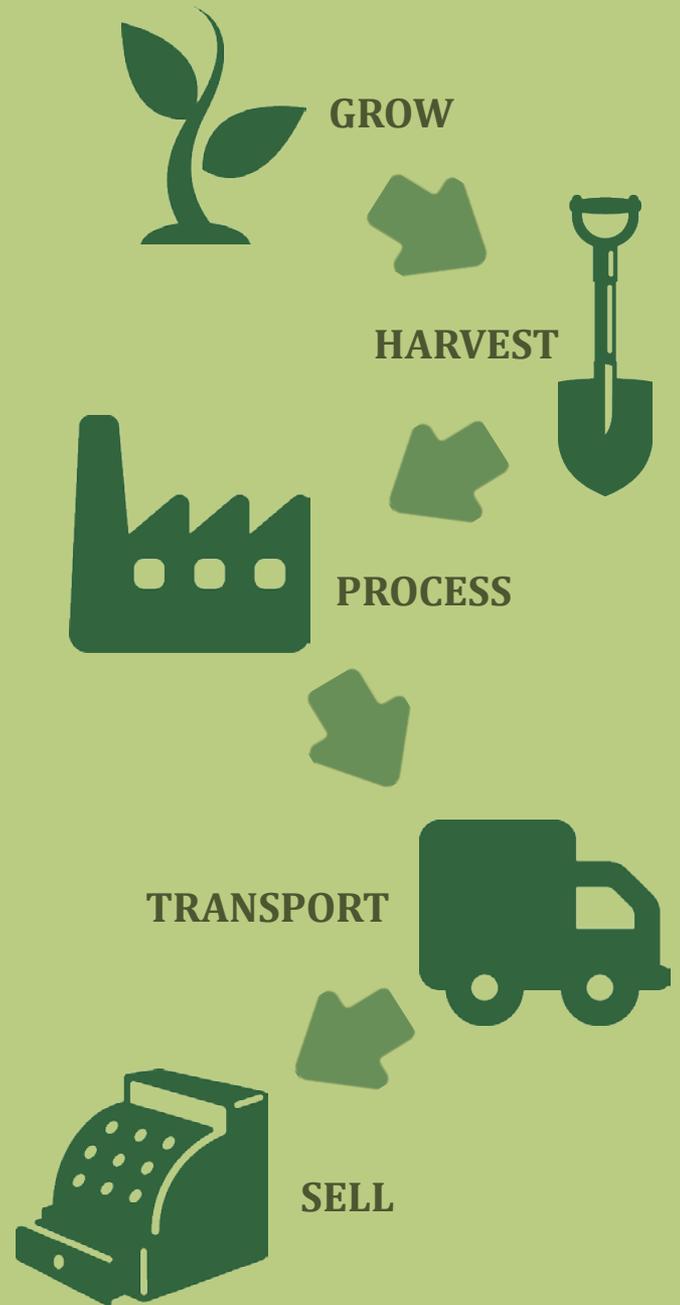
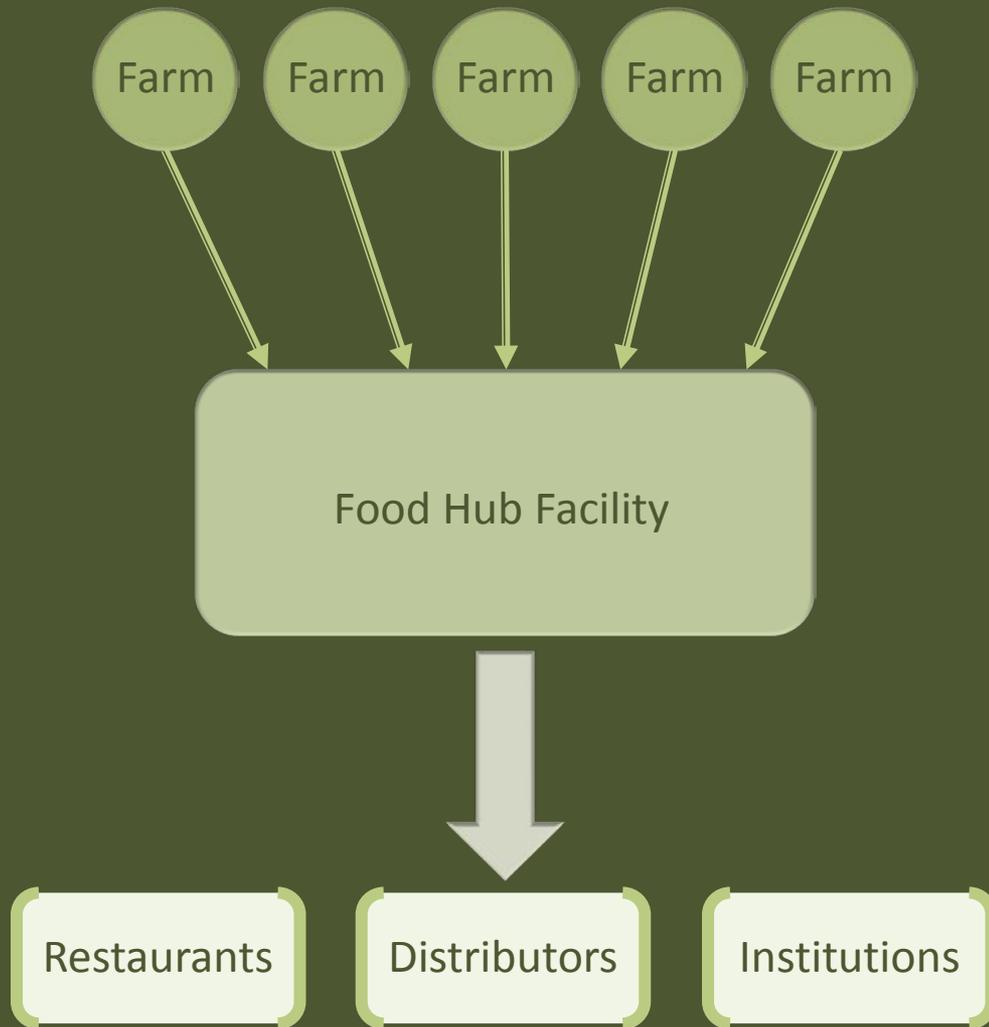


Food Hubs: 21st Century Agriculture

Steven Thomas



Food Hubs: 21st Century Agriculture



Food Hub: a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.

Food Hubs: 21st Century Agriculture

Benefits

- ⚙️ Expand market opportunities for agricultural producers
- ⚙️ Create jobs
- ⚙️ Provide storage
- ⚙️ Provide business development through training, technical assistance and mentoring
- ⚙️ Provide new market outlets
- ⚙️ Increase access to fresh, locally grown foods for consumers

Rule 1:

The single principle and over-riding reason to create a Food Hub is to ensure the economic sustainability of the small- and medium-size farm operation.

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Characteristics of a Successful Project

- ⚙️ Identify demand from customer base
- ⚙️ Identify support from farmers
- ⚙️ Strong institutional and political support
- ⚙️ Viable lead development agency
- ⚙️ Committed and knowledgeable management team
- ⚙️ Serious financial support leading to economic sustainability

Rule 2:

By coordinating crop production, you create economies of scale that serve customers by providing a diversity of crops and a level of service that no one grower could provide individually.

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Business Models

- ⚙️ Management/Producer
- ⚙️ Wholesale/Retail
- ⚙️ Farmer-owned Cooperative
- ⚙️ Non-profit
- ⚙️ Virtual/Online Platform

Build an economy around a local food system, support local farmers, create jobs for local urban and rural people, and develop the region's ability to retain more of the wealth spent on food in the area.

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Customers

- ⚙️ Distributors
- ⚙️ Supermarkets
- ⚙️ Restaurants
- ⚙️ Health Care Systems
- ⚙️ Universities and Colleges
- ⚙️ School Systems
- ⚙️ Non-profit Organizations

Rule 3:

A stable, core customer base is essential to the economic viability of the Food Hub as a business enterprise.

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Why Georgia State Farmers Markets

- ⚙️ **Maintain the economic viability of the individual State Farmers Markets**
- ⚙️ **Revitalize the Markets to attract locally grown/produced agricultural products**
- ⚙️ **Introduce educational components to assist in the creation of new agriculture-based business**
- ⚙️ **Most infrastructure already in place**

The Georgia Department of Agriculture Markets Section administers nine State Farmers Markets which form a network for sales of fruits and vegetables throughout Georgia and the Southeast. These facilities maintain a viable market for Georgia farmers and farm products in the communities where they are located. State Farmers Markets are responsible for over one billion in sales each year.

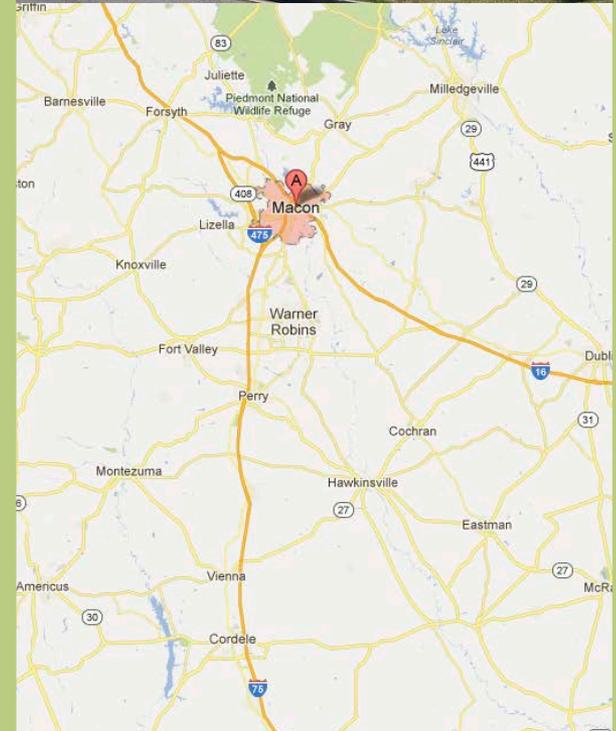
Atlanta
Augusta
Macon (1)
Savannah (2)
Thomasville
Cairo
Cordele (3)
Moultrie
Valdosta

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Macon State Farmers Market Food Hub

- ⚙️ Unlimited infrastructure available for growth
- ⚙️ Food Hub
 - Refrigerated Storage
 - Dry Storage
 - Loading Docks
- ⚙️ State Licensed Kitchen (Retail)
- ⚙️ Community Kitchen (Educational)
- ⚙️ Food Processing Center

Macon Food Hub



Food Hubs: 21st Century Agriculture

Macon State Farmers Market Food Hub

Cooperative effort

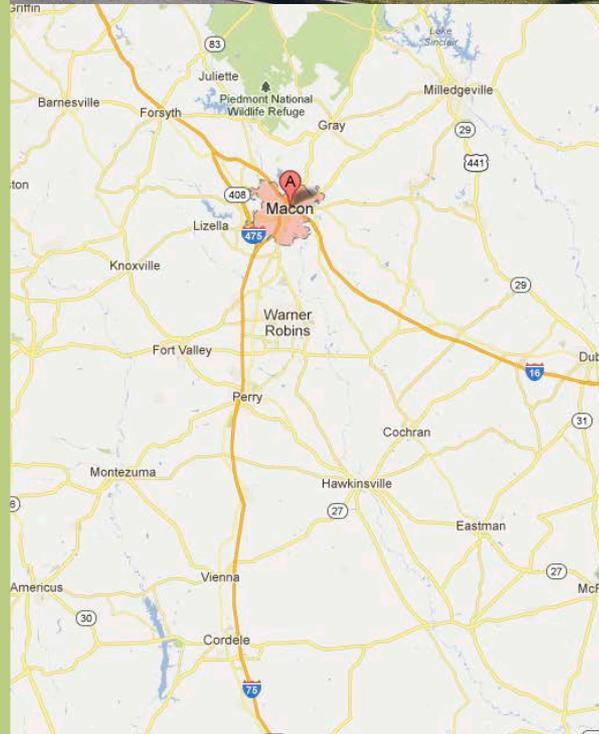
⚙️ 10 farmers

⚙️ 4 non-profit organizations

⚙️ 2 state agencies

⚙️ 1 federal agency

Macon Food Hub



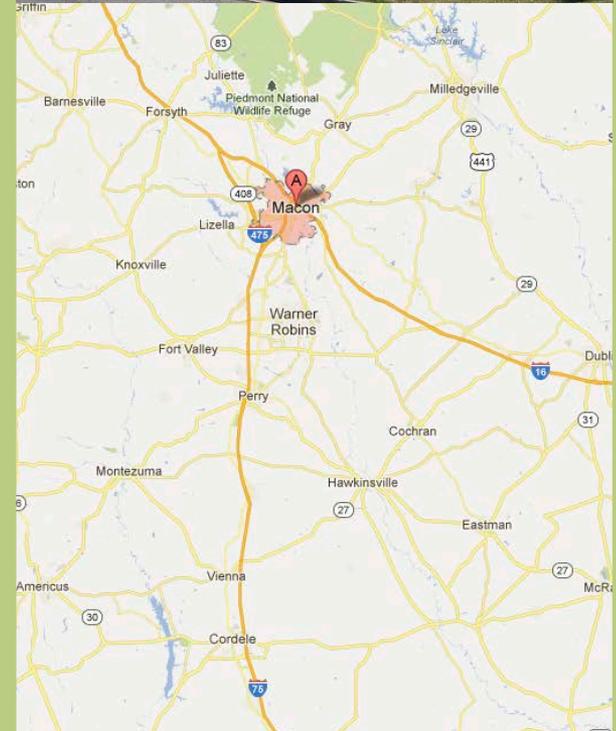
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Macon State Farmers Market Food Hub

What went wrong

- ⚙️ Lack of dedicated principal project manager
- ⚙️ Too many competing ideological outcomes proposed
- ⚙️ Community-focused nonprofit organizations
- ⚙️ Farmers should farm; sellers should sell

Macon Food Hub

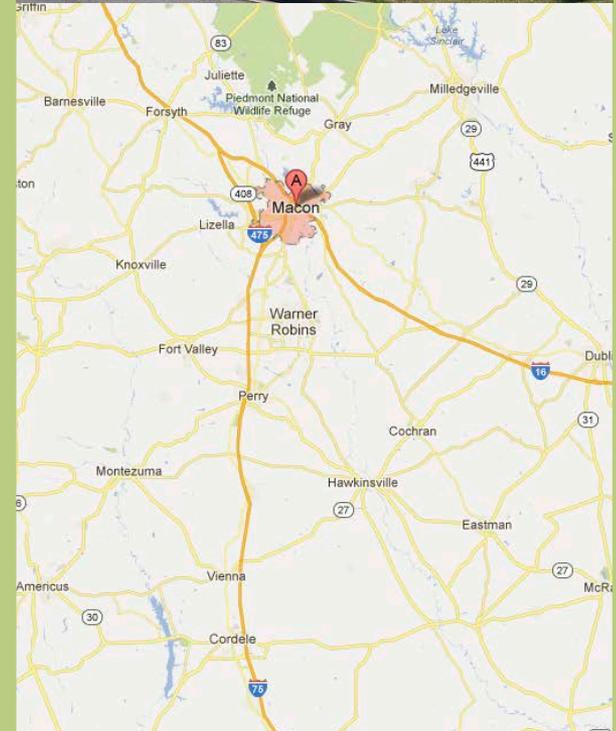


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How to make it work

- ⚙️ Hire a dedicated principal project manager
- ⚙️ Make it easy for farmers to sell to Food Hub
- ⚙️ One or two core distribution customers
- ⚙️ Make it easy and affordable for customers to purchase from Food Hub
- ⚙️ Pay-to-play

Macon Food Hub

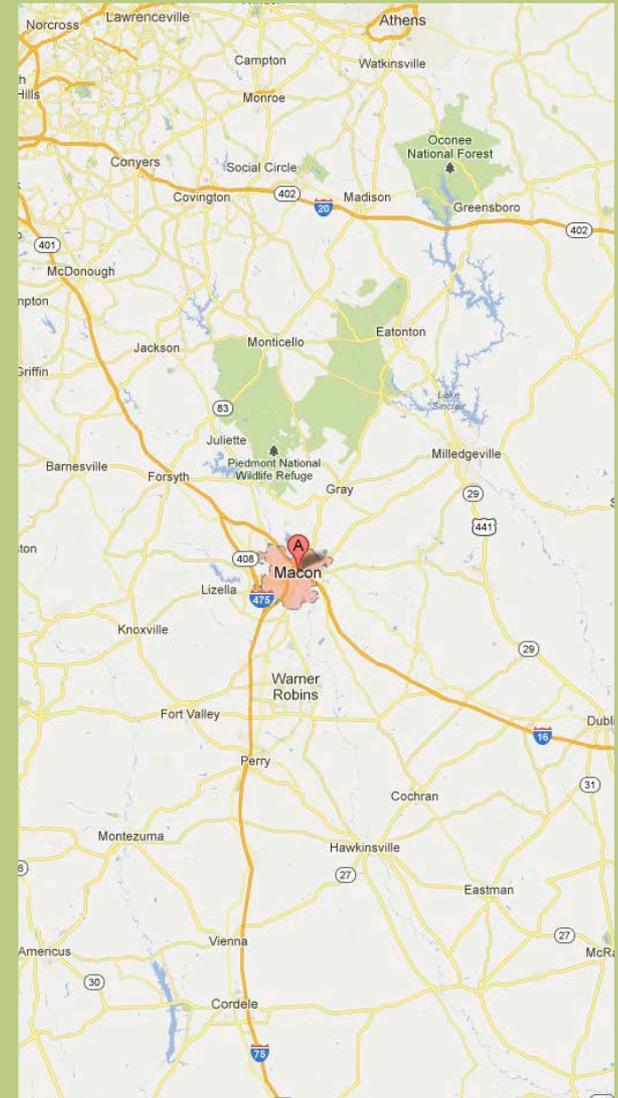


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Getting Started

- ⚙️ **Set up legal and financial entity**
- ⚙️ **Obtain letters of intent from:**
 - Farmers**
 - Customers**
 - State and Local Agencies**
- ⚙️ **Obtain funding from State and Federal Agencies**
- ⚙️ **Hire management team**
- ⚙️ **Contract with farmers**

Macon Food Hub

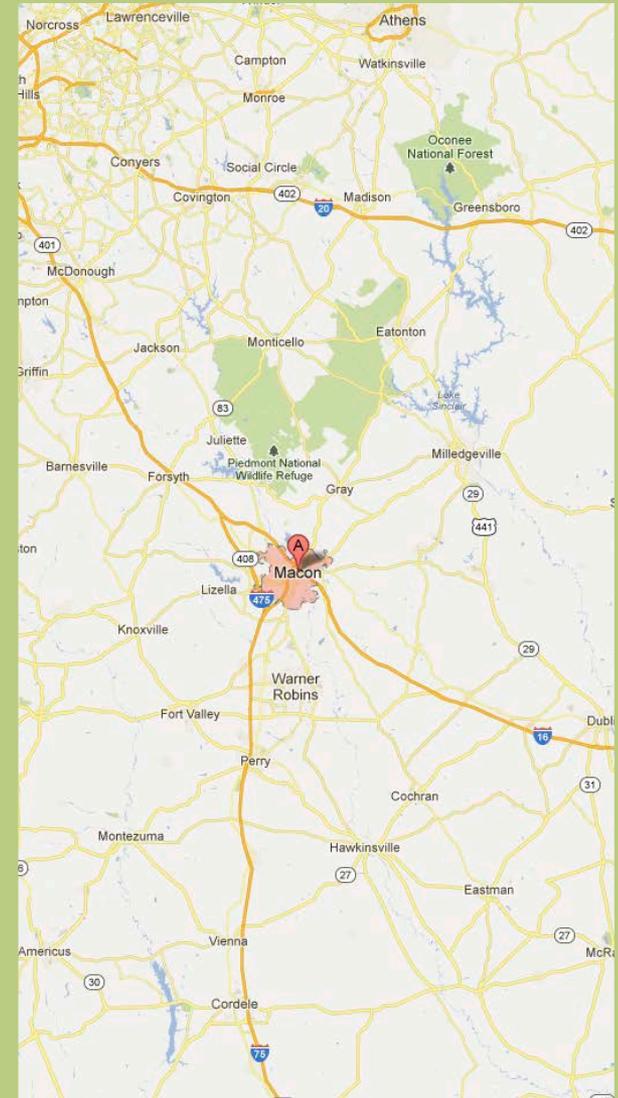


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State and Local Agencies

- ⚙️ Georgia Department of Agriculture
- ⚙️ Georgia Center for Innovation in Agriculture
- ⚙️ Georgia AgriTourism Association
- ⚙️ County Economic Development Authorities

Macon Food Hub

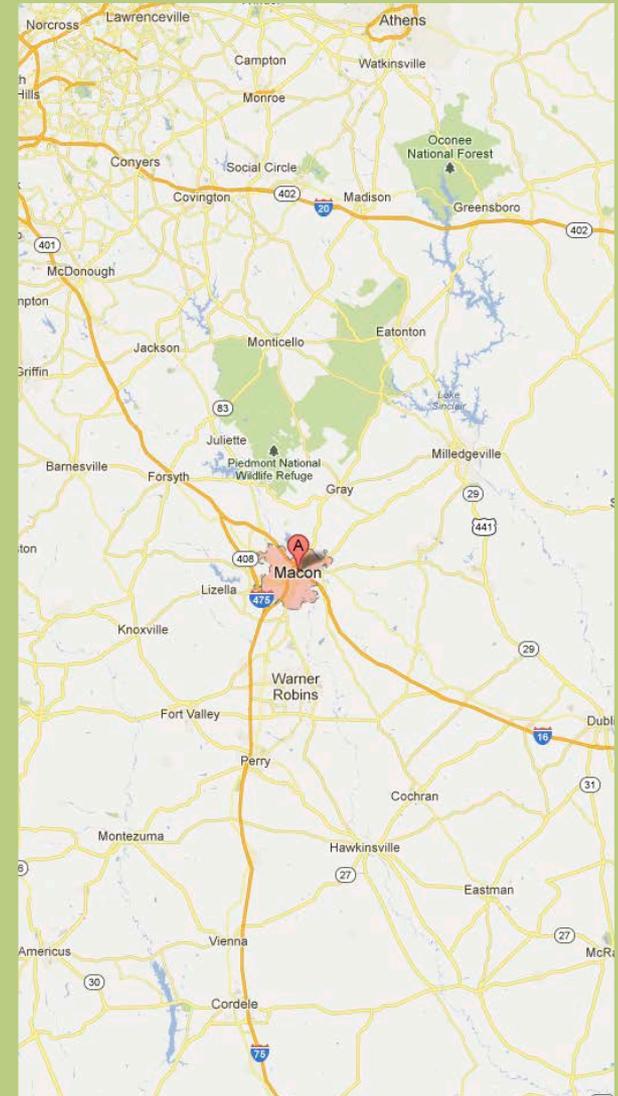


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Federal Agencies

- ⚙️ Rural Economic Development
- ⚙️ Agricultural Marketing Service
- ⚙️ Food Nutrition Service
- ⚙️ Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Rural Economic Development Counties



Macon Food Hub

Although Bibb County is not one of the RED Strike Force counties, it is centrally located to service those counties.

Over time, as more Food Hubs are added in Augusta, Moultrie, Savannah and Cordele, all Strike Force counties will be covered.