THE STRUGGLES OF FARMING DURING A PANDEMIC
Session: A, Breakout Room #1
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This study aimed to understand the struggles of local farms during the pandemic and how the food system should be altered to make sure these events do not happen again. This research aims to motivate citizens to rethink their food sources and restructure our food systems. I was a market research intern at Barn2Door, which gave me insight into how local farmers were struggling during the pandemic. To dig deeper I sent out a survey to local farms in Washington, Illinois, and New Jersey, and gain better insight into what specific aspects of their livelihoods had been affected. I also did a literature review of possible ways our food systems would change because of the pandemic, and what causes them to change. I found that farms had been most affected in the areas of farming operations, producer-consumer interactions, and technology use. I also found that our food system is susceptible to disruptions due to the structure of the system. These results give insight into which farms will need the most help if/when another natural disaster hits and areas those farms will need help. Farmers who used technology during the pandemic have not been as affected since they had an alternate selling technique. Therefore, implementing technology into farming can potentially save a farm’s business if face-to-face contact is limited. Finally, the effects of the pandemic point out that our food system needs to be restructured to accommodate more people and become more resilient.