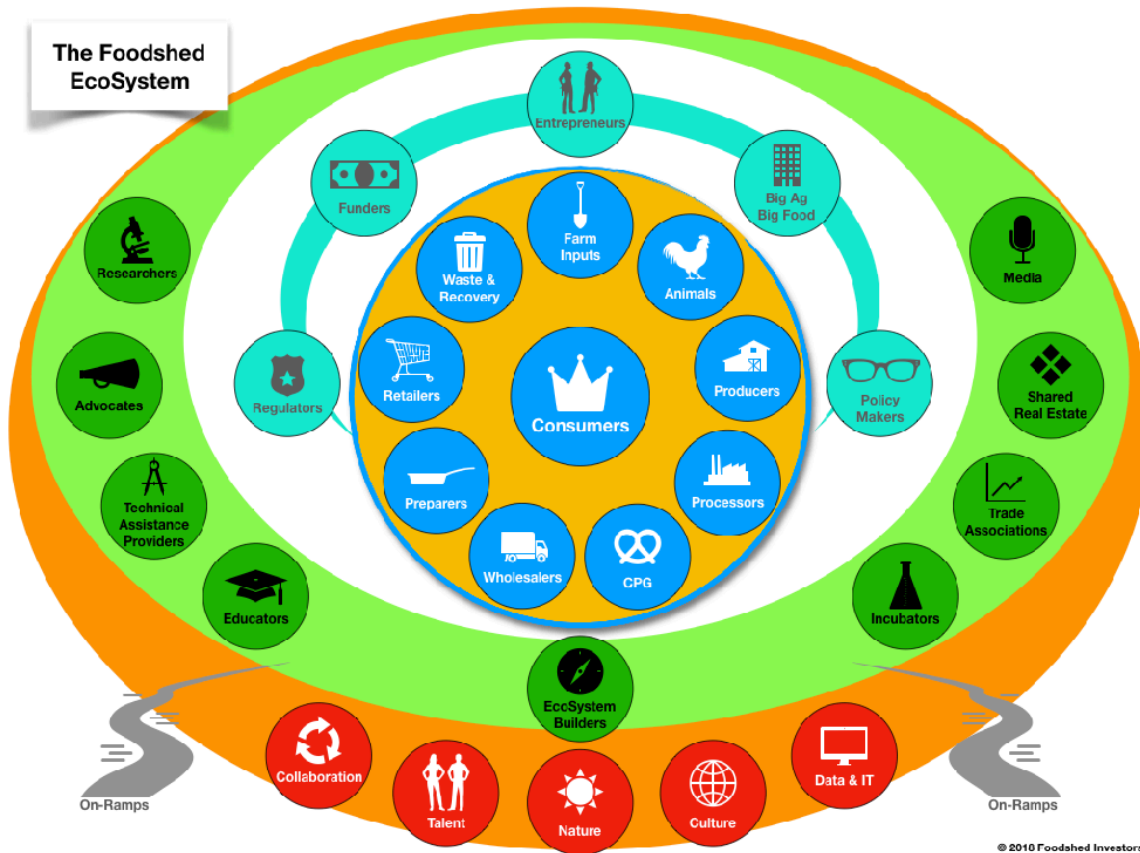




Foodshed EcoSystem Framework

The Foodshed EcoSystem



What is a Foodshed?

"A food shed is the geographical area between where food is produced and where that food is consumed."

The food shed concept is similar to a watershed—both encompass the flow of a substance from its origin to its ultimate destination."

Michigan State Extension

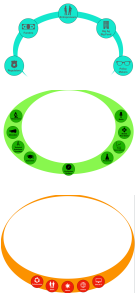
We've developed this "framework" as a mental model for thinking about the foodshed ecosystem. It builds on work by both the Kauffman Foundation and Vermont's Farm-to-Plate project.

Core Components



Many folks think of the "food system" as it's core components: the inner orange circle, with farmers and distributors and retailers and the like. It is, but it is also much more. Some diagrams omit both animals and us eaters and drinkers. We think consumers drive the need for the whole thing. And animals participate with the ultimate price. They deserve to be included, and treated humanely up to market day.

Enablers, Supporters, & Context



Surrounding core food system activities are their direct enablers: the companies that do the activities - and their funders - as well as the policy makers that set the rules and the regulators that enforce them.

Beyond that, there is a whole world of supporters, influencers, and cheerleaders. One of the most recent arrivals on that scene is the EcoSystem Builder, whose job it is to help everyone else connect, collaborate, and succeed.

Of course we wouldn't want to forget the overall context in which that food system operates, particularly our old friend Mother Nature! Other important aspects of context include the actual people (the "talent") available to work in the food system; the overriding national, regional, and "food" culture; the modern world of data and information technology; and the web of collaboration and mutual benefit that binds it all together.

Selected Components

Farm Inputs: land, soil fertilizer, feed, equipment, precision ag tech, energy, services.

CPG: consumer packaged goods, brands, co-packers.

Wholesalers: brokering, aggregating, storing, distributing and delivering.

Preparers: for end-customer consumption: restaurants, cafeterias, caterers.

Retailers: grocery stores, farmers markets, mobile farm-to-institution trucks, end-customer delivery companies.

Waste & Recovery: trash haulers, food waste recovery, composters, hunger agencies, up cyclers.

Shared Real Estate: co-working, shared commercial kitchens.

Nature: weather, soil, ecology, humans, organisms.

Culture: the building of social capital with a focus on the common good and food culture - honoring and helping food cultures from various groups.

Talent: the humans, the workers, the environment that attracts and retains quality, creative, hard working people.

Data: information technology, precision agriculture, SaaS, mobile apps, big data, little data, just right data.

Collaboration: intersections facilitating the interaction of people, ideas and resources; cooperation, trust; reciprocity.

On Ramps



On-Ramps are access points so that all interested people can participate, with particular attention to historically un- or under-represented peoples. On-ramps should be explicitly built and promoted by the players within an ecosystem.

Foodshed Investors invests in sustainable farmers and their customers and vendors in local communities throughout the U.S. to increase the supply of good, clean, fair food, with particular emphasis on access to healthy nutrition and quality jobs for underserved peoples.

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