



## Creating a Local Food Procurement Community of Practice:

### The Alberta Flavour Learning Lab

Mary Beckie<sup>1</sup>, Leanne Hedberg<sup>1</sup>, Jessie Radies<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Alberta, <sup>2</sup>Northlands Agriculture Society

# Alberta's agri-food system



# Alberta's 'turn to local'

- 2016, total market value for farmers' markets, farm retail, and local food restaurants was \$1.624 billion, quadruple that in 2004
- Scaling up the local food sector: building physical and social infrastructure
- Harnessing the power of institutional procurement: benefits and challenges
- Forming a procurement Community of Practice – AB Flavour Learning Lab



- Northlands Ag Society convened the group (summer of 2014)
- Securing funding: McConnell Foundation; ALMA; FLEdGE and Mitacs
- Purpose and definition of local
  - “*Creating a positive community impact by getting more local food on more local plates*”

Criteria for local/Alberta food (2 out of 3):

- ❖ ingredients
- ❖ processing
- ❖ business ownership







# 2014 - 2015

- Inventorying local food products available through distributors or being sourced directly (1700 products; 20 direct trade relationships)
- Learning resources: guest speakers, reports, online sources, local food tours

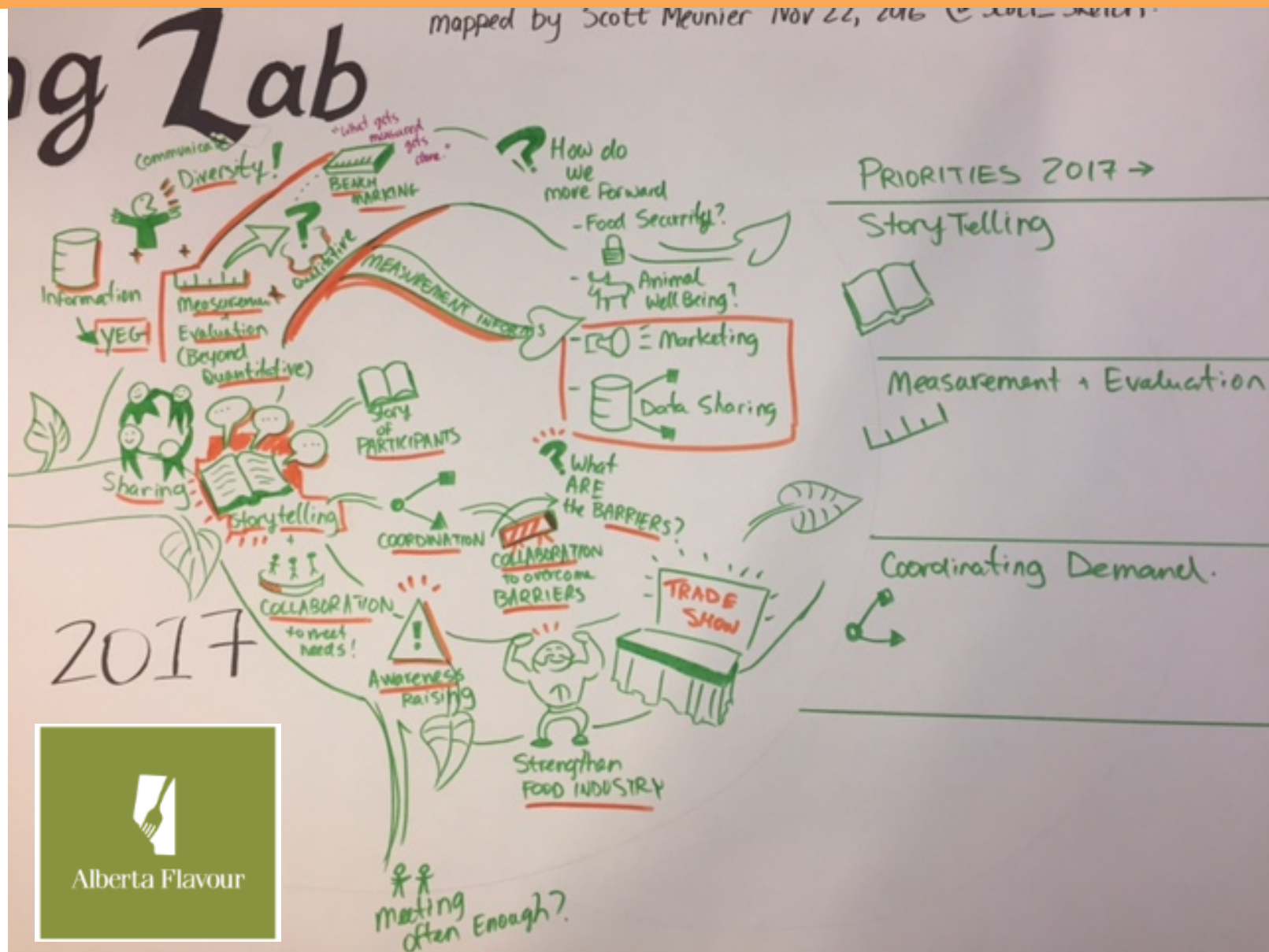




# More food (and drink) tours



# 2016 - 2017







# Telling our stories

- Marketing toolkit
- Website: [albertaflavour.com](http://albertaflavour.com)
- Social media @albertaflavour
- Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8Odc-GDIEk>





# Measurement and Evaluation

## 2015 and 2016 data

- **2015** baseline study of 6 different institutions purchasing
  - Total food spending: \$11.52 million
  - 23.9% (\$2.76 million) on local food
- Highest categories: 57.8% dairy; 44.6% protein; 24.9% frozen
- Lowest: 0.1% beverage; 7.9% fish & seafood; 9.5% fresh produce
- Wide range of individualized % local results (29.9% - 7%)
- Set targets to increase percentage of local food purchases
- **2016** data analysis revealed a slight drop in total % of local food, but again, a wide range of individualized results (30.5% - 12%)



# Coordinating demand

- Barriers to scaling up local purchasing: issues of quantity, range of products, access/distribution
- In order to support production planning and supply chain development - coordinate institutional demand
- Proposed 2 – 3 yr pilot project will focus on coordinated purchasing of a few commodities to start with, secure funding to hire a purchasing coordinator and evaluate the results
- This work will draw on other examples of successful group institutional purchasing (St. Joseph's Health System Group Purchasing Organization) and other initiatives (Nourish Health Care)

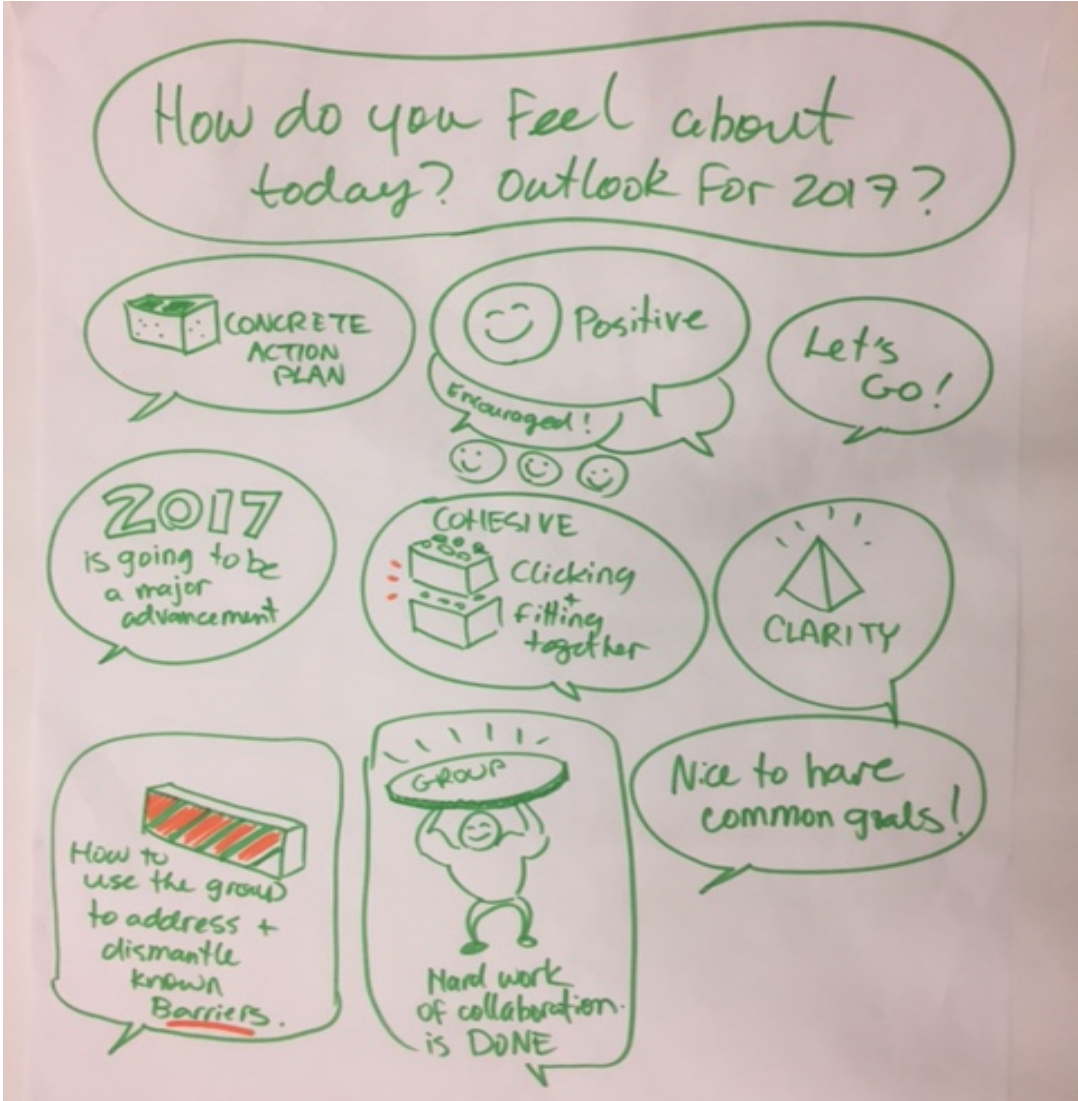


# Challenges and Strategies

- Building relationships of trust
  - Art of Hosting; Confidentiality Agreement
- Terms of Reference and Participation Pledge
- Growing the Learning Lab
- Moving beyond economics to include other dimensions of sustainability



# Successes





# AB Flavour Learning Lab Members

- Northlands Agriculture Society
- Alberta Dept of Ag & Forestry
- AB Innotech
- AB Health Services – U of AB Hospital
- Covenant Health
- NorQuest College
- University of Alberta
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
- MacEwan University
- City of Edmonton
- Shaw Conference Centre
- Organic Box
- Erdmann's Farm
- Aramark
- Sysco
- Gordon Food Services

# Acknowledgements

- Northlands Agriculture Society
  - McConnell Foundation
- AB Livestock and Meat Association (ALMA)
  - City of Edmonton
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