

WASHINGTON STATE FOOD POLICY FORUM

Washington State Food Policy Forum

AUGUST 6, 2026



Agenda

- 1:00pm **Welcome & Get Settled** (15 min)
- 1:15pm **Ag Land Protection Team Spotlight: Succession Planning Learning Session** (20 min)
- 1:35pm **Impacts of Climate Change Team Spotlight: Ongoing Water & Climate Conversations** (20 min)
- 1:55pm **WSDA Farm Viability Report Phase 2 Work** (60 min)
- 2:55pm **State Food Security Strategy Implementation** (20 min)
- 3:15pm **State Farm Bill & Farm to School Planning** (30 min)
- 3:45pm **Closing Reflections** (15 min)
- 4:00pm **Adjourn**

Purpose & Objectives

- Discuss an upcoming Forum-led learning session on succession planning.
- Assess emerging areas of activity related to the Forum's priorities and recommendations and identify strategic opportunities for future Forum influence.
- Provide input on key challenges and opportunities facing Washington's small- and mid-scale farms sector to help inform WSDA's Phase 2 Agricultural Viability report.

Ag Land Protection Team Spotlight: Succession Planning Learning Session

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Team Roster

Addie Candib	American Farmland Trust
Caleb Gwerder	WA State Farm Bureau
Chris Elder	King County
Heather Wendt	WA Association of Conservation Districts
Hilary Aten	WA State Conservation Commission
KayDee Gilkey	WA Association of Wheat Growers
Nate Lewis	WA Farmland Trust
Representative Dye	WA State Legislature

October 1 Forum-led Learning Session

Session Topic	Lead	Time
What Succession Planning is and why it's Important	Representative Dye (WA State Legislature)	20 min.
Producer Panel	Facilitator: Addie Candib (American Farmland Trust) Panelists: Kevin Jensen (Riverbrook Ranch) & two other producers (not yet confirmed)	60 min
State-level Succession Planning Services that Exist in Washington	Hilary Aten (WA State Conservation Commission) & Addie Candib (AFT)	30 min.
Successful Succession Planning Models in Other States	Kellie Henwood (Office of Farmland Preservation Intern)	30 min.
Closing & Reflections	Ag Land Protection Team	10 min.

Anticipated Outcomes

After this learning session Forum members will have a better understanding of...

- What succession planning is and why the future of Washington's food system depends on supporting the intergenerational transfer of farms and ranches.
- How varied farm transition experiences can be for producers
- Succession planning services that exist in Washington and where the gaps lie
- Why certain succession planning policy and program models have been successful in other states & how those approaches can be applied in Washington

Equity Filter Considerations

- What are the unique succession planning needs for different scales of production?
- What are the inequities affecting non-familial succession?
- How can succession planning and intergenerational transition resources be shared to encourage broad access?

Equity Considerations

Likely Beneficiaries

- Producers seeking clearer pathways for succession (e.g., familial, non-familial, employee ownership)
- Beginning farmers and incoming operators

Potentially Burdened

- Producers not successfully engaged

At Risk of Exclusion:

- Long-tenured farm employees and employee-owned farms

Forum Member Input

What questions will you have for the producer panel?

What key information or perspectives would you like the producers to share?

Question Guidelines to Producers:

- Please refrain from...
 - Pressing for information on personal, financial, or family matters
 - Challenging farming methods or values
 - Asking one producer to speak for all producers

Impacts of Climate Change Team: Ongoing Water & Climate Conversations

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Topical Priorities

Water supply for agriculture and food production

- **Action:** Advance the Forum’s 2025 water recommendations toward implementation
 - February 2025 letter to legislators urging them to move these recommendations forward
- **Forum role:** Educate policymakers, communicate urgency and intersections of climate, food, and water, and amplify the 2025 water recommendations

Impacts of Climate Change Team

Caleb Gwerder	WA Farm Bureau
Chad Kruger	WSU Office of Research
Chris Cary	Food Northwest
Chris Elder	King County Department of Natural Resources & Parks
Chris Voigt	WA State Potato Commission
Hilary Aten	WA State Conservation Commission
Jon DeVaney	WA State Tree Fruit Association
Judy Warnick	WA State Legislature
Laura Raymond	WA State Department of Agriculture
Linda Neunzig	Snohomish County Conservation & Natural Resources
Melissa Spear	Tilth Alliance
Rebecca Saldaña	WA State Legislature
Richard Conlin	Conlin Columbia Partnership for Cities

New Water & Climate Data Available

Update from Chad Kruger, WSU Office of Research

- *Draft 2026 Long-Term Water Supply and Demand Forecast*



Washington's Water Future Initiative

What is the initiative?

Governor Ferguson directed the Department of Ecology to lead regional and statewide conversations designed to identify shared water challenges, practical solutions, and priorities related to changing water conditions. Input will help shape future policy, planning, and on-the-ground actions.

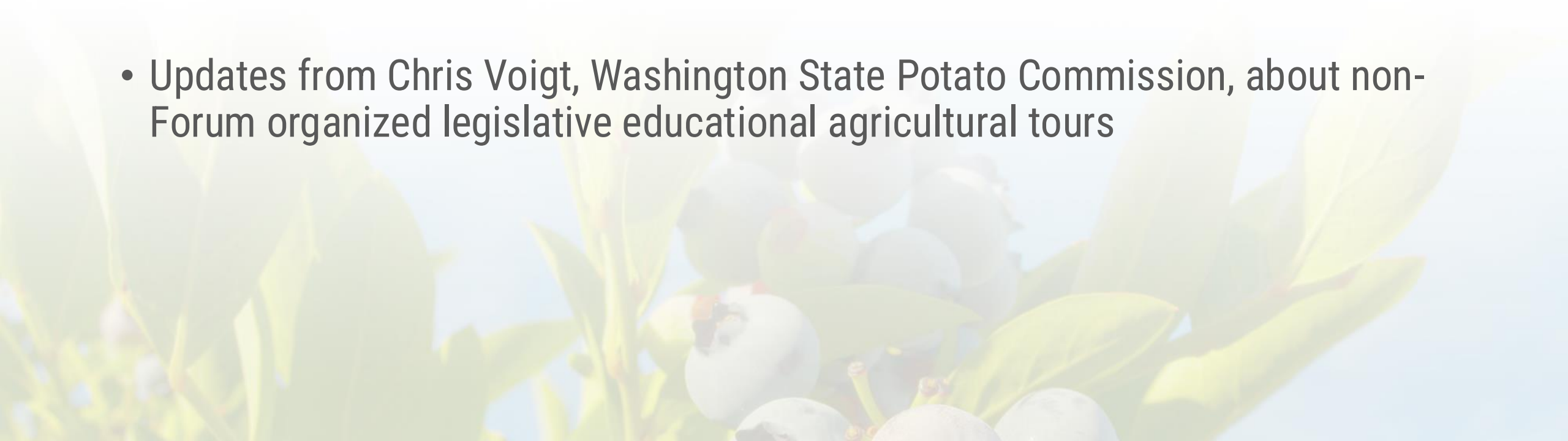
Forum letter to Governor Ferguson

The Impacts of Climate Change team drafted a letter that:

- Thanks the Governor for launching the initiative
- Highlights the Forum's broad range of expertise and experience
- Amplifies the Forum's existing research and consensus recommendations related to water, climate, and food security

Educating Policymakers & Communicating the Intersection of Climate, Food, and Water

- Elevating issues happens through a variety of avenues, including individual efforts and partnerships among agencies, non-profits, industry, policymakers, and community members
- Updates from Chris Voigt, Washington State Potato Commission, about non-Forum organized legislative educational agricultural tours



WSDA Farm Viability Report Phase 2 Work

Laura Raymond & Madi Roy, WSDA

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Agriculture Viability in Washington

Food Policy Forum Session: Viability for Washington's small/mid-scale farming sector



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural Viability in Washington State

Phase 1:

Washington Agriculture at a Crossroads

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

Phase II Report

Phase II – to be completed by 2027.

13 SME's at WSDA providing background and identifying opportunities to relevant topics.

- Agricultural economy (economics)
- Labor
- Trade
- Food systems
- Farmer and farm worker wellbeing
- Climate and energy
- Water quality and quantity
- Animal agriculture
- Plant disease and insects



Agricultural Viability: Phase II

- Focused on the whole agricultural industry.
- Stakeholder engagement in identifying opportunities.
- Starting point to discuss solutions.



Opportunity Themes

- Regulatory Recalibration
- Proactive Policy-Making
- Research/Technology/Science
- Market Access
- Farmer Retention & Success
- Education & Workforce



Focus Opportunity Areas for Today's Session



Farmer Retention and Success

Supportive technical assistance, funding, farmland access, lowering barriers to entry.



Regulatory Recalibration

Research, programs, and incentives to support farmers and mitigate compliance burden.



Proactive Policy-Making

E.g., Food systems strategy, State Farm Bill, funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation.



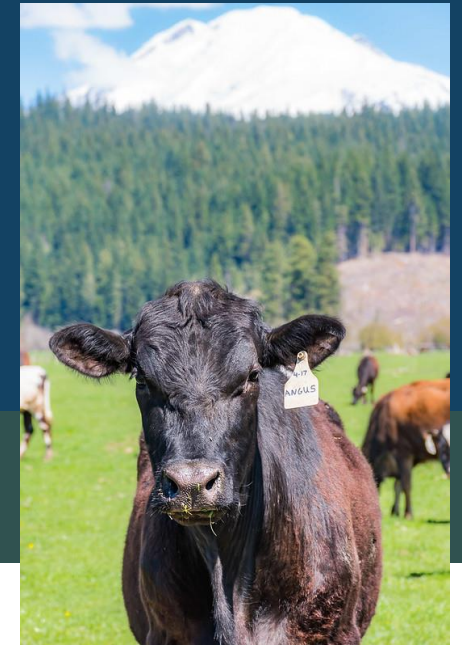
Research, Technology and Science

Support systems for agricultural industry.

Today's Focus: Small to mid-scale ag

Sample characteristics that differentiate this sector:

- Highly Diversified – across sector and within individual operations in terms of production and marketing
- Focused on “more direct” marketing in local and regional markets with differentiated products
- Complex production and sales operations, e.g. row crops and livestock, manufacture value added products, agritourism



Opportunities: How Might We Build on What Works?



Where have you seen something actually work for small and mid-scale farm viability on [Topic], whether that came from funding, technical assistance, a partnership, a program, or a policy change?



What made it work?



State Food Security Strategy Implementation

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Developing Washington's First Food Security Strategy

Katie Rains, Director of Food Systems Initiatives

krains@agr.wa.gov 360-688-4549



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

WSDA's Focus on Food Initiative

- 2019: Director's initiative launched to demonstrate support for food systems broadly & bridge the urban/rural divide
- 2020-2022: WA COVID-19 Food Security Coordination team of WA agencies, NGOs, legislators, FEMA & Governor's office
- 2025: WSDA launched new *Farm & Food Systems Development Division* and hosted Ag Viability conference
- 2026: published the [Baseline Assessment of Agricultural Viability](#) continuing research & analysis for a Phase 2 Report
- During declared emergencies, WSDA is responsible for Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11 *Agriculture & Natural Resources* "to support ... efforts to provide nutrition assistance" and assists DSHS and EMD with ESF #6 *Mass Care, Housing & Human Services* food distribution activities
- While many WA agencies administer USDA programs, WSDA is uniquely linked to USDA, NASDA, & ag industry leadership



COVID-19 Food Security Coordination

During the declared COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, Governor Inslee temporarily authorized WSDA to co-convene a WA State Food Security Coordination team

- Coordinated Community Response Action Team
- Gap Analysis Action Team

Insights:

- There were critical gaps in food system aggregation, processing, storage, and distribution infrastructure and logistics capabilities across the state
- Food supply chains were vulnerable to economic, environmental, political and public health shocks
- Monitoring changes in need and performance required regular communication with partners from across the system and the state



HB2238 “Concerning Statewide Food Security”

- Permanently changes WSDA powers & duties to lead ongoing food security coordination and food system performance monitoring
- WSDA to convene state agencies and named entities – including members of the Food Policy Forum - to collaboratively develop a strategy to:
 - End hunger;
 - Reduce diet-related health disparities; and
 - Increase ag viability & supply chain resilience
- Develop metrics & tools to monitor food system performance, coordinate statewide food security, and report to the legislature every 4 yrs



Timeline for Implementation of HB2238

Law took effect June 11, 2026

Development process begins July 2026

Draft strategy completed Fall 2027

Statewide strategy submitted to legislature December 2027

WSDA submits a legislative report on Competitiveness of Washington's agricultural regulatory landscape July 2030 and every 4 years thereafter



Timeline for Partner Engagement

Phase 1 – Outreach & Discovery

July – October 2026

Phase 2 – Development & Ad Hoc Groups

November 2026 – May 2027

Phase 3 – Review & Refinement

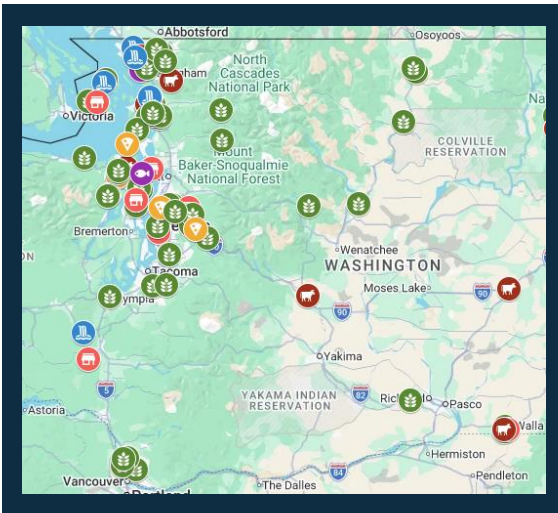
June – September 2027

Phase 4 – Finalize & Report Out

October – November 2027

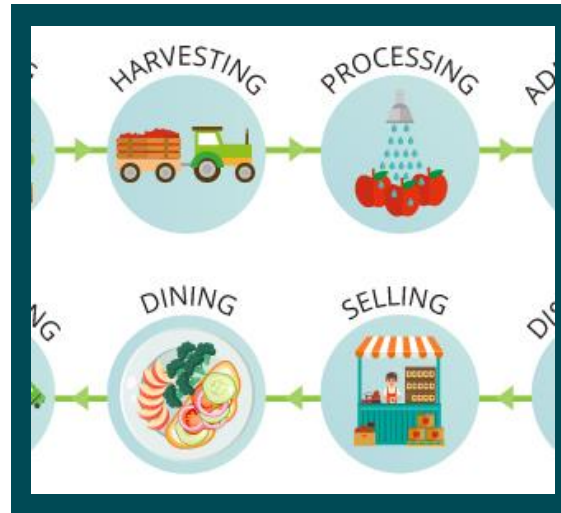


Monitoring Food System Performance in WA



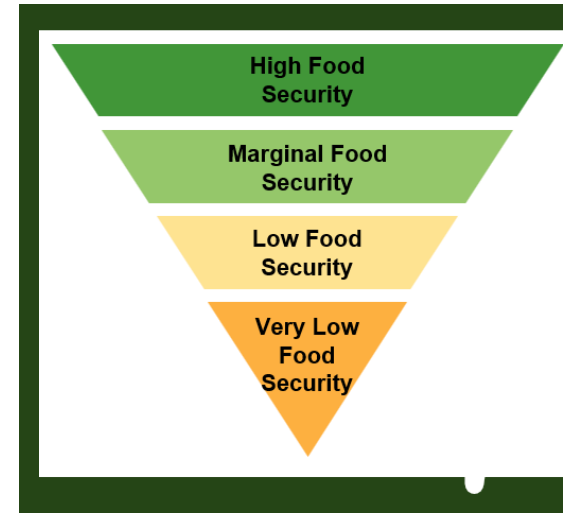
Mapping

- Food System Mapping Partnership with Ecology
- [August 25 10-11:30AM](#)
- Join us to inform project direction, data priorities, and collaboration!



Modeling & Definitions

- Consistent definitions for key terms, roles & functions
- Consider statewide & regional supply chains to model for resilience plan



Data & Metrics

- Consider existing publicly available data & voluntary data-sharing
- Develop Common Metrics & Indicators for Food Security and Ag Viability with a public dashboard



Research & Analysis

- Review food systems research & reporting across WA since 2019
- Gather input from experts for interpretation & trend analysis

Next Steps Toward a Statewide Food Security Strategy

- **Interagency Collaboration:**

- WA Hunger Safety Net dashboard – DOH, DSHS, OSPI
- Food Systems Mapping partnership with ECY

- **Food Policy Forum Consultation**

- **Tribal Notification & Engagement**

- **Community Engagement & Consultation:**

- WA Consumers - annual WAFOOD with broader reach
- Hunger Relief Organizations – **WA Food Coalition**
- Accountable Communities of Health
- County Governments
- Commodity Commissions
- Farmers, Producers, Processors
- Other Food System Partners & Stakeholders



State Farm Bill & Farm to School Planning

Rep. Kristine Reeves

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SUMMARY: Which Committees Regulate What in Food Systems?

Version 4 - 08/01/2026

Rep. Reeves Adapted from RCW, WAC



- production inputs/safety
- processor licensing
- processor oversight
- investigations (shared)



- water quality constraints on agriculture
- organics
- food waste diversion rules



- retail food safety standards
- inspections / permitting for food service/retail; specialized programs like shellfish



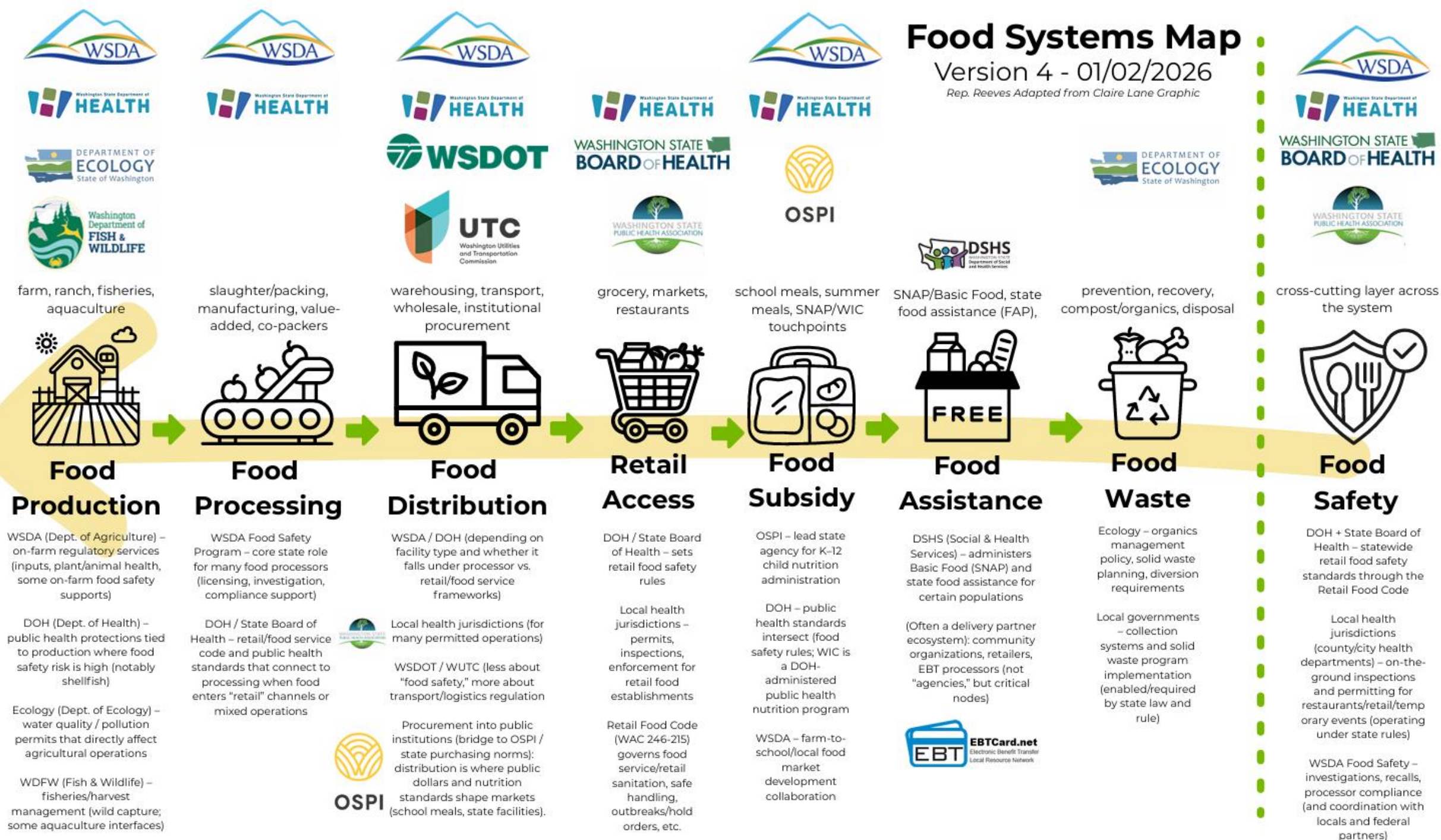
- household food purchasing power (Basic Food/SNAP + state food assistance)



- school meals administration
- subsidized access in K-12
- (and related guidance)

- business regulations
- grocery stores / convenience stores practices

- permitting
- land use



MATRIX: Who Regulates What?

Version 2 - 01/02/2026

Rep. Reeves Adapted from RCW, WAC

System Stage	Primary State Agencies	What Is Regulated / Governed	Key Policies, Programs, or Authorities	Legislative Relevance / Levers
1. Food Production (farms, ranches, fisheries, aquaculture)	• WSDA • DOH • Dept. of Ecology • WDFW	• Agricultural inputs (pesticides, fertilizers) • Animal & plant health • Water quality impacts • Commercial shellfish safety	• Pesticide registration & applicator licensing (WSDA) • Dairy & livestock nutrient management (WSDA) • CAFO permitting & water quality (Ecology) • Shellfish licensing & harvest area closures (DOH) • Fisheries management (WDFW)	• Farm viability & environmental compliance balance • Climate & water policy impacts on agriculture • Shellfish as a public health + economic sector
2. Food Processing (slaughter, packing, manufacturing, value-added)	• WSDA • DOH (limited)	• Facility licensing • Sanitation & hazard controls • Recall readiness & traceability	• WSDA Food Safety Program licensing & inspections • “Green Book” processing guidance • Cottage food & small processor exemptions	• Small business barriers to entry • Local food manufacturing capacity • Workforce & inspection capacity
3. Food Safety (<i>cross-cutting layer</i>)	• DOH / State Board of Health • Local Health Jurisdictions • WSDA	• Food handling & sanitation standards • Outbreak response • Retail & food service safety	• Washington Retail Food Code (WAC 246-215) • Local permitting & inspection authority • WSDA investigations & recalls	• Local public health funding • Consistency across jurisdictions • Emergency response capacity
4. Food Distribution (warehousing, transport, wholesale, institutions)	• WSDA • DOH / Local Health • OSPI (institutional procurement)	• Cold chain integrity • Storage & handling standards • Institutional food sourcing rules	• Licensing based on activity type (processor vs. retail) • School & state procurement standards • Food safety inheritance from processing/retail rules	• Supply chain resilience • Local sourcing incentives • Emergency food distribution
5. Retail Access (grocery, markets, restaurants)	• DOH / State Board of Health • Local Health Jurisdictions	• Retail food establishment safety • Consumer protection (sanitation)	• Retail Food Code enforcement • Local permits & inspections	• Food deserts & access equity • Small grocer & restaurant viability
6. Food Subsidy (school meals, child nutrition)	• OSPI • DOH • WSDA (farm-to-school)	• Nutrition standards • Eligibility & reimbursement • Public procurement rules	• National School Lunch & Breakfast Programs (OSPI) • Meals for Washington Students • Farm-to-School coordination (WSDA)	• Universal school meals • Local food purchasing • Child hunger & academic outcomes
7. Food Assistance (SNAP / Basic Food)	• DSHS	• Household eligibility & benefits • Retailer participation • Program integrity	• Basic Food (SNAP) • State Food Assistance Program (FAP) • Washington Connection portal	• Benefit adequacy • Immigrant access • Administrative efficiency
8. Food Waste (prevention, recovery, composting)	• Dept. of Ecology • Local Governments	• Organics diversion • Composting & anaerobic digestion • Solid waste planning	• Organics Management Law • Chapter 173-350 WAC • Local solid waste plans	• Climate & methane reduction • Food recovery infrastructure • Local government capacity



Food Fighters Caucus | 2026 Food Systems Priorities

"fighting for a strong, sustainable, and equitable food system — from farm and fishery to family table"

farm, ranch, fisheries,
aquaculture



**Food
Production**

slaughter/packing,
manufacturing, value-
added, co-packers



**Food
Processing**

warehousing, transport,
wholesale, institutional
procurement



**Food
Distribution**

grocery, markets,
restaurants



**Retail
Access**

school meals, summer
meals, SNAP/WIC
touchpoints



**Food
Subsidy**

SNAP/Basic Food, state
food assistance (FAP),



**Food
Assistance**

prevention, recovery,
compost/organics, disposal



**Food
Waste**

cross-cutting layer across
the system



**Food
Safety**

2026 Farm Bill
HB 2616 Reeves
Richards / Springer

**Ban Force
Feeding of Birds**
HB 1735 Parshley /
Leavitt

**Small Farm &
Marketing
Assistance**
Oppose GOV
WSDA
Reduction

2026 Farm Bill
HB 2616 Reeves /
Richards / Springer

**Local Food
Infrastructure
Grants**
Oppose GOV
WSDA
Reduction

**State Food Security Strategy + WSDA
Authorizing Bill**
HB 2238 Reeves / Gregerson

2026 Farm Bill
HB 2616 Reeves /
Richards / Springer

**Ban Sale of
Farmed Octopus**
HB 1608
Peterson / Berg

**Grocery Tax
Incentives**
HB 2297
Farivar / Mena

**Grocery
Covenants**
HB 2294
Farivar / Zahn

Municipal Grocers
HB 2313
Farivar / Parshley

Grocery Pricing
HB 2481
Fosse / Pollet

Grocery Stores
HB 2573
Pollet / Fosse

**Farm to
Schools**
HB 2369
Reeves / Ramel

**Medically
Tailored Meals**
HB 2211
Reeves / Doglio

SNAP / WIC
Support Proviso
Bergquist

Error Rate
Support Proviso
Bergquist

**Farm to
Food Banks**
HB 2463
Reeves / Bernbaum

**Food
Donation**
HB XXXX
Doglio

**Ban PFAS
in Pesticides**
HB 2279
Parshley / Reeves

**Food Safety
Response Funding**
Support GOV
WSDA Proviso

Version 3 - 02/01/2026

Chair Reeves Adapted from Member Feedback



Food Fighters Caucus | 2026 Food Systems Priorities

"fighting for a strong, sustainable, and equitable food system — from farm and fishery to family table"

farm, ranch, fisheries,
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**Food
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slaughter/packing,
manufacturing, value-
added, co-packers



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Processing**

warehousing, transport,
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**Food
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grocery, markets,
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**Retail
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school meals, summer
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**Food
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SNAP/Basic Food, state
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**Food
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prevention, recovery,
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**Food
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Version 3 - 02/01/2026

Chair Reeves Adapted from Member Feedback

Closing Reflections & Adjourn

WASHINGTON STATE FOOD POLICY FORUM

Looking Ahead

- **Topical team meetings will be held in September for the following teams:**
 - Impacts of Climate Change
 - Ag Land Protection & Next Generation Farming
 - Food Insecurity
- **Next Forum meeting is on October 1**
 - Meeting Focus: Succession Planning Learning Session led by the Ag Land Protection & Next Generation Farming Team