

# **Collectivizing Local Food: Lessons From the Harvest Moon Society**



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## Context: Local Alternative Food



Discontent w/ industrial food  
Environment ■ Taste ■ Safety  
■ Support Local ■  
Relationships

Livelihood ■ Risk ■ Control  
Local Food as a Rural  
Development Tool ■  
Re-connecting



Rural-Urban ■ Farm-Eater  
Connections





- **Growing Interest in Direct Marketing**
- **Multiple roles of DM Farmers**
- **And scale?**
- **How to Manage this – collectively?**



- 12 farm families
- Diversity



Clearwater, Manitoba  
Population 72

# Early Development

(fall 2006 – summer 2007)



*By 2010, members of the HMFG will capture a greater portion of the food dollar by reducing the distance between farm and fork. This will have a positive economic impact on participating farm families which will resonate through their communities. This economic impact will also increase agricultural opportunities for the next generation of farmers.*

*business.*

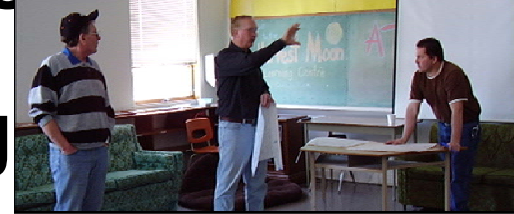




# Initial Focus - “Pooled Model”

Summer 2007 to Spring 2009

- **Pooling products**
- **Focus on larger buyers**
- **Collectivize everything**
- **Better suited farmers who were doing little direct marketing**
- **Standardize production practices**
- **Other farmers were developing direct marketing businesses as individuals**

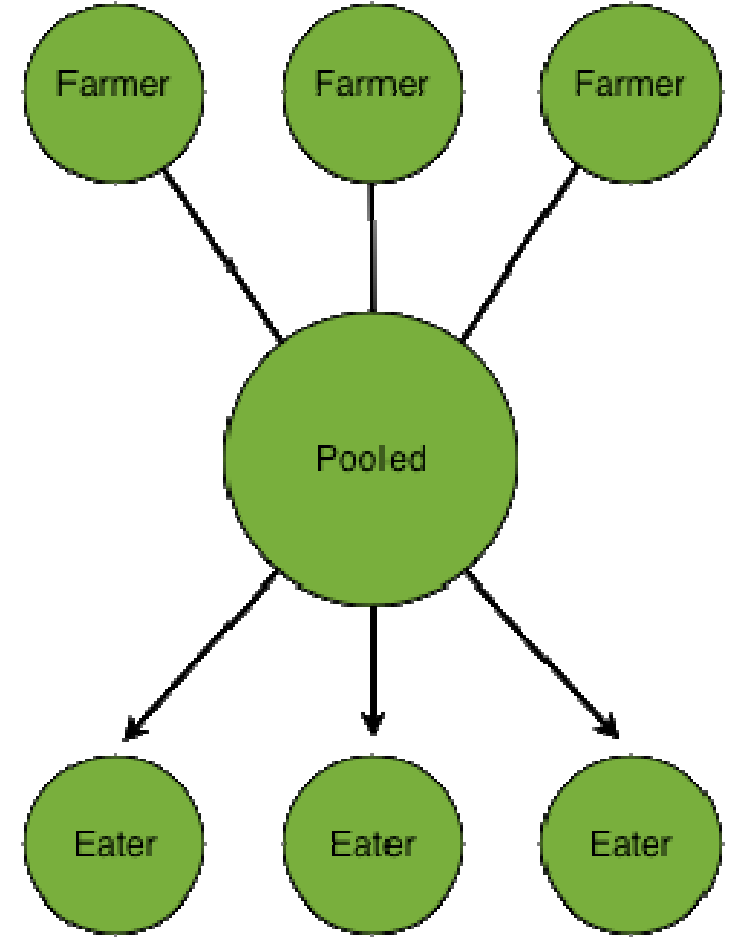
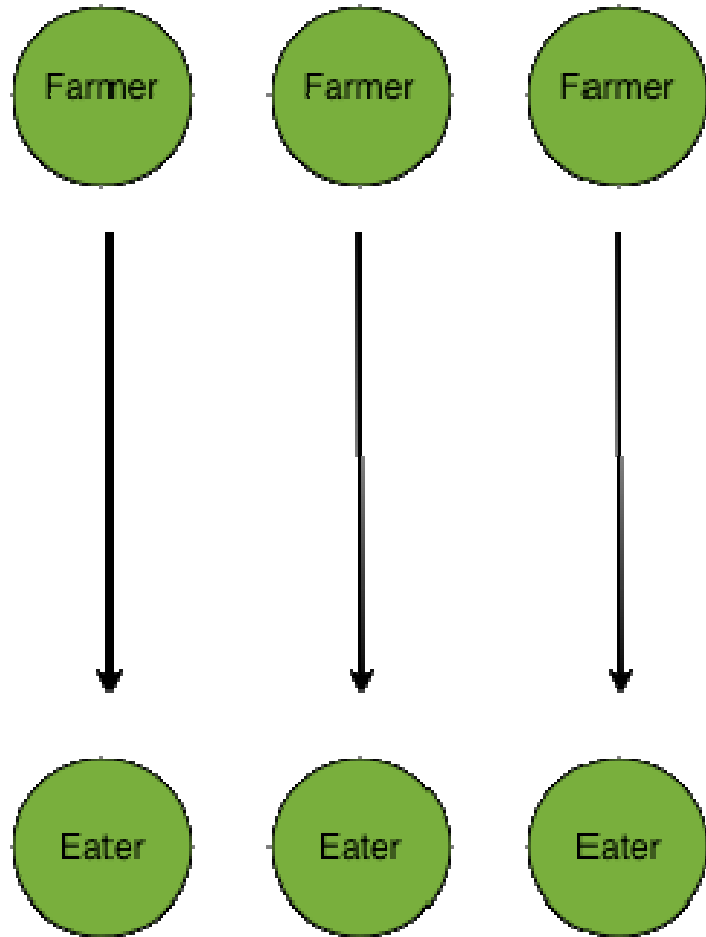


**“I Sell”**

**vs.**

**“We Sell”**

**Sell”**



**Hybrid Model?**



# Transition Towards “I Sell”

(Spring 2009 to now)

- **Collapse of pooled model - standards**
- **Lost some farmers**
- **Collectivizing reduced from pooling products to enabling direct marketing (farm to eater relationships)**
- **Now moving again towards collectivizing more of the DM process**

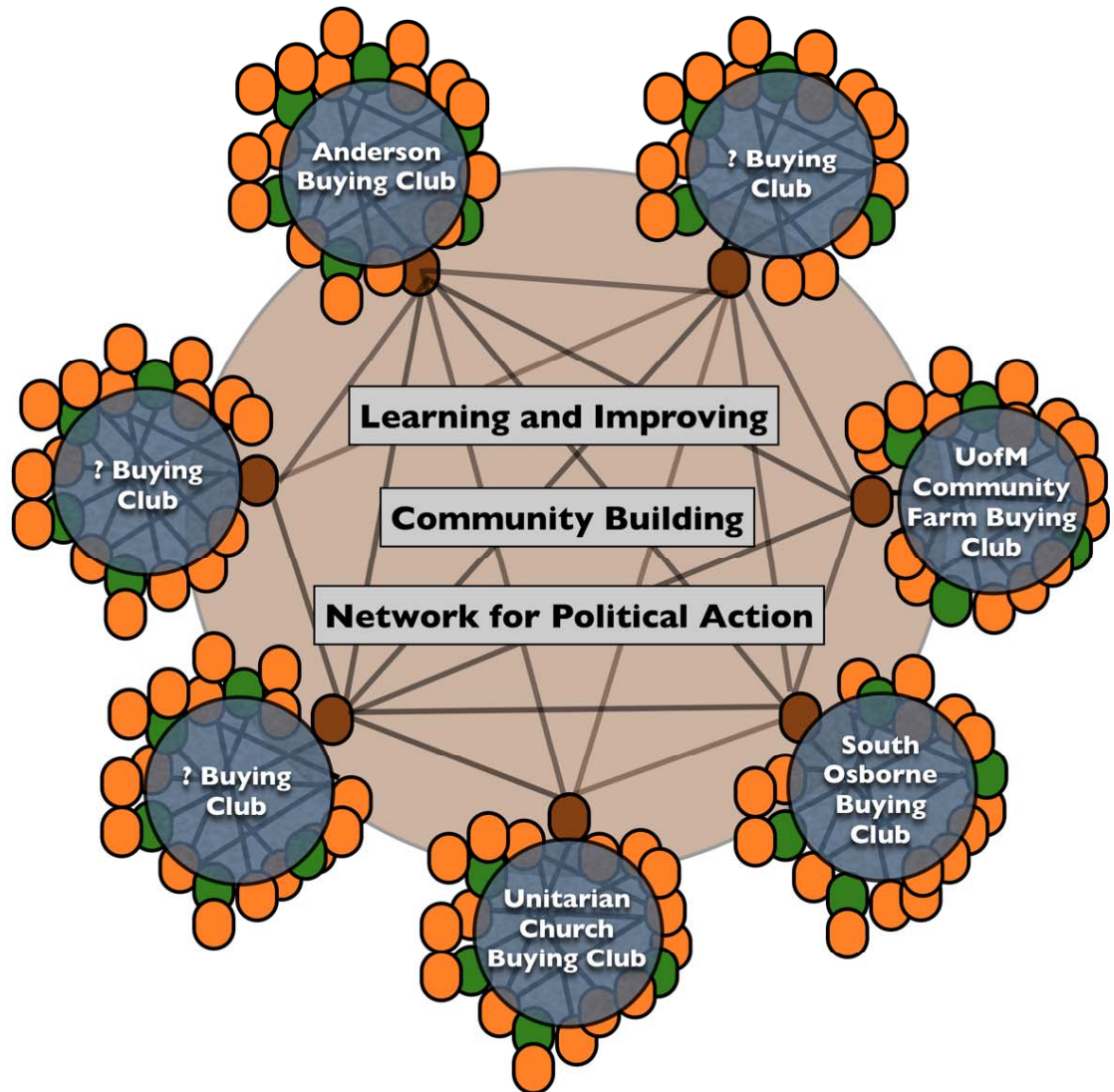
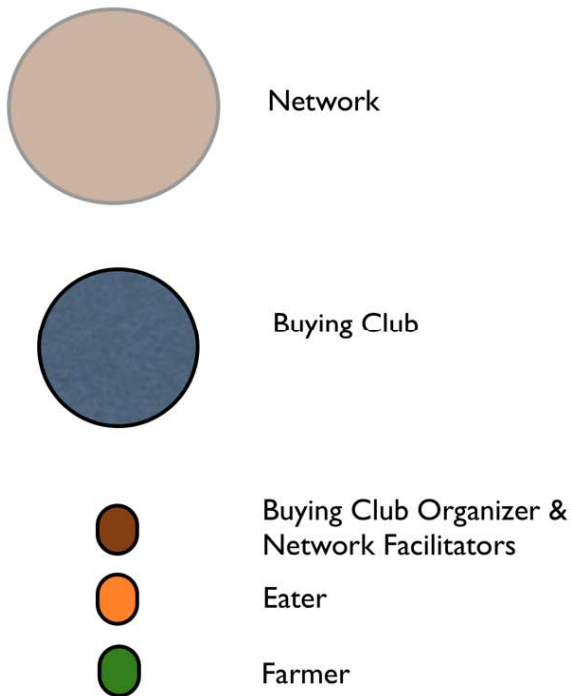


# Food Buying Club Model



# Network of Food Buying Clubs/Communities

**Harvest Moon Local  
Food Initiative Buying  
Group Network**





# Collectivizing Direct Local Food Relationships

**Farmer-Farmer**

**Eater-Eater**

**Eater-Farmer**

# Challenges and Opportunities

1. Bridging the rural-urban divide to create mutual understanding and equitable decision-making in the food system
2. Growing local food to have an impact at larger scales by transforming what's on the dinner table of mainstream consumers
3. Moving beyond the dominant approach to food systems change (as consumers and producers through the marketplace) to change as citizens through political participation and community development



# Lessons Learned

- Collective direct marketing can involve collectivizing different aspects of DM process
- Different farmers have varying needs/visions of what collectivization looks like
- Explore commonalities and differences in vision early. Have the hard discussions. What is 'local'. What is Good Food and Good Farming?



# Lessons Learned

- Need to find solutions in Manitoba for commodity-focused producers looking for alternatives
- Overcome binaries. Hybrid approaches.
- Initiatives that go beyond atomistic producer-consumer relationships are needed
- Not consumers, but network of partners



# Acknowledgements

- Heifer International
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- SSHRC CGS Scholarship
- Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council



“I Sell”

Both

“We

Sell”

