Priority 14: Develop **FOOD DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES** (e.g. collaborative marketing, product pooling and trucking, food hubs) to expand small farm access to local and regional markets

**261 out of 584 respondents (48%) ranked this topic as highest priority. Of those, 111 provided justification as follows:**

* 39 respondents (or 35%) commented that developing food distribution strategies will help small farms reduce transportation, labor, and marketing costs while increasing and stabilizing steady supply of product to various markets.

*“Farmers markets and CSAs are great but to really re-develop our agricultural base we also need to be able to pool together to feed our schools, markets, restaurants, etc. Doing this independently, as small farmers trucking relatively small amounts of product all around the region, is an inefficient use of our time and fuel. Pooling product and shipping together can allow for a steadier supply of product.”*

* 35 respondents (or 32 %) commented that developing food distribution strategies will increase market access to new customers of larger volumes (restaurants, institutional, wholesale, grocers).

*“I'd like to see some sort of collaborative infrastructure so that small farms could band together to provide fresh and healthy food to supermarkets and school cafeterias without having to take on the burden completely by themselves.”*

* 19 respondents (or 32 %) commented that developing food distribution strategies will increase marketing and local food promotions to inform consumers of the environmental, economic, social, and health values of local and regional foods.

*“Relying on produce form California, Mexico, and other faraway lands will become financially impractical at some point in the near future. But even before that extreme point is reached, a regional and local distribution network makes sense: environmentally (fewer fossil fuels consumed), economically (keeping our food dollars closer to home), and medically (increased awareness of where food comes from) encourages consumption of fruits & vegetables and increases awareness of organic foods.”*

* 16 respondents (or 14%) commented that developing food distribution strategies will to increase farmer profitability and thereby increase the number of small farms.

“*The more we can promote locally-grown food to regional urban areas, the more farmers will benefit. If we can have a proliferation of small growers, the whole community benefits from their food, their community presence, and the multiplier of the $$ that come to the farms and to the markets.”*