the soil amendments-do you want to know that? Because that's actually part of the system. Those materials that are made at [Business Name] for sure is coming back out into farms and gardens within...

**Interviewer 2** 43:25

Yeah, the compost itself that's being produced is making his way back to the farmers.

**Participant 214** 43:31

Yes. So there should be a back and forth.

**Interviewer 2** 43:34

Yeah, an arrow back from the composters to the producers, the farms.

**Participant 214** 43:41

And that's going to the farm themselves and it's going to individual gardens in the city too, [inaudible] Flint farms and out through Edible Flint for the kids and the garden starters kit.

**Interviewer 2** 44:07

Oh it's going into garden starter kits as well. So compost is going in garden kits.

**Participant 214** 44:13

Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 44:14

Okay.

**Participant 214** 44:16

So that will be distributed out in May. That's bags media and residents are buying that. Some of that goes outside of the city though too, because those kits and transplants, the seeds and transplants, the garden starters is open to all of Genesee County.

**Interviewer 2** 44:38

I see. Okay. Okay, so we have the-out of Edible Flint, they're making garden kits with compost, okay. So in addition to the things going out to the residents and the farms, the compost itself is going into the kits.

**Participant 214** 44:55

Right. And also, this kind of gets even in the nitty gritty of things. [Business Name] is actually-has a contract right now to-an agreement I guess I should say-that we are growing some of the herbs, they're all herbs in this case because Edible Flint is offering herbs this year for the garden kits-we're nurturing them at [Business Name] that's going in... It's being grown at [Business Name], and then it's going back to Edible Flint for distribution of the farming kits, which is cool.

**Interviewer 2** 45:47

When you say nurture, are those transplants or are you talking about actual already-?

**Participant 214** 45:51

Seeds and transplants. We have an agreement that through April-starting the first week of April-until the date for distribution, those will be grown at [Business Name].

**Interviewer 2** 46:08

Okay. So as a producer, I think we already have an arrow from production over to Edible Flint, I believe there's an arrow from that to Edible Flint. Okay. In this case, most of those arrows that you talked about as producer here at the top is actually [Business Name] producing stuff.

**Participant 214** 46:29

Yeah, okay. Yeah. I think before we didn't have that capability, but now we do.

**Interviewer 2** 46:34

You have it now. Okay. Yeah. Okay.

**Participant 214** 46:38

You have seen it, so you know what I'm saying?

**Interviewer 2** 46:41

Mm hmm. Okay. Let's see. Yeah, we've got lots of connectors. This is good, [Participant 214], your brain. Anything else you want to add before we move on to a couple of other things with you?

**Participant 214** 47:05

And I'm looking to see... I would say that there is not-as far as produce grown-there is not a lot that is going into retail grocery stores like a Meijer. You know, Meijer carries local food and that kind of thing. But I don't think-I don't think we have the capacity in Flint to be producing on that level. Some is going into the farmers market, of course, and that's more in the summertime. Not a lot of local stuff is at the farmers market currently.

**Interviewer** 47:52

Yeah. I was gonna ask a question about that. Is it like, comparatively, is it mostly at the farmers market from more regional or Michigan? Or like, I guess how would you say like, 20% is actually grown in Flint, or like 30%? What would be your best guess for that?

**Participant 214** 48:13

I would say at this moment, this time of year in winter time, .01, maybe less, in Flint. But in the summer time, I would say 20% and that's outside vendors also because a lot of those outside vendors are resellers, I guess I should say, resellers. They're buying in Detroit at the farmers market, and then reselling here. So not-quite honestly, not a lot is is grown and as far as Michigan produced, yeah, a portion of that, you know, 20% and it might be higher in the summer, maybe, we better go with 30-35%, something like that. Of that 35%, Michigan would be represented for sure of the 30-35%. But at this, you know, all the rest would be grown outside. In a summary I would say of that 35%-all of that 35%, you know, 30% of it is Michigan grown. Not necessarily Flint grown or Genesee County grown, but-

**Interviewer 2** 49:53

But Michigan, okay.

**Participant 214** 49:57

And we've lost a couple vendors there just recently so that I'm reflecting on the fact that we've lost those vendors that are Michigan grown-not city, but [Vendor Name] is gone from the market now, so that was all Sanilac County produced.

**Interviewer 2** 50:22

Right, but it's coming into Flint, at the farmers market,

**Participant 214** 50:25

Not so much anymore. I mean, it is owned-it was coming in... We'll be-actually we may be, at [Business Name], we may be a drop site for them, but that has not been completely verified yet. Because they had customers in Flint, that were committed customers to them that were very sad that they were not going to be at the farmers market any longer. So they were trying to do a drop, you know, they would order online, and then they would bring it to a certain drop point for them, and that is hopefully going to happen.

**Interviewer 2** 51:04

Okay, so are you talking restaurants, so what are you talking about?

**Participant 214** 51:08

I'm talking about just residents

**Interviewer 2** 51:12

So in addition to restaurants and stores and markets, there's like drop off delivery, is that what you're saying?

**Participant 214** 51:19

Yes, it would be those folks who were committed to buying at the Flint farmers market from the vendor called [Vendor Name], which all of that was Michigan grown, and not Flint, but Sanilac County. But they were vendors at the farmers market, and now they're no longer going to be there anymore, but they wanted to offer to people that were interested, the ability to go online and order and then they would coordinate their order and bring it to Flint to a drop place and then they could pick it up.

**Interviewer 2** 52:03

Okay, so that's delivery, a delivery service from from a retail standpoint, a delivery service.

**Participant 214** 52:14

Yeah. And they wouldn't be a retailer, I mean, they would be a producer, because [Vendor Name] is a conglomerate of Future Farmers of America, students growing in Sanilac County.

**Interviewer 2** 52:30

Okay. Okay. All right. Great. Lot of great detail there. Anything else you want to add? We got a couple of other things we want to ask you about.

**Participant 214** 52:43

I can't think of something right now.

**Interviewer 2** 52:46

And if it pops up again, we'll add it. Okay. Alrighty. So as we look at your understanding as represented here. What are some of the ways that racial equity or inequities impact participation in the local food system?

**Participant 214** 53:10

Because I-before I had this job that I have now, I was the [Program Name] coordinator for the city of Flint, and so that allowed me to have insight into the inequities that are bound in the city. Some of the barriers of it are access... I don't want to use the word education. Knowledge... help me with a better word than education. Because we truly are at all levels, like three generations out from people understanding food or cooking their own food. So what is that called, it's not... It's remedied by education, I guess, but I don't want to use the word education.

**Interviewer 2** 54:27

So when you're saying three generations out, are you talking about cultural knowledge of food?

**Participant 214** 54:34

Cultural, and yeah, cultural knowledge of food and the fact that we don't cook it at home.

**Interviewer 2** 54:46

Knowledge of food and cooking?

**Participant 214** 54:48

Yes. But within that are even more things. And particularly, I would say not only racial inequity, but economic disparities are things like access to proper kitchen utensils and using them, being able to use them. For instance, if you buy produce, if you buy a summer squash and you don't know what to do with it, it could end up as spoilage, or if you buy it and you don't have knife skills or a knife to cut it, and that isn't only racial inequity, but it is economic. Which does, you know, I know that that is impacted by racial inequity as well. But yes, economic disparities and inequities-racial inequity, too. Not only knives, you know, or instruments to you to cut it up, but leading to, do you have the proper pants to cook it in, or stove to use, or burners that work? Things like that. So, that's an issue, and also knowledge of the food and use of the food. And I know that there are places, you know, Extension, Crown, there's a lot going on to help people who don't know to understand food and to know local foods. But our general knowledge of the food-of local food systems could use a lot of improvement. And it certainly isn't just here, it's everywhere and other places. So one of the-when you talked about access to preparation tools, you also talked about the condition of those tools. You talked about you know, not only did you have them, but that they work, right, the stoves and conditions. So I just want to make sure we get that. Yeah, quality of, thanks for that. Water for cooking, knives for slicing and dicing, pots and pans, dishes, anything like that, stoves to cook on... My experience with [Program Name] allowed me to really see how complex and complicated it can be.

**Interviewer** 58:15

Yeah. Really fast, what are some of the outcomes that you see of these two things, of this lack of knowledge of food and cooking skills, and this lack of access to the quality of food preparation tools. What does that result in?

**Participant 214** 58:33

It results in people repeatedly eating the same things over and over, and many simple carbohydrate foods that do not produce a lot of nutrition and therefore compromise our health. So in definitely, you know, we needed diversity in foods for health, for our gut health, we need a diversity, and if you don't have a diversity because our scope has gotten so small on what we know to eat, it compromises our health. For sure it compromises our health, our brains, our everything, everything is compromised. And [inaudible] in the soil. We need the diversity in the soil, we need diversity everywhere. And you know when we don't have it-when you go into the grocery store-oh no, I feel myself going off on a thing-if you you go into the grocery store now adays and there's so few options. I know if I go to the grocery store and I have a rutabaga or something in my cart, the checkout person doesn't know what it is, and I don't mean to- I'm not looking down on the fact that that person doesn't know what it is. It's just that we've gotten away from understanding our amazing diversity of what is grown and grown locally, because rutabagas are a local crop too. Or beets, or whatever, you know, and anything, and I'm talking things that are local, not necessarily beets, talking about things that are... Actually in some cases, checkout persons know, the things that are not grown around here more than they know the things that are grown out here.

**Interviewer 2** 1:00:55

Seeing them at the counter. Hmm. So [Participant 214], let me ask it another way, because you talked about things that impact and talked about barriers. Are there ways that the food system contributes to racial inequity?

**Participant 214** 1:01:13

With the food? Yes. But let me think of how to, that the food system itself does...?

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:22

Contributes to racial inequity?

**Participant 214** 1:01:25

Yes, I mean, I think that... I can name a few things that I have been involved in, or taking part in lately that helped to broaden it, and maybe that will review reveal some of the things that keeps it small. For instance, [Contact Name], who's part of the food system here in Flint, and if you don't know him yet, you need to know him. He has started a group called the Flint Social Club; he did just do a sponsored film at the Capitol theater that was called High on the Hog. Which, are you familiar with that? Mm hmm. That brought attention and provided information on the African American foods that came from times of enslaved peoples, and how that changed the food system and how it impacts the food system today. And so those kinds of opportunities, I think, help to broaden our knowledge of the food system and help and so by not having access to those kinds of things, or it not being out there... But I also can tell you, what was the diversity in that room for that night, was not there. So I don't know what that means, and I don't know how to change that. And I know that other groups in this city that work really hard to bring about awareness, and that is Communities First, which I know you probably all know too, that provide the opportunities not necessarily on food, but on-I mean, some leads to food, for sure-but the ability to have a diversity, which then leads to food diversity and cultural diversity.

**Interviewer 2** 1:04:08

So that one-I would put this concept-tell you if this captures it for you, is that education on African American food ways, was a positive influence as it relates to racial inequity. You know, cause what you were saying was that the presence of that reduces potentially the lack of knowledge about food. Okay, got it.

**Participant 214** 1:04:39

And the panel afterwards was [inaudible]. The ability to use media-film media, or documentary and I use that lightly, you know-but to have the ability to have to shed light-I don't know, I hate to use the word education, because of the connotation of that, right. So the ability to have different forms of media, whatever, help to give a picture of a broader food system?

**Interviewer 2** 1:05:26

Mm hmm. Yeah. So food system education and awareness is what you're going for there.

**Participant 214** 1:05:33

In particular, that panel afterwards, wasn't very helpful, and it sheld a lot of local light on things right here in Flint. So he took some film, and then changed it to what simply- it was a [inaudible] thing.

**Interviewer 2** 1:05:51

Okay. And you said Communities First, what was it in reference to racial equity, about Community First? What was the aspect there?

**Participant 214** 1:05:54

Community First, do you know them?

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:05

I don't think so, as you talk, maybe-

**Participant 214** 1:06:10

They need to be on your radar too, because they are. They are a nonprofit group that is doing work in Detroit, too. So they're based here in Flint, but they're doing lots of work in Detroit, and they bring about awareness to culture, the arts. I can't remember, there's four arms of it, I think, and environment is one. And they do a lot of awareness through film, through cultural music, blah, blah, but all of it has a food connection too because they also are now working on a food truck area that's right across from their office, right downtown Flint.

**Interviewer 2** 1:07:04

Okay. So they would be represented in these retailers, so like a food truck?

**Participant 214** 1:07:11

Oh, yeah, and bringing about awareness of food and culture.

**Interviewer 2** 1:07:20

Okay, I think we've got that pretty well represented on the map now, as in general, in terms of retailers. So let me ask you this question. Because we've had you for a little bit now. And I want to make sure we get this one question in. So when you look at your representation of the food system and your understanding of it, [Participant 214], how would you make changes to improve

**Participant 214** 1:07:52

You know, I think about that a lot. I think about that a lot. Because literally, in my field of waste, and then how would I change it... I think the power to change things a lot of times has to come from the people themselves, like being more connected to each other. I don't know how to say that.

**Interviewer 2** 1:08:36

You just did. Be more connected to each other, what does that-what might that look like, [Participant 214]?

**Participant 214** 1:08:45

It might look like, just being around each other more or our understanding ways or why we do things the way that we do things. It's more of a you know, I think about it in terms of composting. I've spent many years teaching composting, home composting. So why was it when I go all across the country and teach home composting, that primarily the people who attended were white, female, and between the ages of 35 and 80. Why is that? Because we're not posting and food [inaudible] to everybody. But I'd hate to think that we are still in the fact that women do manage still the food in the home. I don't know, I would think we've gotten beyond that, but we have not. Okay, in order-my connection to that by being more connected to each other is that part is not going to come from some entity. It's going to come from diversity in ourselves and working with each other I guess.

**Interviewer 2** 1:10:35

Okay. Okay. What other things would you change if you were going to improve the system? So connectivity, greater connection, what else would you change to help improve it? Or could change to help improve?

**Participant 214** 1:10:59

I think stronger programs, and I really hate to say it like this, stronger programs in school. But I don't mean to say that because I have a daughter who's a teacher, and that's the last thing they need us to be teaching in school, that really also need to be taught by elders and people in the home. It's probably has to do with-having gotten away from elders being-and when I say elders, the wisdom keepers, those who have had the experiences those older folks and grandparents and the diversity in generational access, I don't know.

**Interviewer 2** 1:11:53

Okay, got that. Yeah, thank you for that. Other things, other ways you think the system can be improved?

**Participant 214** 1:12:07

Things like, I think one thing that's a strong barrier is our access to tools that help us to make things, like knives. And because we don't carry-children aren't encouraged to carry a pocket knife any longer, right? I know this probably sounds so ridiculous in this whole scheme of things, but when kids were taught how to use a knife and how to use it properly, and when you used it, and everyone had one in their pocket, they learned knife skills, right? And those knife skills translate to feeding yourself too, it means that you can slice an apple because now we serve apples that are whole and kids don't eat them, right? Or oranges that are whole, and kids don't eat them. So how do I remedy that? I don't know, it's a cultural thing, right? Why aren't we encouraged to carry pocket knives anymore? I don't know, it seems like a simple thing, but it also has translated-over time has allowed us to not have those skills.

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:34

Okay, gotcha. Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha. Wow. Well, Amy, we have that mapped you saw was your lovely, beautiful brain. And it told us lots and lots about your understanding, you know, on the food system. As we shared at the top of the conversation today, we will keep your information, you know, confidential, and use it primarily, you know, inside of our research team to do what we need to do to reflect your reflective understanding. If other things come back, like as you're thinking about this, because I know how this percolates, right, feel free to reach out, you know, you have Chris's contact information, she'll be your primary contact for that, and just sharing anything additional. The other opportunity is we always, you know, invite you to please do our evaluation. So, Chris will drop a link in the chat but also we'll send you one via email, if that's easy for you to do. We invite you to do that. It's a couple of minutes. You made reference to several organizations while we were chatting if you don't mind, including their contact information because you said you need to know. Yeah, a couple of folks and if you wouldn't mind sharing that and even feel free to reach out and just give them our contact information. If you like this? Well, because we've got, we're going to be completing these set of interviews this month. And we do still have a few spaces that we'd like to talk with, you know, more people. So definitely, if you could you do that for us, that would be amazing. Amazing.

**Participant 214** 1:15:18

We'll and for sure, those are two, you know, Tony, Vu those social club and his group. And, and maybe you do need to know them. Thank you. The other thing really quick, just to I value so much what you all are doing. It is so important. It our, our very health depends on it. Everyone very much depends on this. And, and especially in a time. I don't know, we say this all the time, right? Especially in this time of, but um, I mean, it, this is critical work. We're critical now. And certainly not just Flint, were critical in our food. You know, food awareness, this, this is critical.

**Interviewer 2** 1:16:16

Thank you for that. And thank you so, so much for that. And I think there's a question that I asked you if you want to stay connected, and you made it clear to us last time that you do. So, again, thank you for all that you do. And thanks for this beautiful interview and making these other two connections with us. And I'll we'll be in touch with you soon.

**Participant 214** 1:16:36

Sounds good. Thank you both so much. Thank you. All right. See you there. Bye. Bye.

**Interviewer 2** 1:16:42

You too. Have a great day. Bye. All right, bye bye.