CAN THE NAVAJO NATION CREATE A FOOD CENTERED ECONOMY?

Emergence Group

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Emergence Group

A 501 (c)(3) non-profit supporting
growth of Navajo and Hopi business with collaborative,
targeted projects that further economic growth.

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"Our food, our ability to feed ourselves, is the foundation of our freedom and sovereignty as land-based peoples." Beata Tsosie-Pena

Introduction

The Navajo Nation has fewer than 15 grocery stores across 27,000 square miles, which effectively classifies it as a food desert. Food is central to life and its importance is key, not only to sustain life, but also to sustain culture and traditional practices. Accessing foods is a challenge particularly in rural reservations where there are much higher rates of food insecurity. The Navajo Nation is years behind on critical infrastructure needed to have basic privileges the rest of the United States experiences. Much of the money made on the Navajo Nation is being spent for food off the reservation in border towns. There is potential to grow a food centered economy and, in this report, we will illustrate different ways this economy can be built along with the challenges that will need to be met. Growing a food centered economy will take years to develop, but it needs to happen to improve food access and security for the Navajo Nation now and in the future. The Navajo Nation has long been resilient to many challenges and if enough time, investment, and focus was spent on growing this type of economy then the possibilities are endless.

This research report is a contribution from Emergence Group, a Navajo 501 (c)(3) non- profit organization to the growth of economy on the Navajo Nation . The research utilized public reports regarding 1.) food sovereignty on Navajo, 2.) issues and opportunities for business on Navajo and 3.) related survey and interview data. Survey data and interviews were conducted on related topics by Emergence Group. Taylor Miller, Navajo project intern, made significant contributions.

While recognizing many issues are systemic, we focus here on the potential opportunities and the work is an effort to tease out these opportunities strand by strand. With collaboration of many who are already involved in food production and food access, the findings suggest that we can utilize current strengths and contributions in weaving the strands.

Nature of an Economy

Currently on the Navajo Nation, the local business sectors and thus the economy is severely underdeveloped. According to Robert Miller, Director of the American Indian Economic Development Program at Arizona State University, "American Indians own private businesses at the lowest rate per capita for any racial or ethnic group in the United States" (Miller). "The lack of Navajo owned businesses on the reservation contributes to many problems, including poverty, high unemployment rates, and low family income."

The economic leakage is important here- "leakage occurs when the income of the residents of a city, county, or state leak away from their community sooner than is optimal. Sooner than it can be used to support employment and reinvestment in local business and an economy" (Miller). Since there is no food centered economy on the Navajo Nation, many residents are forced to travel to border towns such as Farmington, Gallup, Page, and Flagstaff for their food supplies. The money is flowing to border towns instead of staying and circulating on the reservation, therefore economic activity is stagnant and so is the ability to build a stable and long-lasting economy.

A 2018 Navajo Nation report found that less than 35 cents of every dollar a Navajo person earns is spent on the Navajo Nation.

Despite leakage being a problem on the Navajo Nation, there is still potential to grow an economy if existing and emerging businesses can be developed. This is true because their existence can lead to a multiplier effect. This is when money is essentially recirculated in the local economy and community. The public buys from local business, which in turn can employ more local people, who then can spend more in the local economy. As it multiplies it creates even more job opportunities and income for the community, instead of that money being spent off the reservation. However, this can only occur when there are businesses where Navajo people can find value in spending their money, which is why local business is so important.

In the following pages we will explore current food and shopping patterns, Navajo Nation food centric businesses and organizations related to food support, the potential of growing a food-based economy by looking at the Navajo Nation's strengths and weakness and opportunities that are presenting themselves for growth.

Current Food Economy

Consumer Food Product Choices

Historically, the Dine' engaged in hunting, then ranching, and agriculture and built a food system for consumption and trade. The decline of Diné agriculture, food systems, culture, family and community, and other lifestyle shifts, are all themes that can be attributed to forced Western influences and the transition to a wage - based economy in Diné society where the majority of Navajo now earn a living working for government or other employers.

One of the leading pieces of research on the food economy on the Navajo Nation was published in April 2014 by the Dine Policy Institute (DPI). The report "Dine' Food Sovereignty" stands as a thorough review of the history, current status (2012) and solid recommendations related to foods on Navajo. DPI is an institute founded by Dine College that applies Dine cultural principles to issues impacting the Navajo people by educating, collaborating, and serving as a resource for policy. Since 2011, DPI has done a lot of work regarding the Navajo Nation Food system which they have identified as the Dine' Food Sovereignty Initiative where through research, meetings with Dine' knowledge holders, community-based data collection, and literature and historical reviews they have gained in depth understanding of the historical and current (2012) Food system. "The purpose of this research was to better understand the systemic

issues that have shaped the current Dine' Food System and its negative health, community, economic, cultural, and environmental impacts, and to identify strategies and recommendations for creating positive change for the Dine people." (Dine' Food Sovereignty, p. 2)

They report that in the early 1900's staples of Diné diet included mutton, goat, goat's milk, coffee, flour, corn, squash, beans, potatoes, canned vegetables (obtained from the trading posts that came onto Diné land after the reservation had been established), as well as continued consumption of wild plants and game meats. This diet demonstrates that while rations and commercial foods were impacting the Diné diet, many of the dietary staples were still foods produced and collected by Diné people themselves. (Dine' Food Sovereignty, pp. 47-48.)

A transition from self-sufficiency to a "income based" economy and Federal government food programs such as those from USDA and purchase support programs such as SNAP and WIC significantly shifted the diet of Diné people away from their traditional diet, consuming fewer "home-produced" foods, such as corn, beans, melons, and squash, and relying more on processed foods. The growing reliance on commodity foods of low nutritional value contributed to a shift in nutritional status from adequate to poor. (Dine' Food Sovereignty, p. 50)

Analysis of the Navajo Health and Nutrition Survey conducted in early 1990's revealed similar findings. The most recent surveys of Navajo diet demonstrate the continued dominance of fried potatoes, fry-bread and tortillas, sugary drinks, and processed meats in the Navajo diet, however, mutton is consumed significantly less than processed meats and no longer serves as a major contributor to daily caloric intake.

The general trend is the decline of indigenous Diné foods and the increase of non-native and highly processed, high calorie foods in the Dine diet. (Dine' Food Sovereignty, p. 51)

Recent interest by government, non-profit organizations and some in the public for healthy foods is nudging its way into the diet and has more potential to do so.

Food Access Options

Data described below suggest that around 50% of Navajo resident food dollars are spent in Border communities, around 40% on the Navajo Nation both in stores and in the informal economy with the remaining 10% being provided through charitable food distributions. (Recent COVID-19 food relief was critical and significant, but was considered temporary and was not factored in as long- term charitable distribution)

The DPI report included a survey of five Navajo Nation Chapters: Tsaile/Wheatfields, Lukachukai, Round Rock, Many Farms, and Chinle Chapter Houses. The survey results indicated that over 51% of food purchased by families from these chapters was purchased off of the Navajo Nation, mostly in Border towns.

Based on the data above it would be expected that around 40% of the food consumed on Navajo is purchased from 1.) grocery stores on Navajo, 2.) convenience stores, 3.) flea market or other local vendors or by 3.) producing foods at home or on community garden plots.

There are currently only 13 grocery stores on the Navajo reservation, eight of which are Bashas grocery stores that have recently changed ownership. These grocery stores carry Western foods and various traditional Navajo foods and fresh produce.

On the Nation there are gas station convenience store that are very popular, but those are few and far between. Options at the convenience stores are mostly limited to food with little nutritional content like chips, candy and soda. Some are offering more fresh produce.

Flea Markets-the Informal Economy

A significant food access option is widespread access to Flea Markets and roadside stands. This identifies a significant "informal economy" that began as trade and barter and continues today as vendors without a formal business. A substantial portion of this informal economy revolves around food in particular and includes food stands at Flea Markets and along roadsides and mobile vendors of burritos and other prepared foods.

While specific numbers do not exist, these informal food sources exist in every community on the Navajo Nation. Navajo Informal According to the Navajo Nation Department of Economic Development estimates indicate that Navajos generate an estimated $40.5 million in the "informal" economy from unregistered microenterprises and home run business. (Appendix A: Navajo Informal Economy)

Charitable Support

Seasonal and annual charitable food distributions have occurred on the Navajo Nation throughout history, with the Navajo Nation government (national and chapter), and NGO's having increasing responsibility. The DPI Food Sovereignty Report identified that ten (10) percent of the food in the communities comes from various food distribution programs.

Much of the food used for charitable distribution comes from U.S. Federal government sources, significantly the US Department of Agriculture. USDA purchases and ships USDA foods, to the Indian Tribal Organizations and state agencies. These administering agencies store and distribute the foods, determine applicant eligibility, and provide nutrition education to recipients. USDA provides the administering agencies with funds for program administrative costs.

Many non - profit organizations including the Navajo United Way and Adopt a Native Elder have food distribution programs.

The non-profit Adopt-a-Native-Elder program has a program called a Food Run which operates every spring and fall. Program volunteers deliver boxes of "food, clothing, and simple medicines to many different areas of the reservation". The locations include, but are not limited to "the

Oljato and Navajo Mountain areas in Southern Utah… areas around Winslow including, Leupp, Dilkon and Birdsprings". Additionally, food "items are delivered to Elders living in areas in the Northeast section of Arizona close to Chinle - Many Farms, Tsaile, and Pinon… and areas around Winslow - Sanders, Teesto, and Big Mountain" (Food Run Info n.d).

The COVID-19 pandemic vastly complicated and increased the food needs on Navajo adding those who had been employed until business and government shutdown and those struggling to access food even when shopping in Border towns. A number of new organizations emerged to address this need and a number of existing organizations enhanced their support or created targeted programs.

Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund

Navajo and Hopi tribal members started The Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund to support the elderly, families with children, and immunocompromised and mobility impaired individuals. Funds raised went toward the purchase of groceries, water, health supplies, and other necessities. It has distributed food supplies, water, and personal protective equipment to more than 350,000 people in the Navajo and Hopi reservations, covering all 12 Hopi villages and 93 of 110 chapters in the Navajo Nation. Ethel Branch, former Navajo Nation Attorney General, started the campaign with 11 other Navajo women. (Mineo, Making Gifts that Keep on Giving)

Food Production on the Navajo Nation

Navajo Agricultural Products Industry

Industrial and traditional business production of food on the Navajo Nation is limited, however, a large government owned agricultural farm exists as do several independent produce farms, a number of small businesses and an unknown, but significant number, of individual food vendors. All of these sources have sales as an element of their interest in operating.

The Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI) established by the Navajo Nation government in the 1970's as a Navajo Nation enterprise is the largest producer of food products for livestock and the Navajo population. At least a third of the 77,000 acres under production produces products consumed by the Navajo population.

NAPI has historically grown pinto beans, potatoes, wheat, alfalfa, and corn. Recently NAPI has undertaken a diversification initiative into organic crops. The newer offerings include organic melons, winter squash, potatoes, onions, wheat, corn, and garlic. NAPI sells to large retail chains, club stores, regional retail chains, specialty markets, private label (Navajo Pride brand) , food service companies, brokers, distributors on commission, dairy farms, and local markets. A large donated food effort is also a part of their work. (Products, n.d.)

Produce Farms

Produce growing is common on Navajo with many small plots being cultivated by small groups of people or by Chapters with a few retail farms. An example of how some of these small community farms began on the reservation is the Yeego Gardening Project. It began in 2014 as two grant funded community demonstration farms in Shiprock and Crownpoint. The project has slowly expanded and in 2019, an Education Resources Coordinator for the Yeego Gardening Project was employed through New Mexico State University. The Project provides workshops and training, with a significant focus on youth as a source for intergenerational change. Project participants learn about the regional growing zones, seed selections for the region, managing organic matter in garden soil, and home gardening methods as important for successful fruit and vegetable gardening. (Yeego Gardening, n.d.)

Chi'shie Farms

The Chi'shie Farms in Leupp, AZ was started by Tyrone Thompson, his wife Felicia, and their five children. Thompson sees Chi'shie Farms as a living laboratory. He's learning to use greenhouses and successional planting rotations to grow food year-round, and he's expanding beyond the traditional crops of corn, beans, and squash. Thompson grows a variety of flowers, herbs, Asian greens, lettuces, and fruit trees.
A
Now that coronavirus has hit the Navajo Nation, Thompson has started making short videos to share on Facebook about how to start seedlings, build self-watering containers, and other DIY gardening ideas.

He also started The Growing Dome and other hoop structures on his farm and they are used for traditional gardening, starts and aquaponics. Local schools visit the hoop houses/domes and learn about the various farming techniques utilized inside. A series of domes and thousands of starts are being given out to families, senior centers, etc. Thompson hopes that the baby starts will be used to support a broad network of farms and communities on the reservation. Non-profits, backyard gardens, schools, senior centers and farms reaching as far as 150 miles away will receive transplants from Chi'shie Farms. Tyrone hopes to create the first food hub on Navajo Nation, and even support sister tribes in the region. He wants to make the Little Colorado river area the "breadbasket" of the Navajo Nation. (Water is Life: Bringing farming back to the Navajo Nation, 2020 Nov)

Coffee Pot Farms, Dilkon, AZ

Coffee Pot Farm is a small farm operated by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable husband and wife team – Cherilyn and Mike Yazzie. They grow a wide variety of crops including green and purple bush beans, scallions, carrots, bell peppers, kale, squash, beets, chard, onions, and also jalapenos, and Anaheim chili's, heirloom tomatoes and melons.

They sell at the Winslow Farmer's Market as well as on their farm where they sell directly to the public and operate a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) venture. In CSAs, people buy

"shares" from a local farmer or farmers during the growing season, and during harvest, the farmers will distribute boxes of the fresh and locally grown produce periodically to those that purchased a share. They have recently begun selling on their website on-line. (Our Story, n.d.)

Other Food Businesses or Vendors

A number of Navajo owned businesses operate both on the Nation and from southwestern communities to produce food -based products. A small sampling are those producers in the following chart:

Navajo Vendors- 2022	**Products Produced for Sale**
Navajo Agricultural Products Industry	Potatoes, Corn, Flour, Pumpkins, etc.
Yeego Coffee	Specialty coffee roaster
Val's Frybread	Premade Frybread Mix
Shima of Navajoland	Honey, Juniper Ash and personal care products
Navajo Mike's BBQ Sauce	BBQ Sauces – 3 styles
Make it Beautiful Designs	Navajo Tea and curated gift baskets

All are interested in increasing sales, and could sell more broadly across the Navajo Nation based on current Nation policies.

Food Economy: Strengths and Opportunities

The potential to enable a food – centric economy revolves around the ability to achieve more purchasing of food products by Navajo organizations and residents from current and future Navajo vendors. The prospects for this can be determined by looking at the juxtaposition of strengths and opportunities and weaknesses and threats that are emerging.

Small businesses and Artisan Vendors Seek Markets

Discussions with growers including Coffee Pot Farms, Chi'shie Farms and Shima of Navajo Land and others identified a strong interest in growing their businesses, as well as, interests in giving back to their communities.

Interviews with Chi'shie Farms and Coffee Pot Farms indicate that they are interested in both local community based growth in sales and off Navajo opportunities.

Home produced Food products are abundant and sales restrictions are minimal on the Nation. Flea Markets are filled with vendors interested in making food related sales.

Non-Discretionary Spending Secures Market Opportunity

There is an obvious ongoing market for food, it is not discretionary spending. The Nation's official number of enrolled members to has increased to 399,494 (Navajo Office of Vital Records and Identification, 2021). The Census Bureau has not yet announced how large it considers the Navajo Nation based on data collected during the 2020 Census and there is not yet a determination of members residing on the reservation only. At the time of the 2010 Census 173,000 people lived on the reservation. Recently Cares Act opportunities have significantly increased enrollment.

From an economic standpoint, the fact that everyone on the Nation has a continuous need for food identifies an immediate and sustained customer base totally viable as an engine for a food based economy. While healthy foods are of more nutritional value, interest in modern processed foods provides opportunities for economic benefit if the food products are Navajo produced and / or sold.

Travel Distance to Food Outlets Can Aid Local Sales

Roads and distances are critical issues on Navajo for those with limited transportation opportunities. There are many roads on the Navajo Nation that are not paved or are severely damaged with potholes. The road infrastructure makes it more complex to make long trips that are needed to sustain the current Border town shopping patterns.

Significant distancea are traveled by participants who shop off the Navajo Nation for food. It was reported as 155 miles for a round trip from Tsaile, AZ to Gallup, NM. The longest distance of 240 miles was from Round Rock, AZ to Gallup, NM. Results showed that 58% of those interviewed in the five Chapters in the DPI study made three (3) trips per month (Dine' Food Sovereignty, p. 17).

Fuel is a major issue, but so is wear and tear on a vehicle, and even the need to have a vehicle to reliably access food.
All of these elements create impetus for access to quality food closer to home.

Interest in Locally Grown Healthy Foods

Public Interest Survey and Interviews

To address the question of could Navajo who currently do not shop for food from Navajo or from reservation - based vendors be prospects for doing so, Emergence Group looked at the habits of individuals representing the following groups 1.) Elders and 2.) Community members more remote from Border communities, and interviewed a member of the Navajo diaspora and a Navajo family shopping routinely off Navajo. This initial work (survey and interview) would suggest options for further market exploration and analysis. See Appendix B: Navajo Customer Profiles

A Customer Discovery survey conducted by Emergence Group in 2018 of 500 Navajo Tribal members, identified essential criteria for products considered for purchase. The survey indicated that Navajo sources were preferred as long as 1.) the quality was high, 2.) there was some variety and 3.) the costs were reasonable comparable to those items available elsewhere. See Appendix C: Navajo Customer Survey

Two extensive Navajo profile interviews were conducted in February 2021 by Taylor Miller, our intern, to get an indication of whether the Navajo public who had not been traditional Navajo purchasers could be a potential further test group for Navajo product sales. One interview was conducted with an 18-year-old college freshman from Northern New Mexico. The other was with a working Navajo mother of three children in Northern New Mexico. Both customers were selected because of the diversity of their experiences, age, family life, and needs.

1. Sam is currently attending college in Hawaii.

She doesn't buy much food at local flea markets and primarily purchases baked goods such as cookies and cakes there. She eats campus food and occasionally at traditional western restaurants. When on the Nation with her family, they eat some traditional Navajo foods, but mostly western foods.

She is a big supporter of Native owned businesses and her purchases are swayed if the product she is available from a business/vendor that is Native owned and operated.

She misses Navajo products while away at school, but does not see a direct way to access them.

She shops for many products on line using Facebook and Instagram.

2. Hannah, is a mother of three children who has a full-time job at a small Native American owned business as an Office Manager. Her children are 12, 8, and 4 and a lot of her free time is spent with her family.

For food, she shops mainly at Sam's Club, Smith's, and Safeway in Farmington, NM. She likes Sam's Club because she can buy everything she needs in bulk at a good price. On her list, the top products she buys are meat, fruits, vegetables, cases of water, snack foods and more.

Feeding a family of five (5) is very expensive, but she loves providing her family with fresh fruit and vegetables and she tries to make all of her food last. A typical bi-weekly grocery bill is around $350. She values family time and always makes it a priority to have dinner with her family every night.

While she does make a goal to buy local, she also does value saving money which is why she likes to shop at big bulk stores. Some of her frustrations include having to make frequent trips to shop, that her grocery bills are often high, and that the nearest town is often crowded or products are sold out which means she has to make more trips. *She thought delivered Food Boxes of different types might be of interest.*

In 2020, two Navajo led non-profits, KARMA and Emergence Group collaborated to assist three Navajo Nation Chapters in geographically distributed locations (Eastern, Western and Ft. Defiance Agencies) to identify Community Needs. The survey polled 150 people and asked about needs related to interest in home and community growing and healthy foods. Of the 150 Navajo Nation residents in three areas there were 630 responses indicting some interest/issues with growing their own food. These interests included in order of importance, 1.) how to grow a home garden, 2.) better access to Native foods, with a smaller number interested in 3). gardening for crop sales.

Over the past ten years there has been a slow but steady rekindling of interest in locally grown produce. The produce farms discussed in this paper and work of Tolani Lakes Enterprise and others indicate this.

Much of the gardening activity is in home - based plots where produce is utilized by the family. Other slightly larger community gardens are largely supplying the needs of several families and more of those in a community. They are frequently tended by community members with produce free to all.

While many of the gardens are not oriented toward sales, there is potential to organize opportunities for sales. *91% of those polled in the DPI Community Assessment study indicated that consumers would shop at a Farmer's Market* (Dine Food Sovereignty, p. 27) This is very promising because it shows the potential communities have to grow local farmer's markets and keep the money circulating within the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Nation Policy

Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014 and 2021

The Navajo Nation has taken actions to stimulate this economy when they became one of the few places in the United States to enact a junk food tax.

The Navajo Nation junk food tax was put into motion November 2014 where it enacted a "2% tax on unhealthy or minimal-to-no nutritional value foods (junk foods)" (Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014). It is important to note how the tax applies to different types of sales both on and off the Navajo Nation. The regulations provided by the Navajo Nation note that "the Junk Food Tax applies to the sale of junk food when the transfer of ownership and/or risk of loss occur within the Navajo Nation". The tax does not apply to sales of junk food when the sale takes place outside the Navajo Nation. The tax does apply to sales of junk food when the sale occurs within the Navajo Nation. (Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014).

In January, 2021, Navajo Nation leaders reauthorized the tax for unhealthy food and beverages bought on the reservation. According to the Farmington Daily Times, "the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission has been collecting revenue from the sales tax since fiscal year 2015". In fact, the tax has generated $7.58 million in gross revenue (Farmington Daily Times, Navajo Nation leaders reauthorize sales tax on unhealthy foods and beverages). President Nez also said, "we're [Navajo Nation] going to be utilizing these dollars to address some of the deficiencies - health deficiencies - in our communities". The bill's sponsor Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty also said the act's objective "is to promote the health of the Navajo people by generating revenue that chapter governments can use to develop community wellness projects" (Albuquerque Journal, Bill seeks to continue 'junk food' sales tax on Navajo Nation).

The public is transitioning toward supporting the role of individual members and chapters in assuring access to food. The Dine' Policy Institute 2014 Survey asked *who should be responsible for solving food problems.* Survey participants identified the following order of responses, *1.) Community members,* 2.) Tribal Government, 3.) Local Government and 4.) Food distribution and Indian Health Service.

Navajo Nation Chapters have received funding from this tax and have developed community gardens and conducted food distributions, as well as, establishing small parks and exercise facilities. While additional components of a food economy are being developed in this process, virtual attendance at a number of Chapter meetings has identified that *some Chapters are struggling to develop and implement plans for utilizing this new funding.* The issues seem to revolve around having staff or members to develop plans and to implement projects.

Division of Economic Development Initiatives

The Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development has partnered with Change Labs , a Navajo led non-profit to implement an impact study of the CARES Act funds made available to businesses and artisans in the fall of 2020. In September to November 2020, the division administered around $28 million of financial assistance to small businesses and artisans of the Navajo Nation. While doing so, the division has been able to collect data much needed to identify the unique structure of businesses throughout the Navajo Nation. There is also supportive information about Navajo owned businesses located off the reservation as well, which will also be part of the comprehensive study.

This study will facilitate the development of a list of food centric and other businesses on the Navajo Nation and those owned by the Navajo diaspora in regions of the southwest.

Moving forward it is in the division's intention to ensure that this particular study, as well as others, will help align the economic path of the Navajo Nation for the upcoming years.

Other studies include a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and an updated consumer leakage report, which will identify the Navajo consumers' dollars that have left the Navajo Nation to goods and services in neighboring towns. "I am very excited to see this study being initiated. With today's meeting, we are motivated that the work Change Labs and the Division will put into the development of the end result. Over the next months, we will work collectively to compile data and feedback on the effects the pandemic has had on our businesses", stated division director JT Willie.

Departments and Agencies

When DPI asked "Who is currently working to solve food problems in your community?" The responses to this question identified in order of support….
Indian Health Service and the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes programs top the list. The Women, Infants and Children program was also indicated prevalently. Tribal Government and Food Distribution programs followed (Dine' Food Sovereignty. 24)

Significant Non-Government Support

Organizations Supporting Access to Healthy Foods

The Navajo Nation was a trailblazer instituting the junk food sales tax on the reservation in 2014. The momentum was started and has been sustained by various programs on the Navajo Nation that aim to rectify the access to healthy foods. Local organizations and community planning are key to challenging and finding solutions to the disparities on the Navajo Nation. In this section are some of the programs and how they are leading the charge for a healthier Navajo Nation.

The Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment Program (COPE) is a non-profit health partnership group that "provides vouchers for families with young children that are good for buying only fruits, vegetables, and traditional foods" (About Us n.d) This is in support of their mission to combat long standing health inequalities the Navajo Nation has suffered from for decades. They believe in investing in existing community resources to overturn these disparities and promote health and well-being on the Navajo Nation. Their programs include the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program where participants can get a voucher to purchase fruits and vegetables from Navajo Nation stores after meeting with an outreach worker and the Healthy Navajo Stores Initiative to tap into the potential of small stores on the Navajo Nation to promote and produce various traditional Diné foods. This program focuses on convenience stores and trading posts since these types of stores are found more often on the reservation.

Organizations Promoting Understanding of Farming Practices

Some organizations are working to develop a food economy in community-based ways. Tolani Lake Enterprises, a non-profit organization that began in 2010. There work focuses on the

Navajo Nation with their mission being to help Indigenous communities grow on their own. They hope to achieve this mission by working to strengthen "food, water, and economic systems in Native communities within the Little Colorado River Watershed" (About Us n.d.). One of their main goals is to also address issues pertaining to food sovereignty including "working on Navajo Nation food policy, finding a balanced approach to food safety programs, access to water, and farm and ranch development" (Our Programs n.d.).

Some of the ways in which they approach this are through their Sihasin Garden, the K'idadiilyehii Youth Leadership program, partnerships with various local and regional grassroots organizations, and also through volunteering. All of their programs are very noteworthy, but their work in regenerative economies is important to highlight because it ties directly into building a food centered economy.

Tolani Lake Enterprises is "seeing a renewed interest in rebuilding Navajo farms and ranches into sustainable agricultural business to meet a growing local demand for fresh, healthy meat and produce" (Regenerative Economies n.d.). There has been an increase in pop-up farmers markets and they also mention that various convenience stores on the Navajo Nation put locally grown produce on their shelves.

Since its inception Tolani Lakes Enterprise has hosted over 40 workshops at the Sihasin Garden and other sites on the Navajo Nation. This is especially important because as mentioned earlier, the Navajo Nation is very respectful towards their food and to Mother Earth.

Currently, the Tolani Lake Enterprise is developing an 8-acre teaching and incubator farm in the Leupp community at the North Leupp Family Farm. The North Leupp Family Farm was very active in the late 2010's as a community based 100-acre farm. They have been very active in sustainable agriculture and this partnership with Tolani Lake Enterprises will focus on organic produce. Tolani Lake Enterprises does sell portions of what they grow on this farm at farmers markets. They also us their products in different ways such as salsa making or preserving them to ensure that they do not go to waste. They also work with organizations around the Navajo Nation who do the same with their produce (Regenerative Economies n.d.).

There is also Navajo Ethno-Agriculture, a nonprofit formed out of concern that upcoming generations are not exposed to food growth. This tribal community educational farm is located in northwest New Mexico, along the San Juan River. Over the past four years, they have designed a teaching environment to pass on this knowledge of culture, history, and heritage foods. And with more than 50 years of combined traditional farming experience, they continue to cultivate a learning environment to teach a broad range of traditional knowledge while incorporating current practices from the natural sciences. They provide classes, workshops and camps designed to accommodate the traditional academic calendar. Lessons are based on the farm work cycle and emphasize the cultural significance and ceremonial value of the land, water and crops. All classes are given in Navajo and English.

The Navajo Ethno-Agriculture presents two tracks to the traditional Navajo farming experience; one that is primarily hands-on and requires no classroom time, while the other is a full

syllabus/curriculum where 3 college credit hours are earned. By partnering with tribal colleges and high schools, they are able to reach bright students who are serious about learning traditional agricultural practices. When students and instructors leave the farm, they will have learned something new about traditional Navajo teachings as they relate to the Earth, our foods and water. (Regenerative Economies n.d.)

The Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund, is transitioning to a non-profit with aspirations to continue to stabilize and elevate opportunities for communities. This organization is beginning a new phase of work in the Monument Valley area of the Navajo Nation. They are beginning a Community Center which will become a hub of support and stimulation activities for growth in the community including that related to food production

Organizations Supporting Developing a Business

A number of Navajo Nation, federal government and non-profit organizations provide learning opportunities from workshops to year - long training to support emerging entrepreneurs in all areas of the Navajo Nation. These organizations include the Navajo Nation Regional Business Development Centers, the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) supported by SBA, the Dine' Chamber of Commerce and Change Labs.

Change Labs has led non-profits into this arena by adopting the overarching goal: to support, enable and empower Native American entrepreneurs and business owners by providing leadership and technical skills training, by exposing them to role models, resources, and like-minded peers. Change Labs programs have several activities with differing outputs, they all share the common goal of expanding and diversifying economic growth on the Navajo Nation through entrepreneurship. As such, they target at least one of the following four outcomes: expanding social capital, human capital, increasing access to physical/financial capital, and social/economic agency. (Doing Business on the Navajo Nation, 2020)

Graduates of Change Labs and other programs have a good grounding in core business practices and frequent events and mentoring opportunities are readily available to these businesses and the public across time.

These organizations are aware of federal, regional, Navajo Nation and other funding that might support the growth of business. Organizations like Change Labs are looking into creative funding models.

Targeted business development opportunities could be identified and incentivized for the food economy space. For example, *a Navajo Food Broker could be trained to assist in identifying and facilitating contracting opportunities.*

There might be a collective market that will allow competitive pricing with big box stores on Border towns for non-perishable foods. *A Navajo wholesale distributorship* could employ Navajo in accessing and distributing canned and other shelf-stable food products desired by the Navajo public and food distribution organizations.

Organizations Assisting in Food Access and Distribution

While there are obvious points of sale for many products on the Navajo Nation, foods have additional access networks largely involved with access to USDA provided foods and charitable food networks.

The Navajo Nation maintains food warehouses in the Agencies to facilitate storage and distribution of USDA provided food.

Chapters seek their own food resources and provide points of distribution.

Non-profit organizations including Adopt an Elder, and the Navajo/Hopi Family COVID-19 Relief organization have systematic distribution points with a team of engaged voluntary distributors.

For foods, there are current networks for distribution, with many seem to be willing to assist at the community level.

Elements of Necessary Communication Exist

It will only be possible for an economy to exist if producers and vendors can easily identify and link with other businesses and the Navajo public.

Cataloging of Vendors/ Producers

Change Labs undertook the creation of a listing of businesses on the Navajo Nation and owned by Navajo beyond the Nation. This database, the RezRising mobile app, provides an opportunity for public and B2B engagement with vendors in all business sectors.

Recent opportunities to receive Cares Act funds have encouraged a number of the unregistered to apply for official business registrations in order to receive funds, a more accurate total of the viable businesses on Navajo could emerge within a year from this registration.

As part of a study in collaboration with the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, Change Labs is also working to access the businesses and artisans who had received CARES Act Funds in the fall of 2020.

Public and Business Interest in using the Internet

Survey results from Customer Discovery survey conducted by Emergence Group identified that

330 of the 480 Navajo tribal members polled had done some internet access, usually by mobile phone. While prone to disruption, most reported that they had shopped at least monthly or for special occasions on website such as Amazon. Business to business (B2B) internet use occurs daily. Appendix C: Navajo Customer Survey

Facebook and Instagram have a large following on Navajo. Deeply rooted community flea market/swap meet options are available. While they have more following among younger consumers, consumers into the 65+ categories follow websites and social media pages.

In an informal survey conducted by Change Labs at previous Navajo Nation Fairs, less than 10% of participating business owners indicated having an online presence prior to COVID-19. Since the pandemic brought vending and tourism to a halt on the Navajo Nation, there is increasing demand from entrepreneurs seeking assistance with tools and strategies for selling online. However, in order to effectively sell online requires regular internet access, an understanding of vending platforms and payment platforms, and digital marketing knowledge. Change Labs is working to support progress in this space. (Doing Business on the Navajo Nation, 2020)

Emergence Group operates a no-commission Navajo multivendor Store (ShopNavajo.com), which has options to be modified to support needs related to foods.

Food Economy – Weaknesses and Threats

While there are existing and emerging opportunities for enhancing a food economy, this development is not without systemic issues. We advocate for identifying and addressing these issues, while also uplifting and supporting the current opportunities.

Habits

We all develop habits around how we manage food access and other aspects of our lives. We visit the same stores, travel the same routes and, in general, eat the same foods. We cannot underestimate the pull that these habits have on those whom we might want to influence the Navajo public to buy foods from Navajo vendors. Access is only a small part of what is needed.

In addition, the continuous opportunity to rely in some degree on foods provided through Federal Government assistance, is and will continue to pull at the strands the Navajo Nation can weave to create food sovereignty.

Sustainability

Establishing an ongoing economic influence, requires a stable underpinning of policy and well positioned professional and non-profit support. This is not something sustainable by one or a small group of two or three partners and some fluctuating grant funding.

Systemic issues must be addressed or at least mitigated in ways that are sustainable.

Enthusiastic entrepreneurs many times meet with issues that overwhelm them. Lack of labor to plant, cultivate and harvest products in the field, lack of access to land, lack of funds to purchase needed equipment are some of the reasons why some entrepreneurs have struggled.

In addition, those that are established as a farm or garden have a maze of issues to resolve to move production into broader sales. Issues that require expertise and time for learning such as what laws and certifications apply in different settings (selling to schools, nursing homes) or market identification of consumer preferences that might lead to new business. All these elements take time and expertise to explore and put the ability to enter new markets into the realm of decision making that is beyond the purview of many. Support is needed.

Market research and thoughtful outreach to the public can win over sustainable segments of the population for the long term, but this requires expertise to be sustained as a partner at the table.

All of the organizations mentioned in this report and many who are not have niches that can contribute on a sustained basis to what is needed to stimulate a foods based economy. Their individual missions and visions address various needs including training and coaching emerging entrepreneurs, sharing successful gardening/business practices, identifying and implementing distribution options for foods. Each niche mission is a piece of the puzzle. The task is to identify the correct puzzle pieces and engage them in effective ways.

A related issue is the lack of time and potentially ability to plan for support that increases healthy foods businesses in local communities. Based on virtual attendance at a number of Chapter meetings, *a number of Chapters struggle with the time and staff support to plan and execute effective implementation of plans for use of the Healthy Dine' Nation tax revenues*. This is currently limiting more community implementation of food centric activity.

Difficulty Starting a Business

As a sovereign nation, the Navajo Nation has its own set of rules and regulations regarding starting a business. Historically, this process has been complex and lengthy. As a result, it is very easy for information to be miscommunicated when first time business owners are navigating the system compounding delays. Some recent initiatives have smoothed the process somewhat, but most progress is still slowed by delays.

Land use and access to existing buildings are complex problems that remain potentially the single most problematic issue for business development requiring physical space.

Lack of access to funding due in large part from lack of opportunities to collateralize land and built assets remains an issue. Several non-profits, notably Change Labs are working to implement more flexible models.

These problems and those presented in this paper, present difficulties in starting a business that need continued work.

Food Access Issues

From the perspective of consumers on Navajo and in the national diaspora, several issues need to be mitigated in order to further the growth of a food economy.

Lack of broadband, physical infrastructure, and mailing address issues also present various difficulties for operating and growing a business.

Expectations: Quality, Price and Variety

Availability of food is not just a question of access to food products. There are also issues that prompt families to travel to border towns for their food notably- lower prices at bulk grocery stores, better quality and more varieties of foods to choose from.

Both the Emergence Group discussions with community members and the Dine Policy Institute Survey indicated that the Navajo public required quality in the products they are receiving, with a number specifically indicating that meat and produce were of lower quality at stores on the Nation. Reasons why they choose to shop in Border communities.

Infrastructure

Issue: Broadband

With this population it is often easy to focus on the concrete things for survival, like food, but as technology evolves its importance increases in every community. Unfortunately, and example of that is the lack of dependable internet access on the Navajo Nation. According to current Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, the Navajo Nation has "approximately 1,000 communication towers providing broadcast and broadband sites for broadband and broadcast carriers" (Park, 12 Oct 2020). He acknowledges that while 1,000 broadcast towers seem like a significant number for the Nation, it lacks in comparison to other states in the United States. For example, New Jersey has over 1,300 towers and it is only 1/3 the size of the Navajo Nation (Park, 12 Oct 2020).

The digital divide on the Navajo Nation affects many facets of life including education, government, healthcare, law enforcement, emergency communication and more. It will also affect the Navajo Nation's ability to grow a food centered economy. Since the Navajo Nation has a relatively small population compared to land area, internet infrastructure is crucial to build any new and emerging economy. If only 40% of the Navajo Nation has a fixed internet service, then it will be quite difficult to pursue this route (Park, 12 Oct 2020).

Even with such limited access many utilize their internet accessibility. The 2019 Survey conducted by Emergence Group of 480 tribal members identified that over 330 used the internet to shop frequently and others using occasionally.

The recent federal CARES Act and Infrastructure funding the Navajo Nation has received will continue to support work on the broadband issues. *With the vast distances between business and*

consumers on the Nation, the Internet could because an interactive informational database for food access.

Internet is becoming a basic human right and many citizens on the Navajo Nation are unable to enjoy it like much of the United States because of the hurdles they face in a stable connection and fast speeds.

Issue: Physical Addresses

Another challenge the Navajo Nation faces in growing a food centered economy is the lack of physical addresses. There is no grid of physical addresses on the Navajo Nation. UPS, FedEx, etc, do not deliver unless there is a physical address.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) usually assigns PO Boxes to Navajo Nation residents, but this alone cannot alleviate the challenges. There are restrictions on what can be delivered to a PO Box.

For an emerging business attempting to sign up for a credit card or getting access to a payment service for use by their customers, frequently requires a physical address as do various forms and banking and government paperwork. For example, business owners cannot easily obtain an Employment Identification Number with the Internal Revenue Service – a process that normally takes minutes in non-tribal areas.

Issue: Poor Roads

There are many roads on the Navajo Nation that are not paved or are severely damaged with potholes. The road infrastructure makes it fairly difficult to make long trips or to visit the most rural households. This challenge coupled with the lack of addresses makes it difficult for there to be regular food or supply delivery routes.

FINDINGS

Does this leave us with opportunities to grow the food centered economy?

Navajo vendors could grow businesses with more education about the possibilities, training in business practices and relevant skills, access to new Navajo and other markets and creative funding opportunities. There seem to be many additional sales opportunities on Navajo for existing business and by the many who sell in the informal economy.

Governments and non-profits would need to continue to play supporting roles in policy and business development and would need to increase the purchase of foods from Navajo vendors for use at events and for charitable distribution.

What are currently identified as the advantages of shopping in Border communities would need to be supplanted, in part, by shopping from Navajo vendors. This would require equal levels of quality in products, competitive pricing and access for those products that would lure additional

shoppers and perhaps new models of product access such as custom Food Boxes. Creative market tested ways of reaching out to the public need to be explored and implemented.

To create a Food economy, the current food - based businesses need to increase sales and additional entrepreneurs need to be encouraged to enter the economy.

Opportunities for Expanding Existing Businesses

Increase access to existing Navajo markets for existing Navajo producers is possible with information, discussion and some policy changes. A number of viable access opportunities are identified below with additional description of opportunities previously offered in the Dine' Food Sovereignty report identified in Appendix D. *All require awareness on the part of the producers, engagement and collaboration between producers and sellers and some familiarity with contracting.*

Selling to Convenience Stores

Convenience stores access to food customers is well documented. Broadening the selection of foods to include those produced by Navajo producers/growers is a viable opportunity.

COPE, for example, has the Healthy Navajo Stores Initiative to tap into the potential of small stores on the Navajo Nation to sell locally grown produce and various traditional Diné' foods. This program focuses on convenience stores and trading posts.

Local farmers provide an amazing source of healthy, local produce and if organized correctly, can be the easiest source of fresh produce for a store to purchase. Stocking local food not only invests in the community, but it also avoids lengthy travel times and results in produce that lasts much longer. Depending on the store partner's interest, local produce can be sold on the store's shelves, or through a Farmers Market organized on the store's property. The community partner can help connect farmers to the store and get the conversation started. COPE and other local partners have resources to help farmers and store partners navigate farm-to-store planning. (From the COPE Healthy Navajo Stores Initiative – Toolkit)

Rocky Ridge Gas and Market, is collaborating with AlterNativeEats and Chi'shie Farms and others that are making fresh sandwiches and Bento boxes that are sold at the convenience store.

Selling to the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise

The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise (NNGE) was established in 2006 and has created over one thousand three hundred jobs, making it a huge economic force on the Navajo Nation.

Across their four properties and one travel plaza, they try to source much of their food from Navajo vendors. For example, the Navajo Blue Travel Plaza, was built in mind to have sustainable initiatives. Their sustainable food production was inspired by their initiative at the Twin Arrows Casino Resort to source most of their beef from Navajo Beef.

Navajo Beef was established in 2013 under Labatt Food Service whose produce "USDA Choice" beef from cattle raised near Padres Mesa Ranch. Labatt Food Service also provides technical assistance for ranchers to help ensure their cattle is at a choice of prime-grade before they sell to their communities. In 2016, there were 42 Navajo families from 23 ranches participating in the program. In a 2020 High Country News article titled "Navajo ranchers are raising premium beef" the article mentions that in 2012, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise became the first customers of Navajo Beef. NNGE pays a 25% premium for the meat and firmly believe that the story and meaning behind Navajo Beef is worth the extra cost. Then Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said, "The Native American Beef program is essential to the Navajo Nation, not only because it has created jobs, but now the People will have another product available to them that is locally sourced within the Navajo Nation" (Navajo-Hopi Observer).

Native American beef is now available for purchase at local Bashas' store on the Navajo Nation

The Navajo Blue Travel Plaza had many goals in the planning phase, but a top priority is to implement and increase sustainability on the Navajo Nation. As a result of this, the Navajo Blue Travel Plaza also created a new food venture called Navajo Fizz. Navajo Fizz is a new craft soda company with four Navajo specific flavors and ingredients sourced from the Navajo Nation.

The vast network needed to organize and support programs like this shows that the Navajo Nation can make new programs for other food types such as produce work and it provided a blueprint on how to make such programs begin.

<u>Selling to those who buy Food for Government Facility Use and for Distribution.</u>

Government and non-profit entities purchase food for charitable distribution on Navajo. While the U.S. Government provides food for distribution on Navajo through various government and NGO's, dollars are spent by these entities to supplement food shared on Navajo through various distribution channels. A percentage of these funds could go to support Navajo producers.

Schools, Senior care and Nursing facilities, and other institutions could be opened to Navajo providers with the proper vendor credentialing.

Navajo vendor food production could be encouraged through direct sales to these food distribution organizations, promoting an economy while satisfying Nation food distribution needs.

Support could be provided to these vendors in the form of 1.) expanding knowledge about what could be sold to whom 2.) expanding knowledge about and smoothing pathways to contracting practices and models.

Selling to Restauranteurs and Chefs

Restaurants and chefs on Navajo are a potential market for locally produced food products. Whether they are staple products such as garlic or innovations such as microgreens, there is a growing number of Navajo entrepreneurs that can enhance this market.

Ashkii's Navajo Grill, Bow and Arrow Brewing Co., Juniper Coffee Eatery, AlterNativeEats all offer opportunities to support local producers and collaborate with other producers and outlets themselves.

Sean Sherman, and Brian Yazzie are among the Navajo chefs that are looking to source from Native communities.

Some of the larger fast food and dine- in options such as Denny's could also be approached with produce and other specialty items.

Opportunities for Artisan Producers

Navajo home- based food producers can make and sell food products on the Navajo Nation without extensive certifications and costly production methods being in place. The Navajo Nation allows the sale of these products without the application of significant restrictions. Both in person and on-line sales are possible.

The Dine' Policy Institute, 2018 report on Flea Markets on the Navajo Nation surveyed vendors with pivotal questions that speak to growth potential. The 385 vendors were asked if they go to other flea markets to sell, 60% said yes, 38% said no, and 2% did not respond.

The vendors were asked if they tried to sell their produce to a convenience or grocery store, 68% said no, 30% did not respond, and 2% said yes.

A substantial number of Flea Market vendors said that protection from the weather with some type of warming structure would do much to support their business. (DPI, 2018)

Temporary vendors must have current Navajo Nation Itinerant Permits and current Navajo Nation, Navajo Area Indian Health Service, or 638 Program food handler's cards and must follow all Food Handler Training and Food Service Permit Protocols. Renewals or permits can be obtained through the IHS website, link: https://www.ihs.gov/foodhandler. Permit and food handler's card are required to be displayed during operation.

The Food Handler Training consists of a one-hour training video and twenty question quiz. Vendors must pass the quiz with at least a 70% to obtain your Food Handler Certificate.

A Food Handler Certificate from the Indian Health Service (IHS) certifies that you have taken the training and passed the quiz. Food Handler Certificates may be honored by Tribes or possibly non-Tribal entities. Vendors need to determine the jurisdiction they are in and their requirements for permits or food certifications.

While some additional requirements/restrictions might be valuable, the current status allows for the targeting of growth of home - produced food products as an addition to the food - based economy. More detail on sales possibilities in the Appendix E: Cottage Food Laws.

Everyone knows what local producer can make a wedding cake. If identified, those who excel could be incentivized to expand their business, increasing their own incomes and allowing for potential employment of others stimulating a multiplier effect

Opportunities for New Entrepreneurs

Market opportunities definitely exist on Navajo particularly with government, non- profit and existing business where product needs are already established. Enterprising entrepreneurs could either fill niches not yet filled or supplant where vendors are not Navajo. Emergence Group survey/interview research identified the following:

Farmers Market Vending – selling at farmers markets.
Farmers Market Arranging – providing organizational support to communities/Chapters to host Farmer's Market on a rotating basis.
Herb Growing – herbs and microgreens can be grown in containers, of interest to Chefs, Farmers Markets, etc.
Specialty Animal Farming – Poultry, Rabbits, Fish,etc.
Beekeeping and Honey Production
Food Box Packing and Shipping
Food Delivery – GrubHub equivalent from Navajo Food Vendors
Food Canning- Training and Equipment Sale
Making Charcuterie Boards. (perhaps a fad, but several years of viability)
USDA Approved Slaughtering Trailer Operation
Meat Packing
Worm Farming for Composting
Agricultural Equipment Rental
Wholesale Distribution of Sought after Non-Perishable Foods
Aquaponics
Hydroponics

Opportunities for Increasing Customers

Enhanced capacity to provide Navajo products and increased awareness by the public bring us to the final step – engaging more of business and the public as Navajo product consumers. A few opportunities appear to be rising to the top. Additional description of opportunities previously offered in the Dine' Food Sovereignty report identified in Appendix F.

Public

Farmers' Markets

The significant interest (*91%) of those polled by the Dine' Policy Institute and increased interest in gardens for produce identified by the Emergence Group survey and conversations, identify Farmers Markets as potentially viable opportunities.*

There is prime opportunity for one or more entrepreneurs to look into organizing and running Farmers Markets in numerous communities on Navajo at Chapter houses, at schools or other public facilities.

New models of product access such as custom Food Boxes might also be valued. More research is needed on this prospect, but models exist to be evaluated.

Networks and Distribution Routes

While many travel by car to border communities and to their local food access grocery or convenience stores, other distribution opportunities already exist and could be leveraged to enhance the food economy.

Chapter houses, NGO's and others have established food distribution routes that cross the Navajo Nation. Many of these already support the distribution of food baskets. boxes or other resources including PPE. Cataloguing what exists would be an initial step in utilizing what is already in place to build the food economy.

Business to Business (B2B)

Existing businesses and vendors have options for contracting with a range of new sales prospects identified previously. Rocky Ridge Gas and Market is an excellent example. They are collaborating with AlterNative Eats and Chi'shie Farms and others that are making fresh sandwiches and Bento boxes that are sold at the convenience store.

Assistance with contracting practices, model contracts and potentially models or assistance with negotiation sessions could add significantly to these opportunities.

Food production businesses can also productively consider establishing Collaboratives or other consortia that will allow them to meet the demands of larger customers. The "Just Transitions" initiate of the Grand Canyon Trust is working with producers in Western Navajo to develop such a collaborative.

Opportunities for Virtual Communications

Assessing and Addressing Business Needs

In April, Change Lab and Nez Technologies launched a Tech Assessment designed to understand the software and equipment needs of Native entrepreneurs, diagnose effectiveness of their internet equipment and document internet speeds at home, and gauge interest and desire for technology literacy training. The assessment will serve 50 Native business owners and artisans and help address the needs of those with significant technology gaps. Change Labs will be able subsidize internet fees and/or lease equipment to entrepreneurs to help them operate online. Funding will also support a four-part Digital Literacy series to launch later this year.

Interactive Virtual Food Focused Clearinghouse

Historical opportunities for potential customers and vendors to engage including Flea Markets, roadside vendors, word of mouth networking, and formal business operation can be enhanced using emerging internet - based capacities and creativity.

It would be possible to grow an interactive informational database for food access.

An online Clearinghouse of the Navajo foods industry could provide the following opportunities:

a. Food industry specific mentoring information for business.

b. Private Chat space could allow for Navajo producers and vendors to get answers to questions from other Navajo vendors and also to discuss/arrange business contracts.

c. Government could access smaller, Navajo vendors that could be used as planned event suppliers (weekly or monthly meeting snacks, conference supply vendors)

d. Schools and other public sites such as Nursing Care facilities, could link with appropriately certified vendors.

e. Chefs and restaurants sourcing for creative menu items could link to vendors.

f. Members of the public looking for traditional Navajo foods or specialty items such as a wedding cake could locate possibilities.

g. Cross Navajo transportation options could be identified – from existing delivery routes, to a Navajo version of Grubhub.

h. Information could be shared about healthy eating, beginning a garden,

i. Competitions could be held rewarding those who source the most Navajo foods.

It Takes a Kinship Community

It is highly unlikely that a single pathway can be created to foster a food -based economy. It is realistic that some structured efforts can be effective in supporting organic efforts that can build momentum relying in part on Navajo kinship.

Many are poised to address elements of food economy creation.

a. Navajo Nation support for healthy foods and food access through legislation and food distributions.
b. Chapters interested in supporting community gardens and assuring food for all residents.
c. The Navajo/Hope Covid-19 Relief organization and others who have created extensive outreach networks and have continued interest in the food space with their new Food Boxes..
d. Ongoing business development efforts of the Navajo Nation, SBDC's and Navajo non-profits. Significant work by Change Labs.
e. Solid reporting and market analysis of food sovereignty status by Dine'College and others.
f. Tolani Lakes Enterprise and others offering model farming. training opportunities and wholistic thinking.
g. Lists of businesses including food vendors compiled by Change Labs and others.
h. Some businesses beginning collaborations like Rocky Ridge Gas and Market.

The Navajo Nation is the largest Native American tribe in the United States, both in terms of population and land mass. With a growing number of programs and efforts to grow a food centered economy by program such as Tolani Lake Enterprises, COPE, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, change and improvement in food systems is coming slowly but surely. The successful collaboration between Native American Beef and Labatt Food Service is evidence that a network exists for programs like this to flourish. There is great potential to build a food centered economy on the Navajo Nation if we learn from programs and communities that have done the groundwork first. Collaboration is key and because the momentum has already been started to invest and grow in this food centered economy, change and food security is much closer than we think.

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Appendix A: Navajo Informal Economy

Much of content below represents excerpts from the Dine’ Policy Institute paper, *Flea Markets on the Navajo Nation: A Report on the Informal Economy*, Oct, 2018. Additional content was developed from phone interviews with individual sellers and government officials,

> The Navajo Nation is characterized by exceptionally high rates of unemployment and poverty.NNDED estimates unemployment at fifty percent (50%). The reason for this high unemployment rate is the lack of formal employment opportunities on the Navajo Nation. In order to keep the unemployment rate from growing, over 3,500 jobs must be created each year on the Navajo Nation, however, the number of actual jobs created on the Navajo Nation falls far below this.
>
> Understanding the Navajo Nation economy in terms of formal employment numbers, however, is an oversimplification of the economic realities. As also noted by The NNDED also noted that , there is a substantial informal economy that operates on the Navajo Nation.

Navajo people are finding ways to overcome the barriers of unemployment in order to support themselves.

According to NNDED estimates, Navajos generate an estimated $40.5 million in the "informal" economy from their unregistered microenterprises and home-based business. The on-the-ground realities demonstrate the business sense, innovation and creativity that individuals and families call upon to support themselves in dire economic circumstances.

A substantial portion of this informal economy revolves around food in particular and includes food stands at Flea Markets, and along roadsides and mobile vendors of burritos and other prepared foods who sell largely to businesses in border communities or to their friends and family . While specific numbers do not currently exist to measure their presence, these informal food economies exist every community on the Navajo Nation.

Flea Market Surveys and Interviews to Understand Vendor and Customer Perspectives

The goals of the Dine' Institute flea market economy report were to understand the rationale of flea market vendors and customers for supporting flea markets and how their interests and concerns could be used to better understand potential growth in a Navajo economy.

The Dine' Policy Institute led surveys at 13 flea markets and gathered data by surveying consumers and vendors, interviewing vendors of the flea market, and interviewing tribal stakeholders about economic development.

They sampled individuals in the flea market, N= 736. Results show that many of the vendors and consumers identified as women, most of the participants were about the age of 45 years old. For the producers, the average yearly income was $19,000 with a monthly income of $588. Data suggested that producers in flea markets are supplementing their income.

The data from the vendor and government official interviews identified key interventions needed to support business development on the Navajo Nation. The major factors are the lack of access to land and capital, arduous bureaucracy, and lack of business education. They provided insight into how the Navajo government can improve the process and procedures for business development.

The consumer surveys were given to individuals within the flea market and helped provide a glimpse of the population that buys at the flea market. 351 surveys were collected from consumers. Those administering surveys asked the consumers why they come to the flea market, and it was revealed that food, particularly Native foods, were the biggest draw. It is common for Navajo flea markets to be the center of local food vendors, one can find traditional Navajo food, kettle corn, pickled foods, lemonade stands, Mexican food, and a growing Chinese cuisine.

The 385 vendors were asked if they go to other flea markets to sell, 60% said yes, 38% said no, and 2% did not respond.

The vendors were asked if they tried to sell their produce to a grocery store, 68% said no, 30% did not respond, and 2% said yes.

Vendors were asked what hindered their selling activity. 150 vendors identified weather related issues, 70 did not respond, 35 wrote that nothing hindered their business, 24 said that when costumers have no money it affects their business, 24 said competition is a hindrance, 24 said personal issues were a problem, 17 said that lack of infrastructure is a problem, 16 said that the expenses can decrease profit, 15 said that some flea markets are too far from their homes.

Thirty-one participants mentioned having advertisement for the flea markets would help increase customers who are not local. The Navajo Nation has many tourist hot spots, and the vendors believe that they should be able to tap into that portion of the economy. Vendors imagined signs directing tourists to the flea market and also included ideas for developing the signs.

Three said having internet available would increase business. That could be part of the infrastructural category, but it does demonstrate some initial interested in incorporating the internet into local businesses. Some vendors use card readers for transactions, and the wifi would help with that.

Based on the surveys, flea market vendors believe that infrastructure, particularly shelter for cold or rainy weather is the main factor to supporting their businesses. This makes sense considering how open the flea market spaces are and how vulnerable they can be to extreme weather.

Government Official Interviews

The interviews with the government officials provided a glimpse into the reality of Navajo business owners and entrepreneurs who work to establish a business on the Navajo Nation from the top-down.

When responding to why Navajo businesses remain, due to choice or the lack thereof, in the informal economy government officials identified the following:

They felt that emerging Navajo entrepreneurs were not technical experts and they do not understand the institutions that exist and how entrepreneurs need to engage, navigate, and or abstain from their own business visions.

There are four main areas of discussion that surfaced in the interviews; land, bureaucracy, access to funding, and business acumen

Land is held in trust but the Federal government rather than the tribal government which hinders development. Land is sparse due to inaccessibility caused by the land tenure system that favors grazing rather than other types of land use and development. Due to land being held in trust, loans are difficult to obtain by Navajo entrepreneurs, and most do not have required credit scores to apply for loans.

The Navajo government offers some matching funds to bring businesses to the Navajo Nation, but not enough to entice most businesses. These funds have been focused on bringing in larger businesses and not "growing their own" on Navajo.

Bureaucracy is the result of the Navajo government and the institutions that govern land use and development.

Business acumen plays a role in the management of Navajo businesses, and the interviews with the vendors suggest that they are willing to learn, so that they can maintain their businesses.

Appendix B: Navajo Customer Profiles

To address the question of could Navajo who currently do not shop for food from Navajo or reservation - based vendors be prospects for doing so, Emergence Group sampled the habits of individuals representing 1.) Elders 2.) Community members more remote from Border communities, 3.) the Navajo diaspora and 4.) Navajo families shopping routinely off Navajo.

This initial work (survey and interview) would suggest options for further market exploration and analysis.

The Community Survey work conducted by Emergence Group in 2018 and 2020 revealed food purchasing habits in several communities in the Eastern Agency and in sample Chapters across the Nation (Eastern, Ft.Defiance and Western Agencies) Consistent patterns emerged for the follow groups.

Elders

Elders making their own food purchases tended to buy many more shelf stable products and to buy the products in bulk limiting purchases of local produce or products.

Elders with access to food support had support routinely from family members or charitable support organizations. Support organizations largely provided a quantity of shelf stable products that would be delivered on some schedule. Schedules varied from once or twice a year to monthly.

Where friends or family members could assist, fresh produce might be made available. Access to cooling/refrigeration was a factor in this. Also important was the ability of the elder to manage food preparation.

Community Members with Long Commutes to Border Communities

Longer commutes to food purchasing options also triggered a need for and purchase of more shelf stable foods. There is increasing awareness that farms/gardens raising produce

are available, but only a minority of the public sampled were aware or sought this source for food.

Members with opportunity to shop as needed, frequently went to Border communities at least twice a month. The quantity and types of fresh produce purchased in Border communities, was determined by ability of the shopper to preserve freshness and quality. Access to suitable refrigeration was an issue.

Profiles of Two Categories of Potential New Markets for Navajo Produced Foods

Two customer profile interviews were conducted in February 2021 and are indicative of t work done which suggests additional market opportunities. One customer profile was of Sam an 18-year-old college freshman from Northern New Mexico currently studying in Hawaii. The other was of Hannah, a working mother of three (3) children in Northern New Mexico. Both customers were selected because of the diversity of their experiences, age, family life, and needs.

Sam: Navajo Student Away for College

Sam is currently attending college in Hawaii. However, due to the pandemic she is taking online classes while waiting to return to campus. She has been working for 3+ years mostly with the local movie theater and now she works with a small Native American business on the Navajo reservation while she is taking online classes.

She is very active on social media and often buys her authentic Native American products through social media channels or at flea markets in big cities like Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico. She relies on social media to update her on new products that are released by Native jewelers or designers. She doesn't post on her social media frequently, but she does share important news or items on her 'stories'.

She doesn't buy much food at local flea markets and primarily purchases on baked goods such as cookies and cakes at the flea markets. Additionally at the flea market, she loves trying homemade household goods like soaps, masks, home decor, and more.

She misses Navajo products while away at school, but does not see a direct way to access them.

She is a big supporter of Native owned businesses and her purchases are also swayed if the product she is buying is Native owned and operated. Her values include supporting local and Native owned business, happiness from buying products, making sure her jewelry and products are authentic or sourced sustainably, an organized business that makes it easy for her to purchase in person or online, and creative pieces that are not easy to find anywhere else. Along with her values she has very similar goals including finding a reliable online website that supports her values and has wide range of products that aren't limited to only artisan pieces, but that will also include traditional or Native American foods that can be delivered to her in Hawaii. Also, the opportunity to share easily through her social media network like pre-made infographics on products she buys so her friends and follower may purchase as well.

Despite having clear values and goals when buying products, she has various frustrations as well. For example, she thinks finding an all-in-one Native American marketplace for various goods is hard to find. Whereas going to a flea market is easier and covers more of her goals and values. However, a downside of that is that local flea makers do not often have a huge selection of food and baked goods and also a large selection of jewelry. She mentioned that her favorite place to shop was at the Santa Fe Indian Market, which only happens once a year so there is a lot of missed opportunities for her to buy the products she needs. Also, another key frustration she has is that is hard to find Native American owned business near her.

Even if she is not planning on going to flea markets, there are opportunities near her to shop at Native owned businesses. Ideally, she mentioned there could be an app that points these types of establishments out on a map, but she acknowledges that it is hard to consolidate the information in one place. She is an avid user of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. She frequents online marketplaces like Poshmark, Mercari, and Depop for some of her shopping needs.

Hannah – Mother of Three Children

The second customer profile was for Hannah, a mother of three children who has a full-time job at a small Native American owned business as an Office Manager. Her kids are 12, 8, and 4 and a lot of her free time is spent with her family.

For food, she shops mainly at Sam's Club, Smith's, and Safeway in Farmington, NM. She likes Sam's Club because she can buy everything she needs in bulk at a good price. On her list, the top products she buys are meat, fruits, vegetables, cases of water, snack foods and more. Since all of her children are attending a hybrid of school online and in-person, she has to buy a lot more food. She relied a lot on the free lunch program that her children's school provided. At school, they get free breakfast and lunch, so while she is shopping, she doesn't focus too much on breakfast or lunch. Dinner is the main meal that she buys a lot of food for. However, this has changed because of COVID-19.

Feeding a family of 5 is very expensive, but she loves providing her family with fresh fruit and vegetables and she tries to make all of her food last. A typical bi-weekly grocery bill is around $350. She values family time and always makes it a priority to have dinner with her family every night.

She is career-oriented and also values saving money so she will coupon and take advantage of in-store discounts. Her goals are to maintain a good work-life balance and also would like to find other options to source her food – whether it be from local farmer markets or other Native owned produce stores.

While she does make a goal to buy local, she also does values saving money which is why she likes to shop at big bulk stores. Some of her frustrations include having to make frequent trips to

shop, that her grocery bills are often high, and that the nearest town is often crowded or products are sold out which means she has to make more trips.

She mentioned that access to creatively developed Food Boxes of different sizes and types might be of interest.

She also provided a typical shopping list she uses for her bi-weekly grocery stores visits.

Shopping List
- Meat (Steaks, Ground Beef, Chicken)
- Potatoes
- Cases of Water
- Chips
- Milk
- Bread
- Fruit (Bananas, berries, pomegranates, apples)
- Vegetables (Broccoli, Corn, Bell Peppers, Squash)
- Soda
- Eggs
- Baking ingredients (Flour, Sugar)
- Beans
- Dog Food

Appendix C: Navajo Customer Survey

In Summer and early Fall of 2019, Emergence Group invited tribal members from various locations in the Eastern Agency including the area from Gallup, NM to Crownpoint, NM to respond to a Customer Discovery Survey to determine shopping interests and ability to shop using the Internet. Assistance in securing responses was provided by Navajo interns.

Survey results from Customer Discovery survey conducted by Emergence Group identified that 330 of the 480 Navajo tribal members polled had done some internet access, usually by mobile phone. While prone to disruption, most reported that they had shopped at least monthly or for special occasions on website such as Amazon. Business to business (B2B) internet use occurs daily.

260 women and 220 men responded.
Respondents could identify all categories that applied for each question.

Respondents were asked to rank 16 categories of most shopping interest.
Gifts and Food were the highest ranking products for which people had interest in Internet shopping.

Of particular interest for this data are the responses regarding 1.) interest in and conditions for "Buying Navajo." and 2.) interest and ability to shop on the Internet

Participants could respond to all responses that were important to them.

1. What are the biggest issues you find when trying to get a product or service you need?

230___Cost too high
140____Quality not good
150____Poor selection of merchandize or choice of service providers
160____Must travel too far

2. Is the idea of "Buying Navajo" important to you?

420___I like to support Navajo.
210___I buy what I think is the best product or service, regardless of who makes or provides it.
160___ If it helps my community.
190___ If it helps the Navajo Nation economy.

3. Have you purchased products or services from the Internet through an on-line Marketplace like Amazon?

130____No
60____Yes, shop weekly
140____Yes, shop monthly
150____Yes, shop for special occasions

4. What are your biggest issues regarding shopping on the Internet?

40_ The idea is foreign to me
60_ Idea is not traditional, so I do not support it
60 __ I do not have Internet access
60_ Lack of a computer or smartphone
330_ No issues, I do it.

This response indicates that some/many shop on line even if no good internet access is available at home (do so when in a hot spot or larger community) or when they do not have a computer.

Appendix D: Increasing Sales Opportunities for Navajo Producers an Excerpt from the Dine'Food Sovereignty Report.

Working with Existing Entities to Increase Healthy, Traditionally Based

Foods and Foods From Navajo Producers an Excerpt from Dine' Food Sovereignty

Commitment of Navajo Nation Programs to purchasing healthy and traditionally based foods, divesting from purchasing unhealthy food - This recommendation holds that Navajo Nation Government, including programs, departments, divisions, Chapters, and all other entities make a financial commitment to purchasing healthy foods and traditional-based foods, and where possible, to purchase these foods from Diné food producers. This policy would increase access to healthier and traditional food for people employed in the Navajo Nation government and those serviced by Navajo Nation Government programming on the Navajo Nation, as well as directly contribute to rebuilding a Diné food economy by channeling Navajo Nation dollars spent on food purchases to Diné producers. Along with this financial commitment, the Navajo Nation should also consider policies to restrict the purchase of unnecessary, heavily processed, high caloric foods with Navajo Nation government funds where healthier alternatives exist. At least one other Native American Nation has done this; the Lummi Nation in Washington State passed a policy to restrict tribal government dollars from being spent on soda.

To use Navajo Nation dollars to purchase foods from Diné producers, a process for purchasing from individual producers as well as Diné collective organizations including Community Supported Agricultural Associations (CSA's) and Cooperatives by the Navajo Nation will need to be established, and food safety standards will need to be addressed. This process should be inclusive enough to allow for a wide range of purchases, from vendors at flea markets to farmers' markets. Several options to address food safety concerns will be discussed in the following sections.

Requirements for Navajo Nation Hotels and Casinos - The Navajo Nation has spent millions of dollars in recent years to build casinos and hotels to generate revenue for the Navajo Nation. Outside of the direct revenue generation, casinos and hotels can contribute directly to the Navajo Nation economy by committing to provide healthy traditional food offerings and to purchase foods from Navajo food producers when possible.

Contract Agreements with Stores on Navajo Nation, Guidelines for Grocery and Convenience Stores on the Navajo Nation

For non-Navajo businesses selling food to operate on the Navajo Nation a contract agreement must be signed with the Navajo Nation. Through these contract agreements, the Navajo Nation can enact requirements for businesses to carry healthy traditional food offerings from Navajo producers, which will not only help to rebuild a Diné food economy, but also give Navajo Nation consumers access to these foods in existing food retail locations.

Furthermore, the Navajo Nation should also work with existing businesses, such Bashas' Diné markets, gas stations, and convenience stores to develop strategies and guidelines to increase healthy food offerings as well as to provide food related health education, as studies have shown that stocking shelves with healthier options and promoting healthier foods leads to an increase of healthy food consumption in food deserts.47 Data from the Community Food Assessment demonstrates that healthy foods, specifically fresh foods, natural and organic

foods and traditional foods are what people want but do not have access to in their community. Furthermore, the data demonstrates that local community growers are willing to fill the void of organically, naturally produced foods, as well as traditional foods

Appendix E: Cottage Food Laws

Cottage Food Laws by State

New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah all have varying cottage food laws. Cottage food laws are basically laws that allow some-time producers to use appliances in their homes to bake, cook, can, pickle, dry or candy certain low-risk foods for sale. The main difference being that the people producing this food do not have to do so in licensed or commercial kitchens.

Each state has their laws and a variety of allowed foods. New Mexico's cottage food laws for selling online include those homemade foods are limited to non-TCS foods only, (TCS stands for time/temperature control for food safety), the seller/producer, must obtain an New Mexico Environment Department approved food handler card, and more if selling in-person at flea markets. Prior to July 1, 2021, New Mexico had some of the strictest food laws in the country, but due to the passage of the 2021 Homemade Food Act, homemade food producers may sell their products directly to consumers through the internet or over the phone. In addition, they may also use the mail to deliver their products, have in-person deliver, and home pickup.

In the state of Arizona, cottage food producers may sell directly to consumers, including from their homes and unlike many other states, Arizona also allows producers to sell homemade food to online buyers within state limits.

In Utah, homemade food producers are able to sell shelf-stable food and items that require refrigeration, so long as the seller informs the consumer that the food is homemade and not regulated. Food sellers in Utah also allow producers who make their food at home to sell them through retail outlets like grocery stores and online to buyers within state limits.

These guidelines are complex and individual by product, so sales beyond the Navajo Nation require diligent review. For example Food Preparation Training Courses vary by County and municipalities can add additional rules.

Federal Law regarding Interstate Commerce

If you engage in interstate commerce, it will be necessary to review federal regulations. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's PACA license (short for the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act) even applies to in-state commerce if you sell more than a ton of produce a day. If you sell more than $500,000 worth of produce a year, FDA regulations might also apply.

Appendix F: Potential New Access Points for Healthy and Traditional Foods
An Excerpt from the Dine' Food Economy Report

In addition to offering healthy and Diné foods through existing food retail locations and food access points, the Navajo Nation can further move to increase access to healthy traditional foods and rebuild a Diné food economy by creating new access points for both consumer and food producers.

Mobile Grocery Stores

Mobile grocery stores are one strategy communities are using to bring immediate access to fresh and healthy foods for people living in food deserts. Mobile grocery stores are refrigerated, temperature controlled trucks, which bring affordable fresh produce and healthy foods into communities. One mobile grocery store operating regionally is the Northern New Mexico based MoGro, which is now serving several Pueblo communities including Jemez, Cochiti, Santa Domingo, San Felipe, and Laguna. The effectiveness of mobile grocery stores for Native communities could be further expanded by offering locally produced and traditional foods. The Navajo Nation could work to contract with an existing food retailer or mobile grocery store to get these services on the Navajo Nation, or it could develop its own. Furthermore, farmer and community-based cooperatives could also establish a mobile grocery store.

Farmers' Markets

Farmers' Markets have been making there way onto the Navajo Nation in recent years – in 2013 alone, successful farmers' markets were held in Shiprock, Ramah, Tsaile, and Tuba City.

Data from the Community Food Assessment illustrates Diné peoples' interest in farmers' markets; ninety-one (91%) of participants in the Consumer Survey indicated that they would be interested in shopping at a regional farmers' market. In the Community Grower Focus Groups, Tsaile growers said they were inspired to plant after seeing the success of the Tsaile farmers' market in 2012.

Farmers' markets not only create a space for people to access healthy and traditional foods and for food producers to sell their products, but also provide opportunities for communities to connect and socialize. Research participants elaborated in interviews that they would be more likely to visit a famers' market if it featured social activities, such as music, art, and cooking demonstrations for all generations. For a farmers' market on the Navajo Nation to be successful, it must have mechanisms in place to enable the use of EBT and WIC, given that such a high percentage of the population of the Navajo Nation depends on food assistance programs. The Navajo Nation Food Distribution program can also work to develop vouchers that its program recipients can use at Farmers' Markets rather than simply providing USDA commodity food.

Community Supported Agriculture

Another strategy that farmers, communities, and the Navajo Nation can use to create access to local and traditional foods is through the development of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). In CSAs, people buy "shares" from a local farmer or farmers during the growing season, and during harvest, the farmers will distribute boxes of the fresh and locally grown produce weekly to those that purchased a share. One regional example of a CSA is the Work in Beauty CSA based out of Gallup, NM, which offers Spring, Early Summer, Summer, and Fall shares through season extension methods, as well as gardening workshops. P. 74-75.

Food Boxes for Sale

The Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund, developed initially to support food access during the pandemic, is transitioning to a non-profit with aspirations to continue to stabilize communities. This organization, currently operates in the Monument Valley area of the Navajo Nation. Recently, they announced an online food subscription box program called Nich'iyáán Yá'ádaat'éehii Market. The options for food deliver includes one time, monthly, and biweekly. The food box subscription program will launch on Friday, June 4, 2021. A complete food box will have items such as:

Non-Perishables

- Pinto Beans (1lb)
- Starkist Tuna Chunk Light (5oz)
- Salt (26oz)
- Pear Halves (8.5oz)
- Green Beans (14.5oz)
- Rice (2lbs)
- Water, Spring Alpine Flat Cap (2gal)
- Chicken and Rice Soup (10.5oz)
- Baking Powder (8.1oz)
- Sardines (4.38oz)
- Corn (15oz)
- Peanut Butter (16oz)
- Quick Oats Cereal (42oz)
- Bluebird Flour (20lbs)
- Corned Beef Hash (14oz)
- Turkey Fine Ground Chub (1lb)
- Bacon Turkey Butterball 24 slices (12oz)
- Ground Beef (2lbs)

Perishables

- Turkey Bacon Butterball 24 slices (12oz)
- Ground Beef (2lbs)
- Celery (1/2lb)
- Carrots (1/2lb)
- Cabbage (1ct)

- Banana (1lb)
- Fresh Large Eggs (1doz)
- Yellow Onions (3lbs)
- Red Apples (4ct)
- Cucumber (2ct)
- Orange (4ct)
- Idaho Baker Potatoes (5lbs)
- Zucchini Squash (2lbs)

"The food can be delivered or also set for pickup at the distribution location the Monument Valley – Navajo Nation Welcome Center. Pickups are on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month and deliveries are made on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. This is a great example of a relatively new organization putting a strategy in place to develop a network of food deliveries."

The Intertribal Agriculture Council, while not solely Navajo, has a Native Food Connection program whose mission is to "elevate Native agriculture by increasing exposure and growth in the domestic and specialty markets" (Native Food Connection n.d). They do this in a variety of ways, one of which is the Native Food Connection Box. This is a food box that has a variety of products that are all sourced by Native American vendors and they are custom made. The goal behind this food connection is to "increase promotion of American Indian Foods members and to educate the public about the value and quality of Native foods" (Native Food Connection n.d). The Native Food Connection comes with 4 native made/produced foods such as Séka Hills Extra Virgin California Olive Oil, Red Feather Red Chile Powder, Sakara Botanicals Healing Tea, and Ute Bison Pepper Steak Strips. Each box may vary, but this is an example of a typical box sent to customers.