

INSIGHT 03

MISMATCHES OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES IN THE CURRENT SYSTEM INCREASE EXISTING DISPARITIES.

The distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunity for growth was an important topic across conversations. North Carolina has the resources available, yet they are not equitably distributed within communities. These mismatches lead to opportunity gaps in regional food systems that otherwise would succeed.

Rural communities felt that while they have access to land for farming, the food they produce rarely stays within the community. Additionally, a digital divide between urban and rural communities creates barriers to innovation. Farmers and small growers lack opportunities, especially around technology, to grow the scale of business and stay viable.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification also has financial barriers. GAP is a voluntary program that verifies the safe growing, handling, and packing of produce. GAP certification can open farmers into more selling markets but can be costly to get and renew.

Race showed up in the Latino conversations while discussing the mismatch of resources available to Latino farmworkers. Additionally, BIPOC participants stated that agricultural land is being used to build wealth for the few rather than to nourish the many.



“Most of them [small farmers], they either have no option and they’re going to a farmers market or they’re doing a little stand so that most of them are too small to try to get into and now it’s almost impossible to be GAP certified for small farms because they can’t generate enough income for that, there are very few opportunities for them so being able to have access to a developing food hub that can purchase from local farmers is another option where we’re going.”

- YOUTH/ELDER*



Calls to Action:

- We need to redistribute resources instead of reinventing the wheel.
- Government subsidies should support small farmers that can't compete with large farmers or can't access facilities needed to grow their production (food hubs, aggregators).
- Audits of community resources should be conducted regularly, so that they are equitably divided depending on a communities' needs.
- Continued investment into farmers of color –beyond that which was available in 2020– is crucial.

“They [people in farming communities] don’t eat well even though they are surrounded by this resource. Most farms are commercial and raise food to ship it elsewhere, people are growing cotton, soybeans, peanuts that get shipped out and profits go to a small proportion of the people.”

- RURAL