



Red Tomato: Food Hub, Farms and Workers

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Red Tomato's Core Purpose:

Creating opportunities for our region's farmers to become primary suppliers of a sustainable regional food system



Who: Red Tomato Growers and Customers



Growers: 45+ Farmers:
capacity,
diversity, infrastructure,
regional

Customers: Retail chains,
independent groceries, food
service, institutions via third-
party distribution.

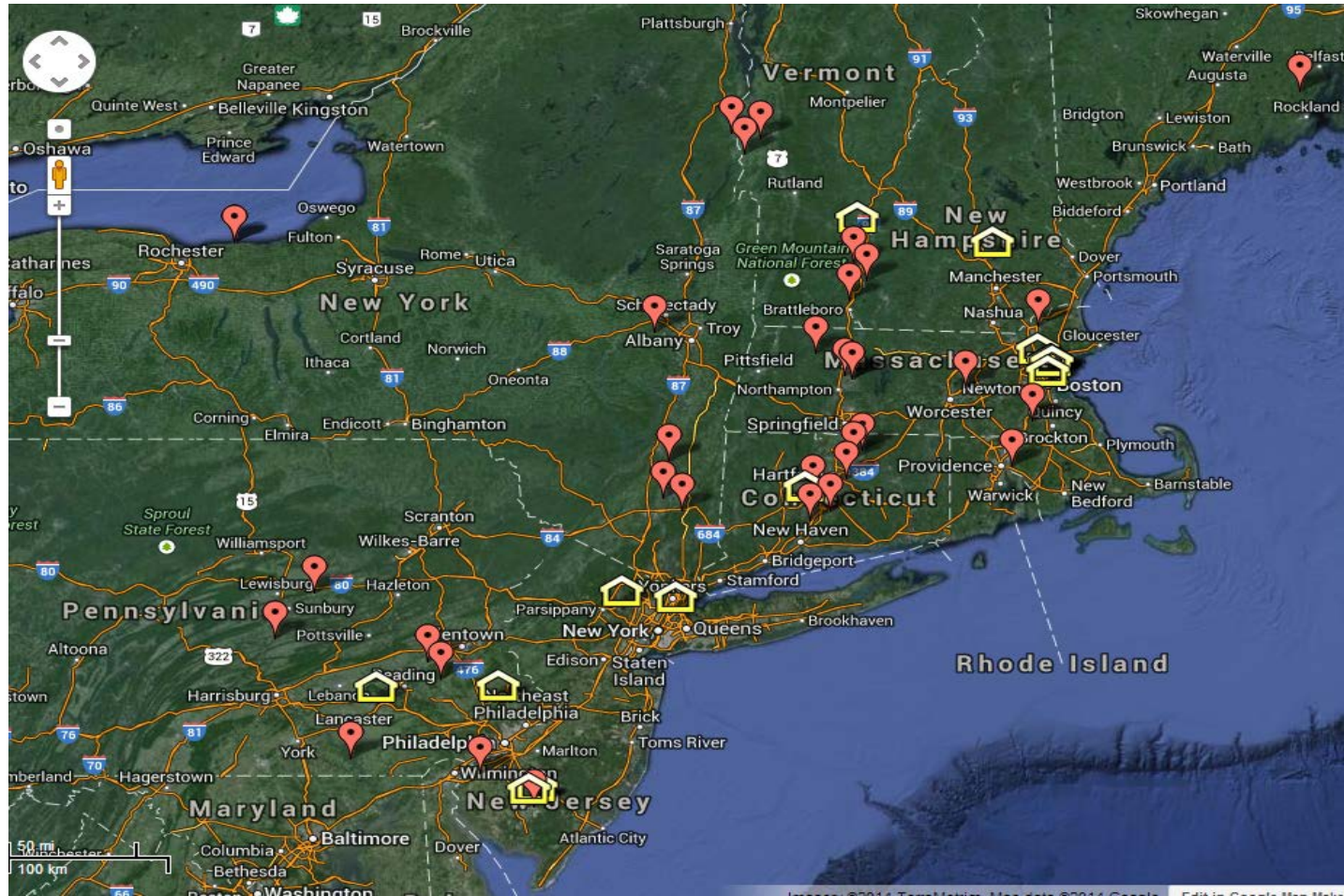


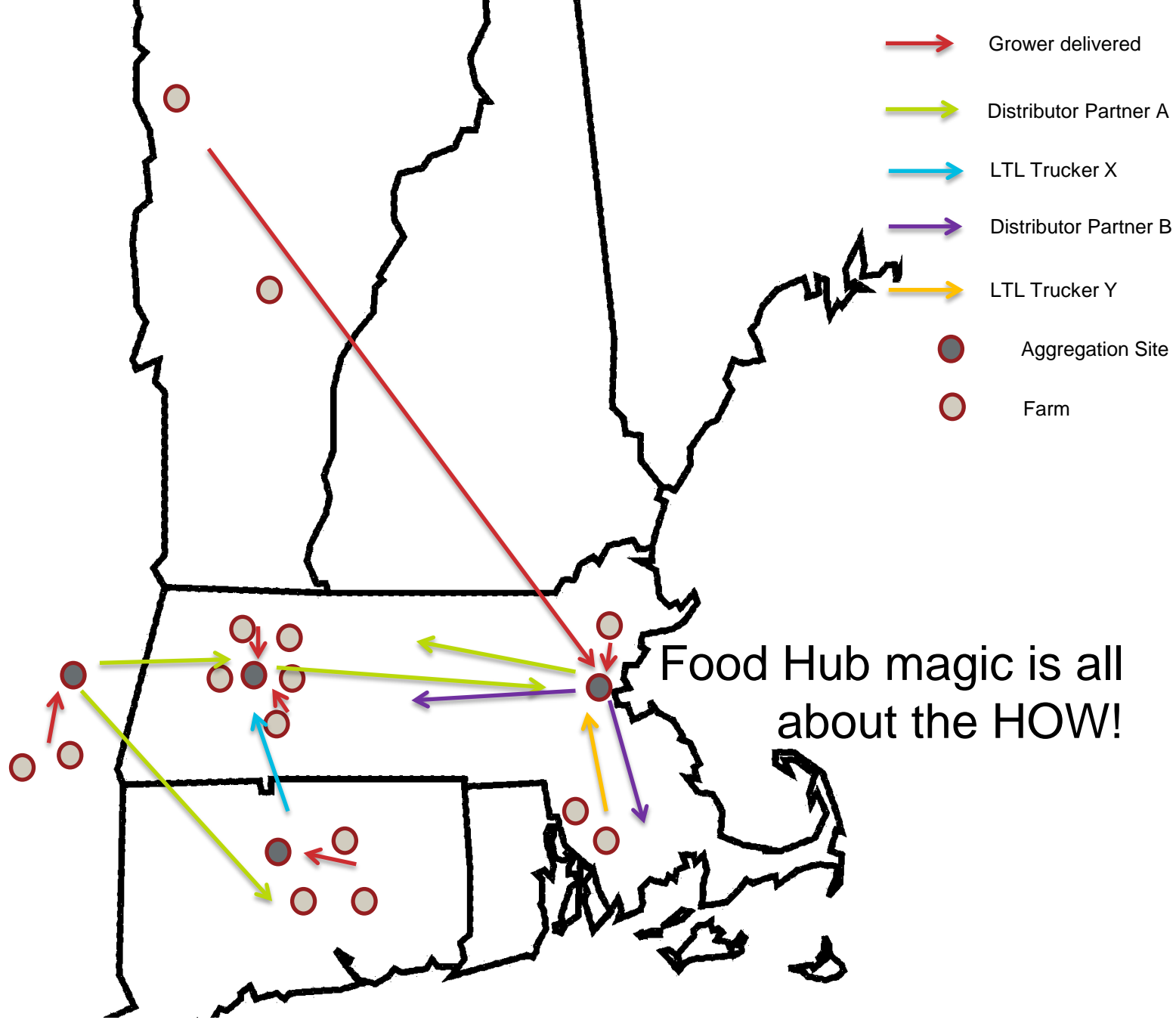
Who: Red Tomato Team

- 8 fulltime employees + 2 consultants (finance and art/design)
- 6-member Board of Directors
- Advisors, supporters and funders



Red Tomato: Where?





What: Farm-Identified, Season-long Local Product line



Industry standards: grading, packing, cold chain, quality control, food safety, marketing, branding, price

Red Tomato Farm Network

- Approximately 45 family-owned fruit and vegetable farms in 9 Northeastern states
- Farm Size: ranges from 20 acres to 1500 acres; average size is 265 acres
- Gross Annual Sales / Farm: ranges from under \$250k to over \$2 million; midpoint is ~ \$1 million/year, primarily wholesale with some direct/farmstand sales.
- Years in farming: ranges from 12th generation to first generation; most farms have been in the same family for 4 generations or more.

Red Tomato Farm Network

- Mid-sized family farms, most producing for the wholesale market.



Farm Labor in Red Tomato's Network

- Farm Workers on these mid-size family farms are in four main groups:
 - Family Members
 - Year Round Employees
 - Seasonal Employees—Local
 - Seasonal Employees—H2A
- Year Round Workers: range 1-50, avg 6-7
- Seasonal Workers: range 5-125, avg 35
- Family Members employed: range 1-7, avg 3

Seasonal Workers include local adults, hs and college students, interns, and H2A workers



H2A Agricultural Guest Worker Program

- Federal Program that allows temporary workers to be brought to US farms to fill need for farm labor.
- Farm is required to provide housing, transportation to and from home country, and pay workers a prevailing wage that is set by govt and generally higher than local wages for similar work.
- Farms must advertise and attempt to fill positions locally first, even if H2A employees have more experience, and must pay all local workers at the same rate as H2A.

H2A Agricultural Guest Worker Program

- Workers must be requested by a specific employer, and cannot change farms or employers during their time in the US
- Management of the program varies within each country, so practices, fairness, and alleged corruption vary widely.
- and there are far too many instances of abuse within the program, especially in some regions and large commodity operations.
- On small and midsize farms with good working conditions and wages, like most farms in the Northeast, H2A workers work alongside owners and local workers and make an essential contribution to growing and harvesting of food crops.

H2A Guest Worker Program

H2A workers on Northeast farms, like these guys at Sunrise Orchard in VT, often come from Jamaica and Mexico.



H2A workers in Northeast: Skilled & experienced, they return year after year to same farms.



Devon, from Jamaica, has expertly staked tomatoes at Wards Berry Farm in Sharon MA for many years.

RED TOMATO
righteous produce!™



Thank you!

www.redtomato.org