

WASHINGTON STATE FOOD POLICY FORUM

Washington State Food Policy Forum

APRIL 2, 2026



Agenda

- 1:00pm **Welcome & Get Settled** (10 min.)
- 1:10pm **WSDA Agricultural Viability Report** (75 min.)
- *Madison Roy and Kelly McLain, WSDA*
 - *Presentation, Q&A, and Discussion*
- 2:25pm **Diversifying Voices Team Update** (10 min.)
- 2:35pm **Impromptu Networking** (15 min.)
- 2:50pm **Upcoming Administrative & Vice Chair Nominations** (15 min.)
- 3:05pm **Progress Toward Forum Priorities** (15 min.)
- 3:20pm **Closing Reflections** (10 min.)
- 3:30pm **Adjourn**

Purpose & Objectives

- Understand the results of WSDA's Ag Viability Phase 1 Report, the direction for the Phase 2 Report, and provide feedback.
- Learn about the Forum's efforts to broaden participation and diversify voices in Forum discussions and activities.
- Build and strengthen connections across the food system.

WSDA Ag Viability Report: Presentation & Discussion

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WSDA Ag Viability Report: Presentation & Discussion

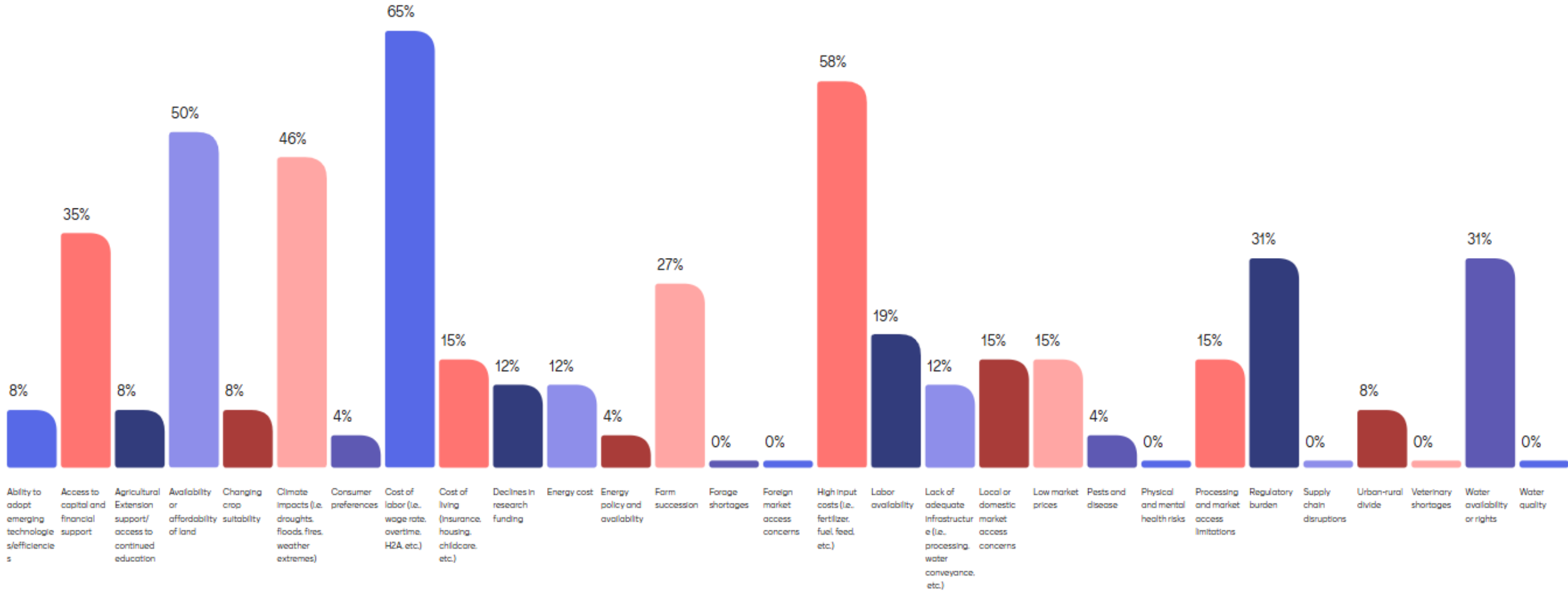
Please welcome Madison Roy and Kelly McLain from WSDA

Session objectives

- Learn more about the results of the Phase 1 report
- Learn more about the intent and direction of the Phase 2 report
- Provide input on high-level topics, including challenges and opportunities, to help inform WSDA's efforts for Phase 2

Poll Question and Responses

From your perspective, what are the top 5 challenges impacting agriculture over the last five years?



Agricultural Viability in Washington State

*Phase 1:
Washington Agriculture at a Crossroads*

Madison Roy, Agricultural Economist

Kelly McLain, Assistant Director, Agricultural Environmental Services/ Policy Advisor to the Director

WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE AT A CROSSROADS:

A Baseline Assessment of Agricultural Viability

FEBRUARY 2026



This report provides a high-level snapshot and establishes a baseline for a comprehensive agricultural viability study to be released in July 2026.



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

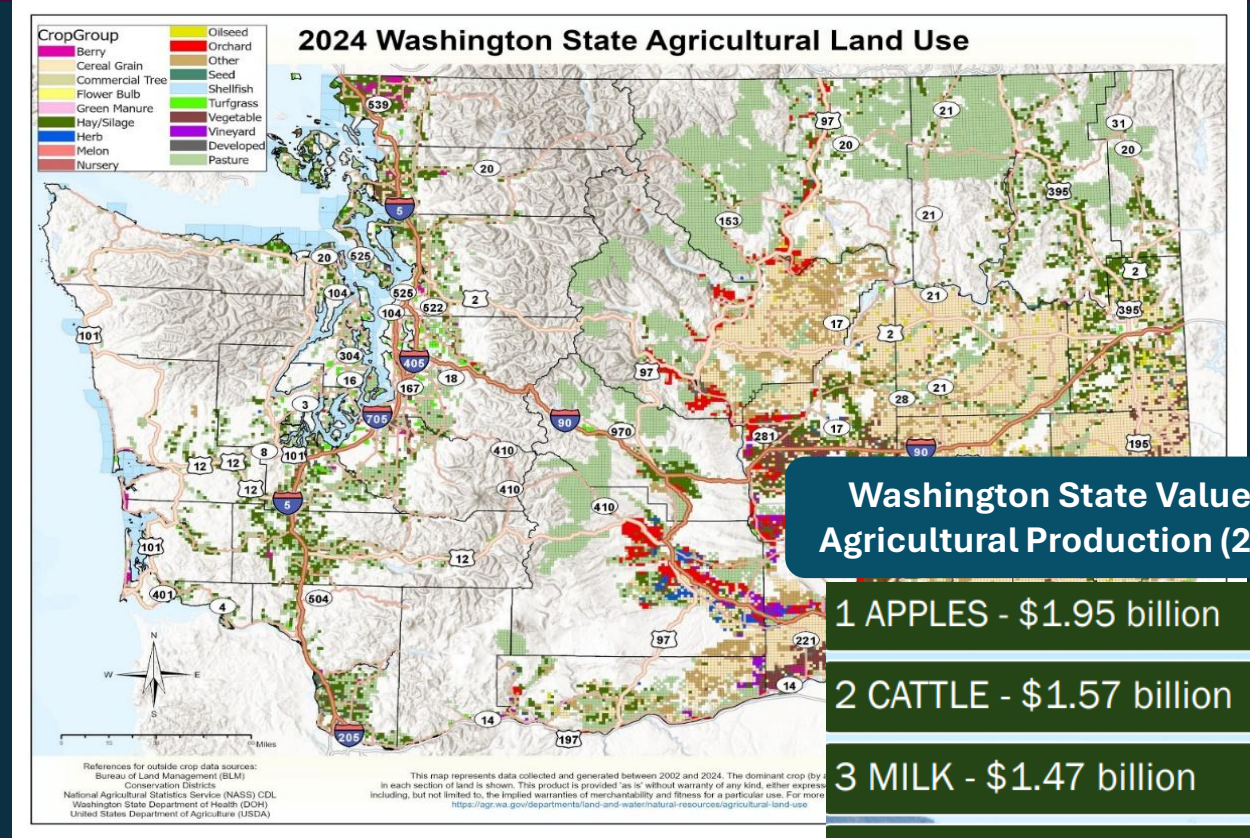
Washington Agriculture

- **\$12.9 billion** – market value of crops and livestock only (2024)
- **300+** - crops grown in Washington
- **32,076** – farms (2022). 94% family owned

Washington's Top Export Markets (2024)

Country	2024 Export Value	Top Commodities
Canada	\$1.37 Billion	Seafood, Apples, Cherries
Japan	\$1.12 Billion	Frozen potatoes, Hay, Wheat
Mexico	\$908 Million	Apples, Frozen potatoes, Malt
China	\$693 Million	Beef, Seafood, Hay
South Korea	\$508 Million	Frozen potatoes, Hay, Wheat

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division via wisertrade.org



Washington State Value of Agricultural Production (2024)

- 1 APPLES - \$1.95 billion
- 2 CATTLE - \$1.57 billion
- 3 MILK - \$1.47 billion
- 4 POTATOES - \$1.03 billion
- 5 WHEAT - \$747 million
- 6 ONIONS - \$477 million
- 7 HAY - \$474 million
- 8 EGGS - \$463 million
- 9 CHERRIES - \$434 million
- 10 HOPS - \$320 million

Strengths

- Geographic and climatic advantages
- Natural resource advantages
- Built infrastructure and networks
- Unique farms and food businesses

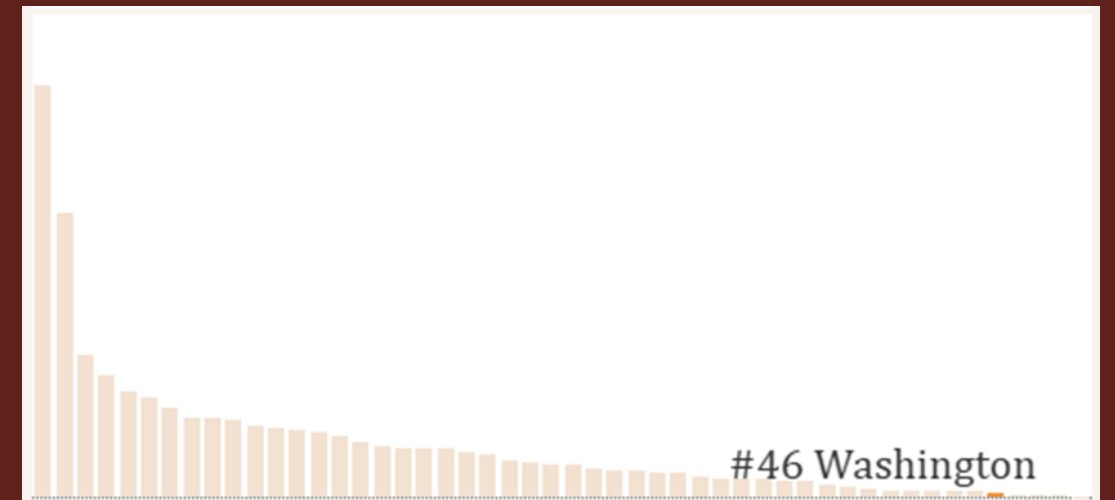
Washington Agriculture

Weaknesses

- Rising input costs, low crop prices
- Labor and workforce concerns
- Trade challenges
- Increasing land costs and development pressure
- Growing urban- rural divide
- Changing climatic conditions
- Declines in research funding
- Infrastructure challenges

Net farm income

2008–24

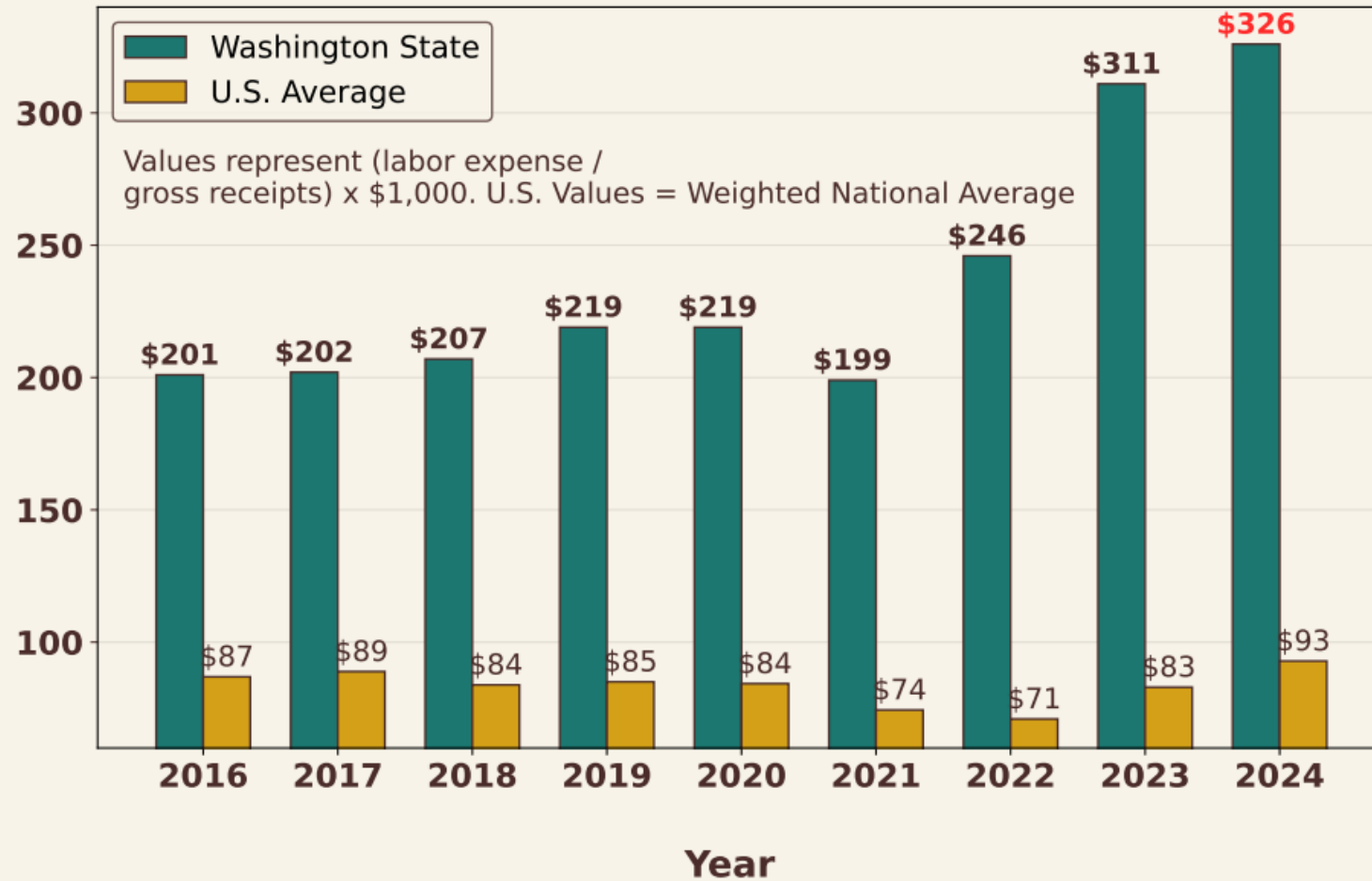


Washington State vs U.S. Average (2016-2024)

Labor Expense per \$1,000 of Gross Farm Receipts

Labor Expense includes hired and contract labor

Labor Expense per \$1,000 of Gross Farm Receipts



Washington Agriculture *Opportunities*

Trade and International Markets



Improvements in Agricultural Technology



Farm and Food System Development at Home



Supporting Farmer and Farmworker Mental Health



Opportunities and Strategies to Mitigate Climate Risks



Workforce Development and Agricultural Education



Clean Energy



Questions: Phase I Report?

WSDA Phase 1 Report :
Washington Agriculture
at a Crossroads





Phase II: WSDA Agricultural Viability Report

Agricultural Viability: Phase II

Goals & Outline

- Agricultural economy (economics)
- Labor
- Trade
- Small to mid-scale, direct & locally marketing farms
- Food systems
- Farmer and farm worker wellbeing
- Climate and energy
- Water quality and quantity
- Animal agriculture
- Plant disease and insects



Questions?



Madison Roy
Agricultural Economist
Madison.Roy@agr.wa.gov



Kelly McLain
Assistant Director, Agricultural
Environmental Services/ Policy Advisor
to the Director
kelly.mclainardal@agr.wa.gov



agr.wa.gov



Diversifying Voices Team Update

WASHINGTON STATE FOOD POLICY FORUM

Team Roster

Name	Affiliation
Anna Nepomuceno	Northwest Harvest
Brian Estes	LINC Foods
Claire Lane	Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition
Hilary Aten	State Conservation Commission
Kyle Unland	Department of Health
Laura Raymond	Department of Agriculture
Marcia Ostrom	WSU Food Systems
Melissa Spear	Tilth Alliance
Mia Gregerson	WA State Legislature

Diversifying Voices Team: February 27 Meeting

The team shared:

- What each team is learning in the process of applying the equity filter.
- How the Diversifying Voices Team can support the consistent integration of equity and diverse perspectives into all stages of the Forum's work.
- How to utilize the output of questions that emerged from applying the Equity Filter to guide next steps for topical teams.

June 2021

Identifying How Actions and Recommendations of the Forum Impact Equitable Outcomes for Washingtonians

In the Summer of 2020, the [Washington State Food Policy Forum](#) (Forum) committed in its [Early Implementation Action Report](#) to identify how actions and recommendations of the Forum impact equitable outcomes for Washingtonians (page 10). Based on this commitment, in Spring 2021, the Forum developed and tested this equity filter.² The following questions will be used to understand how the Forum's actions and recommendations have different impacts on the diversity of geographic and demographic communities in Washington. The intention of this filter is to help guide the Forum in its work to develop and take action on recommendations so that the Forum contributes to the development of a food system that benefits all people in Washington. This is considered a living document in that the Forum intends to align its work on equity with guidance provided by Washington State agencies, such as the newly funded Office of Equity.

Definitions

Equity: The act of developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people. Equity is distinct from equality which refers to everyone having the same treatment without accounting for differing needs or circumstances. Equity has a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups.¹



Source: <https://bit.ly/3nqgcv.org/equity>

Populations to consider: Inequities are not inherent to an individual's identity, rather they are influenced by social determinants that systematically marginalize groups due to their identity. Inequities can be exacerbated or alleviated by intersecting identities. When determining who is likely to be burdened by a proposal, the Forum considers not only historical systemic inequities, but present-day systemic inequities and present-day vulnerability. The Forum begins by thinking expansively about who is likely to be burdened by a proposal. To get started, consider the list of populations on slide 9 in this [State Board of Health presentation](#).

Proposal: A policy, program, practice, action, or budget decision that has been identified by the Forum.

¹ Draft DFM glossary of foundational DEI terms to create a shared language.

² The filter was developed by the Forum's Equity Subcommittee, members include: Amy Elings (DOH), Brian Estes (JLNC Foods), Christina Wang (Northwest Harvest), Claire Lane (WA State Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition), Evan Sheffels (WSDA), Kate DeLoren (SIC), Laura Raymond (KISDA), Leana Lewis (WSE), Representative Mary Dye, Mary Embleton (King Conservation District), Melissa Spear (Trib Alliance), Nancy Warner (Initiative for Rural Innovation and

Equity Filter Application Reflections

- This year, the **Equity Filter** is surfacing questions that can influence how **teams approach** information collation/secondary analysis and help determine when and which additional voices should be brought in
- Implement an “**equity in every step**” approach by intentionally integrating equity into all meeting agendas. This could include:
 - Adding a regular, visual reminder of the Equity Filter questions during topical team meetings
 - Allowing time for deeper discussion and reflections on equity considerations by developing a modified version of the Equity Filter that can be used more regularly
 - Each time a team makes a decision (where to focus or how to approach the work), it should signal to the team to apply the Equity Filter. The Equity Filter output should then remain visible and central as the work moves forward so the team can refer back to it at each call
 - Developing a list of populations to consider that more specifically addresses the issues of food and farming

Ideas to Utilize the Output of Questions to Guide Next Steps for Topical Teams

- Review existing data to determine whether some questions can be answered through prior research
- Contact individuals and organizations representing likely beneficiaries and potentially burdened communities to provide perspective on questions emerging from the Equity Filter application
- Invite non-members with relevant experiences into topical team discussions, full Forum meetings, or to review team materials and approach

Impromptu Networking

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Impromptu Networking: Breakout Groups

- All participants will be placed in breakout groups of 3-4 individuals
- **In your breakout group, please take turns sharing:**
 1. Your name and where you sit in Washington's food system
 2. A recent win (big or small) in your work
 3. One challenge that you're navigating right now
- After 10 minutes, we will return to the full group and invite folks to share any highlights or connections that stood out

Upcoming Administrative & Vice Chair Nominations

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Administrative Chair and Vice Chair

Responsibilities:

- Uphold the Forum's managing principles as described in the Forum's charter.
- Act on behalf of the Forum, not independently.
- Serve as a connection between the convening agencies coordinating staff and the Forum membership.
- Attend a Co-Leads meeting once a month (Tuesdays 1-2pm).

Specific roles and activities may include:

- Representing the Food Policy Forum's goals and consensus recommendations in various settings. Settings may include legislative committee meetings, stakeholder groups, conferences, etc. When representing the Forum, the chairs represents the goals and/or consensus recommendations of the Forum, not their personal/professional views or strategies.
- Opening and closing Forum meetings and assisting with managing Forum meetings.
- Participating in the development and revision of Forum meeting agendas.
- Supporting and providing input on the Forum's annual administrative priorities, including:
 - Engaging local food policy councils
 - Diversifying voices in the Forum

The Forum's statute states: *"A majority of the participating members appointed by the directors must appoint an administrative chair for the forum."*

The administrative chair serves a 12-month term and may serve alongside a vice chair, who will have the option to become chair after the term ends.

June 2025-June 2026:

Administrative Chair: Chris Elder

Vice Chair: Jon DeVaney

Process for the Next Round of Appointments

Nominations are needed for two individuals

June 2026-June 2027

- Chair: Jon DeVaney
- **Vice Chair:** *To be appointed*

June 2027-June 2028

- **Chair:** 2026-2027 Vice Chair (if they accept the role)
- **Vice Chair:** *To be appointed*

Process for appointment includes:

- Self-nominate or nominate another member (April-May 2026)
- Vote during Forum meeting (June 4, 2026)
- Appointment (June 4, 2026)

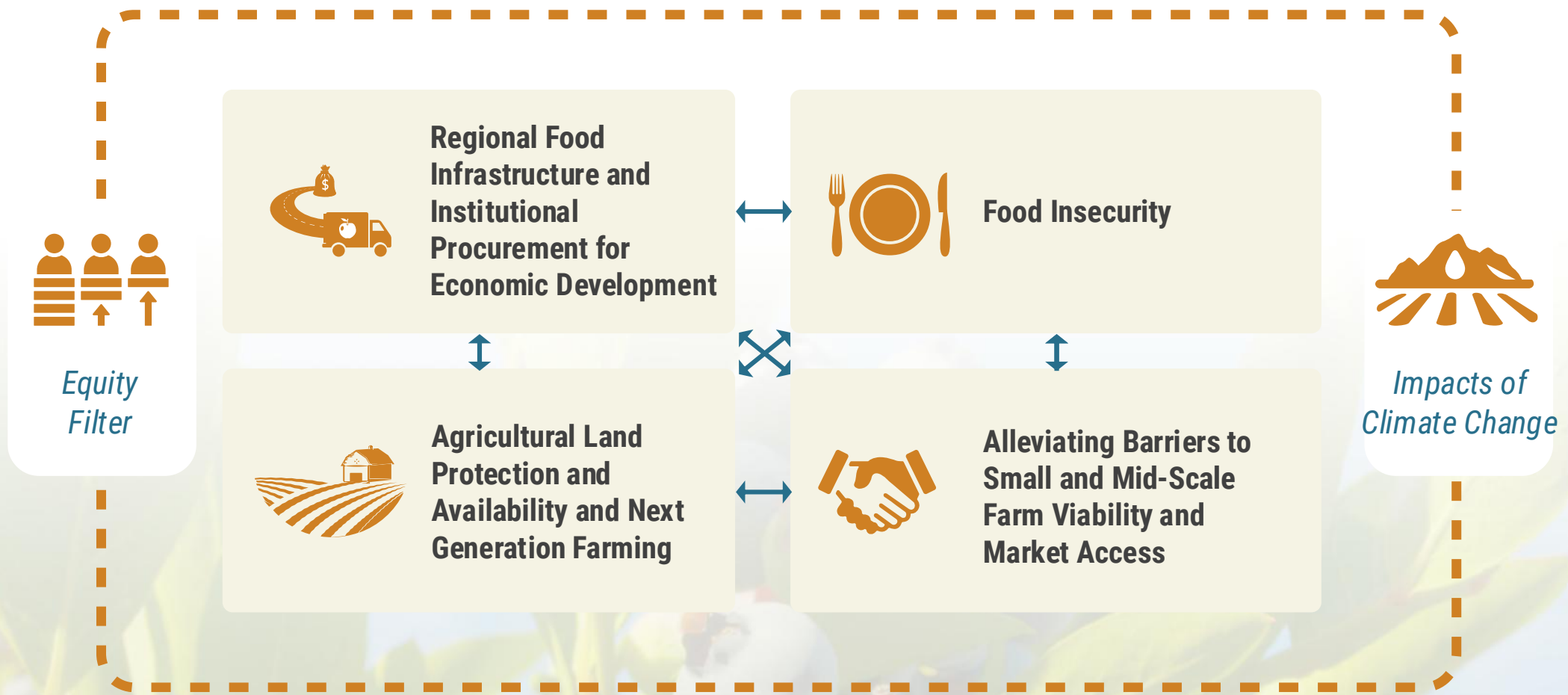
Progress Toward Forum 2025-2027 Priorities

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2025-2027 Topical Teams & Priorities

Team Name	2025-27 Topical Priorities
Impacts of Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Supply for Agriculture and Food Production • Climate Resilience for Agriculture and Food Production
Agricultural Land Protection and Availability and Next Generation Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Planning and Incentives
Alleviating Barriers to Small and Mid-Scale Farm Viability and Market Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Technical Expertise and Knowledge Transfer
Regional Food Infrastructure and Institutional Procurement for Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-Private Partnership Models for Infrastructure Finance • Strategic Infrastructure Planning and Coordination
Food Insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food System Coordination for Food Security • Eligibility and Access for Food Assistance Programs

Topical Teams Status Report



Advancing 2025-2027 Priorities

Team	Impacts of Climate Change	Food Insecurity	Ag Land Protection & Availability & Next Gen Farming	Small & Mid-Scale Farm Viability & Market Access	Regional Food Infrastructure & Institutional Procurement for Economic Development
2025-27 Priority Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Supply for Agriculture & Food Production Climate Resilience for Agriculture & Food Production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination for Food Security Eligibility & Access for Food Assistance Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession Planning & Incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Technical Expertise and Knowledge Transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-Private Partnership Models for Infrastructure Finance Strategic Infrastructure Planning & Coordination
Progress / Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feb 26: Submitted water recs cover letter to the Legislature Continue efforts to elevate the water recommendations toward implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feb 2: Submitted letter to the Legislature demonstrating support of HB 2236 Analyze legislative outcomes and engage in development of statewide food security strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile resources on succession planning models, services, etc. Plan and host a learning session for the Forum in Oct 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1–2 page problem statement that clearly articulates what farm viability means for small- and mid-scale producers, identifies the key challenges they face, and explains why addressing this issue is timely and important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catalog examples of lessons learned from food system infrastructure public private partnerships and convene practitioners and elected leaders to learn together
Forum Role(s)	Communication (amplify & reinforce existing recs); Educate policymakers; Convene stakeholders	Bridge sectors (facilitate coordination); Provide unique stakeholder representation & coordinated, systems-level input	Compile/synthesize data & resources; Facilitate learning session	Increase public & policymaker awareness of viability challenges + impacts of underinvestment	Convene & synthesize practitioner knowledge; Increase public-sector understanding of food-system PPP opportunities

Closing Reflections & Adjourn

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Looking Ahead

- **Admin & Vice Chair nominations:** Self-nominate or nominate another member by the end of May
- Topical team calls in **May** – Look for scheduling emails from the Ross team
- **Next Forum meeting is on June 4, 2026**
 - Afternoon hybrid meeting (1:00-4:00pm) – Option to join via Zoom
 - Planning underway for an in-person site visit in the morning until lunch at Riverbend Ranch and Tenino Ag Innovation Park – Thurston County