

# Growing Connections: South Dakota Local Food System

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## Overview of South Dakota Local Food System

Behind every farmer's market, community supported agriculture (CSA) share, or local food event is an unseen network of advocates, educators, and support organizations that work to make it all possible. The South Dakota local food system encompasses more than just producers and consumers; it depends on processors, distributors, tribal programs, government agencies, Extension programs, and nonprofit partners that provide essential services, system-wide coordination, and producer and community support. Although many organizations and initiatives actively support local food efforts and carry out meaningful, impactful work at local and regional scales, they often operate in silos with no centralized structure for sharing information or coordinating efforts across the system. Historically, a lack of visibility regarding who is doing what and how their work connects has contributed to opportunities for strategic alignment, and duplicative efforts.

Local food systems are complex social systems built on individual efforts, relationships, and collaborative initiatives. Because the local food system spans production, processing, distribution, education, tribal sovereignty, public programs, and community initiatives, people contribute to the system from many different roles and positions. With so many people and organizations contributing to different parts of the system, it is not always clear how individual roles connect to the broader landscape of local food efforts.

This map visualizes the organizations, efforts, and initiatives in the South Dakota local food system. The purpose of this map is to understand the broader network or organizations supporting the system. By illustrating the organizations, what roles they play, and how they relate to one another, the map serves as both a planning tool and a practical resource for anyone seeking to engage with and strengthen local food efforts in South Dakota. The map is especially useful for community leaders, nonprofits, producers, educators, and agencies who want to better understand the landscape and identify opportunities for collaboration. Our hope is that this map will support more coordinated efforts, guide strategic decision-making, and inspire new partnerships that move the local food system forward.

The South Dakota Local Food System map illustrates the organizations that contribute to strengthening local food through a variety of roles and functions. Six colored clusters represent a functional domain: food sovereignty; producer support, outreach and education; grassroots and producer networks; local food markets and distribution; youth and public education; and government and public support. Each cluster represents a distinct set of functions, and yet they are interconnected as parts of a larger system. The organizational map also highlights different types of organizations that are shown using different shapes on the map. Organization types are differentiated by shape, (e.g., nonprofits (hexagons), government and public institutions (pentagons), coalitions (circles), private businesses (octagon), and producer co-ops (rounded squares). Organizations were grouped into domains based on their primary scope of work, identified

through recurring functional patterns observed across interviews, focus groups, and organizational materials. The map also includes details on each organization's mission and vision, their contribution to the local food system, and their website.

## Summary and Suggested Use

This map serves as a practical guide for producers, practitioners, and communities to better understand who is active within the South Dakota local food system and how their scopes of work contribute to system function. By categorizing organizations by functional domain, the map answers questions about who is doing what, clarifies organizational scope, and helps users identify potential partners or collaborators. This tool can be leveraged to support project development, identify grant partners, foster peer learning through shared knowledge, and help producers locate technical assistance and organizations that support local food initiatives.

This map reveals several strengths of the South Dakota local food system, including a high level of organizational engagement across most domains and one strong example of a collaborative model is the Farm to School Network. At the same time, the map highlights opportunities to strengthen the system by drawing attention to functional areas that are less represented, such as local food storage and youth education. This organizational map can have broad impact by increasing visibility within a system where organizations often operate in silos and effort can be duplicative. It provides a shared reference point that supports coordination, strategic engagement, and more intentional development of the local food system.

## Methods Used to Create the Local Foods Map

We developed an organizational map to illustrate the landscape of the local food system in South Dakota. The map integrates research and community knowledge by combining qualitative data and public online information. During 30 interviews and 8 focus groups, participants were asked to identify additional individuals and organizations involved in the South Dakota local food system during multiple iterations of the map. Additional organizations were recorded and added to the map. Together, these methods increase the likelihood that both

formal and grassroots organizations are represented on the map. To supplement participant input, we reviewed each organization's website and publicly available materials to better understand an organization's mission, values, and scope of work. This project focused on organizations that provide support across the local food system rather than individual producers or farmstands that contribute to it. Individual producers and farmstands were intentionally excluded to avoid duplication because producers are already represented through existing organizational resources (See: DRA, 2025; SDSPA, 2025). All procedures were conducted and approved by the South Dakota State University Institutional Review Board (IRB-2112001-EXM).

Learn more at: <https://extension.sdstate.edu/growing-connections-organizational-map-south-dakota-local-food-system>
















## Acknowledgments

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# South Dakota Local Food System Organizational Map












## Food Sovereignty

- Braveheart Society 
- Cheyenne River Youth Project 
- Intertribal Buffalo Council 
- Lakota Food Sovereignty Coalition 
- Mahpiya Lúta Food Sovereignty Program 
- Makoce Agriculture Development, Inc 
- Oyate Teca Project 
- Re-Member 
- Scared Storm Buffalo 
- Sičanǵu Co 
- Sisseton Wahpeton College Extension Program 
- The Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board 
- The Intertribal Agriculture Council 
- Thunder Valley 
- Takota Youth Center 

## Local Food Processing

- Bell Valley Ancient Grains 
- Stengel Seed & Grain 
- 605 Meats 
- Blue Bird Locker 
- Dakota Pure Bison 
- Hudson Meats & Sausage, Inc 
- Jorgenson Meat Processing 
- Wall Meats 
- Western Buffalo Company 
- Wild Idea Buffalo 
- Dimock Cheese 
- Farm Life Creamery 
- Käsemeister Creamery 
- Stensland Family Farms 
- Valley Queen 









## Local Food Aggregation

- Aqua Acres Market 
- Black Hills Farmers Market 
- Breadroot Natural Foods Co-op 
- Brookings Farmers Market 
- Dakota Fresh Food Hub 
- Diamond E Collective 
- Falls Park Farmers Market 
- Feeding South Dakota 
- Glory Garden 
- Meals on Wheels 
- Natural Abundance Food Co-Op 
- Pomegranate Market 
- Sioux Falls Food Co-Op 
- South Dakota Farm Stands 
- Watertown Farmers Market 

## Producer Support, Outreach, and Education

- Blue Dasher Farm 
- Cash Crop 
- ECDYSIS Foundation 
- South Dakota Soil Health Coalition 
- South Dakota State University Extension 
- Value Added Ag Center 

## Youth and Public Education

- Cheyenne River Youth Project 
- Iron Fox Farm 
- Local Foods Education Center 
- Oyate Teca Project 
- Sacred Storm Buffalo 
- South Dakota State University Extension 
- Thunder Valley 
- Youth and Family Services 

## Government, and Public Support

- Rapid City Sustainability Council 
- South Dakota Department of Education 
- South Dakota Department of Health 
- South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources 
- South Dakota Department of Tourism 
- South Dakota's Planning and Development Districts 
- North Central Regional Food Business Center 
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 
- United States Department of Agriculture 
- Intertribal Buffalo Council 
- The Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board 
- The Intertribal Agriculture Council 

## Grassroots and Producer Networks

- Dakota Rural Action 
- Project Food Forest 
- South Dakota Association of Meat Processors 
- South Dakota Cattlemen's Association 
- South Dakota Farm to School Network 
- South Dakota Grassland Coalition 
- South Dakota Healthy Nutrition Collaborative 
- South Dakota Local Foods Coalition 
- South Dakota Specialty Producers 
- WSDCAP Rapid City 

## Local Food Storage

- Dakota Warehouse 

## Local Food Markets & Distribution

- Vanguard Hospitality 

Non profits: , Government & Public Institutions: , Coalitions: , Private Businesses: , Producer Co-Ops: 

# Food Sovereignty

The Food Sovereignty cluster includes Indigenous-led organizations and community initiatives that advance cultural revitalization, youth engagement, and tribal food system development. Organizations in this cluster emphasize work that centers around food sovereignty, self-determination, and the integration of traditional foodways into local food efforts. This cluster also has the greatest number of cross-cluster connections on the map, with three organizations linked to the Government and Public Support cluster and three connected to the Public and Youth Education cluster. These connections illustrated on the map show the broad scope of work undertaken by Indigenous food sovereignty organizations and their role in linking multiple parts of the local food system.

## **Braveheart Society**

The Braveheart Society is committed to providing elders and families on the Yankton Reservation with fresh vegetables. The Woju Okodakiciye (“Planters Society”) has established a 3-acre community garden, which is primarily maintained by youth. Their goal is to cultivate and grow local vegetables for the Yankton community while advancing tribal food sovereignty.

## **Cheyenne River Youth Project**

Located in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, the Cheyenne River Youth Project (CRYP) operates the Winyan Toka Win (“Leading Lady”) Garden, a 2.5-acre pesticide-free community garden. This initiative provides fresh produce to the community, educates youth about sustainable agricultural practices, and reinforces Lakota cultural values. Through hands-on learning experiences, CRYP fosters stronger connections between young people and traditional food systems, promoting health, self-sufficiency, and cultural preservation.

## **Intertribal Buffalo Council**

The Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), founded in 1992, focuses on buffalo restoration and advancing food sovereignty within Native American communities. Its founding and ongoing mission is to restore buffalo to tribal lands for cultural and spiritual revitalization and preservation. The ITBC provides education on sustainable buffalo management, as sustainability remains one of the core principles of its work. Additionally, the natural behaviors of buffalo support environmental sustainability and ecosystem health.

## **Lakota Food Sovereignty Coalition**

The Lakota Food Sovereignty Coalition is working toward its goal of establishing a comprehensive food system on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. This effort emphasizes food sustainability, access to healthy foods, education and research, and agricultural workforce development. The coalition seeks to cultivate and strengthen relationships with producers while advancing the role of local food systems in tribal policy.

## **Mahpiya Lúta Food Sovereignty Program**

Mahpiya Lúta, formerly known as Red Cloud Indian School, integrates food sovereignty into its educational framework on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The program includes geodesic greenhouses, gardens, and a chicken coop, which provide fresh produce and eggs for school meals. Students participate in classroom programs, cooking demonstrations, and a summer internship, gaining hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture and traditional Lakhóta food practices. The school also collaborates with organizations such as the Lakhóta Food Sovereignty Coalition and NATIFS to strengthen and expand its initiatives.

## **Makoce Agriculture Development, Inc.**

Founded by Nick Hernandez (Oglala Lakota), Makoce Agriculture Development is a grassroots organization on the Pine Ridge Reservation dedicated to restoring Indigenous food systems through regenerative agriculture and entrepreneurship. Its flagship project, the Regenerative Poultry Producers Project, trains families in humane poultry raising and processing, supported by a mobile processing unit. This initiative not only provides local protein sources but also fosters economic growth and community self-sufficiency.

## **Oyate Teca Project**

The Oyate Teca Project, located in Kyle, South Dakota, serves the Pine Ridge Reservation by providing hands-on training in home gardening and sustainable food production. Its Medicine Root Gardening Program educates community members on how to plan, plant, maintain, and preserve their own food. Through 12-week educational courses, free seedling distributions, and workshops on composting and food preservation, Oyate Teca builds practical skills and strengthens community resilience. Thousands of seedlings are distributed annually to support household gardens, making the program a cornerstone of efforts to advance local food sovereignty and food security on Pine Ridge.

# Food Sovereignty

## Re-Member

Re-Member and SDSU Extension established a 2.5-acre community garden and two hoop-house greenhouses. These facilities serve as the foundation for a reservation-wide network of home- and school-based gardens. Additionally, plans are underway to introduce a “veggie wagon,” which will distribute fresh produce and provide gardening resources throughout the reservation.

## Sacred Storm Buffalo

Sacred Storm Buffalo is a Native-led social enterprise and workforce-development initiative that integrates apprenticeship-based meat processing with cultural revitalization and community economic development. The organization trains young Indigenous adults in buffalo harvesting, butchery, processing, and small-scale food entrepreneurship, thereby restoring traditional foodways while building practical skills and certified employment pathways. By operating processing facilities, a retail outlet, and value-added product lines, Sacred Storm creates market infrastructure for locally produced buffalo meat and related goods, strengthening regional supply chains and market access for Indigenous producers. Its emphasis on food sovereignty, culturally relevant foods, and healing-centered workforce programming links ecological stewardship and cultural continuity with tangible improvements in local food security and rural economic resilience.

## Sičanǵu Co

Sičanǵu Co leads a holistic food sovereignty initiative rooted in Lakota values on the Rosebud Reservation. Through education, local food production, and economic development, the organization is revitalizing traditional foodways and building long-term self-sufficiency. Its food systems work includes the Sičanǵu Food Sovereignty Initiative, which manages the Keya Wakpala Garden — a community demonstration farm that produces vegetables

and traditional foods. The initiative also supports youth through the Waičahya Ičaǵapi Kte (WIK) Internship, a paid learning program focused on regenerative agriculture and entrepreneurship. In addition, Sičanǵu Co distributes seeds and starter plants, hosts local food markets, and integrates food education into schools and community programs. Its approach centers land, language, and culture as essential components in reestablishing Indigenous food systems.

## Sisseton Wahpeton College Extension Program

Sisseton Wahpeton College Extension Program plays a critical role in supporting local food systems with in the Lake Traverse Reservation and surrounding communities. The program advances food sovereignty by providing culturally grounded education, technical assistance, and hands-on programming related to gardening, traditional foods, and sustainable agriculture. Thorough community partnerships and producer support, the Extension Program strengthens local food production, and knowledge sharing, and self-determination.

## The Great Plains Tribal Leaders’ Health Board

The Great Plains Tribal Leaders’ Health Board aims to help tribal members achieve health through the food they eat. Nutrition education is important to them as they equip members to make autonomous food choices. The Great Plains Good Health and Wellness Program promotes healthy lifestyle choices by educating tribal communities on the importance of nutrition for overall health. In addition, they encourage traditional and sustainable food practices while enhancing community resilience and equitable food access.

## The Intertribal Agriculture Council

The Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) is a national organization founded in 1987 to promote the conservation, development, and use of agricultural resources for the betterment of Native American communities. In South Dakota, the IAC plays a pivotal role in supporting tribal producers by providing technical assistance, advocating for policy changes, and facilitating access to markets. Through initiatives like the National Intertribal Food Business Center, the IAC empowers food businesses by expanding market opportunities, enhancing access to capital, and streamlining regulatory pathways for growth. By fostering entrepreneurship and private-sector partnerships, the IAC ensures that Indian Country food systems contribute significantly to the broader American food system and national food security.

## Thunder Valley

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a Lakota-led nonprofit organization based on the Pine Ridge Reservation that advances regenerative community development. Its food sovereignty initiatives focus on revitalizing traditional food systems while incorporating modern sustainability practices. Thunder Valley operates geothermal greenhouses that produce fresh food year-round, supports chokecherry and native plant cultivation, and maintains backyard chicken coops to promote household food security. These efforts empower families to grow their own food, reduce dependence on external sources, and strengthen connections to Lakota land-based traditions. The organization also integrates food systems education with youth development and housing programs to promote intergenerational knowledge transfer and long-term self-sufficiency.

# Producer Support, Outreach, and Education

The Producer Support, Outreach, and Education cluster features organizations that provide technical assistance, marketing assistance, business development, and product development as part of their main mission. Of the organizations represented, are nonprofits, business, and state institutions. Organizations in this cluster represent state institutions, non-profits, and businesses that provide essential services to local producers. Together, they help farmers and ranchers access the knowledge and tools necessary to grow food and participate in local markets.

## Blue Dasher Farm

Blue Dasher Farm is a regenerative demonstration and research farm that produces honey, eggs, lamb, and pork while educating farmers and the broader community about ecosystem-based agricultural practices. The farm bridges practical production with scientific inquiry, supporting resilience and innovation within local food systems. Through its efforts, the farm not only delivers fresh, responsibly produced foods but also helps foster innovation, community awareness, and better stewardship of the land for future generations.

## Cash Crop

Cash Crop is a South Dakota-based marketing and community-building platform designed to connect local producers with consumers through digital tools and storytelling. The organization offers services such as online marketing courses, a producer directory, and the Cash Crop Conversations podcast, which features interviews with local entrepreneurs. By emphasizing digital visibility and community engagement, Cash Crop strengthens the presence of local food businesses within the regional economy.

## ECDYSIS Foundation

ECDYSIS Foundation is a nonprofit research organization that advances regenerative agriculture through on-farm research across North America. Through initiatives such as the 1,000 Farms Initiative, the foundation collects and analyzes data on soil health, biodiversity, crop yields, and farm economics, providing participating growers with practical feedback. Its work supports farmers in adopting resilient, ecosystem-based practices while contributing to the broader scientific understanding of sustainable food systems.

## South Dakota Soil Health Coalition

The South Dakota Soil Health Coalition (SDSHC) is a producer-led nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing soil health and regenerative agriculture practices across the state. Through educational programs, technical resources, and events such as the annual Soil Health Conference, SDSHC empowers farmers and ranchers to implement sustainable land management strategies. Its initiatives, including the Mentor Network and Soil Health Schools, facilitate peer-to-peer learning and practical training. Additionally, SDSHC's South Dakota Fresh Connect platform bridges the gap between local food producers and consumers, enhancing access to fresh, locally grown foods. By fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing, SDSHC plays a pivotal role in building resilient local food systems grounded in healthy soil.

## South Dakota Specialty Producers

The South Dakota Specialty Producers Association (SDSPA) is a statewide nonprofit organization that supports South Dakota's specialty crop and local food producers through education, outreach, networking, and promotion. Its diverse membership includes fruit and vegetable growers, beekeepers, florists, bakers, specialty meat and grain producers, agritourism operators, and food entrepreneurs. SDSPA provides educational resources, hosts training events and the annual South Dakota Local Foods Conference, and maintains a statewide Local Foods Directory to connect producers with consumers and markets. The organization also collaborates with SDSU Extension, state agencies, and other nonprofits to advance the viability and visibility of South Dakota's local food system.

## SDSU Extension

SDSU Extension is a statewide public outreach network that connects South Dakotans with practical, research-based information to support agriculture, community health, youth development, and food systems. Within Extension, the Local Foods Extension Team focuses specifically on strengthening South Dakota's local food infrastructure through support for farmers markets, farm-to-school initiatives, community gardens, school nutrition programs, and season extension techniques. Extension specialists work directly with producers, educators, food service staff, and consumers to build capacity in production, procurement and, food safety. Their efforts are essential for advancing resilient, community-driven food systems.

## Value Added Ag Center

One of the Value Added Ag Center's primary roles is conducting feasibility analysis to support farmers, cooperatives, and rural entrepreneurs interested in developing value-added agricultural enterprises. With expertise in product development, marketing strategies, and investment planning, the center helps local food producers scale their operations and access wholesale or institutional markets. Although independently operated, the center collaborates closely with South Dakota State University, local governments, and state agencies to foster economic opportunities across South Dakota's agricultural sector.

# Grassroots and Producer Networks

The Grassroots and Producer Networks cluster includes coalitions, associations, and nonprofits that facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration, advocacy, and community organizing. These groups create spaces for producers and community members to exchange ideas, build relationships, and advocate for South Dakota's local food system. However, coordination across organizational networks remains limited. At present, the South Dakota Farm to School Network stands out as one of the few examples of cross-organizational collaboration represented on the map, with core members from the Department of Education, Dakota Rural Action, South Dakota State University Extension, and South Dakota Specialty Producers Association. The Farm to School Network illustrates how relationships can create opportunities for coordination across South Dakota's local food system.

## **Dakota Rural Action**

Dakota Rural Action (DRA) is a grassroots, member-led organization dedicated to building sustainable food systems and empowering communities across South Dakota. Through its Farm Beginnings® program, DRA provides farmer-led training that equips beginning farmers and ranchers with the skills and knowledge necessary to launch profitable and sustainable enterprises. The organization also plays a pivotal role in the South Dakota Farm-to-School Network, connecting producers with schools to integrate local foods into educational settings. DRA maintains a comprehensive Local Foods Directory to link consumers with local producers, fostering a robust local food economy. Beyond these initiatives, the organization engages in policy advocacy, community organizing, and leadership development to promote environmental stewardship and food sovereignty throughout the state.

## **Project Food Forest**

Founded in 2016 in Sioux Falls, Project Food Forest is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering communities through agroforestry, edible landscaping, and education. The organization establishes public food forests, including the Prairie Ally Outdoor Center in Luverne, Minnesota, and provides design services for low-maintenance edible landscapes. Its programs aim to increase access to fresh produce, promote environmental sustainability, and educate the public on sustainable food practices.

## **South Dakota Association of Meat Processors**

The South Dakota Association of Meat Processors (SDAMP) is a nonprofit organization that supports small- and mid-sized meat processors across the state and the broader Midwest. It provides networking opportunities, technical education, and advocacy for independent processors, including custom-exempt and state-inspected facilities. SDAMP hosts an annual convention featuring workshops, supplier showcases, and peer-to-peer learning, fostering a collaborative environment for industry professionals. The association's board comprises processors and educators, including representatives from South Dakota State University, reflecting its commitment to both industry advancement and educational outreach.

## **South Dakota Cattlemen's Association**

The South Dakota Cattlemen's Association (SDCA) represents beef producers and advocates for policies that support a strong and sustainable cattle industry. While its primary focus is on statewide and national beef policy, the SDCA is also a key stakeholder in local food system development, particularly in areas such as regional meat processing, farm-to-school procurement, and food safety regulations. The association further supports youth programs and producer education, contributing to the development of a viable next generation of livestock producers.

## **South Dakota Farm to School Network**

The South Dakota Farm-to-School Network is a statewide collaboration of educators, producers, and public health professionals working to increase the use of local foods in school meal programs. The network provides resources, training, and policy support to assist schools in sourcing locally, establishing school gardens, and implementing food and agriculture education. It serves both as a support hub and a collective voice for integrating local food into institutional settings, with leadership shared among Extension, nonprofit, and agency partners.

## **South Dakota Grassland Coalition**

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition (SDGC) is a producer-led organization focused on improving the health and long-term viability of the state's private grasslands. Through grazing schools, pasture tours, and peer-to-peer mentorship, the Coalition provides landowners with practical, science-based guidance on soil health, adaptive grazing, and sustainable rangeland management. By strengthening grass-based livestock operations, SDGC supports the stability and productivity of South Dakota's local food system. Its work also generates broader ecological benefits, such as improved soil function, water quality, and wildlife habitat, which reinforce both agricultural resilience and rural community well-being.

# Grassroots and Producer Networks

## **South Dakota Healthy Nutrition Collaborative**

The South Dakota Healthy Nutrition Collaborative (SDHNC) is a statewide coalition dedicated to improving nutrition security and equitable access to healthy food. It brings together public-health professionals, tribal food leaders, local producers, nonprofits, and academic partners to coordinate research, programming, and policy efforts that strengthen the food system. Through its focus on the full “food life cycle,” the Collaborative addresses production, distribution, access, and consumption as interconnected components of community health. SDHNC also elevates community and tribal perspectives, ensuring that interventions reflect lived experience and local cultural context. Collectively, these efforts support a more resilient and accessible local food system across South Dakota.

## **South Dakota Local Foods Coalition**

The South Dakota Local Foods Coalition is a cross-sector network of producers, consumers, educators, and agency partners working to strengthen the state’s local food system. The coalition convenes regularly to share resources, identify policy opportunities, and coordinate initiatives that support food access, market development, and local procurement. By fostering collaboration across regions and stakeholder groups, the coalition plays a vital role in aligning community needs with institutional and policy action, thereby contributing to a more resilient and equitable food system.

## **South Dakota Specialty Producers**

The South Dakota Specialty Producers Association (SDSPA) is a statewide nonprofit organization that supports South Dakota’s specialty crop and local food producers through education, outreach, networking, and promotion. Its diverse membership includes fruit and vegetable growers, beekeepers, florists, bakers, specialty meat and grain producers, agritourism operators, and food entrepreneurs. SDSPA provides educational resources, hosts training events and the annual South Dakota Local Foods Conference, and maintains a statewide Local Foods Directory to connect producers with consumers and markets. The organization also collaborates with SDSU Extension, state agencies, and other nonprofits to advance the viability and visibility of South Dakota’s local food system.

## **WSDCAP Rapid City**

The Western South Dakota Community Action Program (WSDCAP) is a private, nonprofit Community Action Agency. Established in 1965 to combat poverty, WSDCAP now operates in more than fourteen South Dakota counties. It is the only Community Action Agency in the state that serves as a Commodity Supplemental Food Program distributor to low-income seniors in Rapid City. The organization partners with local farmers to source fresh produce while simultaneously operating a food shelf, demonstration gardens, and a commercial kitchen, which is used to prepare and provide healthy meals to the community. WSDCAP also offers educational programs and hands-on classes focused on food preparation and nutrition.

# Local Food Processing

Organizations that process and sell food within South Dakota are also connected to the Local Food Processing subcluster. Organizations within this cluster primarily function as private businesses or producer-owned processing facilities. The organizations span several product types and include dairy, animal proteins, and grains. Notably, the map does not include any fruit or vegetable processors, highlighting a gap in statewide processing infrastructure..

## Bell Valley Ancient Grains

Belle Valley Ancient Grains cultivates and mills organic ancient and heirloom wheat varieties, including einkorn, emmer, spelt, and red fife, in the Belle Fourche River Valley of western South Dakota. The operation produces whole grains, flour, and other grain products, which are distributed through an on-farm store, an online shop, and wholesale channels.

## Stengel Seed & Grain

Stengel Seed & Grain is a family-owned toll processor located in Milbank, South Dakota, specializing in cleaning, conditioning, and packaging organic grains, seeds, and edible beans. Its services include color sorting, de-hulling, pearling, and custom packaging in a range of sizes, from 25-pound bags to bulk totes, which are shipped domestically and internationally. Certified organic under multiple standards, including USDA NOP, and Kosher-certified, the company supports purity and traceability requirements within the food industry.

## 605 Meats

605 Meats is a family-owned business located in Chester, South Dakota, providing affordable, high-quality livestock and game processing services, with products delivered vacuum-sealed. The operation sources meat locally, including beef, pork, lamb, and goat, processes it, and makes it available for direct purchase through local delivery or on-site pickup.

## Blue Bird Locker

Blue Bird Locker, located in Delmont, South Dakota, is a family-owned meat processing facility that provides essential services to local producers of beef, pork, and lamb. The business plays a significant role in the regional food system by connecting producers with local consumers and strengthening the accessibility of locally sourced meat. Its operations also help retain food dollars within rural communities, supporting the economic sustainability of South Dakota's agricultural sector.

## Dakota Pure Bison

Dakota Pure's initiative focuses on sustainable agriculture and community engagement. The organization seeks to connect producers directly with consumers and local businesses. The families behind Dakota Pure are experienced in bison production, raising and managing bison on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation and in Todd County, South Dakota. The initiative emphasizes a commitment to quality by avoiding the use of added hormones and antibiotics in bison production.

## Hudson Meats & Sausage, Inc.

Hudson Meats & Sausage, located in Hudson, South Dakota, is a USDA-inspected, organically certified, and animal welfare-approved meat processing facility. The business combines the standards of a modern processing plant with the personalized service characteristic of a small-town locker. Through its processing and retail operations, Hudson Meats & Sausage plays an important role in the local food system by providing the community with high-quality, locally sourced meat products.

## Jorgenson Meat Processing

Jorgenson Meat Processing is a family-owned and operated meat processing company established in 1989. Since its inception, the business has experienced consistent growth and expansion, increasingly serving its local community year after year. The Jorgenson family proudly contributes to South Dakota's local food system by offering processing services for beef, lamb, pork, and wild game. In addition to processing services, the company features a retail department that provides high-quality, pre-cut meat products.

## Wall Meats

Wall Meat Processing is a custom meat processing and retail facility located in Wall, South Dakota, specializing in local beef and pork cuts, smoked meats, and custom orders, including whole, half, or quarter animals. In response to increasing demand, the facility is expanding operations—supported by a USDA grant—to construct a larger facility in New Underwood, with a projected capacity to process up to 4,000 head per year.

## Western Buffalo Company

Originally known as RC Western Meats in 1979, the company changed its name to Western Buffalo in 2000 as it shifted its focus exclusively to the purchasing, harvesting, processing, and marketing of bison. With over 30 years of experience in the industry, Western Buffalo processes more than 5,000 bison annually. The company supplies meat to grocery stores, restaurants, and meat markets and is widely recognized among regional vendors.

# Local Food Processing

## Wild Idea Buffalo

Wild Idea Buffalo produces high-quality bison products while simultaneously working to restore the Great Plains ecosystem through sustainable ranching practices. This holistic approach benefits consumers, the bison population, and the land itself. The company collaborates with regional ranchers and prioritizes sustainable agricultural methods and environmental stewardship in all aspects of its operations. Its mission centers on regenerating prairie ecosystems and providing nutritious, locally sourced red meat that supports the health and vitality of surrounding communities.

## Dimock Cheese

Since 1931, Dimock Cheese has been dedicated to producing high-quality dairy products for the state of South Dakota. Located just south of Mitchell, the company employs a small team of 12 who work closely with local dairy farmers to deliver exceptional products. Dimock Cheese remains committed to traditional cheesemaking practices, emphasizing flavor, heritage, and strong community values in its production process.

## Farm Life Creamery

Farm Life Creamery is a family-owned, on-farm dairy operation in Ethan, South Dakota, producing small-batch cheeses, bottled Grade A milk, and artisan ice cream using milk from its own herd. By transforming their milk into value-added products, the creamery enhances farm profitability and supports the economic stability of local dairy production. Their products are distributed through an on-site farm store and regional retail outlets, strengthening local supply chains and increasing consumer access to locally sourced dairy. Through tours, community events, and agritourism activities, Farm Life Creamery also deepens public understanding of agriculture and reinforces direct connections between producers and consumers within South Dakota's local food system.

## Käsemeister Creamery

Käsemeister Creamery is an on-farm artisanal dairy operation near Frankfort, South Dakota, producing handcrafted cheeses and dairy products using milk sourced directly from its own herd. By transforming locally produced milk into value-added specialty products, the creamery strengthens economic viability for the farm while expanding regional access to locally made cheese. Its direct-to-consumer sales, wholesale partnerships, and emphasis on small-batch craftsmanship support a more resilient and diversified local food system.

## Stensland Family Farms

Stensland Family Farms is a multi-generational, family-owned agricultural operation located in Larchwood, Iowa, that plays a vital role in supporting the southeastern South Dakota food system. The farm exemplifies a homegrown approach to food production by processing its own products, including cheese, ice cream, and specialty dairy items. In addition to on-site processing, Stensland Family Farms cultivates feed for its herd, further enhancing the sustainability and self-sufficiency of its operations. Through retail storefronts and partnerships with local restaurants, the farm increases consumer access to locally produced dairy products. In doing so, it contributes to regional food system resilience, strengthens local agricultural economies, and provides consumers in South Dakota with greater transparency regarding the origins of their food.

## Valley Queen

Valley Queen Cheese (Valley Queen) is a long-established, family-owned dairy processor located in Milbank, South Dakota, founded in 1929. The facility sources milk from dozens of farms within roughly a 90-mile radius and processes millions of pounds of milk daily into cheese, whey protein, lactose, and other dairy products, anchoring a stable market for regional dairy producers. Through a recent major expansion, Valley Queen increased its cheese production capacity by over 125 million pounds and will generate additional demand for milk and create new jobs, thereby reinforcing the dairy supply chain in eastern South Dakota. By providing reliable processing infrastructure and market outlets, Valley Queen helps sustain dairy farming in the region, contributing to both local food production capacity and rural economic stability.

# Youth and Public Education

The Public and Youth Education cluster includes organizations and programs that strengthen food literacy, garden-based learning, and community engagement across South Dakota. These groups help youth and adults build practical skills to grow and prepare local food while fostering awareness of nutrition and the value of supporting local producers. Through hands-on education, workshops, school and community programs, and outreach efforts, organizations in the cluster play an essential role in cultivating an informed and engaged public that can actively participate in and contribute to the local food system.

## **Cheyenne River Youth Project**

Located in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, the Cheyenne River Youth Project (CRYP) operates the Winyan Toka Win (“Leading Lady”) Garden, a 2.5-acre pesticide-free community garden. This initiative provides fresh produce to the community, educates youth about sustainable agricultural practices, and reinforces Lakota cultural values. Through hands-on learning experiences, CRYP fosters stronger connections between young people and traditional food systems, promoting health, self-sufficiency, and cultural preservation.

## **Iron Fox Farm**

Iron Fox Farm’s primary mission is to educate school-aged children and community members about the importance of participating in local food system development and procurement. Through urban agriculture, the farm demonstrates the value of community involvement in food production and fosters greater awareness of sustainable food practices. In addition to its educational efforts, Iron Fox Farm distributes fresh vegetables to schools and Fair Market grocery outlets, further supporting access to locally grown produce and reinforcing sustainable agriculture within the community.

## **Local Foods Education Center**

The South Dakota Local Foods Education Center is a community-focused learning hub that provides accessible, research-informed education to increase public awareness, confidence, and participation in South Dakota’s local food system. Through workshops, hands-on demonstrations, garden-based learning, and consumer-centered programs, the Center helps people of all ages build practical skills in gardening, local food purchasing, nutrition, and food preparation. Its work strengthens community knowledge, connects residents to local producers and seasonal food opportunities, and supports a more engaged and resilient local food culture across the state.

## **Oyate Teca Project**

The Oyate Teca Project, located in Kyle, South Dakota, serves the Pine Ridge Reservation by providing hands-on training in home gardening and sustainable food production. Its Medicine Root Gardening Program educates community members on how to plan, plant, maintain, and preserve their own food. Through 12-week educational courses, free seedling distributions, and workshops on composting and food preservation, Oyate Teca builds practical skills and strengthens community resilience. Thousands of seedlings are distributed annually to support household gardens, making the program a cornerstone of efforts to advance local food sovereignty and food security on Pine Ridge.

## **Sacred Storm Buffalo**

Sacred Storm Buffalo is a Native-led social enterprise and workforce-development initiative that integrates apprenticeship-based meat processing with cultural revitalization and community economic development. The organization trains young Indigenous adults in buffalo harvesting, butchery, processing, and small-scale food entrepreneurship, thereby restoring traditional foodways while building practical skills and certified employment pathways. By operating processing facilities, a retail outlet, and value-added product lines, Sacred Storm creates market infrastructure for locally produced buffalo meat and related goods, strengthening regional supply chains and market access for Indigenous producers. Its emphasis on food sovereignty, culturally relevant foods, and healing-centered workforce programming links ecological stewardship and cultural continuity with tangible improvements in local food security and rural economic resilience.

# Youth and Public Education

## **SDSU Extension**

SDSU Extension is a statewide public outreach network that connects South Dakotans with practical, research-based information to support agriculture, community health, youth development, and food systems. Within Extension, the Local Foods Extension Team focuses specifically on strengthening South Dakota's local food infrastructure through support for farmers markets, farm-to-school initiatives, community gardens, school nutrition programs, and season extension techniques. Extension specialists work directly with producers, educators, food service staff, and consumers to build capacity in production, procurement and, food safety. Their efforts are essential for advancing resilient, community-driven food systems.

## **Thunder Valley**

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a Lakota-led nonprofit organization based on the Pine Ridge Reservation that advances regenerative community development. Its food sovereignty initiatives focus on revitalizing traditional food systems while incorporating modern sustainability practices. Thunder Valley operates geothermal greenhouses that produce fresh food year-round, supports chokecherry and native plant cultivation, and maintains backyard chicken coops to promote household food security. These efforts empower families to grow their own food, reduce dependence on external sources, and strengthen connections to Lakota land-based traditions. The organization also integrates food systems education with youth development and housing programs to promote intergenerational knowledge transfer and long-term self-sufficiency.

## **Youth and Family Services**

Youth and Family Services (YSF) is a key organization providing children with nutritious meals across South Dakota. To date, YSF has distributed over 622,000 meals to program participants. The organization serves more than 30 counties through the Family Child Care Nutrition Program, which supports meal planning and preparation. YSF also operates summer food programs, providing approximately 250 free meals per day. In addition to meal provision, YSF administers a Garden Education Project, which offers instruction on gardening, nutrition, and sustainable food systems, including farmer-to-consumer knowledge. The organization is currently implementing a Farm-to-School program with support from a USDA grant.

# Local Food Markets & Distribution

The Local Food Markets and Distribution cluster features three subclusters that branch into local food processing, aggregation, and storage. Each subcluster represents a distinct function of the supply chain, but they are interdependent since raw and value-added products need to be processed, stored, and distributed to reach consumers. Organizations in this cluster often represent brick-and-mortar facilities where local food is processed, stored, or sold. One exception is Vanguard Hospitality, which is attached to the central cluster because it purchases, processes, and serves local food, placing its work across multiple subclusters rather than within a single function. The following sections describe each subcluster and its role within the local food system supply chain.

## Vanguard Hospitality

Vanguard Hospitality, a Sioux Falls–based restaurant group, is a notable contributor to South Dakota’s local food system. Operating establishments such as Minervas, Grille 26, and Morrie’s Steakhouse, Vanguard emphasizes sourcing ingredients directly from regional producers.

Its partnerships include collaborations with Cherry Rock Farms for fresh produce and the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe for buffalo meat, supporting both local agriculture and Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives. Additionally, Vanguard collaborates with Tillford Rye Farm, integrating regenerative agriculture practices into its supply chain.

# Local Food Storage

The Local Food Storage subcluster features only one business, which is the only rentable cold-storage facility in South Dakota and is located in Rapid City. The limited number of facilities highlights a clear challenge to cold storage access for local food producers. Storage can play a critical role in maintaining product quality and expanding access for local food producers who rely on storage to move products through the supply chain. Charitable food organizations such as Feeding South Dakota and Meals on Wheels have built storage infrastructure to support their distribution efforts but is exclusively used by them.

## Dakota Warehouse

Dakota Warehouse provides cold storage facilities that preserve and extend the availability of local foods in South Dakota. By offering temperature-controlled storage and logistical support, the facility enables producers to safeguard their products and access markets throughout the year. They also handle dry and general commercial warehousing, giving operations flexibility whether for seasonal storage or long-term inventory management.

# Local Food Aggregation

Local Food Aggregation subcluster are organizations that are involved in buying and selling local food and are the public-facing side of the local food system. Organizations include farmers markets, food co-ops, health food stores, independent online consumer guides, charitable food access organizations, and the state's only food hub. Organizations in this cluster are majority producer-owned, represented by private businesses, nonprofits, and collaborative initiatives. The organizations featured tend to be located in population centers, which reflects the concentration of consumer demand and supporting infrastructure.

## **Aqua Acres Market**

Aqua Acres Market has entered the urban farming sector by incorporating aquaponics, a soil-free growing method in which nutrient-rich water from fish tanks sustains plant growth. Serving the Rapid City area, Aqua Acres Market provides fresh, locally grown produce and utilizes its space to showcase the products of approximately 20 additional local producers. With its commitment to local sourcing and community agriculture, Aqua Acres Market stands as a growing alternative for people seeking fresh, responsibly-grown produce in Rapid City and the surrounding region.

## **Black Hills Farmers Market**

Black Hills Farmers Market strengthens the local food system in western South Dakota by connecting local producers with consumers. It showcases the products of farmers, ranchers, and artisans while supporting the local economy. The market promotes sustainable practices and fosters strong community connections. Open year-round, including an online wholesale market the Black Hills Farmers Market continues to grow its partnership with the community by creating opportunities for producer success.

## **Breadroot Natural Foods Co-op**

Located in Rapid City, Breadroot Natural Foods Co-op is a community-owned grocery store offering a wide selection of organic, non-GMO, and locally sourced products. Open to both members and non-members, the co-op emphasizes cooperative economics and sustainability, providing access to fresh produce, bulk goods, wellness products, and other essentials. By supporting local farmers and producers, Breadroot

strengthens the connection between the community and its food sources. The co-op also promotes education around healthy living and sustainable food choices, helping residents make informed decisions about what they eat. Through its community-focused model, Breadroot plays an important role in expanding access to foods.

## **Brookings Farmers Market**

The Brookings Farmers Market was established to provide community members with access to fresh products from local farmers and entrepreneurs. The market underscores the importance of supporting local economic development and fostering a resilient regional food system. To enhance the experience, it offers family-friendly activities that create a well-rounded and engaging community event. Operating year-round on Saturday mornings, the Brookings Farmers Market serves as a vital gathering place that strengthens connections between producers and consumers.

## **Dakota Fresh Food Hub**

Dakota Fresh is a farmer-owned cooperative that aggregates and distributes locally grown and produced foods from southeastern South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota. Through its online marketplace, customers can order a variety of products, including meat, dairy, produce, and value-added items, for weekly pickup in Sioux Falls and Brookings. The cooperative serves both retail and wholesale customers, including restaurants and institutions, and participates in programs such as the USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program to provide local foods to communities in need.

## **Diamond E Collective**

Diamond E Collective provides locally sourced food to residents of Rapid City, sourcing all menu items from regional producers to realize its farm-to-table vision. The organization participates in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, reinforcing its commitment to supporting local farmers while promoting the health and well-being of consumers.

## **Falls Park Farmers Market**

The Falls Park Farmers Market offers a wide variety of products, including meats, vegetables, baked goods, flowers, and other locally crafted items. Wholesale purchasers and consumers alike can be confident that each product is intentionally grown or produced to serve the local community. With a history spanning more than a century, the Falls Park Farmers Market remains a cherished institution in the region. Despite periods of change and transition, its core values of community, quality, and sustainability have remained steadfast.

## **Feeding South Dakota**

Feeding South Dakota is the state's largest hunger-relief organization, dedicated to addressing food insecurity across all 66 counties. Through programs such as Mobile Food Distribution, Child Hunger initiatives, Senior Boxes, and Wellness Pantries, the organization provides nutritious food to individuals and families in need. Feeding South Dakota distributes million meals, serving families monthly through mobile sites alone. Its efforts are strengthened by collaborations with local farmers, volunteers, and community partners, ensuring that food reaches recipients efficiently and with dignity.

# Local Food Aggregation

## Glory Garden

Glory Garden, located near Sioux Falls, South Dakota, operates an online farmers market that connects local consumers with more than twenty local producers. The platform provides accessible, user-friendly opportunities for purchasing fresh, locally grown products directly from producers. For over a decade, Glory Garden has supported the growth of local agriculture, strengthened producer–consumer relationships, and contributed to the development of a more sustainable regional food system.

## Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels in South Dakota provides nutritious meals to individuals in need, including seniors and people with disabilities. Each week, the program delivers meals to older adults across the state. By addressing food insecurity and sourcing from local producers when possible, Meals on Wheels contributes to the resilience of local food systems while supporting regional agriculture. In addition to meals, the program often delivers a much-needed sense of connection and regular check-ins, particularly for elderly or isolated residents. Volunteers and staff coordinate delivery routes throughout South Dakota, ensuring access even in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

## Natural Abundance Food Co-Op

Established in 1978, Natural Abundance Food Co-op—commonly referred to as “NatAbu”—is a member-owned cooperative located at 112 N. Main Street, Suite 2, in downtown Aberdeen, South Dakota. Open to all shoppers, the co-op specializes in natural, organic, locally sourced, and fair-trade products. Through its cooperative structure, members can participate in the co-op’s governance and help shape its mission and offerings — reinforcing community connection and shared values.

## Pomegranate Market

Pomegranate Market is a locally owned natural-and-organic grocery and prepared-food retailer in Sioux Falls that prioritizes fresh, sustainably produced, and regionally sourced foods. The store’s neighborhood location and expansion into a downtown site reflect a strategic commitment to improving urban access to healthy food. By curating produce, dairy, meat, and specialty items from small and mid-scale regional suppliers, Pomegranate functions as a dependable market outlet that strengthens local producer livelihoods. Its prepared-food offerings, catering services, and community orientation further deepen consumer–producer connections and contribute to the diversification and resilience of South Dakota’s local food system.

## Sioux Falls Food Co-Op

The Sioux Falls Food Co-op is a member-owned cooperative grocery that operates with an explicit mission to increase access to sustainable, healthy, and locally sourced food within the Sioux Falls region. Grounded in cooperative governance, the Co-op prioritizes procurement from small and mid-scale regional producers, curating produce, dairy, meat, and prepared foods that create dependable market outlets for local suppliers. In addition to retailing local products, the Co-op provides prepared-food services, community programming, and membership benefits that collectively deepen consumer–producer relationships and bolster food literacy. By circulating revenue within the local economy and sustaining diversified market channels, the Co-op strengthens the resilience, equity, and economic viability of the regional food system.

## South Dakota Farm Stands

South Dakota farm stands play a vital role in supporting the state’s local food system. They provide fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables to both community members and visitors, fostering access to nutritious and locally sourced foods. These stands contribute to the local economy, offer nutrient-dense ingredients, and help maintain food production within the community. The website below serves as a valuable resource for accessing information on the locations, products, and offerings of farm stands and farmers markets throughout South Dakota.

## Watertown Farmers Market

The Watertown Farmers Market takes pride in providing the community with access to fresh, locally produced foods. Its core values emphasize healthy and sustainable living while addressing and reducing food insecurity. The market features a variety of offerings, including fresh produce, locally made foods, artisanal products, and live music, creating a vibrant community atmosphere. Operating seasonally on Wednesdays, the Watertown Farmers Market continues to serve as a cornerstone of the local food system.

# Government, and Public Support

The Government and Public Support cluster represents agencies and councils that provide regulatory oversight, funding, and policy support for the local food system. Organizations operate at local, state, federal, tribal, and regional levels and influence local food policy, infrastructure investment, and program implementation. On the map, this cluster includes four state agencies, two federal agencies, and one local government. Also included are two regional entities as well as three tribal organizations that help shape local food initiatives. Together, these organizations illustrate the range public sector involvement in local food, ranging from disbursement of funds, technical assistance, and program administration to support local food across South Dakota.

## **Rapid City Sustainability Council**

The Rapid City Sustainability Committee (RCSC) is a municipal advisory body dedicated to promoting economic, social, and environmental sustainability within Rapid City. In recent years, the committee has increasingly focused on strengthening local food systems. Initiatives include exploring the development of a downtown food hub and an indoor farmers market to enhance access to locally produced foods. The RCSC also collaborates with Indigenous food leaders, such as Lakota chef Sean Sherman, to promote Indigenous food systems and cultural food sovereignty. Additionally, the committee supports urban agriculture, home gardening, and hydroponics education, aiming to build a resilient and equitable food infrastructure in the region.

## **South Dakota Department of Education**

The South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) advances local food systems through its Farm-to-School program, which connects schools with local producers to provide fresh, locally grown foods in school meals. The program encompasses three core elements: the procurement of local foods, nutrition and agriculture education, and the establishment of school gardens. These initiatives aim to educate students about food production, promote healthy eating habits, and strengthen the local economy. The SD DOE collaborates with partners such as SDSU Extension and Dakota Rural Action to support schools in implementing Farm-to-School activities, providing resources including toolkits, training, and networking opportunities.

## **South Dakota Department of Health**

The South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH) plays a pivotal role in promoting nutrition and supporting local food systems throughout the state. Through programs such as the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) initiative, the SD DOH provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and access to healthy foods for eligible families, thereby enhancing food security and public health. Additionally, the department's Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan outlines strategies to encourage healthy eating and active lifestyles, contributing to the development of sustainable local food environments. Collaborations with organizations such as Feeding South Dakota further extend the department's capacity to address food access and nutrition education.

## **South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources**

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) is the lead state agency overseeing agriculture, food systems, and natural resources in South Dakota. It plays a key role in supporting local food infrastructure and procurement through programs such as the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA), which connects South Dakota producers with food-insecure communities through direct purchasing and distribution. DANR also administers the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program, which invests in aggregation, processing, and storage to enhance regional food resilience. These efforts help expand market access for producers and strengthen food security across the state.

## **South Dakota Department of Tourism**

The South Dakota Department of Tourism actively promotes agritourism as a strategy to strengthen local food systems and rural economies. Through the AgritourismSD program, a collaboration with SDSU Extension, the department provides a two-year intensive educational initiative designed to equip farmers and ranchers with the skills and knowledge necessary to develop successful agritourism enterprises. This program includes workshops and resources that assist participants in integrating tourism into their agricultural operations, thereby creating new revenue streams and enhancing visitor experiences. Additionally, the department maintains a comprehensive online directory of agritourism attractions, including farm stays, U-pick operations, and culinary events, connecting consumers with authentic South Dakota farm experiences.

## **North Central Regional Food Business Center**

The North Central Regional Food Business Center, led by the Region Five Development Commission (R5DC), serves the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Its mission is to strengthen small- and mid-sized agricultural value chains by providing technical assistance, infrastructure support, and market access.

# Government, and Public Support

## **South Dakota's Planning and Development Districts**

South Dakota's Planning and Development Districts, including entities such as the Southeast Council of Governments (SECOG), play a crucial role in strengthening local food systems by providing technical assistance and grant-writing support to communities and organizations. These districts assist stakeholders in navigating complex funding opportunities, including the USDA's Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program, by supporting application processes, ensuring compliance, and facilitating project development. For example, SECOG serves as a Regional Technical Assistance Provider for the North Central Regional Food Business Center, helping small- and mid-sized farm and food businesses access resources to expand operations and improve market access. Through these efforts, Planning and Development Districts are instrumental in enhancing the capacity and resilience of South Dakota's local food infrastructure.

## **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)**

The South Dakota office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and landowners to enhance soil health, water quality, and environmental sustainability. Through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), NRCS supports conservation practices that directly benefit local food producers, including high tunnels, cover cropping, and pollinator habitat restoration. NRCS staff work directly with producers to design conservation plans that align with both ecological objectives and farm profitability.

## **United States Department of Agriculture**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the federal agency responsible for supporting the nation's food, agriculture, natural resources, and nutrition systems through research, regulation, technical assistance, and program administration. In the context of local and regional food systems, the USDA plays a central role in guiding policy, ensuring food safety, expanding market opportunities, and supporting producers through programs such as NRCS conservation services, Rural Development grants and loans, Farm Service Agency assistance, and Food and Nutrition Service programs that shape school meals and community nutrition. USDA's work influences nearly every level of the food system by providing infrastructure support, funding, data, and guidance that help strengthen agricultural viability and improve food access across states and Tribal nations.

## **Intertribal Buffalo Council**

The Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), founded in 1992, focuses on buffalo restoration and advancing food sovereignty within Native American communities. Its founding and ongoing mission is to restore buffalo to tribal lands for cultural and spiritual revitalization and preservation. The ITBC provides education on sustainable buffalo management, as sustainability remains one of the core principles of its work. Additionally, the natural behaviors of buffalo support environmental sustainability and ecosystem health.

## **The Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board**

The Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board aims to help tribal members achieve health through the food they eat. Nutrition education is important to them as they equip members to make autonomous food choices. The Great Plains Good Health and Wellness Program promotes healthy lifestyle choices by educating tribal communities on the importance of nutrition for overall health. In addition, they encourage traditional and sustainable food practices while enhancing community resilience and equitable food access.

## **The Intertribal Agriculture Council**

The Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) is a national organization founded in 1987 to promote the conservation, development, and use of agricultural resources for the betterment of Native American communities. In South Dakota, the IAC plays a pivotal role in supporting tribal producers by providing technical assistance, advocating for policy changes, and facilitating access to markets. Through initiatives like the National Intertribal Food Business Center, the IAC empowers food businesses by expanding market opportunities, enhancing access to capital, and streamlining regulatory pathways for growth. By fostering entrepreneurship and private-sector partnerships, the IAC ensures that Indian Country food systems contribute significantly to the broader American food system and national food security.