Tufts University | Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy
FOOD AND NUTRITION INNOVATION INSTITUTE

EVENT SUMMARY

REGENERATE 2025

A GATHERING TO REIMAGINE
FOOD, HEALTH & CLIMATE
FROM THE GROUND UP

AUGUST 12-14, 2025
WILD KID ACRES
EDGEWATER, MD

01

Growing Curiosity for a Regenerative Future

On August 12th, 2025, nearly 100 food system and nutrition-forward leaders gathered at Wild Kid Acres in Edgewater, Maryland, a learning center for regenerative livestock farming, for Regenerate 2025. We came with a simple question: What does it take to nourish both people and planet at the same time? Not just "sustain" them but regenerate them. Is "Regenerative Nutrition" the blending of the climate and health worlds that we need to center?

We arrived carrying tensions about mismatched incentives, fragmented systems, and widespread distrust (of the system, not necessarily each other). The attendees described concerns about barriers to markets, skepticism and worry about misinformation, worry about community health and access to care, and the challenge of investment risks. Each story was a reminder of how deeply our food system reflects the struggles of our time.

Added to the tensions we brought with us were the discomfort of humid August days in Maryland, flies from the farm, and the constant sound of fans moving the dense air around us. Despite the physical discomfort, everyone committed to the event and did the work. Our host, Gerardo Martinez, centered the discomfort we were feeling and reminded us that it *pales in comparison to the discomfort of the farmers and laborers working outside in the fields*, cultivating and harvesting our food.

Despite the heat, something powerful happened in our time together. We didn't stop at the tensions or let the discomfort limit our work. Instead, we exercised deep listening, and worked across six tracks: infrastructure, finance, policy, data, systems integration, and communication, to identify patterns, share best practices, and envision a transformation.

What emerged was a shift away from fear and scarcity and a movement toward curiosity about regeneration and a commitment to, and love for, the work. Across all six tracks, curiosity surfaced repeatedly among participants as the connective tissue that motivated a willingness to ask, to listen, to test, and to imagine. Curiosity turned tensions into conversations, distrust into dialogue, and skepticism into an invitation to learn and collaborate.

This report captures the work of those who attended Regenerate 2025, the tensions we named, the prototypes we sketched, and the new narratives we began to tell. It is not a finished product. It's a dynamic seedbed of ideas that serves as an activation point for new partnerships and collaborations.

We invite you to enter this report not as a static record, but as an open field: a place where curiosity can grow, and where we can begin, together, to practice regenerative nutrition as a system of trust, abundance, and possibility.

With love and gratitude to all who made it possible,

Katie Stebbins, Hallie Maly, Nicole Ninteau

Conveners, Regenerate 2025
Tufts Food & Nutrition Innovation Institute

02

Executive Summary

Regenerate 2025 was an immersive workshop held over three days with 10 different group activities and six different tracks. The first activity that participants were asked to complete was a fairytale-based story scaffold. The scaffold, which is a common facilitation tool, set a tone of creativity and fun and was framed to invite imagination and aspiration for the food system. An AI-generated compilation of all the story scaffolds from Day 1 of Regenerate 2025 can be found in Section 3.

Day 1 of Regenerate 2025 concluded with Tension & Practice cards, meant to surface the real dilemmas participants navigate in their work. While we began with this storytelling exercise that emphasized optimism and vision, we followed it with a discussion of tensions. Each participant was asked to complete as many Tension & Practice cards as they could in a limited amount of time (10 minutes). This exercise enabled participants to release the tensions, concerns, and challenges they had brought to the event.

Then, facilitators guided each group to cluster these tensions into themes. The group was asked to collectively examine all the Tension & Practice cards that were generated and to identify synergies and begin to shape priorities.

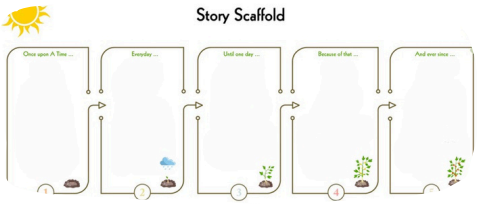
On Day 2, groups selected one core tension to focus on, mapped its edges and boundaries to clarify scope, created a system snapshot to visualize dynamics, and developed a solution sketchpad to test potential interventions.

On Day 3, the participants crafted new, individual fairytale story scaffolds capturing their personal learning arc from the gathering and then worked in their groups to synthesize the insights into a shared story scaffold that served as the foundation for each group's final presentations. The program ended with fun and playful skits and shares (hysterical!), and personal seven-day commitments that were meant to call attention to each person's next steps beyond the convening.

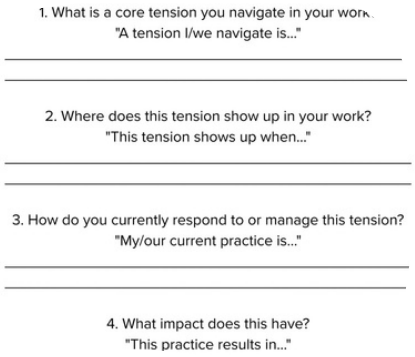
The following is a summary of the work completed by each of the Regenerate 2025 tracks. Each group produced a different version of artifacts, *ultimately creating wonderful and noticeable variability in each track report.*

The Journey:

Day 1

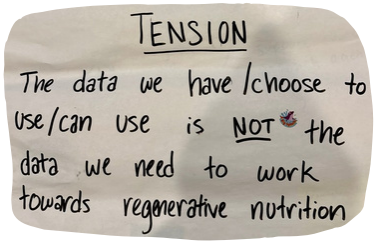


Individual story scaffolds



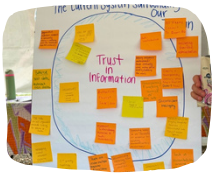
Tension & Practice cards

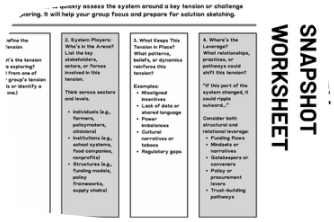
Day 2



Selected tension

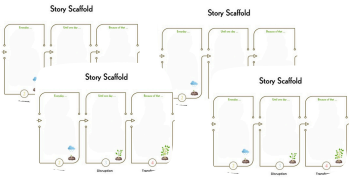
Edges & Boundaries





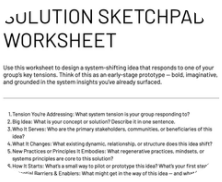
Systems snapshot

Day 3



Individual story scaffolds

Solution sketchpad



Group story scaffold & presentation

The Tracks:

1

Infrastructure - Building Regenerative Systems
Farmers, engineers, nutritionists, and climate experts reimagined the physical and digital infrastructure needed to support regenerative systems.
Focus: A Natural Asset Company (NAC) that addresses capital needs across the supply chain, aligning human and ecological needs under a shared vision.

2

Policy - Shaping the Next Decade
Participants identified opportunities to align climate, agriculture, and health agendas and build strategies to drive coordinated policy action over the next ten years.
Focus: The American Food, Farms, and Health for Freedom Act- a coordinated policy framework designed to build and define value-based incentives that create a food system optimized for health, sustainability, and economic resilience.

3

Finance - Valuing What Matters
Financial innovators, policymakers, and practitioners designed new models for investing in food systems that deliver environmental, nutritional, and equity returns.
Focus: Farm for America- A self-sustaining national non-profit that will bridge the gaps in education and financing to meet the transformational goal of transitioning US farming practices from 1.5% to 30% regenerative in 3 years.

4

Data - Measuring Impact Across Systems
Participants explored emerging measurement frameworks, identified shared metrics for cross-sector accountability, and grappled with interoperability, data equity, and real-time decision-making challenges.
Focus: Soil to Stool- a system-wide data integration and intelligence initiative designed to connect ecological conditions, agricultural practices, food quality, human biology, and real-world health outcomes through a unified data infrastructure.

5

Communication - Narratives for Change
Communication track participants co-created new ways to talk about food system transformation in a time of political polarization and shifting public trust.
Focus: A blueprint for communication that is collaborative, culturally attuned, emotionally intelligent, and structurally supported.

6

Integration - Collaborating Across Corporate Silos
Participants examined how to build bridges across departments and initiatives, including research & development, procurement, ESG, marketing, and more, to align industry actions with nutrition and climate impact.
Focus: The Annapolis Project: A real-world, place-based demonstration that proves how shared data, shared incentives, and shared visibility can convert supply chain friction into collective value.

Table of Contents

03

The Tale of the Hungry Land

Once upon a time, in a vast and fertile land, people lived with empty baskets and heavy hearts. Some people dwelled in deserts of food where grocery shelves overflowed with junk, but not a single apple was fresh. Others were students who stretched their coins on cheap noodles, dreaming of fruit they couldn't afford. Farmers, too, struggled – small and proud, they could not find steady markets, and their soil grew weary from overuse. All the while, excessive feasts fueled storms that battered the land, and the wisdom of the soil was forgotten.

Every day, life was full of patterns of loss. Mothers traded nutrition for survival, restaurants searched in vain for local produce, and the people turned their faces from the soil beneath their feet to the screens held in their hands. The skies grew darker, storms more violent, and the bond between people, food, and earth weakened.

Until one day, small sparks of change began to flow. A caravan of markets rolled into forgotten neighborhoods, carrying fresh food to families. Teachers and healers gathered students in courtyards, showing them how to grow food and cook with culture and care. Farmers learned new ways to rest their land, planting cover crops and rotating harvests. While some rested the soil, others grew food indoors. Inventors crafted new, healthier alternatives, and wise elders reframed soil not as dirt, but as the beating heart of the land.

Because of this, networks blossomed. Communities shared knowledge like seeds, sprouting trust and innovation. Training programs nurtured local businesses, while new markets gave farmers stability and generational wealth. Soil literacy spread like a folk tale retold across villages, and new, healthy alternatives filled plates that had once been empty.

And ever since, the land has not been perfect, but it's alive with new possibilities. Millions of people each week eat from markets that once did not exist, enabled by new investments in food as a critical national economic infrastructure. Food-related disease is a memory, and healthcare is now recentered as public health and defined by wellness and prevention. Livestock are cultivated with compassion and for regeneration. Students graduate nourished in both body and mind. Farmers plan for their grandchildren's future, not just tomorrow's crop sale. The soil sings again, and though storms still come, the people face them together, bound by resilience.

And so, the tale of the hungry land became the story of a land learning to thrive- together.

04

Group Track Summaries

INFRASTRUCTURE

Overview

The Infrastructure track was represented by leaders from farming, supply chain leaders, students, academia, and community advocacy groups. The group, over the course of three days, centered on one fundamental insight: *infrastructure must serve as a platform for trust-building and coordination in addition to serving as a critical physical processing and distribution ecosystem*.

Day 1 revealed the Infrastructure track's shared vision for transforming food system infrastructure through equity, resilience, and innovation. Participants emphasized the urgent need to ensure that every person has access to healthy, affordable food, particularly in communities where access is limited. They also stressed the importance of strengthening and expanding physical infrastructure and capital for local producers and businesses through training, logistics, new sources of capital, and supportive networks. Participants highlighted the importance of soil health and environmental stewardship, framing infrastructure not just as physical systems but also as ecological ones (microbes as critical infrastructure).

On Day 2, financing and scaling emerged as a consistent struggle. Innovators were described as being caught in the "valley of death", as investors chase either shiny new startups or already-scaled companies, while mid-stage ventures struggle to grow to a scale that could truly activate systems change. This gap was echoed by leaders in plant-forward foods, who expressed a lack of robust business models, particularly in the U.S., leaving entrepreneurs to chase scarce funding and piecemeal partnerships.

At the same time, trust and transparency gaps were identified as something that undermines progress. Students described rejecting “clean” lunches that offer limited choice, consumers (which all of the participants are) expressed doubt about labels, and institutions expressed a lack of reliable data to prove supply chain claims such as deforestation-free sourcing. Without credible information, scaling regenerative practices becomes a matter of guesswork.

On the production side, farmers described razor-thin profit margins as they attempt to adopt regenerative practices, while acknowledging that without changes, soil health suffers and bare land increases. Similarly, participants explained that chefs and food entrepreneurs, faced with the same small margins, often prioritize taste and convenience over human or planetary health, while dietitians and nutritionists stay siloed from food systems and culinary innovators. The result is what several participants called a “collision of expertise,” or stakeholders stuck in their own lanes, with few business models or incentives to bridge divides, which causes collisions and not collaborations when cooperation is desired.

By Day 3, key practices emerged from proposals to build cross-sector coalitions, develop shared data platforms, and embed participatory planning into infrastructure design. Trust-building emerged as a central theme, with participants calling for transparency and co-design to bridge divides between institutions and communities. Financing was also a recurrent issue described as short-term budgets that constrain progress, while innovative financing mechanisms and long-term commitments are needed to provide stability. Ultimately, the group centered *infrastructure as a platform for trust-building and coordination in addition to a critical physical processing ecosystem*.

The Journey

Naming the Lived Tensions

Participants began by surfacing nine tension buckets from more than 30 individual tension and practice cards that hold Infrastructure back.

1. **Trust -** "When I read a food label, I'm not sure if I can trust what's on it. I either guess, use an app, or know my farmer - all of which have consequences for my health."
2. **Education & Transparency -** Traceability is poorly understood, and the lack of shared education undermines trust.
3. **Tools Don't Match Ambitions -** Data gaps make the food value chain a black box, which limits systemic change.
4. **Pilots Don't Scale -** Small, local producers stall between ambition and infrastructure, unable to scale beyond pilots.
5. **Profit vs. Mission -** Small, mission-first ventures struggle with profitability, irregular harvests, and a lack of processing infrastructure.
6. **Lack of Capital -** Ambitious goals meet empty pockets while dominant systems "can't see another way."
7. **Healthy ≠ Real Choice -** Limited variety of "healthy" food (e.g., in school lunches) creates waste and restricts access. The agency of choice should be respected.
8. **Misaligned KPIs -** Stakeholders operate in different or conflicting "whys".
9. **Lack of Communication -** Even like-minded actors fail to connect, keeping the system fragmented.

From Tensions to Focus Areas

The Infrastructure track synthesized the nine tensions into four practice buckets: how, who, what, and why. The group, working in four subgroups, framed the edges and boundaries of each bucket, defining what belonged at the center vs. what fell outside the scope. This focus area synthesis marked a turning point: the group moved from listing problems to framing an action agenda, with Natural Assett Companies elevated as the flagship project.

How

Outside: Profit-first mindset

Edge: New technology

Center: Story and mission-first narratives to influence decision-makers and mitigate risk

***Insight**: Investment and profit remain critical, but they must be in service to the mission.*

Who

Outside: Nonprofits with limited funding

Edge: Need for shared evidence connecting soil and human health

Center: Designer, engineer, ESG expert, chef, dietician, VC, retailer, entrepreneur, farm aggregator, distributor, behavioral scientist, data expert, CPG, economic development leaders

***Insight**: Success requires cross-sector coalitions to support and collaborate with resource-deprived stakeholders.*

What

Outside: Health claims?

Edge: SNAP policy reform, celebration of flavor/taste alongside health claims

Center: NAC as a market vehicle balancing the economy and ecology. Metrics include soil health, water and air quality, and wildlife/biodiversity

***Insight**: NACs offer a cyclical relationship between soil health and consumer trust, but might need big infrastructure to scale.*

Why

Outside: Profit-only models prioritizing “I” over “we”

Edge: Scaling regenerative models, Shifting federal language to match

Center: Move from “I” to “We”, democratize supply chain data, expand participation and representation, add local context to every link in the chain

***Insight**: The Why is rooted in connection, purpose, and collective responsibility.*

The Arc of Transformation

Prototyping a Solution

With their focus areas set, the group developed a refined solution sketch:

What	Create a Natural Asset Company (NAC) blueprint that addresses capital needs across the supply chain, aligning human and ecological needs under a shared vision.
How	Structure as a third-party certification coalition, with equal weight for members at the table.
Value	Use data to measure food beyond water weight, including soil health, nutrient density, and ecosystem services.
Who	• Growers/producers and processors adopting better practices. • Big companies supply capital to scale the transition. • Experts in science, data, nutrition, economic development, labor, and health. • Consumers and grassroots orgs as demand-shapers and feedback loops.
Limits	Government procurement and institutional resistance; entrenched inertia.
Leverage	Center truth, trust, and transparency to overcome doubt and confusion; evidence-based solutions as shared value across stakeholders.

The NAC became not just a concept, but a blueprint for a coalition, a certification body, and a center of excellence.

Reframing the Story

The final story scaffolds on day 3 reflected a shift from fragmentation to coherence:

- From mistrust and opacity → to truth, trust, and transparency.
- From extraction and profit-first → to shared risk, shared reward.
- From pilots → to scalable, regenerative models.
- From siloed actors → to coalitions with diverse expertise.
- From disjointed narratives → to a shared mission statement:
    - "Transforming current infrastructure to address human, ecological, and capital needs in a way that positively impacts health and planetary resilience."

NACs were crystallized as the flagship innovation carrying this new story forward, ultimately bridging capital, ecology, and health.

In addition, it was noted that additional practices are emerging:

- Innovators de-risk scale-up by leveraging shared infrastructure and less-risky contracts.
- Others seek out early adopters and connectors, such as chefs, stakeholders, and risk-takers, who are willing to step up beyond the status quo.
- Farmers and scientists pursue testing and management to tie ecological health to human health.
- Advocates push for a traceability infrastructure and a comprehensive value-chain analysis of ingredients, building credibility from the ground up.
- Some look for adjacent efforts like linking chefs with universities or connecting dietitians to broader food system conversations which can chip away at silos and spark collaboration.

Conclusion

Across the convening, Infrastructure track participants surfaced the clear diagnosis that today's producer infrastructure is optimized for extraction, fragmentation, and short-term return, creating persistent mistrust across sectors and misalignment between capital, communities, and ecosystems. Furthermore, infrastructure is currently imagined as a capital asset that favors scale and profit only. In response, the group advanced Natural Asset Companies (NACs) not as a financial instrument alone, but as a new operating model for regenerative infrastructure, one capable of aligning stewardship, governance, and long-term value creation alongside physical capital assets.

Group Track Summaries

POLICY

Overview

The Policy track was represented by leaders from industry, international economic development, academia, and community advocacy groups. The group, over the course of three days, centered on one fundamental insight: *lasting change in the food system depends on changing what, and who, we reward*.

On Day 1, participants of the Policy track explored how misaligned incentives across the food system limit progress toward healthier, more sustainable diets. Participants examined the structures that shape food procurement, production, and consumption, revealing a system where policy often rewards volume and efficiency over nutrition, equity, and resilience. The group identified opportunities to realign incentives toward community-centered outcomes by reframing policy narratives, expanding cross-sector partnerships, and piloting locally grounded procurement models.

The Policy Track began by confronting a shared tension: *that our current policy environment does not enable an optimal, sustainable, or healthy diet because it lacks clear and consistent incentives for value-based food*. Across the food system, the group observed that policies, procurement standards, and institutional frameworks too often reward efficiency, yield, and cost minimization, rather than nutrition, resilience, and community well-being. Participants surfaced how this misalignment has created a cycle of dependency on industrialized production systems and a lack of trust between the government, farmers, and communities. *Policy was seen as both the structure maintaining the problem and the potential lever for transformative change*.

Mapping the system on Day 2 revealed a dense web of players and influences shaping what food gets produced, purchased, and consumed. Farmers, insurers, buyers, investors, policymakers, and community-based organizations were all named as actors navigating a fragmented landscape of incentives and regulations. Participants noted that large-scale agriculture continues to dominate policy agendas and that this mindset has constrained innovation in policy design and perpetuated inequities in who benefits from public investment. The group discussed how the absence of value-based procurement mechanisms prevents institutions such as schools, hospitals, and food assistance programs from advancing sustainability and health goals in tandem, and discounts the real community value of small and medium enterprise farming.

At the same time, participants identified clear leverage points. They emphasized the need for cross-sector collaboration across agriculture, education, environment, health, and policy sectors to bridge silos and enable shared progress. Central to this shift, participants named reframing the national food narrative from one rooted in scarcity and efficiency to one grounded in *"Food, Farm, and Health Freedom."* By positioning freedom as a unifying value, participants discussed how policy could evolve to champion local autonomy, nutrition security, and regenerative agriculture as patriotic and economically sound imperatives.

The exercises culminated on Day 3 in a vision of policy as a catalyst rather than a constraint. Participants highlighted the power of incentive design, especially procurement reform, to redirect markets toward outcomes that prioritize both public health and sustainability. The group's solution sketchpad proposed piloting values-based procurement models that reward farmers and food producers for sustainable practices and community benefit. These pilots would test mechanisms such as grants, flexible waivers, and outcome-based purchasing metrics tied to health and environmental indicators. Participants envisioned local governments and community coalitions leading these efforts, backed by state and federal policy support. This would create a virtuous cycle of trust, market stability, and shared accountability across the food system.

The Journey

Naming the Lived Tensions

Participants began by grouping and surfacing seven collective tensions sourced from 28 individual tension and practice cards that were populated by members of the Policy track.

1. **Incentives -** Policy and funding structures still reward yield and short-term gains over long-term nutrition, sustainability, and equity outcomes.
2. **Community -** Alienation of local voices due to top-down or overly technical policy processes.
3. **Farming -** Disconnect between federal frameworks and farmers' lived experience; unclear policy home for food and nutrition programs.
4. **Capacity -** Lack of human and institutional resources to operationalize policies at local and regional levels.
5. **Infrastructure -** Physical and administrative systems (data, logistics, coordination) are underbuilt for cross-sector food policy execution.
6. **Misalignment -** Divergence between political timelines, industry incentives, and systems-level food and nutrition goals.
7. **Access -** Persistent disparities in who benefits from nutrition programs and markets, especially along cultural and regional lines.

From Tensions to Focus Areas

The defining tension is that **we are not, as a system or society, meeting an optimal and sustainable healthy diet** primarily due to a lack of value-based incentives.

Current System Forces & Behaviors

- Incentives that reward **short-term profit** and production efficiency rather than long-term health and sustainability outcomes.
- **Policy frameworks** are designed around commodity agriculture and industrial food systems, not nutritional or ecological outcomes.
- **Fragmented accountability** across sectors- health, environment, and agriculture operate in silos with conflicting mandates.
- **Reactive policymaking** driven by crisis, lobbying, and legacy systems rather than proactive, evidence-based foresight.
- **Public programs are constrained** by budgetary and political cycles, limiting innovation or experimentation.
- **Unequal access** to resources and influence- large institutions dominate agenda-setting while community voices remain peripheral.

Desired Future State or Missing Elements

- **Integrated incentives** that align public health, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality.
- **Policy design** that rewards prevention and resilience, not just treatment or productivity.
- **Cross-sector coordination** mechanisms that connect agriculture, healthcare, education, and community development.
- **Community-informed policymaking** where local knowledge and lived experience shape incentive design.
- **Public-private partnerships** that prioritize shared value creation over competitive advantage.
- **Transparency and accountability** tools to track the real impact of policies on nutrition equity and planetary health.

The Doers

- Processors / manufacturers
- Insurers
- Consumer advocacy groups
- Media
- Investors
- Farmers
- Buyers (procurement)
- Policymakers
- Community groups, non-profits

What keeps this tension in place?

This tension endures because the current food policy ecosystem is organized around scale, efficiency, and economic growth rather than the shared value of health, equity, and sustainability. Participants described how these priorities become self-reinforcing through institutional design, market dynamics, and cultural expectations.

- **Quantity over quality**: Existing agricultural and food production policies reward volume, yield, and output as measures of success. This focus on feeding people "at scale" overshadows the nutritional and ecological quality of what is produced.
- **Efficiency as the dominant logic**: "Big Food" and "Big Ag" have optimized for doing things faster, cheaper, and more consistently, shaping policy toward industrial efficiency instead of SMEs, regenerative, or community-based models.
- **Macro over micro**: Decision-making privileges macroeconomic indicators, GDP growth, export capacity, price stability, over micro-level outcomes like community health, farmer resilience, and local food access.
- **Shelf stability as necessity**: The assumption that large populations can only be fed through shelf-stable, processed, and globally distributed foods keeps the system locked into industrial supply chains and undermines incentives for integrating fresh, regional, or minimally processed food into food systems.
- **Policy inertia and legacy systems**: Subsidy structures, infrastructure investments, and regulatory frameworks built over decades reinforce the current paradigm, making it difficult for new incentive models or innovations to take hold.

Together, these forces create a reinforcing feedback loop that sustains the current policy environment, and the system continues to value what it measures: scale, stability, and efficiency, rather than what it ultimately seeks: equitable access to healthy, sustainable diets.

Where is the leverage for change?
What relationships, practices, or pathways could shift this tension?
The group identified several leverage points where relationships, practices, and narratives could create systemic change:

- **Develop and amplify an "American Food, Farms, and Health for Freedom" narrative:** This new story reframes food policy around shared national values: freedom, resilience, and care rather than partisan or industrial divides. It positions nutrition security as fundamental to both personal liberty and national strength, inviting collaboration across political and geographic lines.

- **Center and incentivize collaboration across sectors:** The group emphasized aligning incentives across agriculture, food, health, education, climate, and policy to drive collective investment in shared outcomes. This means structuring programs and funding mechanisms that reward joint efforts, like school meal programs linked to local farms and learning, or healthcare reimbursements for preventive nutrition initiatives.

- **Build connective infrastructure for shared learning and data transparency:** Participants saw potential in policy data ecosystems that link metrics of health, environment, and food access, allowing policymakers to make decisions informed by integrated outcomes rather than isolated measures.

- **Empower community-led policy design:** By bringing community organizations and local governments into the early stages of policy formation, incentives could better reflect lived experience, not just national benchmarks.

- **Invest in next-generation leadership and workforce capacity:** Building the policy fluency of farmers, healthcare professionals, and educators was identified as key to sustaining long-term alignment.

Together, these leverage points form a cohesive pathway toward a rebalanced system, one where *value-based incentives reward the co-benefits of nutrition, sustainability, and equity,* and policy itself becomes a bridge between sectors rather than a boundary.

The Arc of Transformation

Prototyping a Solution

With their focus areas set, the group developed a refined solution sketch: *The American Food, Farms, and Health for Freedom Act*- a coordinated policy framework designed to build and define value-based incentives that create a food system optimized for health, sustainability, and economic resilience.

The core design of the solution describes how federal funds will flow through states to local communities, empowering them to execute values-based food purchasing and production practices that align with nutrition, sustainability, and equity goals. The program leverages existing systems- federal feeding programs, agricultural incentives, and public health infrastructure while redirecting them toward outcomes that strengthen community health and resilience.

Key Elements of the Prototype

Farmer Empowerment	Incentivize and resource farmers to obtain food safety certifications and access technical assistance that opens new markets and encourages collaboration between small producers, distributors, and institutions.
Inclusive Market Incentives	Expand participation of consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies in federal feeding programs, tying eligibility to sustainability and nutrition standards.
Education Integration	Offer nutrition and food systems education in schools nationwide, linking curricula to local agricultural systems and family health outcomes.
Cross-Sector Reach	Serve and align incentives across payers, farmers, consumers, procurement officers, policymakers, and state departments of agriculture, health, education, and economic development.

A National Food Policy Innovation Lab	This would be a permanent, cross-sector infrastructure for testing, evaluating, and scaling policy models that align health, equity, and sustainability goals. The Lab would pilot new frameworks for values-based procurement, use predictive analytics and mapping to anticipate ripple effects of policy decisions, require community leadership and equity audits as core operating principles, and build trust bridges across government, industry, and civil society

The vision reframes policy as a living instrument that is adaptive, participatory, and regenerative. Through this solution, policy becomes more than a checklist of compliance, it becomes a creative design process that evolves and innovates with community needs.

What It Changes

This act reorients the system from a macro-nutrition and industrial scale lens to a micro-systems perspective that values community health, SMEs and local economies, and the co-benefits of sustainable production. It introduces a suite of evidence-based nutrition and food policies that jointly support the health of people and planet, creating new feedback loops between health, environment, and economy.

How It Starts

Participants agreed the effort must "go big!" by launching as a comprehensive, national framework rather than a patchwork of pilots or short-term grants. Early implementation could focus on a few demonstration states to test scalable governance and accountability mechanisms.

Enablers	Barriers
Reframing the policy narrative under an "American Family First" ethos ensuring that every family is physically and economically healthy within a sustainable environment that creates a unifying call to action transcending political divides.	• The need for robust, integrated evidence of return on investment (ROI). • The challenge of cross-agency communication silos at the federal level.

Why It Matters

The American Food, Farms, and Health for Freedom Act directly addresses the central tension identified by the Policy Track which is the absence of value-based incentives that align food, health, and sustainability.

In this context, values-based refers to a policy and investment framework that measures success according to shared societal values like health, equity, sustainability, and resilience rather than purely economic or efficiency metrics. A values-based system rewards actions and outcomes that advance public goods such as nutritious food for all families, fair compensation and opportunity for producers, and protection of ecosystems that sustain future generations.

By shifting how we define and reward value, the Act transforms fragmented programs and spending streams into a coordinated incentive ecosystem that links agricultural policy, healthcare, education, and environmental stewardship. It reorients public resources toward outcomes that make communities healthier and economies more resilient.

Ultimately, this approach *envisions an America where the food system reflects our collective values,* where feeding people well is not just a moral imperative, but a national strategy for freedom, prosperity, and well-being.

Reframing the Story

The final story scaffolds reflect a shift from a collective frustration in the current isolation-based system to optimism in a system that represents collective purpose:

- From individual frustration ➔ to shared accountability.
- From siloed mandates ➔ to aligned incentives.
- From macro-level efficiency ➔ to micro-level wellbeing.
- From compliance and control ➔ to collaboration and creativity.
- From fragmented advocacy ➔ to a unified narrative of “Food, Farms, and Health for Freedom.”

Conclusion

This new story reframes policy as a tool for alignment, connecting agriculture, health, education, and environment through values-based incentives that reward collaboration, equity, and resilience. From isolated efforts to a unified call, the Policy Track reimagined policy as the connective tissue linking food, health, and freedom.

Group Track Summaries

FINANCE

Overview

At the start of Regenerate 2025, participants in the Finance track arrived with the weight of familiar tensions including capital constrained by risk models, sustainability treated as niche, and innovation slowed by the short-term logic of quarterly returns. The conversation began with, "*How can regenerative principles find a home in a system designed for extraction and control?*"

Day 1 surfaced deep, but widely recognized structural barriers such as rigid definitions of fiduciary duty, a lack of metrics for long-term ecosystem health, and limited trust between investors, innovators, and communities. Participants described a field still governed by transactional thinking, where finance remains reactive rather than generative. They asked, "*What if value wasn't measured in growth alone, but in renewal?*"

By Day 2, the group began experimenting with new lenses. Discussions turned toward trust-based capital, community-owned models, and finance as relational infrastructure rather than as an extractive tool. They imagined regenerative finance as a practice of repatterning flows where capital can be aligned with living systems, biodiversity, and social well-being. Small illustrative stories of courage were shared like fund managers taking first losses to de-risk innovation, and investors redefining "return" to include resilience.

By Day 3, the tone had changed. Participants traded the language of constraints for possibilities such as designing incentives for stewardship grounded in education, building blended finance models that reward patience, and embedding circularity in capital design. The group envisioned *a future where regenerative capital becomes the norm, and capital seeks coherence rather than control.*

The ultimate unifying vision was captured as “Farm for America” where the cycle of regenerative capital begins with education infused at multiple levels of exposure with community and leadership.

The Finance track participants (who also found air conditioning) left with a shared conviction: *finance can be reimagined as a living system, one that regenerates value across ecological, social, and economic dimensions*. What began as a conversation about risk ended as a reflection on responsibility.

The Journey

Naming the Lived Tensions

Participants of the finance track began by surfacing six tension buckets from 16 individual tension and practice cards.

1. **Mission vs. Financial Sustainability -** The challenge is staying true to impact-oriented principles without compromising the business model needed for survival.
2. **Growth vs. Resource Constraints -** Practitioners face significant barriers to scaling. This creates a cycle where regenerative work lacks resources to expand.
3. **Speed vs. Inclusivity in Decision-Making -** Friction between consensus-based, participatory decision making and the operational necessity to move quickly and efficiently.
4. **Market Readiness vs. Customer Education -** Extensive education and relationship building is needed before the market naturally matures.
5. **Authenticity vs. Market Demands -** Finding the “right” consumer fit versus adapting to existing demand, while maintaining confidence in regenerative expertise.
6. **Short-term Survival vs. Long-term Change -** Organizations face daily operational and financial pressures while trying to build for scale and create lasting transformation.

From Tensions to Focus Areas

The primary tension pulled from the six tension topics for the Finance Track was, "How financially can regeneration become the standard?"

Current System Forces & Behaviors

- There is more emphasis currently on selling the consumer on products instead of supporting the capital needs of the farmers.
- Current banking tools fail to recognize the future value that a healthier ecological system could provide if the best practices are implemented.
- The lobbying on the farm practice transformation side is weaker than traditional farm lobbies.

The System Players

- Farmers/ Ranchers/ Landowners
- Consumers
- Government (all levels)
- Lobbyists
- Financial institutions
- Cooperatives
- Retailers
- Processors
- Suppliers
- CPG companies
- MRV (measurement, reporting, verification) companies (verify environmental impacts and carbon market values)
- Land grant universities
- Conservancy groups
- Ag tech players
- Media

What Keeps the Tension in Place?

- Complexity
- Poor communication
- Consolidation
- Certification
- Policy
- Education
- Crop Insurance
- Food Labels
- Multi-generational farming
- Workforce constraints
- Risk perceptions
- Contract farming

Where is the Leverage for Change? What Relationships, Practices, or Pathways Could Shift this Tension?

- Rural/Urban regional dynamic economies can drive mass adoption by:
  - Creating consumer demand through community-based education
  - Creating change leaders in both rural and urban settings who work together
  - Supporting producers financially to improve the lifespan of the land while increasing profitability
- Education K-12, high school gap year employment, professionals seeking a change, disconnected youth, etc.
- Soil is recognized as a valuable capital asset, with its enhanced quality contributing to higher land equity values.
- Tax incentives and value chain partnerships created to drive change and reduce financial strain of shifting standards.
- Next generation of unconventional farmers.
- Development of a food culture that values planet, animal, and human health.

The Arc of Transformation

Prototyping a Solution

With their focus areas set, the group developed a refined solution sketch called *Farm for America,* a self-sustaining national non-profit or social venture that will bridge the gaps in education and financing to meet the transformational goal of transitioning US farming practices from 1.5% to 30% regenerative in 3 years.

Key Elements of the Prototype

Tension

How does regenerative agriculture become the standard best farming practice rather than the exception?

Current systems reinforce short-term profitability, high risk aversion, and fragmented support structures that make regenerative transitions financially and educationally inaccessible to most farmers. The tension lies in misaligned incentives where the true value of soil health, ecosystem restoration, and long-term resilience is not recognized or rewarded.

Solution

Farm for America:

A self-sustaining nonprofit organization that bridges the financial and educational gaps that prevent widespread adoption of regenerative agriculture.

Goal: Increase regenerative agriculture adoption from 1.5% → 20% within 3 years.

Farm For America will provide farmers with:

Access to training and technical education

- Soil science
- Practices in agriculture
- Finance and garming
- Nutrition/agriculture production quality
- Farm management challenges
- Benefits of collaboration
- Connecting with consumers

Transitional financing to de-risk adoption

- Partner-based ($) → New and existing farmer subsidies for productivity losses
- Government → Low/no interest loans to convert farms, and coverage of farm insurance losses on farm conversion loans
- Philanthropy → Seed capital
- Corporate membership fees (data access, exposure, etc.) → Funding for operations organizations that are undertaking the transition assistance.

Regional hubs connecting local ecosystems of farmers, educators, funders and consumers

- Each region is imagined to have an anchor institution, educational partners that offer "edutainment" (immersive AI, etc.) of workforce development, blended finance funds for SME farmers and cooperatives, consumer-led demand for better products, and cross-sectoral collaboration.
- Each region is segmented based on climate and growing zones.
- Crops for the application of best practices are prioritized based on which ones have the greatest potential for impact.
- Cross-country exchange of chefs and aggregators is activated to broaden education and collaboration.

System Players

Farm For America acts as a convener and integrator across these sectors, translating shared interests into coordinated action.

Primary stakeholders:

- Farmers, ranchers, and processors
- Consumers and consumer advocacy groups
- Government (federal, state, and local)
- Financial institutions and cooperatives
- Lobbyists and policymakers
- CPG companies and retailers
- Higher education institutions and extension services
- Community-based organizations and nonprofits
- Media, influencers, and storytellers

What It Changes

Farm For America reorients relationships around shared value creation rather than isolated impact. Specifically, it changes:

- **Power Dynamics**: Empowers farmers through education, ownership, and access to capital.
- **Financial Systems**: Introduces new blended capital models (philanthropy + co-op membership + government matching) to fund regenerative transition.
- **Knowledge Flows**: Connects higher education, community training, and consumer awareness.
- **Cultural Narratives**: Builds public recognition of regenerative farming as the new standard of excellence.

New Practices & Principles it Embodies

The solutions's core regeneratives practices, mindsets, and systems principles include:

- **Education as equity**: Equipping farmers and consumers with practical, easy-to-access, and scientific knowledge.
- **Finance as regeneration**: Using capital to heal land and livelihoods rather than extract from them.
- **Regionalism and adaptation**: Building local hubs (NW, NE, GP, MW, SW, SE) tailored to ecological and cultural contexts.
- **Collaboration over competition**: Linking farmers, funders, and food buyers in mutually reinforcing ecosystems.
- **Transparency and data sharing**: Creating data pathways for tracking soil health, productivity, and profitability.

First Steps

- **Pilot Program:** Launch with one farm and one student (or recent graduate) through a regional hub partnership. Consider tapping into Future Farmers of America, a national farming leadership program, or other similar programs.
- **Curriculum Development**: Deliver training on seven core education topics: soil, agricultural practices, farm finance, nutrition, collaboration, consumer health, and resilience.
- **Partnership Network**: Secure government (all levels are options) and financial partners to test no-interest transition loans and coverage for conversion losses.
- **Brand Activation**: Build recognition for Farm for America through storytelling and social media campaigns linking consumers to participating farms.

Why It Matters

The Finance track reframed the regenerative transition not as a farmer problem, but as a national investment strategy. Farm for America becomes the connective tissue aligning finance, education, policy, and narrative into a single framework that enables systemic adoption of regenerative agriculture. It positions capital, community, and communication as regenerative forces that can restore both ecological and economic health across America.

Conclusion

By the close of the convening, it was clear that the work of regeneration in finance is not about discovering something new, but about aligning what practitioners already know works, and scaling it with coherence, rigor, and courage. These leaders were not standing outside the financial system calling for change; they *are* the system, actively rewiring its incentives, language, and metrics from within. Over three days, they moved beyond theory toward the architecture of a regenerative capital network, one that values soil, education, cultural geography, community, and continuity alongside returns. The work ahead is not invention but integrating and connecting proven practices, codifying trust, and mobilizing capital that already exists in service of the living systems that sustain it.

Group Track Summaries

DATA

Overview

The Data track convened practitioners working across agriculture, nutrition science, food service, health care, academic research, technology, and investment. The group represented people who live inside the complexity of generating, interpreting, and applying data in a food system undergoing rapid ecological, economic, and cultural change. This group was not learning the system for the first time; they were surfacing the friction points they navigate daily and mapping the barriers and openings that define how data becomes action across the “soil-to-stool” continuum.

Their shared aspiration: to *move from scattered datasets and siloed incentives toward a coordinated, regenerative data ecosystem capable of guiding decisions for planetary and human health.*

On Day 1, the Data track surfaced the deep structural tensions practitioners encounter when attempting to link soil, food, and human health through data. Although participants represented different parts of the food system, their experiences converged around a single, overarching tension: *the data available and the data incentivized by current systems is not the data required to advance regenerative nutrition.*

This central tension showed up in multiple ways. Many participants described operating within a landscape where assumptions and beliefs often substitute for robust evidence, particularly around soil health, nutrient density, and their downstream effects on human well-being. They noted that insights are frequently limited by what is easy to measure, not what is meaningful.

Measurement tends to follow legacy priorities such as safety, yield, surveillance, and market performance, rather than ecological function, nutrient quality, or long-term health outcomes.

Across the group, there was widespread recognition that *economic incentives for data collection are deeply misaligned with regenerative outcomes.* Actors are rewarded for tracking quantity over quality, compliance over insight, and short-term operational metrics over long-term system performance. This misalignment shapes every part of the data pipeline: what gets collected, how it gets interpreted, who has access to it, and what decisions are ultimately informed by it.

Participants also identified *fragmentation and siloed ownership* as major sources of tension. Data lives in disconnected pockets on farms, in laboratories, in clinical systems, and in corporate databases, each governed by its own standards, methods, and legal constraints. This fragmentation makes it difficult to draw connections across the value chain, particularly across soil → food → and human health pathways that regenerative nutrition relies upon. Several participants reflected on the reality that much of the most critical data either does not exist, is inaccessible, or is guarded behind proprietary walls.

The Day 1 boundary mapping exercise made these tensions visible. When asked to categorize the "data we have" versus the "data we want," participants mapped a clear gap. The data we have includes yield metrics, safety and compliance data, market demand signals, and clinical outcomes, which are all important, but none are completely sufficient. *The group identified some data sets they want, including integrated nutrient density measures, soil health indicators, longitudinal human health data, biomarker linkages, and multidimensional indicators that can inform prevention, resilience, and ecosystem function*.

Surrounding these needs are the outer boundaries that constrain progress:

- **Privacy and regulatory restrictions** that limit sharing and interoperability
- **Ethical concerns** around data ownership and misuse
- **Timeframes** that privilege short-term reporting over long-term insight
- **Outdated system architectures** incapable of handling interoperable, multi-source data streams

Participants also surfaced that the system often functions with “data driving reason instead of reason driving data.” In other words, metrics shape decisions even when those metrics do not reflect the values or outcomes the field is trying to achieve. This inversion reinforces the status quo and makes transformative data innovation difficult.

Day 2 marked a significant turning point for the Data track, as the group shifted from exploring system tensions to defining a concrete, actionable concept. Building on the previous day’s insights, participants moved into structured design exercises to identify leverage points and prototype a system-shifting intervention. By the end of the day, the group converged on a unifying idea called the *“Soil-to-Stool Data Consortium.”*

By Day 3, the Data track had moved beyond identifying tensions and imagining discrete fixes. Their work coalesced into a unified recognition that the soil-food-human health system can only progress if data becomes connective tissue rather than sets of disconnected artifacts. The Day 3 story scaffolds reflect the maturity of this insight. Participants were no longer naming isolated problems or discipline-specific needs; instead, they were articulating a whole-system architecture and a shared set of commitments that would allow the field to function differently.

The Journey

Naming the Lived Tensions

Participants began by surfacing 10 tension buckets from more than 40 individual tension and practice cards that hold Infrastructure back.

1. **The Data We Have is not the Data We Need -** Current datasets are built for yield, safety, and compliance - not for nutrient density, soil function, or long-term human health.
2. **What's Measurable is not always What Matters -** Easy-to-capture metrics drive decisions, while meaningful, complex, or longitudinal indicators remain underdeveloped or underfunded.
3. **Fragmented Systems vs. Integrated Insight -** Critical data lives in isolated silos (farm, supply chain, retail, clincial, research), making it impossible to see the whole-system relationships.
4. **Proprietary Control vs. Public Benefit -** Key datasets are paywalled or privately owned, blocking scientific progress and reinforcing inequity.
5. **Short-Term Incentives vs. Long-Term Outcomes -** Economic, regulatory, and research cyles priortize rapid returns, while soil-food-health impacts unfold over years or decades.
6. **Assumptions & Beliefs vs. Rigorous Evidence -** Practitioners intuitively understand system relationships but lack shared, validated, casual data linking soil → food → health.
7. **Compliance Data vs. Regeneartive Data -** Systems built for surveillance and risk mitigation overshadow the need for data that supports resilience, prevention, and ecosystem health.
8. **Inconsistent Standards vs. Shared Methods -** Divergent protocols, definitions, and measurement frameworks prevent interoperability and undermine trust.
9. **Risk Fears vs. Collaborative Sharing -** Actors hesitate to contribute data due to potential exposure, misuse, or unclear governance.
10. **Individual Burden vs. Collective Value Creation -** Producers, small enterprises, and community partners bear disproportionate data burdens without equal access to benefits or insights.

From Tensions to Focus Areas

The group then worked to narrow the ten named areas of tension into one chosen area of focus. The group named *"The data we have, choose to use, or are incentivized to generate, is not the data we need to advance regenerative nutrition"* as their primary tension.

Underlying System Drivers

- **Misaligned incentives:** Markets reward yield, volume, and cost efficiency, not nutrient density, ecological function, or human health outcomes.
- **Fragmented data ecosystems:** Supply chain actors, researchers, clinicians, and farmers generate unique datasets that do not align, integrate, or communicate.
- **Siloed sectors and cultures:** Each step of the soil-food-health continuum operates under different mandates, values, and success metrics.
- **Lack of validated causal pathways:** No shared, evidence-based framework connects soil practices → food quality → human health at scale.
- **Legacy metrics govern decisions:** What's easy to measure (e.g., calories, yields, safety tests) dominates, even when misaligned with regenerative goals.

This clarified that the tension is not simply a gap in data, but a *systemic misalignment of purpose, structure, incentives, and infrastructure.*

System Players

- Producers (farmers, anchers, fishers, growers)
- Aggregators, distributors & retailers
- Scientists & researchers across soil, agronomy, nutrition, and health
- Businesses & ag/food tech companies
- Regulators & policymakers
- Investors and funders
- Consumers and communities
- Advocates and NGOs
- Healthcare providers (clinical + prevention)

Through this process, the group centered that each actor contributes a piece of the puzzle, but no single actor can assemble the whole picture. A functional system requires coordination, shared standards, and interoperability, none of which exist today.

What Keeps the Tension in Place?

- Short-term market pressures over long-term regenerative outcomes
- Economic disincentives for collecting the “right” data
- Lack of a common language or measurement framework
- Concerns around privacy, ownership, and proprietary advantage
- Narratives that minimize the importance of soil–food–health relationships
- High cost of generating scientifically robust, longitudinal datasets
- Skepticism, mistrust, or conflicting values among stakeholders

These dynamics create a self-reinforcing loop where the absence of shared data leads to fragmented action, which in turn limits demand for better data, keeping the system stuck.

Where is the Leverage for Change? What Relationships, Practices, or Pathways Could Shift this Tension?

Participants next explored where strategic interventions could shift these system dynamics. Several leverage points emerged consistently:

- Shared data standards and transparent measurement protocols
- Interoperable infrastructure that enables cross-sector data integration
- A research agenda linking soil practices to nutrient density and human health
- Collaborative governance structures to steward data ethically
- Narrative frameworks that elevate the value of regenerative nutrition data
- Pilot regions or cohorts to demonstrate proof of concept
- Incentive alignment through policy, investment, or market mechanisms

The Arc of Transformation

Prototyping a Solution

With their focus areas set, the group developed a refined solution sketch:

Soil to Stool: a system-wide data integration and intelligence initiative designed to connect ecological conditions, agricultural practices, food quality, human biology, and real-world health outcomes through a unified data infrastructure.

The *Soil to Stool* initiative aims to augment today's fragmented, discipline-specific datasets with a coordinated ecosystem capable of generating causal insight, predictive analytics, and shared standards that reflect the true complexity of the food system.

At its core, *Soil to Stool* is about building the infrastructure including technical, scientific, governance, and incentive-based, that allows the entire soil → food → consumer → clinician → stool/biomarker feedback loop to operate as one coherent knowledge system, rather than isolated data islands.

Key Elements of the Prototype

A Shift From "Problems to Solve" to "Capabilities to Build"

Across the Day 3 story scaffolds, participants reframed their work around the capabilities necessary for a regenerative, nutrition-aligned data ecosystem. Their stories emphasized:

- Real-time data flows that connect farm practices, soil metrics, supply chain transformations, and health outcomes
- A common data language that cuts across disciplines and institutions
- Incentive structures that reward participation, open contribution, and long-term stewardship
- Collaborative governance that protects privacy, reduces risk, and encourages shared innovation

This reflects a major shift from the Day 1 listing gaps to a theory of change for what must exist for the system to function.

Integration Over Isolation

The Day 3 narratives consistently rejected the fragmented status quo. Participants imagined a system in which:

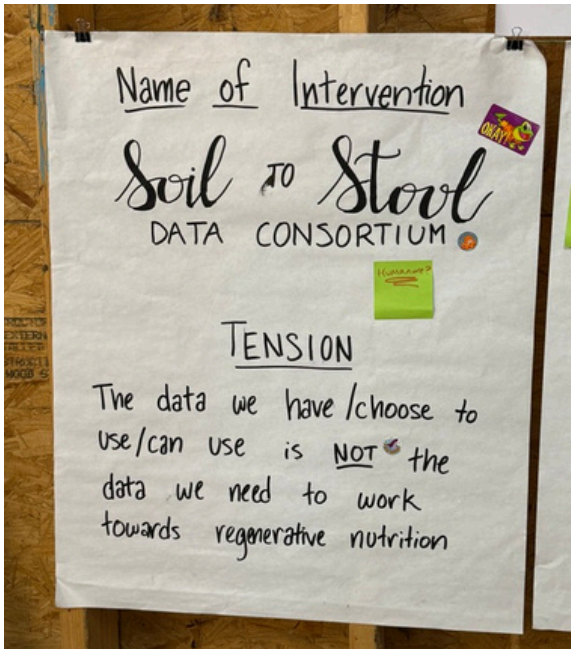
- Farmers are not expected to bear data burdens alone
- Food producers and retailers can access clear, trustworthy indicators of nutrient and ecological performance
- Clinicians and public health experts receive meaningful, easy to interpret dietary and biomarker insights
- Scientists can operate within interoperable standards to advance discovery
- Communities have access to insights that reflect their lived experience

In short, they envisioned a system where *data flows to where it can do the most good,* not just where it is easiest to collect.

A Shared Commitment to Truth, Transparency, and Trust

Day 3 stories explicitly emphasized the need for trustworthy data that's not just accurate, but governed in a way that feels fair, ethical, and mutually beneficial. Participants named the need for:

- Transparent methodologies
- Clear rules around data sharing and attribution
- Ethical frameworks that honor sovereignty and equity
- Validation that is longitudinal, not just cross-sectional



The Emergence of a "Soil to Stool" Intelligence System

The Soil-to-Stool Intelligence System integrates ecological, agricultural, nutritional, clinical, and community data into a coherent infrastructure for innovation.

This concept was expressed not as a single product, but as an ecosystem architecture:

- Data hubs and translation layers
- Common ontologies and standards
- Feedback loops that run soil → food → consumer → clinician → researcher → policymaker → farmer
- User-centered interfaces for different types of stakeholders
- Predictive models capable of forecasting system impacts and identifying leverage points

The idea was not to build one dataset but rather to architect a dynamic mapping and analytics ecosystem that mirrors the complexity of the real system.

A Mature, Field-Level Understanding of Next Steps

Day 3 conclusions were sophisticated and practitioner-driven. The group identified that progress will depend on:

- **Pilots that demonstrate integrate value** (e.g., a crop, region, or health condition)
- **New forms of partnership** across disciplines and competitive boundaries
- **Incentives that make contributions easier than withholding**
- **A neutral convening home**, capable of stewarding governance and trust

Critically, participants did *not* end on idealistic aspirations. They articulated practical scaffolding for how a connective data ecosystem could emerge, be governed, generate value, and reinforce equitable participation.

Why It Matters

The *Soil to Stool* project addresses one of the most consequential gaps in today's food and health systems which is we cannot improve what we cannot see. Right now, the links between soil health, agricultural practices, food quality, human biology, and real-world health outcomes remain fragmented, making it impossible to generate the evidence, standards, and incentives needed for regenerative nutrition. By creating a unified, trusted data ecosystem, *Soil to Stool* offers a trusted framework or a pathway for scientists, farmers, clinicians, policymakers, and communities to work from the same source of information. This unlocks predictive insight, accelerates innovation, reduces risk, and ensures that the benefits of a healthier, more resilient food system are shared widely and equitably.

Conclusion

The *Soil-to-Stool Data Consortium* crystallizes a shared recognition among practitioners that without aligned, trustworthy, and meaningful data, the regenerative nutrition movement cannot scale with integrity or impact. Across three days, participants agreed that solving regenerative nutrition is not a question of more data, but of the right data, ethically generated and collaboratively governed. Their final vision calls for a transdisciplinary, producer-centered, privacy-protective ecosystem that links soil health, food quality, and human well-being through shared standards, long-horizon research, and interoperable infrastructure. By transforming fragmented, proprietary datasets into a coordinated, open, and scientifically rigorous knowledge system, the *Soil-to-Stool* project lays the foundation for a future where data becomes a public good and ultimately drives better decisions, accelerating innovation, and strengthens trust across the food system.

Group Track Summaries

COMMUNICATIONS

Overview

The Communications Track convened to examine a fundamental tension: even when better food, better science, and better practices exist, they fail to reach people in ways that are trusted, understood, or actionable. Participants surfaced a viewpoint that nutrition narratives are at times shaped less by evidence and more by algorithms, incentives, cultural divides, and power dynamics, resulting in widespread confusion, mistrust, and disengagement.

Rather than framing communication as a downstream activity, something that happens after solutions are developed, the group positioned it as core infrastructure for regenerative nutrition. Communication, in the group's view, can translate complexity, bridge sectors without erasing differences, and rebuild trust by centering values, relationships, and lived experience alongside data.

"What happens when people lose the thread of the food story?"
On Day 1, the Communications Track surfaced a shared realization: across the food system, people are no longer living inside a coherent story about food, health, land, or each other. The participants described a communication ecosystem that has frayed so deeply that even truth itself feels slippery. Most participants began their narratives with a memory of connection described as food grown by neighbors, school gardens, family meals rooted in tradition, a welcome change of seasons, and getting dirty in soil. But they followed that with what we have collectively lost, like new generations of kids touching the soil, grandmothers passing down recipes, and science, once a trusted compass, growing politicized, contested, or drowned out by louder voices.

Day 1 ended not with a problem to solve but with a collective recognition: if the food system is broken, the story of the food system broke first. *To fix the system, we must first rebuild the story.*

On Day 2, the Communications track shifted from identifying communication breakdowns to mapping the broader system that produces them. Through system snapshots and shared analysis, participants recognized that misinformation, distrust, and fractured food narratives are not isolated failures, but the predictable result of a communications system shaped by misaligned incentives, unequal access to “the mic”, and the accelerating speed of digital media.

Their solution sketchpad leaned in with a call for a new, community-centered communications ecosystem that democratizes voice, bridges scientific and lived knowledge, and rebuilds trust through relational, culturally grounded storytelling.

On Day 3, the Communications track shifted fully into solution-making mode. With the realizations of Day 1 and the system dynamics of Day 2 in view, participants began to imagine what a new communications ecosystem could look like, centered on trust, cultural connection, and shared authorship.

The Day 3 story scaffolds of the communications track participants captured a collective turn from frustration to possibility and rather than trying to outcompete misinformation or simplify science, they envisioned creating new spaces, new practices, and new voices capable of carrying a richer, more truthful food narrative.

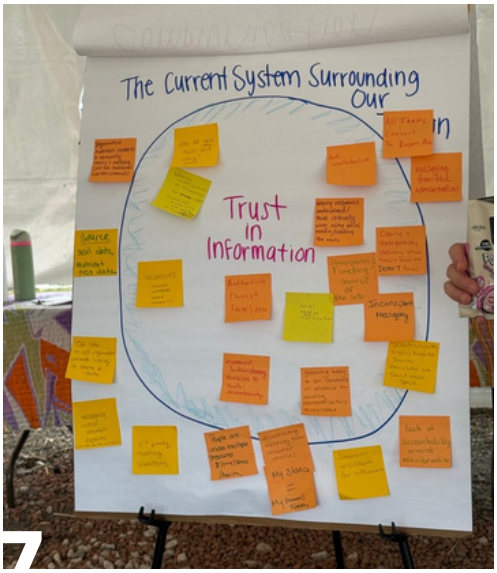
Day 3 solutions emphasized co-created messaging, community-rooted storytelling, alliances between scientists and cultural translators, and infrastructure that can hold complexity without overwhelming people. By the end, participants had articulated an aspiration to build a communications ecosystem where trust is restored, truth travels farther than misinformation, and communities become co-narrators of a healthier, more connected food future.

The Journey

Naming the Lived Tensions

Participants began by surfacing five tension buckets from more than 35 individual tension and practice cards that hold communications back.

1. **Truth vs. Misinformation -** Reliable, research-backed nutrition information is consistently obscured by louder, simpler, and often false narratives that spread faster than facts.
2. **Complexity vs. Comprehension -** Food, nutrition, and health systems are inherently complex, yet people crave clarity, creating a gap between what is true and what is easily understood.
3. **Science vs. Distrust -** Public confidence in scientific voices has eroded, making it harder for research-backed messages to gain traction or shape behavior.
4. **Expertise vs. Influence -** Trained experts struggle to compete with influencers whose reach, charisma, and storytelling - rather than accuracy - drive public perception and choices.
5. **Equity vs. Access -** Communities most affected by food and nutrition disparities often have the least access to trustworthy information, culturally relevant messaging, and supportive environments.



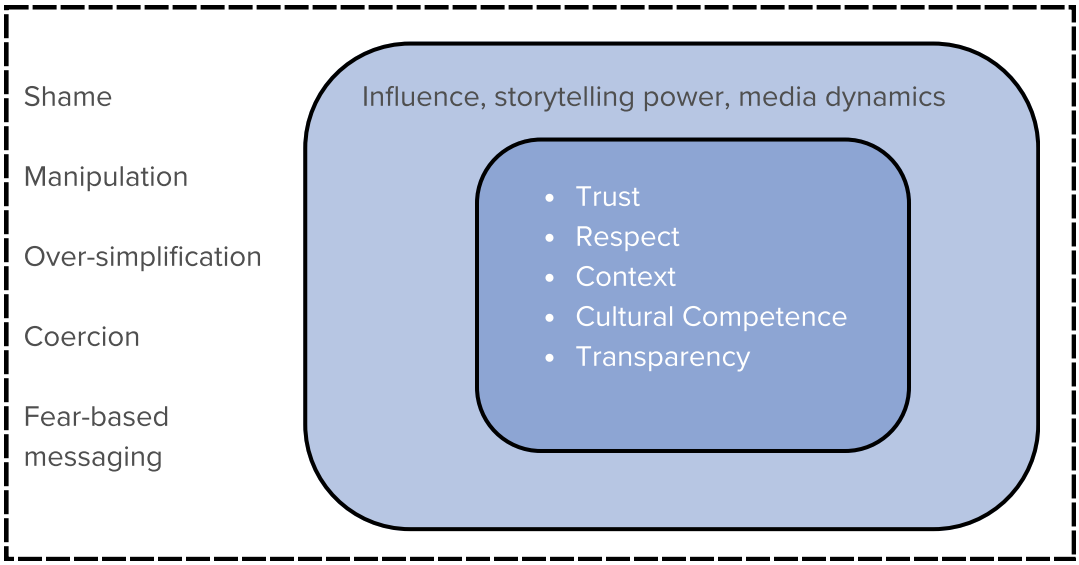
From Tensions to Focus Areas

When participants mapped their tensions, a collective realization emerged that the voices that carry truth about nutrition, health, and agriculture struggle to be heard, while misinformation spreads effortlessly, or said another way, we have been trying to fix a narrative problem with information tools.

They named the forces shaping this disconnect:

- Hyper-simplified social media nutrition trends that reward confidence, not accuracy.
- Corporate marketing narratives that overshadow local knowledge and lived experience.
- Cost and convenience pressures make the unhealthy choice feel inevitable.
- Certification regimes and policy structures that erase small farmers' stories.
- Deep inequities in access to trustworthy food information and healthy options.
- A public overwhelmed by complexity, making it hard to engage with nuance.

The boundary exercise sharpened this understanding. When participants named what belonged inside ethical communication and what lived outside acceptable practice, they drew bright lines:



This boundary map revealed the moral weight of the work. Communications is not simply about outreach, it's also about guarding the integrity of the food story while making it accessible and identifiable to different communities.

Cross-Cutting Drivers

The defining tension determined by the Communications track is: *people are making food and health decisions in an information environment that is rigged for confusion, inequity, and disconnection*.

Through the worksheet activities, the Communications group surfaced the deeper system dynamics shaping this tension.

- **Fragmented messengers and narratives:** Food system communication is scattered across agencies, advocacy groups, influencers, researchers, companies, and media, with each one promoting their own definitions, values, and calls to action. This creates narrative noise rather than shared understanding.
- **Low public trust in institutions and expertise:** Health, nutrition, and government messengers face increasing skepticism. Even when evidence-based information exists, the information struggles to compete with voices perceived as more relatable, entertaining, or emotionally resonant.
- **Oversimplification in a complex system:** Regenerative nutrition intersects climate, agriculture, culture, equity, and health, and yet the communication environment rewards soundbites, not nuance. This pushes out systems thinking in favor of oversimplified or distorted messages.
- **Misaligned communication incentives:** Media platforms amplify conflict, novelty, and controversy. Brands pursue differentiation. Influencers chase virality. None of these incentives prioritizes accuracy, coherence, or societal benefit.
- **Cultural and linguistic mismatch:** Messages often fail to reflect diverse lived experiences around food, identity, and health. Without cultural grounding and community co-creation, even well-designed communication can fall flat.
- **One-way messaging instead of relationship-building:** Most existing strategies rely on broadcasting information and assuming that more facts will drive behavior change. But what communities might really need is belonging, dialogue, trust, and shared meaning.

System Players

Knowledge Generators

Academic researchers; food & nutrition scientists; medical experts, clinicians; extension specialists; federal agencies (USDA, NIH, CDC)

- System role: Produce evidence, set standards, identify emerging risks/opportunities.
- Communication tension: High expertise, low public reach, and low trust relative to the influencer

Institutional Communicators

Public health (local, state, federal); cooperative extension; NGOs focused on nutrition, climate, food systems; schools, universities

- System role: Convert research into formal recommendations, policies, and education.
- Communication tension: Can be slow, cautious, or disconnected from a community's lived experience.

Industry & Brand Communicators

CPG, retailers, food service companies, agricultural commodity groups, marketing & PR firms

- System role: Shape the everyday messages people see (protein, convenience, indulgence) and what's hidden (soil health, sourcing, ecosystem impact).
- Communication tension: Incentivized to differentiate, not to align around shared definitions or public-good narrative

Media Ecosystem

Traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers), digital publishers, podcasters, bloggers, independent journalists; trend-spotting or hype-driven media outlets

- System role: Translate complex issues into headlines and cultural storylines.
- Communication tension: Incentives for speed, virality, and controversy over nuance.

Influencers & Content Creators

TikTok nutrition creators, "wellness" personalities, fitness influencers, celebrity chefs, and micro-influencers with niche loyal audiences

- System role: Deliver emotionally resonant stories that move behavior and identity.
- Communication tension: High trust/high reach, but inconsistent accuracy; often contradict science-based messages.

System Players (cont.)

Community Voices & Cultural Interpreters	Community organizers, faith-based leaders, cultural food leaders, neighborhood coalitions, kitchen-table influencers (parents, elders, trusted peers) • System role: Bridge global narratives with local realities; make messages meaningful. • Communication tension: Often left out of message creation; rarely resourced to participate.
Consumers, Eaters, and Families	Individuals navigating food choices, families planning meals, students in cafeterias, patients in clinical settings • System role: Interpret, remix, and act on (or ignore) the incoming messages. • Communication tension: Overwhelmed by contradictory advice and influenced heavily by cost, culture, time, and convenience.
Platforms & Algorithmic Gatekeepers	Social media platforms (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), search engines, recommendation algorithms, ad-targeting systems • System role: Define the architecture of attention; determine which messages surface and spread. • Communication tension: Optimized for engagement and revenue, not accuracy or societal benefit.
Funders & Resource Gatekeepers	Philanthropy, government grant programs, foundations, corporate social responsibility teams, impact investors System role: Shape which voices get amplified and which initiatives survive. Communication tension: Funding cycles rarely match community engagement timelines or long-term narrative change.

What Keeps the Tension in Place?

Through cross-group synthesis, participants distilled the forces reinforcing the status quo. Several reinforcing forces keep this tension firmly in place:

- **Incentives reward noise, speed, and conflict**, not truth or alignment: Media platforms and industry prioritize virality, novelty, and controversy. This pushes communicators toward simplification, emotional hooks, and polarization.
- **Expertise is structurally disadvantaged in the attention economy**: Researchers, clinicians, and public health institutions operate on slow cycles of review and consensus while content creators operate on minutes. The mismatch allows misinformation to arrive before credible messages.
- **Public distrust of institutions blunts even the strongest evidence**: Decades of political polarization, corporate scandals, and inconsistent public guidance have eroded trust in formal messengers, pushing people toward voices that feel familiar, emotionally resonant, or identity-affirming.
- **There is no shared narrative about what "regenerative nutrition" means**: Without a coherent story, the public receives a collage of claims rather than a clear understanding.
- **Communication happens to communities, not with them**: Communities, especially those most affected by inequities, rarely shape the messages intended for them.
- **Cultural, linguistic, and lived-experience gaps distort meaning:** Messages often fail to reflect diverse identities and food cultures that translate naturally into the daily decision-making realities of most people.
- **Fragmented systems create fragmented communication:** Agriculture, nutrition, health care, environmental science, retail, and consumer behavior are treated as separate domains. Without integration, communications remain piecemeal and contradictory.
- **Underinvestment in narrative infrastructure:** Storytelling and long-term narrative change are rarely funded or staffed. As a result, the people most skilled at shaping meaning remain peripheral to the system.
- **Algorithms determine exposure:** Platform design rewards emotional intensity and identity signaling over nuance, context, or scientific accuracy. This invisible architecture is counter to regenerative nutrition goals.

Where is the Leverage for Change? What Relationships, Practices, or Pathways Could Shift this Tension?

Co-Creating Messages with Communities, Not Delivering Messages to Them. Powerful leverage lies in shifting communication from broadcast to co-creation. Opportunities include:

- Embedding community knowledge-holders as co-designers of narratives.
- Developing regional or cultural "story circles" to shape regenerative nutrition meaning.
- Supporting local ambassadors who can translate, contextualize, and adapt messages.

Building Bridges Between Experts and Influencers. Rather than competing with influencer ecosystems, leverage in forming cross-ecosystem partnerships:

- “Science + creator” collaborations.
- Training trusted messengers in evidence-based practices.
- Providing influencers with simple, resonant regenerative nutrition story frameworks.
- Creating a distributed network of “trusted translators”.

Establishing a Shared Narrative Framework for Regenerative Nutrition. Opportunity lies in creating:

- A simple, flexible narrative backbone.
- Shared language across health, climate, soil, food, and equity.
- Frames that emphasize identity, belonging, and agency.
- Modular stories that can be adapted across communities and cultures.

Creating Relationship-Centered Communication Practices. Rebuild connection rather than push content:

- Dialogue-based engagement
- Community feasts, kitchens, and tasting experiences
- Partnering with local institutions trusted across generations
- Slow, relational public health communication models

Where is the Leverage for Change? What Relationships, Practices, or Pathways Could Shift this Tension? (continued)

Elevating Cultural Interpreters and Community Anchors. Center the people who already carry food meaning in their communities. This includes:

- Elders
- Cultural food leaders
- Local healers
- Faith leaders
- Youth organizers
- Community educators

Repairing Institutional Trust Through Transparency & Humility. Several sketches noted that communications will remain fragile until institutions adopt new norms:

- Honest acknowledgement of uncertainty
- Clear explanation of why guidance changes
- Transparency about funders, data, and decision-making
- Speaking more like humans than like bureaucracies

Redesigning How Information Flows Through the System. The need for integrators, such as people, networks, or platforms that connect silos:

- Shared communication hubs linking science, policy, the food industry, and communities
- Cross-sector “meaning-making tables”
- Narrative convenings
- Common reference stories used by all actors

Leveraging Moments of Cultural Attention. Participants pointed to the importance of timing, not just messaging:

- Seasons (e.g., harvest, holidays)
- News cycles
- Policy windows
- Cultural events
- Moments of collective concern (e.g., food shortages, public health crises)

Aligning Incentives for Truthful, Resonant, Public-Good Communication. Several pathways emerged:

- Funding models that reward community-led communication.
- Shifting institutional KPIs from “reach” to “relationship strength”.
- Supporting public-interest creators fairly and financially.
- Pointing philanthropic investment in narrative infrastructure.

The Arc of Transformation

Prototyping a Solution

Over the three days of the summit, the Communications track moved through a clear and powerful arc: *from a fragmented landscape of mistrust and narrative noise toward a coordinated, culturally grounded, relational communication ecosystem capable of advancing regenerative nutrition.* What began as a diagnosis of the chaotic meaning-making environment evolved into a prototype for how aligned storytelling, community partnership, and shared narrative infrastructure could reshape the entire food system.

By the close of Day 3, the Communications track had articulated an elegant, field-shaping insight: If the food system is going to transform, people must first see themselves inside a new food story, and that story must be built with them, not for them.

The Day 3 artifacts show several core shifts:

From broadcasting to co-creating
Participants proposed communication platforms and practices where communities, farmers, clinicians, and scientists co-author food narratives and create a living knowledge ecosystem rather than a one-way information stream.

From correcting misinformation to cultivating belonging
They recognized that people follow the voices that make them feel seen. Solutions focused on creating emotionally resonant, culturally grounded touchpoints that make truth feel personal, not institutional.

From experts vs. influencers to blended roles
Instead of seeing influencers as antagonists, participants imagined partnerships where cultural figures, health leaders, and agricultural storytellers amplify each other's strengths.

From fragmented messages to narrative coherence
The group emphasized building a common storyline rooted in shared values defined by care, community, nourishment, and responsibility, ultimately creating a system where communications don't compete, but reinforce each other.

From information infrastructure to narrative infrastructure
Communications needs the equivalent of roads, bridges, and power lines. Not campaigns, but systems. Not slogans, but spaces. Not facts, but facts and relationships.

Conclusion

Across three days, the Communications track illuminated a truth that sits at the heart of the entire regenerative nutrition movement: *transformation is impossible without a shared narrative, trusted relationships, and a communication ecosystem capable of carrying complexity with clarity and cultural coherence*. The group moved from diagnosing a fragmented and distrustful landscape to prototyping a distributed, community-rooted storytelling architecture that can align science, culture, and lived experience.

Their blueprint shows that communication is not an accessory to food system change, but rather connective tissue through which values spread, identities form, and collective action becomes possible. By centering co-creation, elevating cultural interpreters, and building partnerships between experts and influencers, the Communications track charted a path toward a future where communication actively cultivates trust, belonging, and shared purpose. In doing so, they positioned narrative work not as the final step of system change, but as the essential foundation upon which regenerative nutrition can grow.

Group Track Summaries

INTEGRATION

Overview

Diagnosing Disconnection Across the Supply Chain
On Day 1, the Integration Track surfaced a fundamental tension: the food system loses enormous value economically, nutritionally and environmentally because the complex network of stakeholders who advocate for change in these areas, even within a single company, often operate in silos. The group mapped the full supply chain, from production to waste recovery, and revealed how fragmented data, isolated incentives, and incompatible decision-making frameworks prevent the system from functioning as a whole.

This early mapping produced a clear insight: no one sees the whole. And without systemic visibility, the food chain cannot support regenerative nutrition, equitable value distribution, or climate-aligned outcomes. Day 1 concluded with a shared recognition that integration is not a luxury. Instead, it's the necessary foundation for any meaningful transformation.

On Day 2, the Integration track honed in on a single, system-wide tension: *the food system loses extraordinary value because information does not flow between the actors who need it most.*

From this, they developed The Annapolis Project, a place-based prototype that creates shared visibility across the entire supply chain. The project proposes a unified data layer that follows food from soil to shelf, a multi-sector governance body that enables coordination, and new incentive designs that reward behaviors benefiting the whole system rather than individual silos. Rooted in the Annapolis region, this initiative serves as a real-world demonstration of what becomes possible when processors, growers, retailers, distributors, consumers, and waste partners can finally see themselves as part of one interconnected chain. It's both a test case and a blueprint for a more integrated, high-efficiency, regenerative food system.

By Day 3, the Integration track had moved from diagnosing fragmentation to envisioning a fully coordinated, transparent, and efficient food system where information flows, incentives align, and every actor understands how their decisions influence the whole. What began as a series of disconnected pain points coalesced into a coherent, place-based prototype: The Annapolis Project, a demonstration of what an integrated supply chain could look like in practice. Participants recognized that integration is a behavioral and relational shift. Over three days, they articulated how the system must evolve if integration is to become not an exception, but a norm.

The Journey

Naming the Lived Tensions

Participants began by surfacing five tension buckets from more than 20 individual tension and practice cards that hold Integration back.

1. **Fragmented Data & Information Flows -** Every mode collects data for its own operational needs, but nothing travels across the chain causing duplicated effort, blind spots, and incompatible systems.

2. **Siloed Incentives Across the Supply Chain -** Growers, processors, retailers, and consumers have no shared metrics for health, resilience, or regeneration.

3. **Missing Infrastructure for Integration -** Technical systems, governance mechanisms, and interoperability standards do not exist or aren't shared which prevents collaboration even when it's desired.

4. **System Blindness (No One Sees the Whole) -** Everyone sees their own lane and optimizes within it but upstream decision create downstream burdens invisibly.

5. **Misaligned Value Distribution -** Costs and benefits accrue unevenly across the value chain so those who bear the cost of transition (e.g., farmers) struggle to profit, while those who benefit rarely redistribute gains.

From Tensions to Focus Areas

The defining tension is: We lose enormous value across the food system because information does not flow efficiently. Data gets stranded in silos, insights stop at organizational boundaries, and no shared view of the system exists to help actors understand how their decisions affect one another.

Current System Forces & Behaviors

- Growers do not know what processors need.
- Processors do not know the nutritional or soil-quality context of inputs.
- Retailers do not know the ecological story embedded in the product.
- Consumers cannot see upstream impacts.
- No one can see emergent waste, inefficiency, or opportunity across the chain.

This isn't a data problem - *it's an integration failure.*

The System Players

- **Production**: Growers, producers, land stewards
- **Harvest & Post-Harvest Handling**: Harvest teams, logistics
- **Processing**: Food processors, packaging, co-manufacturers
- **Distribution**: Warehouse, logistics, cold chain, transport
- **Retail**: Grocery, institutional buyers, restaurants
- **Consumers**: Households, schools, communities
- **Waste & Regeneration**: Composting, waste management, circular systems

Key insight: Each actor holds different data, incentives, and regulatory frameworks which creates structural fragmentation.

What Keeps the Tension in Place?

This tension endures because the food system is not designed to function as a whole. Its metrics, incentives, technologies, trust structures, and governance models reinforce fragmentation. The Integration track recognized that solving this tension requires more than better data, it requires a new architecture for shared visibility, shared incentives, and shared responsibility, which is exactly what the *Annapolis Project* begins to demonstrate.

Where is the Leverage for Change? What Relationships, Practices, or Pathways Could Shift this Tension?

Shifting this system will require systemic change, not isolated fixes. The Integration track identified that dissolving silos and enabling information to flow across the supply chain depends on creating the relationships, practices, infrastructure, and governance that allow actors to benefit collectively from alignment. Through the Annapolis Project concept and Day 2 synthesis, several leverage points emerged:

Build Place-Based Integration Pilots to Demonstrate Real-World Value
Test integration in a contained, real supply chain where producers, processors, retailers, consumers, and waste partners already interact.
Why it's leverage: Prototypes create proof, reduce risk, and make hidden efficiencies visible.

Create a Shared Data Layer and Interoperable Infrastructure
Develop a unified information layer that tracks soil health, nutritional quality, processing inputs, logistics flows, retail signals, and waste outcomes across the entire chain.
Why it's leverage: When actors see the same information, they can coordinate, reduce friction, and unlock shared value.

Establish Cross-Sector Governance and Dedicated Integrator Roles
Designate an entity or team that holds the whole system, convenes actors, stewards shared metrics, manages data infrastructure, and resolves friction across nodes.
Why it's leverage: Integration doesn't happen on its own; it requires leadership, accountability, and a home.

Align Incentives and Shared Metrics Across the Supply Chain
Replace siloed KPIs with supply chain-wide metrics (nutrient density, ecological impact, waste reduction) and design incentive mechanisms that reward behaviors benefiting the full system.
Why it's leverage: Incentives shape decisions more powerfully than values or messaging alone.

Build Trust-Based Partnerships Grounded in Transparency and Shared Benefit
Shift supply-chain relationships from transactional to relational through joint planning, transparent pricing, shared risk, and consumer engagement anchored in upstream visibility.
Why it's leverage: Trust unlocks data sharing, cooperation, and long-term integration.

The Arc of Transformation

Prototyping a Solution

With their focus areas set, the group developed a refined solution sketch:

The Annapolis Project: A real-world, place-based demonstration that proves how shared data, shared incentives, and shared visibility can convert supply chain friction into collective value.

The Annapolis Project includes the following explicit ideas:

A multi-actor collaboration built in a real place (Annapolis, MD)	The group wanted an initiative rooted in a specific geography so they could test integration in a real supply chain, not in abstraction.
A shared dataset or "common layer" that follows the product	This includes: • Soil health or ecological metrics • Processing and packaging data • Distribution footprints • Retail or consumer-facing attributes • Waste recovery outcomes Unified information that everyone can access both in a single company or between ventures.
A cross-sector governance or convening body	The group described this as a hub, a convening table, a multi-stakeholder steering group, or an interstitial team whose job is integration.
A proof-of-concept for aligned incentives across the supply chain	The group emphasized revenue, margin, or value-distribution redesign so that benefits and burdens no longer fall unevenly. Examples include: • Rewarding regenerative growers • Tying processing methods to nutritional quality • Recognizing retailer roles in educating consumers • Incentivizing waste reduction and circularity

A place to test transparency as a source of efficiency	They identified Annapolis as an ideal demonstration site because: • It's small enough to manage • It has strong civic institutions • It has regional food networks • It can host an intact "soil-to-shelf" ecosystem • It's symbolically aligned with coastal/regenerative values
A prototype for eliminating friction through integration	Their vision includes: • Fewer duplicated systems • Fewer blind spots • Fewer mismatched KPIs • Fewer upstream choices that harm downstream value • More shared insight = more shared opportunity

Why It Matters

From System Blindness to Shared Visibility

Early discussions revealed that no single actor sees the entire chain. By Day 3, the group envisioned a shared "pane of glass" across the Annapolis supply chain- a real-time view of soil practices, processing data, logistics flows, retail signals, and waste outcomes. This visibility becomes the backbone for smarter decisions, reduced duplication, and fewer downstream burdens.

From Siloed Optimization to Collective Value Creation

Initially, participants described a system where each node optimizes for its own KPI: yield, efficiency, shelf life, margin, and convenience. By Day 3, they reframed success around shared metrics that travel across nodes- nutrient density, ecological impact, circularity, and community benefit. This shift enables actors to coordinate rather than compete.

From Fragmented Data to a Unified Information Layer

The group moved from lamenting the chaos of incompatible systems to imagining a common data layer that follows products from soil to shelf. By Day 3, they outlined how that data infrastructure could support traceability, accountability, equitable value distribution, and regenerative incentives.

From Passive Coordination to Active Governance
Early artifacts reflected uncertainty about who "owns" integration. By Day 3, the group converged on the need for a cross-sector governance body or a neutral integrator capable of stewarding relationships, aligning incentives, and maintaining the shared data layer.

From Concept to Place-Based Prototype
The *Annapolis Project* evolved into a concrete test case:

- A region small enough to manage,
- Rich in civic partnerships,
- Home to both producers and consumers,
- Ready to host a full supply-chain demonstration of regenerative alignment.

By grounding their ideas in a real geographic context, the group shifted from abstraction to implementation.

From Friction to Flow
Across the summit, participants reframed integration as the shift from a system riddled with friction defined by duplication, miscommunication, and incompatible incentives to one where information flows, resources flow, and benefits flow. This is the heart of the transformation arc.

Conclusion

Day 3 solidified the group's belief that integration is the hidden engine of regenerative food systems. Without shared visibility, shared metrics, and shared governance, no other transformation in nutritional, ecological, financial, or cultural opportunity can reach its potential. The *Annapolis Project* captures this insight in a concrete form: a prototype demonstrating how an integrated value chain can reduce waste, increase efficiency, strengthen relationships, and unlock regenerative value for every actor from soil to shelf.

05

Summary Analysis & Action

Cross-Cutting Themes Across Tracks

Drawing from all track summaries and narrative framing, five system-wide themes were consistently present:

01. Curiosity as a Systems Lever

Curiosity repeatedly surfaced as the emotional and intellectual engine of the gathering and as a counterweight to fear and scarcity that enabled collaboration across silos.

02. Siloed Systems Create Compounding Inefficiencies

Whether in data, finance, infrastructure, policy, communications, or integration, participants identified fragmentation as a root cause of mistrust, inefficiency, and missed opportunities for shared solutions.

03. Incentives Are Misaligned with Regenerative Outcomes

Market, policy, and cultural incentives privilege speed, yield, and short-term returns, while regenerative nutrition requires patience, long-term commitment, and relational value creation across sectors.

04. Trust Deficits Undermine Every Layer of the System

Communities mistrust institutions; consumers mistrust labels; investors mistrust innovators; sectors mistrust one another's motives, metrics, and data. Rebuilding trust emerged as both a prerequisite and an outcome of regenerative systems work.

05. Regeneration is Both Technical and Cultural

Solutions spanned infrastructure, finance, policy, and data, but the deep work involved culture: shifting mental models, reframing narratives, and centering interdependence and shared purpose.

Ten Action Steps Across Tracks

Sourced from track summaries, “practices” sections, and Day 3 synthesis.

01. Build Shared, Cross-Sector Metrics for Regenerative Nutrition

Across data, policy, and finance tracks, participants called for unified measures of soil health, nutrient density, community wellbeing, and long-term ecological resilience.

02. Establish Translation Infrastructure Between Sectors

Experts across tracks emphasized the need for intermediaries who can translate language, values, data, and incentives between agriculture, health, science, policy, and finance.

03. Create Trust-Based, Relationship-Centered Practices

Solutions centered on human relationships: community-led finance, participatory policy design, shared data stewardship, and values-based communication.

04. Develop New Structures for Cross-Sector Coordination

Integration, infrastructure, and policy tracks all named the need for hubs, alliances, and networks that break down silos and coordinate action across fields.

05. Reform Incentives to Align With Regeneration

This included policy reform (subsidies, procurement standards), financial restructuring (patient capital, community governance), and market transformation (rewarding nutrient density and ecological outcomes).

06. Invest in Education and Soil-to-Health Literacy

Communications, policy, infrastructure, and data tracks emphasized that regenerative nutrition requires cultural shifts: growing public understanding of soil, food quality, and health connections.

07. Build Shared Data Ecosystems

Data and integration tracks proposed interoperable systems, open data layers, and harmonized standards that enable coordinated decision-making.

08. Scale Community-Led Models and Local Infrastructure

Infrastructure and finance tracks urged investment in local production, aggregation, distribution, and culturally resonant entrepreneurship.

09. Prototype Narrative + Policy + Market Alignment

Communications and policy tracks converged on a new narrative: "Food, Farms, and Health for Freedom," linking well-being, autonomy, and regenerative practices.

10. Support Regenerative Innovation with Blended Capital

Finance track participants described new vehicles that pool risk, diversify return expectations, and align capital with ecosystem and social outcomes.

06

Holding Time as a Tension

We spent three hot and sticky days together at Wild Kid Acres and moved through the full arc of transformational work from aspiration to tension, from mapping to prototyping, and finally from individual insight to collective commitment. But beneath all of it ran a tension we rarely named directly, the tension of time itself.

Our ancestors knew how to keep the soil healthy across generations. They understood that building soil fertility takes decades and must be protected, that trust is cultivated slowly, and that wisdom moves through lineages like nutrients cycling through an ecosystem. They worked in the rhythm of seasons, not earning quarters. They optimized for resilience and relationship, not speed and scale.

Modern day is run by algorithms that work differently. The promise is precision, personalization, and acceleration. Data science programs can model complex systems, predict outcomes, and match needs to resources in a matter of milliseconds. Algorithms operate at the pace of high-speed computing, not manual cultivation. This modern-day innovation offers us the possibility of rapid iteration, testing, and learning at scales our ancestors could never imagine.

The question Regenerate 2025 surfaced, again and again across all six tracks, is this: **How do we honor both? How do we hold urgency and patience as a paradox with equal weight?**

We are living in an emergency. Climate disruption, diet-related disease, soil degradation, and economic fragility are crises that demand a collective and urgent response. Our algorithms tell us we need to move faster, scale harder, and optimize better. The data is alarmingly clear that we don't have generations to wait.

And yet.

The farmers reminded us that soil cannot be rushed. The community leaders reminded us that trust cannot be automated. The finance innovators reminded us that patient capital, the kind that waits for hazelnut trees to grow and relationships to deepen, is precisely what's missing from our current system. The systems integrators reminded us that sustainable and regenerative change happens at the speed of culture, not the speed of code.

This is the paradox of urgency and patience we must tenderly hold.

What makes this moment different from previous waves of food system reform is not just our tools. Though AI, biotech, and precision agriculture offer unprecedented capabilities, what makes this different is our growing understanding that technology alone cannot solve what are fundamentally relational and cultural challenges. Algorithms can show us what's possible, however, only we can decide what's worth doing ourselves.

At Regenerate 2025, curiosity and love emerged as our practice for holding this paradox. When we approached our tensions with curiosity and love rather than fear, and when we listened across our differences with genuine openness, we created space for both ancient wisdom and emerging innovation. Curiosity allowed us to ask ourselves and each other, “What if the speed of technology could serve the depth of regeneration? What if our ancestors' optimization for relationships could inform how we design our data systems, our financing structures, and our policy frameworks?” Love for the planet, for each other, and for the work at hand, kept us asking, and going.

As we left Wild Kid Acres and returned to our respective fields of work, we carried with us a dual mandate to act with the urgency our moment demands, and to tend the soil with the patience regeneration requires.

The hungry land in our opening fairytale didn't heal overnight. It healed because "small sparks of change began to glow" by leveraging new technology, recovering old wisdom, and connecting the networks of trust and shared purpose. The land became alive with possibility at multiple timescales simultaneously: the immediate (feeding families today), the medium-term (building infrastructure and markets), and the long-term generational (restoring soil, shifting culture, planning for grandchildren).

This is the work ahead. Not a choice between ancestors and algorithms, but a both/and that honors what each brings. Not a compromise, but a synthesis. Not a balance we achieve once, but a paradox we practice holding, with love and curiosity, so we can move forward without scarcity, fear, and pain. The land is waiting. Our communities are waiting. The future our grandchildren will inherit is being shaped by the choices we make now about what we build, how we build it, with and for whom, and at what pace.

May we stay curious enough to keep learning from both soil and sensors, from elders and innovators, from what has always worked and what has never been tried. The regenerative future we seek won't arrive all at once. It's already arriving, in small sparks that will grow into something we cannot yet fully imagine, but something that will be awe-inspiring if we make the changes we know we need to make.

With gratitude for those who hosted, those who held us in thoughtful facilitation, all who gathered, all who took care of us, and all who will carry this work forward,

Katie, Hallie, and Nicole

Conveners, Regenerate 2025
Food & Nutrition Innovation Institute Team

Tufts
UNIVERSITY

Gerald J. and Dorothy R.
Friedman School of
Nutrition Science and Policy
**FOOD AND NUTRITION
INNOVATION INSTITUTE**

REGENERATE 2025
EVENT SUMMARY

Email
fnii@tufts.edu

Website
innovation.nutrition.tufts.edu