

Iowa's LFPA: A Vision for Data-Driven Farm to Food Access Systems

Market Research, Trends and Impact
Tuesday, November 14, 2023

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Intro to Speaker



Credit, PJ Pasturczak Photography

Kaci Ginn is the Operations Director with Iowa Valley RC&D based in Amana, Iowa and has been with the organization since July 2022. Within Iowa's LFPA, Kaci served as the primary staff overseeing the program's initial implementation and continues to lead and manage the data systems.

Agenda



1. **What is the LFPA + Farm to Food Access?**
2. **Getting the Data**
3. **Managing the Data**
4. **Understanding + Using the Data**
5. **What's possible: Key Insights + Impacts**

Why Iowa Valley RC&D?

- **Facilitator**, Iowa Food Hub Managers Working Group (est. 2016)
- Key entity **Convening** and **Championing Value Chains** in Iowa
- **Technical Assistance** Provider for Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Producers and Farmers in Iowa



Iowa Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program



The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service established the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA).

The LFPA program is part of the “Build Back Better” initiative, authorized by the American Rescue Plan.

Iowa’s LFPA kicked off purchasing in September 2022.

Additional funding for food purchasing was made available and awarded Spring 2023 through the Commodity Credit Corporation.



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Goals of the LFPA



Three Overarching Goals

1



Provide an opportunity for States and Tribal Governments to **strengthen their local and regional food system.**

2



Help to support local and **socially disadvantaged farmers/producers** through building and expanding economic opportunities.

3



Establish, **strengthen**, and **broaden partnerships** with producers and the food distribution community, local food networks, and non-profits-distributing fresh and nutritious foods in rural, remote, or **underserved communities.**

Iowa's LFPA Model



FARM TO FOOD ACCESS

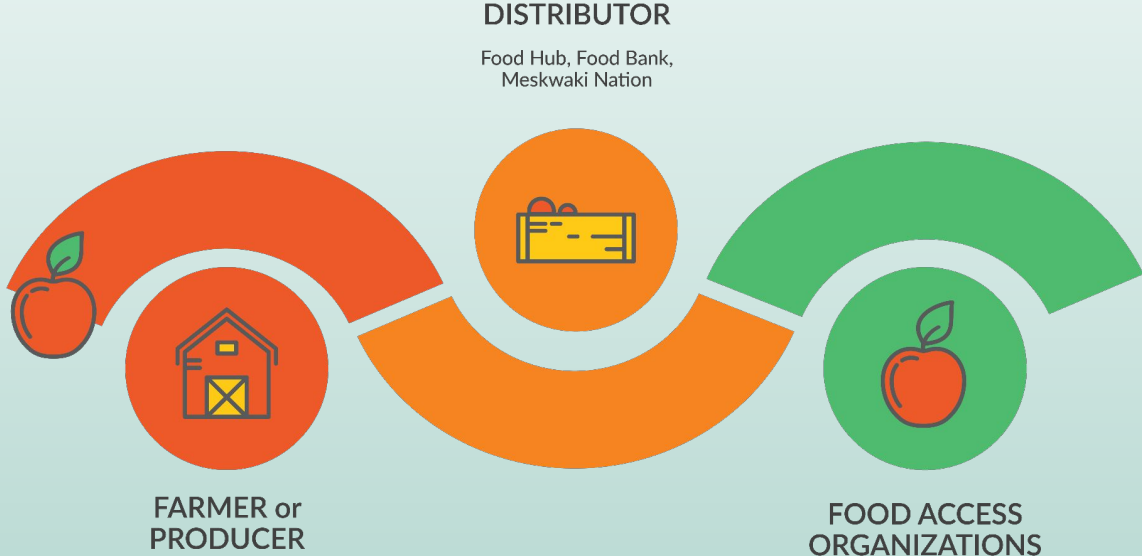
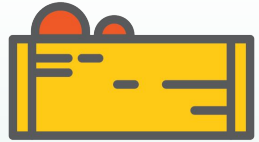


Figure 1.1, Iowa LFPA Model

Note: Scenarios represented on this flow chart are non exhaustive and may be subject to change due to the needs of the program and involved partners

Central Data Warehousing



Key Data Tool: Airtable

- **Facilitates understanding of the end to end flow of funds and product within program + greater network**
- **Centralizes data across activities and allows analyses across multiple facets of the program**
- **Generates USDA reporting formatted properly for submission**

Investment:

- *Independent Contractor*
 - Program staff worked with an independent contractor to establish automations within the Airtable Base to streamline data management and improve program participant experience
- *Program Staff Time*
 - Continuous data input, management, and analysis

Data Sources: Farms + Producers



Key Data Source: Producer Registration Form

- **Centralizes** *producer data required for USDA reporting for program staff*
- **Collects and aggregates** *relevant licenses, food safety certificates, and W9 forms submitted as producers complete + submit the producer registration form and for review by Distributors*
- **Provides key insights** *on producer relationships with distributors and CAPs*
- **Consolidates** *producer contact information for Distributors to facilitate new sales relationships + market opportunities*

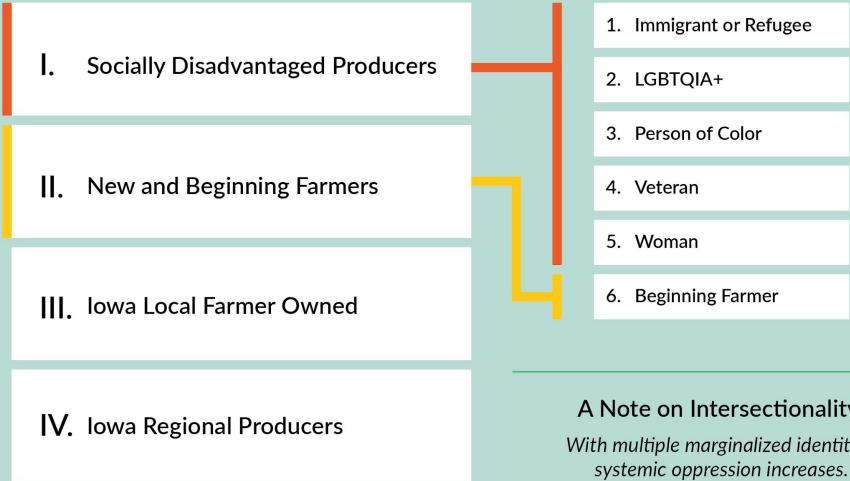
Tools + Software:

- **Qualtrics Survey Software**
 - Registration Form and document submission
- **Box**
 - Stores producer W9 forms and food safety licenses
- **Zapier**
 - Automates transfer of producer registration data into Airtable

Data Utilization: Farms + Producers



LFPA Producer Tier Designation



The Tiered Purchasing Structure is intended to support participating distributors in prioritizing purchases from Socially Disadvantaged Producers participating in Iowa's LFPA.

A Note on Intersectionality:
With multiple marginalized identities, systemic oppression increases.

- Example 1 | I-3: Veteran, Person of Color, Immigrant or Refugee
- Example 2 | I-2: LGBTQIA+, Woman
- Example 3 | II: Beginning Farmer

Figure 2.1

Data Utilization: Farms + Producers



Approved Producer List Example

Status	Business Name	Tier Status	First Name:	Last Name:	Address:	City:	State:	Zip Code:	Phone:	Email:
Approved	Ol' Dog Farm	1-2	Stella	Silver	123 Nap Lane	Puppyville	IA	55555	111-111-1111	barkingatcars@gmail.com



Figure 2.2

*Database automations generate the 'Tier Status' for each registration submitted via Qualtrics based on Figure 2.1. This allows Distribution Partners to access data to inform their procurement strategies, while minimizing the sharing of Producer's personal details.

Data Sources: Distribution Partners



Key Data Source: Distributor Sales Reports

- **Satisfies** requirements for detailed USDA procurement reporting
- **Spreads out overall reporting task** for Distributors throughout time span of program
- **Verifies** procurement is only occurring from approved producers
- **Demonstrates** increased marketing opportunities for producers
- **Ensures** fair pricing for producers is followed with the LFPA Pricing Guidance developed by program staff

Tools + Software:

- **Excel or Google Sheets**
 - Distributors generate sales reports from individual accounting systems and submit reports in specified format in Excel or Google Sheets for review and final submission by program staff
 - Reimbursements for purchases are tied to sales report submissions
 - Program staff upload sales reports into Airtable manually after reviewing for completion and adherence to program guidelines

Data Utilization: Distribution Partners

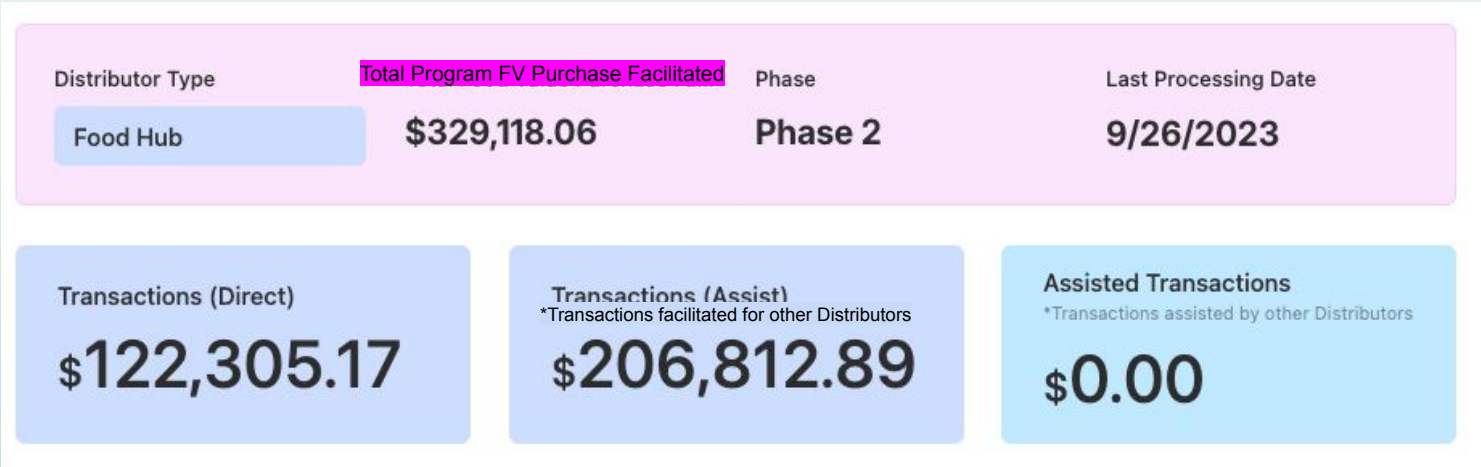


Figure 3.1, Distributor A Sales Data by Query

Data Utilization: Distribution Partners

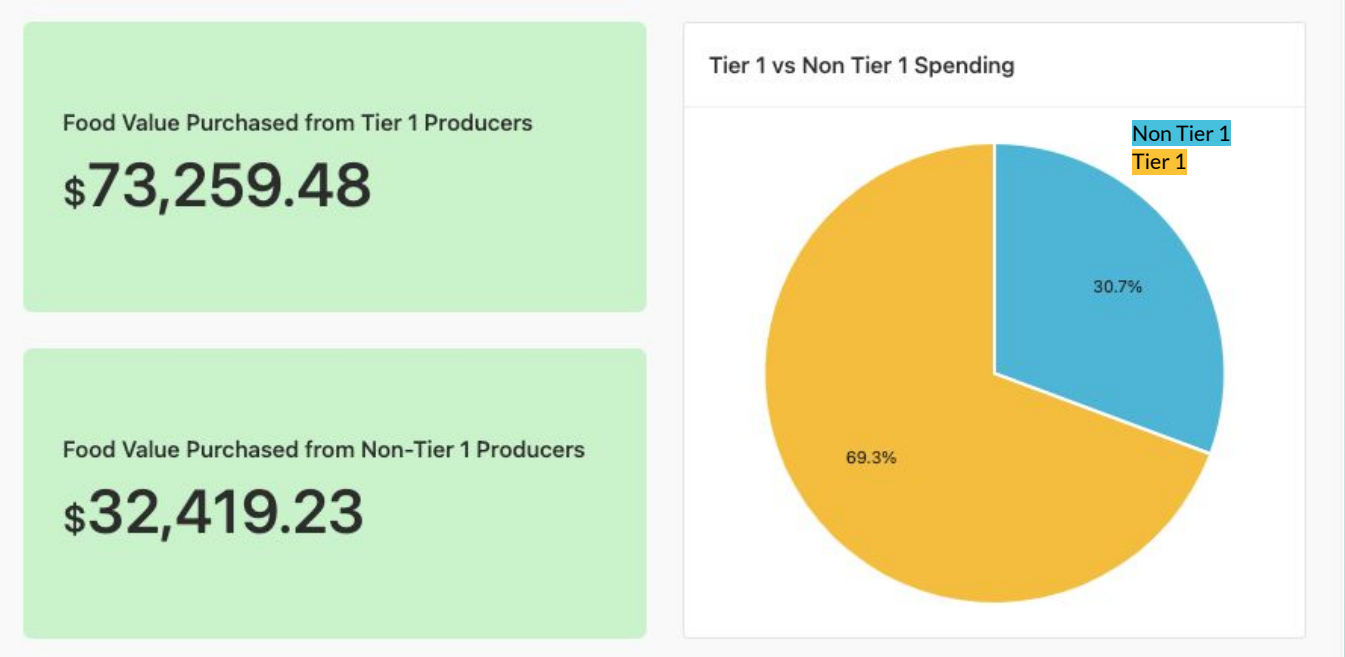


Figure 3.2, Food Bank B purchasing by Tier 1 vs Non Tier 1 Producers

Data Utilization: Distribution Partners



How many producers has this distributor sourced from overall?

Figure 3.3

P1 Producer #	P2 Total # Producer GOAL	P2 Producer #	P3 Producer #	Program Producer #
25	30	45	0	53

How many Tier 1 producers has this distributor sourced from?

Figure 3.4

P1 T1 Producer #	P2 T1 Producer # GOAL	P2 T1 Producer #	P3 T1 Producer #	Program T1 Producer #
15	24	36	0	39

P+Number : Denotes the Phase of the program the reported activity occurred within. Iowa's LFPA has 3 Phases.

Program : Indicates program-to-date all-time totals.

Data Sources: Community Food Access Organizations



Key Data Source: Community Partner Registration Form

- **Centralizes** *community partner data required for USDA reporting for program staff*
- **Ensures** *food purchased with LFPA funds is distributed to intended populations outlined by USDA*
- **Demonstrates** *expansion of emergency food distribution networks within Iowa*

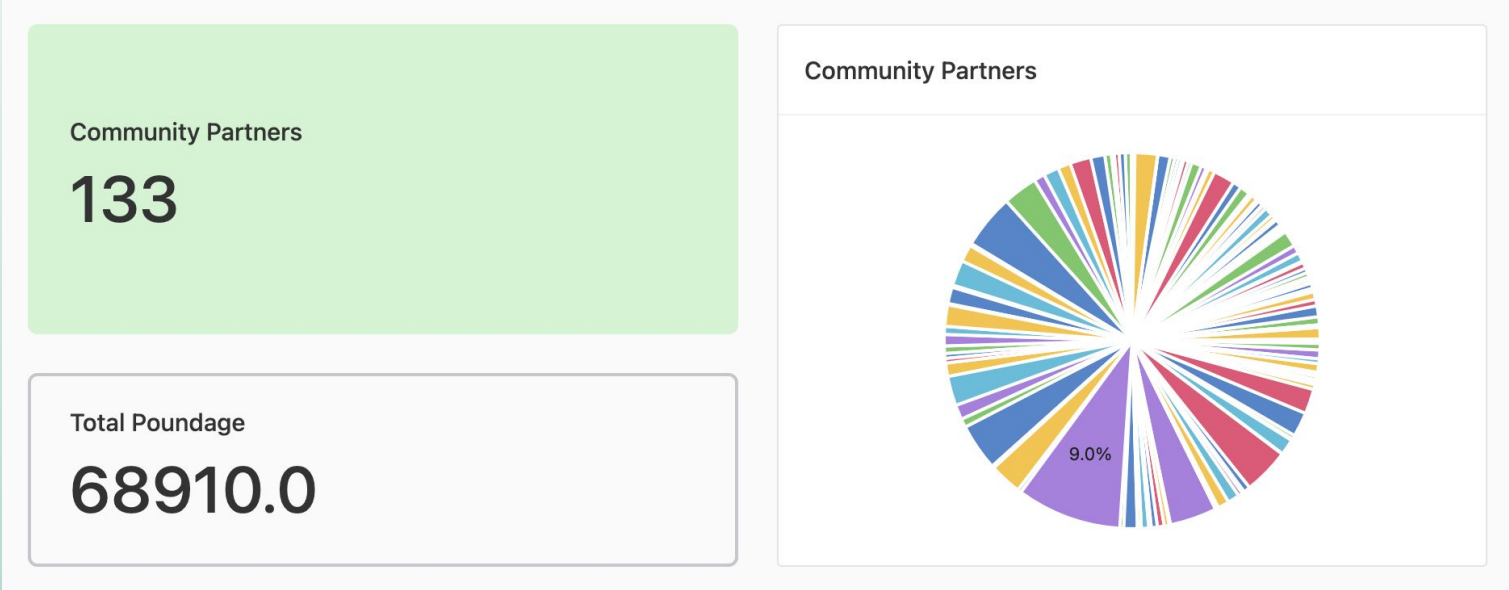
Tools + Software:

- **Google Forms**
 - Community Access Partners who are not currently Food Bank partners submit the registration form to indicate interest in receiving product through the program
 - Existing Food Bank Access Partners are not required to register for the program, necessary partner site data is provided to the program by Food Bank staff
- **Zapier**
 - Automates transfer of community partner registration data into Airtable

Data Utilization: Community Food Access Organizations



Figure 4.1, Food Bank C : Number of unique community partners receiving LFPA product, total poundage distribution reported by bank program all-time, poundage share by Community Partner



Data Utilization: Community Food Access Organizations

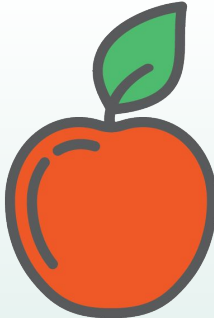
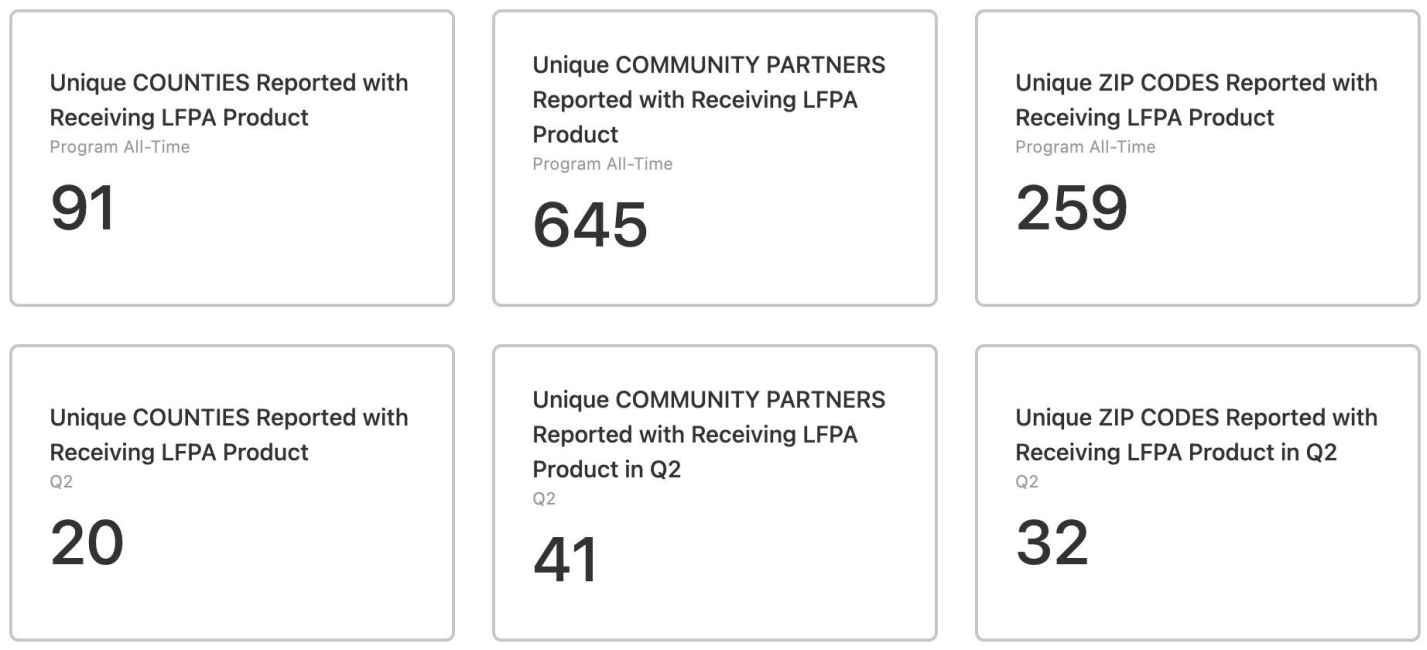


Figure 4.2, Program-Level Distribution Data Comparison: Q2 2023 and Program All-Time Activity



Key Data Systems Learnings



- Powerful, quality data is not an accident.
- Understanding your data facilitates a deeper understanding of the impact across the programs.
- Curiosity is key.

Thank you!



If you have questions or want to continue the conversation:

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