**Agriculture and Local Foods**

The purpose of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to help local governments, non-profits, and the business community find funding, support legislative policies, and growth southwest New Mexico economically. The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments values all stakeholders opinions especially of the small business sector.

Niches: Farmers and Ranchers, Famer’s Markets, Value-Added Producers, Intermediate Sales, Agriculture Supply Chain, Resource Entities

Partners: NMSU Cooperative Extension, Southwest New Mexico Food Hub, New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, New Mexico Famer’s Market Association, Local Farmer’s Markets, Food Co-Ops, Chamber of Commerce, MainStreets, Governmental Institutions, Deming-Luna County Economic Development Corporation, and Western New Mexico University

Strategies and Measures

* Facilitate connections between local farmers/ranchers/food producers to restaurants, schools, food trucks, supply chains, MainStreets, and grocery stores by supporting the expansion of the Southwest New Mexico Food Hub’s efforts.
* Cultivate a culture of food entrepreneurship that will benefit residents and tourist through commercial kitchens, greenhouse training and sales, apprenticeships and supporting cottage industry policies at the State and Federal level.
* Increase the awareness of lending capital by facilitating access to micro-lenders and federal agencies, such as, Accion, WESST, NM Loan Fund, USDA, EDA, etc.
* Support farm and ranching apprenticeships on public lands to help succession planning and
* Encourage local governments to have procurement policies for institutions such as jails and university to purchase locally grown food.
* Increase meat processing facilities for personal and commercial use throughout the region by increasing the amount of USDA and State agriculture inspectors.
* Increase the cold storage throughout the region with adequate infrastructure.
* Support change in the legislative policies and regulation to decrease the regulations on farmers, ranchers, and food producers.

Possible Threats

* Governmental assistance to the employable worker deterring entrance to the workforce; such as, the extra $600 a week in COVID unemployment payments.
* Shortfalls in the State budget disallows local governmental entities to buy food locally.
* Natural disasters such as, flood, fire, drought, freeze
* Regulation that are in place hindering agriculture businesses to grow.
* Succession planning of retiring agriculture business owners.
* Startup overhead is huge.