Growing Resiliency: Approaching Year-Round Food Security In The Greater Seattle Area

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Background

Why look at food resiliency?

- In 2021 10.3% of King County reported struggling with food insecurity

Ensuring local year-round food resiliency amid a growing population, we must overcome various obstacles:

- Prolonged time from harvest to plate: This delay results in reduced nutritional value, diminished food quality, and food loss.
- Lack of political support: A significant amount of funding (in the form of subsidies) supports monoculture industrial farming, making it challenging to transition to more sustainable practices.

Figure 1: *Team members and I (bottom left) volunteering out on The UW Farm.*

Research Question

What does it take to increase urban food resiliency in the greater Seattle area year-round?

Internship/ Methods

- I interned with The UW Farm, focused on an educational heritage orchard and working as the communications coordinator
- I conducted research and planning for an educational heritage apple orchard to be installed at the Center for Urban Horticulture site.
- I also interviewed with farmers and foodbanks to better understand barriers and successes in current food resilience efforts.

Results

Interviews offered qualitative data (Figure 2) and quantitative data (Figure 3) that informed the barriers in improving food resiliency.

Key barriers to achieving year-round food resilience identified during my internship:

- Communication gap between farmers and food banks, hindering efficient resource distribution.
- Misalignment between food production timing and community needs, can lead to surpluses or shortages.
- Infrastructure needs (ex. Greenhouses), to extend the growing season.

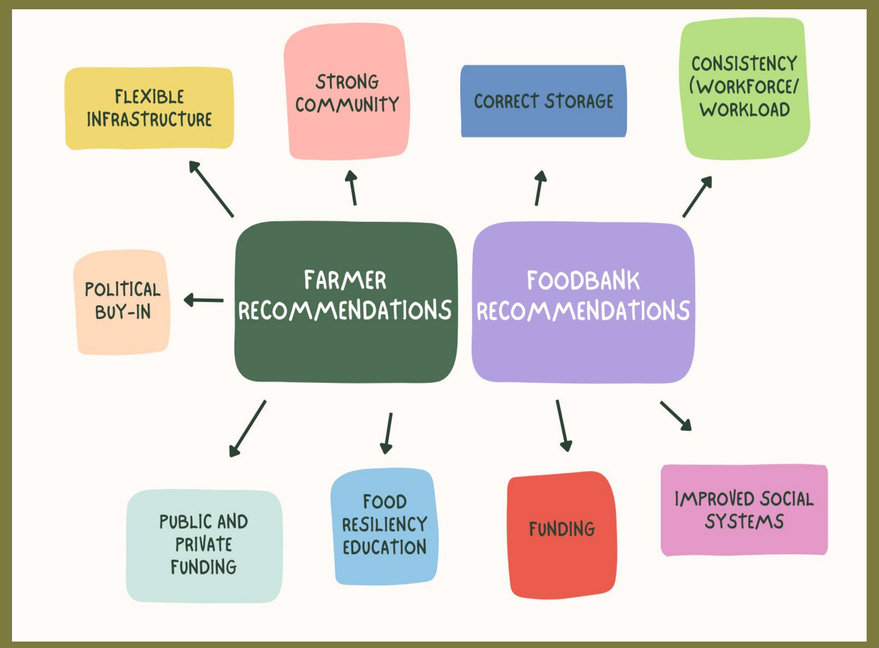

Figure 2: *Qualitative findings from interviews with farmers and foodbanks, with top recommendations towards improved food resiliency.*

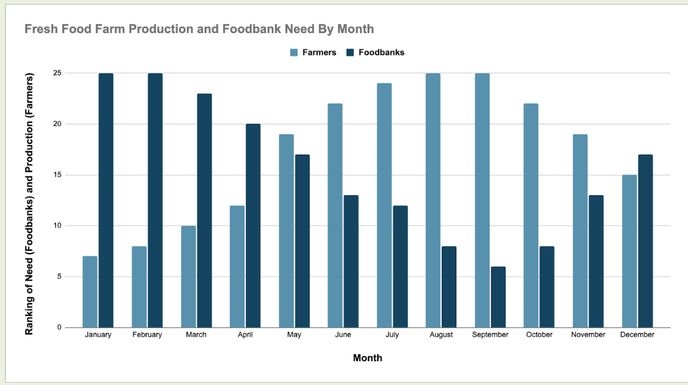

Figure 3: Farmers: *5 interviewed asked to rate production from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) each month.* ***Foodbanks:*** *5 interviewed asked to rate the need for fresh produce from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) each month*

Implications

- Addressing the recommendations suggested would allow for a more resilient food system
  - Less chance of low periods of produce production
  - Larger access to quality produce
  - Communities more connected and engaged with the food they eat
- Addressing barriers found can facilitate increased community wellbeing and broader social wellbeing.
- With a changing climate and growing regions having diverse ecologically healthy food systems is imperative to future production.
- Investing in regenerative agriculture is not only ecologically advisable, but also economically viable.
- Soil health and the crops we grow are valuable in sequestering carbon from the atmosphere.

Acknowledgements

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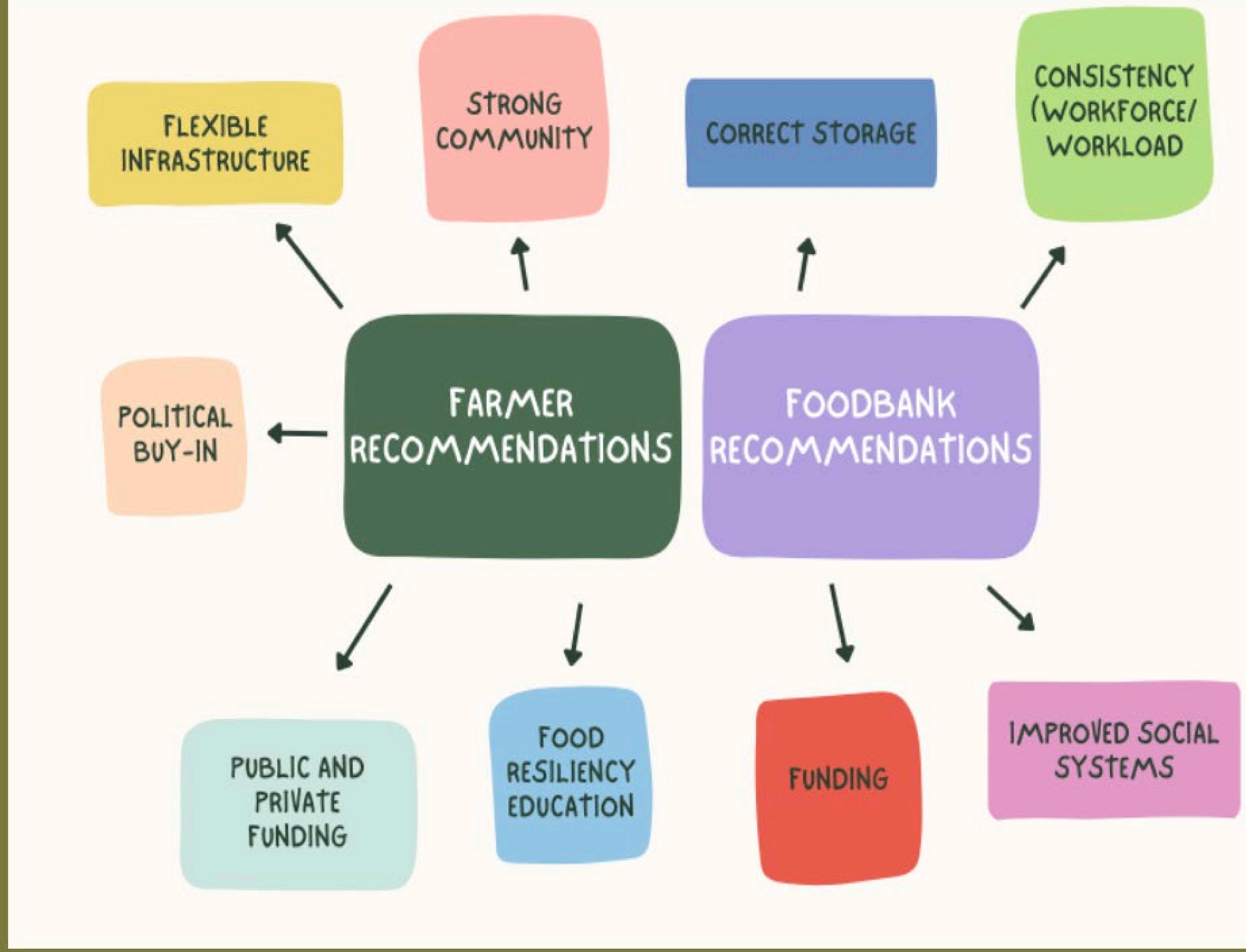

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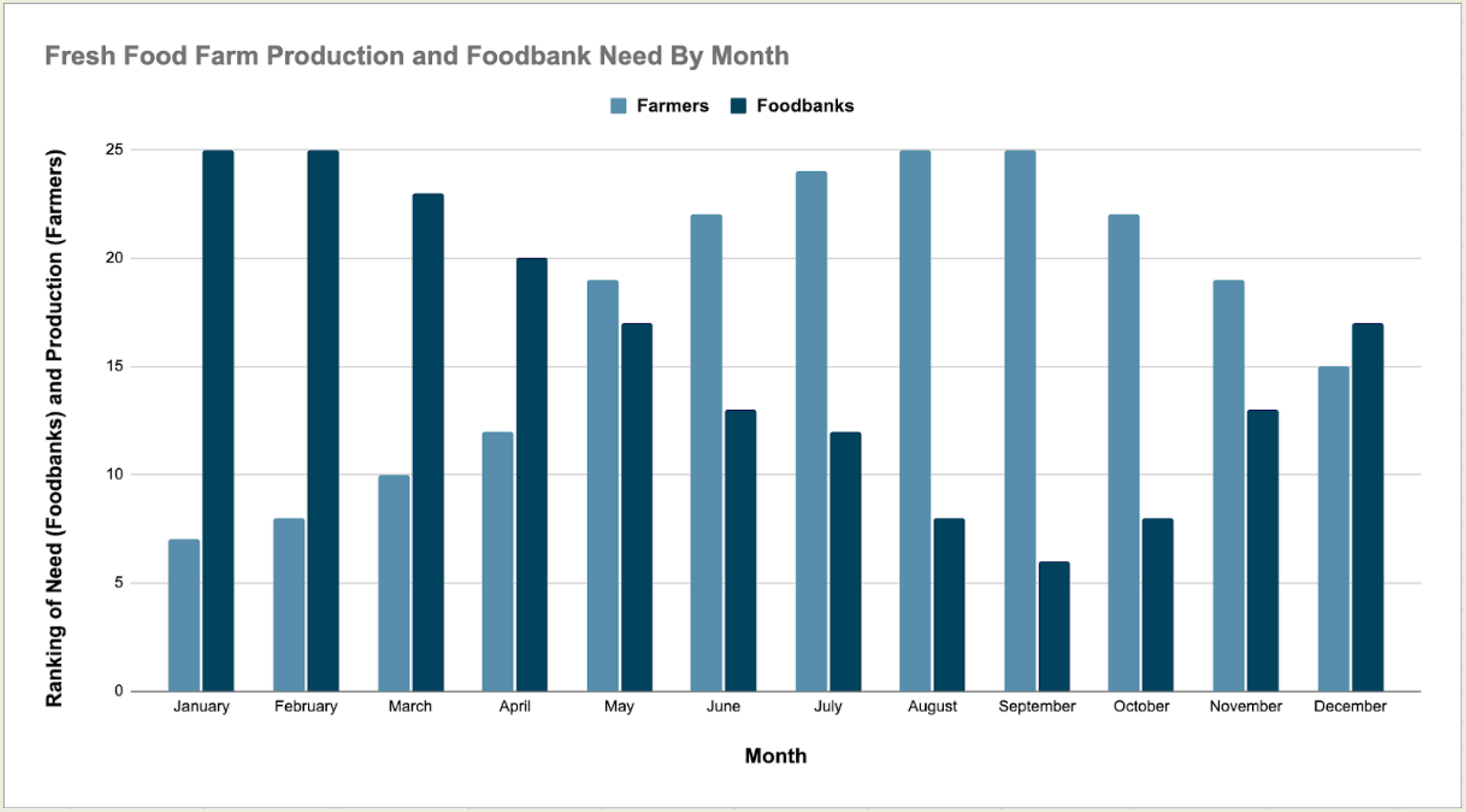

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