

2023-2024



Strategic Playbook

A Collaborative Approach
to Resilient Farms and
Socially Responsible
Communities



To our partners, present and future, welcome to The Common Market's 2023-2024 strategic playbook: our guide for driving lasting transformation across our food system.

We invite you to be active players of impact! Over the span of our work, even through the most uncertain of times, we have taken steps to **advance equity, reverse climate change, and to foster public health**, as we embrace the evolving needs of both our agricultural and food access partners.

We have set ambitious goals to transform the food system—to transform those steps into leaps. We need communities like yours to bring this playbook to life!

Our plan plays on a basic driving principle: **anchor institutions—from public schools to hospitals and universities—hold the purchasing power to sustain meaningful market opportunities for family farms.** As these institutions prioritize their community's values and find ways to let them guide their purchasing, we will foster resilient farms and socially responsible communities—the building blocks of a food system that works for everyone.

Thank you for being here. We look forward to partnering with you!

With gratitude,

[Tatiana Garcia Granados](#) and [Haile Johnston](#)
Co-Founders and Co-CEOs

The Common Market Mission

The Common Market is a nonprofit regional food distributor with a mission to connect communities to good food grown by sustainable family farmers. We are building a nation composed of vibrant regional food systems—where urban and rural communities thrive by building relationships that strengthen the health and wealth of all people.

How it works

The Common Market builds the **bridge between rural farmers and urban communities** in three ways:

1. We operate as a **wholesale food distributor**, selling locally grown food from multiple regional sources to community institutions, such as school districts and hospitals.
2. We **build a supply chain** for farmers and ranchers who are at the forefront of creating an equitable and resilient food system—one that builds **local economies, consumer health, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability**.
3. We help organizations **shift their purchasing practices** to take into account the full value of the food and its impact on the health of their customers, community and environment, not just its price.

We believe our goals for the coming months will help bring our mission to life in new ways.

GOAL 1: Partner with institutions to align their purchases with community values

GOAL 2: Drive forward commitments

GOAL 3: Build supply chain capacity





Partner with institutions to align their purchases with community values

We will support anchor institutions such as public schools, government agencies, hospitals, and universities to **align their purchases with their values** and **adopt procurement practices** that prioritize the consideration of broader societal impacts, including **social responsibility, environmental sustainability, fair labor practices, and supporting local businesses.**

Approach:

1. We partner with anchor buyers to **illustrate the benefits of aligning their purchases with their values**, and encourage their adoption of values-based purchasing practices.
2. To facilitate communication and decision-making, we will convert our **Farm Impact Assessment*** data into a format that is easily shareable and understandable for anchor buyers so that it serves as a **helpful guide along their responsible sourcing journeys, giving richer insights and increased visibility into our supply chain.**
3. We seek **financial support from funders interested in advancing sustainable procurement practices.** With their support, we can launch impactful pilot programs that showcase the benefits of local, values-aligned purchasing and track their impact to encourage further adoption.



**See next page*



What is the Farm Impact Assessment?

The Common Market developed its Farm Impact Assessment in 2019 as a means to better **understand and communicate the on-farm practices of our supply chain**—the network of local, sustainable farmers, ranchers, and producers behind our food—and **how they align to the value areas that matter most to our buyers.**



Through a series of nearly 100 questions across four value categories – **local and community, environmental sustainability, nutritious and clean label, and animal welfare** – our tool provides a verification of practices in the absence of third-party certifications. Results enhance transparency, enable dialogue, and provide an alternative means for small suppliers with strong sustainability practices and performance to qualify to participate in values-driven markets.



The assessment translates production and business practices into frameworks that can be analyzed alongside both established certification criteria and local context, and ultimately **help buyers align their purchases along their values with ease.**



GOAL 2

Drive Forward Commitments

Secure **consistent, long-term commitments from institutional customers** that will enable farmers to grow with confidence and strengthen regional supply chains.

Approach:

1. We formalize forward **commitments from anchor institutions and their food service management companies**. These commitments provide producers with a **guaranteed market**, allowing them to plan and invest in their operations for sustainable growth.
2. We **engage farmers in seasonal production planning** and make long-term purchasing commitments that drive the **growth of regional supply** and farmer profitability.



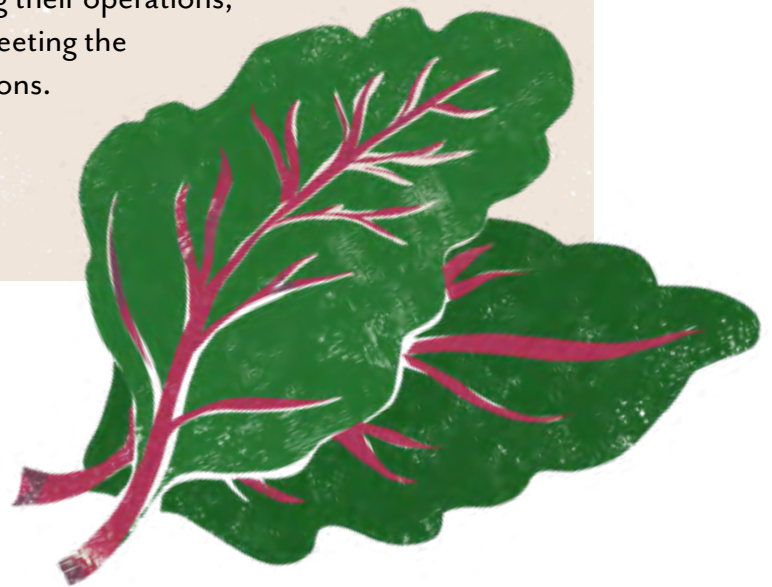
Technical and financial assistance enhances capacity of our farms, enabling them to meet demand of institutions and maintain a consistent supply of high-quality products. The Common Market invested in a greens washer for a Georgia farm in 2023, which enabled \$125,000 worth of Collards sales.

Build Supply Chain Capacity

Grow our supply chain of diverse and ambitious farmers, ranchers, and producers who are ready to meet the needs of our anchor buyers and their values.

Approach:

1. We actively identify and engage with producers who align with our mission and are committed to meeting the needs and values of institutional customers.
2. To ensure a strong and reliable supply chain, we provide financial support through Purchase Order (PO) loans and technical assistance to farmers. This assistance enhances their capacity, enables them to meet the commitments made, and maintains a consistent supply of high-quality products.
3. We coordinate a network of technical assistance providers with expertise in scaling and wholesale readiness. This network supports producers in improving their operations, expanding their capacity, and meeting the requirements of anchor institutions.





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Partner with us!

The Common Market's 2023-2024 Strategic Playbook presents a comprehensive approach to advancing values-based procurement within our institutions. This empowers our farmers to farm with confidence while enhancing supply chain capacity, ensuring our partners have a source for local food they can trust. Through collaboration with anchor institutions, farmers, and other stakeholders, we aim to transform regional food procurement practices and strengthen the connections between producers and consumers. Together, we can create a future of resilient farmers and thriving communities.

