



What We're Growing Together

**Stories of regeneration, renewal,
and collaboration from across the
INFRA community.**

Regenerating the Future, Together

Regeneration has become a defining theme across the natural foods industry in recent years.

Consumers, retailers, brands, and industry leaders are coming together around the farming and food practices that have sustained healthy people, thriving communities, and resilient ecosystems for generations. At a time when convenience culture and hyper-individualism are leaving many people feeling fragmented, disconnected, and dissatisfied, we're beginning to ask important questions. What would it look like to create a food system that serves the interests of all people? A future where consumers know where their food comes from? A future where food brings people together and strengthens community?

This is the work that independent natural food retailers do best.



Every day, across this network, our members demonstrate what it means to lead with both heart and ingenuity. They show up for their communities in ways that go far beyond transactions. They create spaces where people feel connected, cared for, and inspired. And in moments of challenge, whether economic, environmental, or operational, they find a way forward. Not alone. But together.

For INFRA, regeneration is more than a buzzword or a passing trend. It's a way of being.

It shows up at the intersection of food, family, and locality, as members preserve regional traditions and share them through recipes, stories, and connection. It shows up in the stewardship of intergenerational knowledge, as second- and even third-generation owners carry businesses and values forward. It shows up in the connections between art, culture, and food, and in the many ways independent retailers bring people together as the heart of their communities.



The next chapter for INFRA, and for the independent natural channel, is not just about scaling what exists. It's about regenerating what's possible. As we enter this next chapter, I invite you to reflect on what regeneration looks like in your own store, your own community, and your own leadership.

What needs to be renewed?

What needs to be strengthened?

What future are you ready to help create?

Because the truth is, the future of independent retail will not be decided by trends or external forces alone. It will be shaped by the choices we make, together.

Handwritten signature of Pat Sheridan in purple ink.

—Pat Sheridan, President and CEO, INFRA

Regeneration of Food & Land

From the recipes we pass on to the soil that sustains us, healthy food systems are built through stewardship, knowledge, and a commitment to future generations.



TELLING FAMILY STORIES THROUGH FOOD: THE KIMBERTON COOKBOOK

At the heart of many INFRA Member stories is a deep history of family food traditions. Whether a store is second-generation or family owned, rooted in regional cooking practices, or serving family recipes at its deli counter, there is no denying the ways that food, family, and locality are inextricably linked. Preserving those traditions and passing them onto future generations is its own form of regeneration.

This is the project that Kimberton Whole Foods Co-Owners Pat and Terry Brett undertook in creating The Kimberton Cookbook: A Family History, featuring more than 60 recipes spanning the store's 32-year history as a community gathering place. Included in the cookbook are seasonally inspired recipes as well as stories from local farmers and food producers across Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Today, Kimberton works with over 200 local producers throughout the greater Philadelphia region.

See the next page for a recipe from the cookbook, and learn more about this project here: kimbertonwholefoods.com/kimberton-whole-foods-cookbook

Want to bring these recipes home?

Visit the **Swag Swap Booth (#1117)** for a chance to win your own copy of the cookbook.

“Kimberton Whole Foods is legendary as a pioneering and down-to-earth food store... This stunningly beautiful cookbook shows the warmth and love that comes from caring about food, farms, and family.

—Maria Rodale, organic food advocate, author,
and former CEO of Rodale Inc.

CASHEW-CITRUS PORTOBELLO BURGER

MAKES 6 BURGERS

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

2 large portobello mushroom caps,
diced in large chunks
½ pound white mushrooms, sliced
(stems removed)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, diced
1 ½ teaspoons garlic, minced
¾ cup carrots, grated
½ teaspoon dried basil
¼ teaspoon turmeric
¾ cup raw cashews
¼ cup raw sunflower seeds
1 ½ tablespoons red miso
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ tablespoon balsamic vinegar
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
¾ cup cooked brown rice
Orange zest and 6 orange wedges
(optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pulse mushrooms in food processor until finely chopped. In a medium saucepan over medium-high, heat olive oil. Add onion and garlic and cook on medium-low until onions are translucent. Add mushrooms, carrots, basil and turmeric. Continue cooking for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, and then transfer to a large bowl. In food processor, pulse cashews, sunflower seeds, red miso, lemon juice, balsamic vinegar and pepper to combine. Add to bowl with chopped mushrooms. Add rice and stir to combine. Refrigerate mixture overnight, covered.
2. When ready to cook, preheat oven to 375°F. Form mixture into 6 patties that are 1-inch thick. Place patties on an oiled baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for about 25 minutes until golden brown. After cooked, top each burger with a sprinkle of orange zest and a squeeze of citrus from the wedge of an orange. Serve burgers either on a bun with lettuce, tomato, onion and vegan mayonnaise or on a tossed salad.



Regeneration of Food & Land

Partner Article, Kiss the Ground

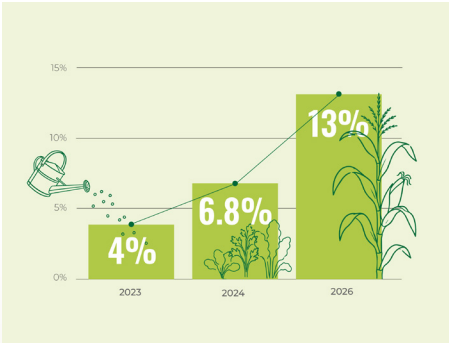


Kiss the Ground's 2026 Research reveals a massive pivot: public understanding of regenerative agriculture has tripled since 2023. Today, 13% of U.S. adults demonstrate a working understanding of regenerative practices as a solution for both human and planetary health—a significant jump from just 4% in 2023.

CLOSING THE REGENERATIVE UNDERSTANDING GAP: AND WHAT INDEPENDENTS CAN DO TO HELP

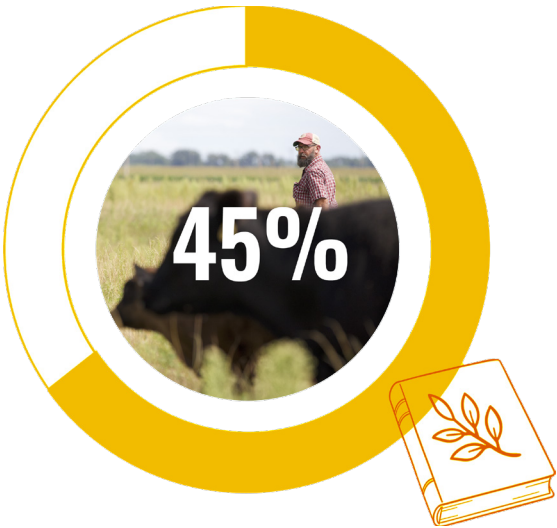
For years, regenerative agriculture lived as a niche concept—one not yet fully grasped by the typical consumer. While awareness grew steadily, a lack of clear understanding kept shoppers from moving from “interested” to “invested.” That gap is officially closing. Consumers are connecting the dots between the health of the soil and the health of their own bodies.

At the shelf, the data is even clearer: 72% of shoppers prioritize personal wellness above all else, and more than half are curious about where their food comes from. While regenerative products currently represent a small fraction of new launches, the acceleration is undeniable. The Movement is moving into the mainstream, and the primary barrier to purchase is simply a lack of information. This is where the independent retailer becomes an essential bridge.



U.S. understanding of regenerative agriculture has grown 3X since 2023!

The Knowledge Gap
45% of consumers say they don't choose regenerative products more often because they “don't know enough about them yet.”



Activating Your Shoppers

Round Up for Regeneration: Your shoppers care—help them turn everyday purchases into micro-donations to support regenerative agriculture and soil health. Partner with organizations focused on soil health and regeneration and show customers first-hand the impact they can make.

Education is the New Marketing: Transparency is your most valuable SKU. Showcase the “why” behind a brand rather than just the “what.” When shoppers understand the link between soil and their own vitality, they don't just buy a product; they join a Movement.

The consumer is ready to buy into a healthier future. And INFRA Retailers can lead the way.

Ready to hear more about the regenerative movement and how independent retailers can play a role?

Join us on Thursday morning for a keynote from Evan Harrison, CEO of Kiss the Ground.

Thursday | 8:30-10:00am | Ballroom

Regeneration of Identity

From branding and merchandise to art and community engagement, independent retailers help preserve and renew the unique character of the places they call home.



CHICORY MARKET: BRINGING A STORE’S IDENTITY TO LIFE THROUGH BRANDING

Chicory Market in Oxford, Mississippi has developed a reputation for being more than just a place to shop for groceries. With roots as a community farmstand, Chicory has become a crossroads for the local food movement in North Mississippi, connecting Oxford and Lafayette County with more than 65 local farmers and food makers while creating a grocery experience deeply rooted in place, personality, and community. By strengthening local relationships and celebrating the people behind the food, Chicory is continually renewing the community it serves.

At Chicory, the food itself tells a story. From Delta-grown rice to pasture-raised meats to Calhoun County sweet potatoes, the store reflects the culture, flavors, and creativity of the modern South. That same spirit carries through every aspect of the customer experience, including the store’s branding and merchandise.

From the retro 50s feel of the décor to the colorful shirts and hats, Chicory Market has cultivated a strong visual identity that feels unmistakably its own. Across INFRA membership, independent retailers have a unique opportunity to use creativity and branding not just to market themselves, but to strengthen ties to their communities and invite their shoppers and employees to be a part of something bigger.



At Chicory Market, that creativity is intentionally collaborative. Rather than making branding decisions behind closed doors, everyone is brought into the conversation. Former Chicory Market employee and current INFRA Member Support Specialist Hunter Johnson shared that feedback and collaboration were a core part of the culture. “Whenever I designed something, I would take my iPad around the store and poll staff on their favorite designs,” Johnson says, “I wanted everyone to be involved.”

That collaborative process helps ensure the branding reflects the same warmth, personality, and local character that define the store itself. Instead of striving for something overly polished or corporate, Chicory embraces hand-drawn elements and playful designs that feel approachable and authentic. “I think folks really resonate with something that’s hand drawn and a little more down-to-earth,” Johnson says.

Community members are also a priority in the creative process. As customers wear Chicory merchandise around town, the branding naturally becomes an extension of the store’s presence within the community.

Ultimately, independents have the opportunity to create something authentic and human through their merchandise and branding. By partnering with local artists, drawing inspiration from the community, and involving employees in the creative process, Chicory Market demonstrates how authenticity, community, and success go hand-in-hand.





RIVERWARDS PRODUCE: WHERE ART AND COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER

Riverwards Produce in Pennsylvania started as a humble pop-up in a garage, driven by Founder Vincent Finazzo's passion for fresh produce and a vision for a healthier community. Today, with three locations across Philadelphia and Detroit, Riverwards continues to redefine grocery retail through local food, creativity, and community connection.

That sense of community has always been central to the store's identity. Beyond its emphasis on local produce, art has long been close to Riverwards' operations. The store's hand-illustrated flyers are a perfect example—combining function with a unique and authentic touch.

Kyle Schwander, Art Director at Riverwards, was an early believer in Vincent's vision. As a local to the Philadelphia area and avid foodie, the idea of opening a neighborhood grocery immediately resonated. "I met Vince when I worked at a local pizza shop," he says, "back then, Riverwards was just a restaurant delivery service." Kyle says that he was inspired by his hometown experiences working at a small general store. "I was in love with that place. It was the central hub of the town," he says.

As a former art school kid himself, Vince recognized Kyle's talents in drawing and a natural collaboration unfolded. "He decided I'd be perfect to create the store's signage," he says, "from there, I saw other opportunities to use hand-drawn illustrations to draw people's eyes in."

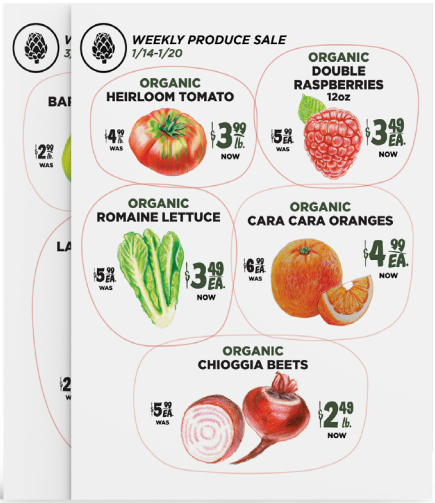
Today, Riverwards' hand-illustrated flyers feature everything from fresh seasonal produce to natural grocery products in vibrant colored pencil.

"In a technologically advancing world, I think people enjoy seeing physical art done by hand," Kyle comments. "It reflects part of Riverwards' ethos; taking something people see every day, but pouring love, care, and hard work into it to show people its beauty and importance. To us, it's far more than a grocery store."

This commitment to creating spaces that feel personal, welcoming, and rooted in community is something

many independent retailers share. Through food, art, and human connection, stores like Riverwards help strengthen the communities they serve.

"Our community is everything. They're the reason we do this," Kyle says, "beyond giving back through participation in community events, charities and donations, we're grateful for the opportunity to give local producers a place where they can sell and promote the products they work so hard to create. I'm not sure a grocery store exists without community, or a community without a grocery store—they feel pretty intertwined if you ask me."



Regeneration of Community

Strong communities don't happen by accident. They are built through relationships, shared purpose, and a commitment to helping people thrive. Independent retailers play an essential role in bringing those connections to life.

The GENNY

THE GENNY: BRINGING A COMMUNITY HUB BACK TO LIFE

In many small towns, the local general store is more than a place to buy groceries. It's a gathering place, a source of connection, and a reflection of the community itself. For years, Albany, Vermont, was missing that anchor. After a fire, the town's general store sat vacant and abandoned. But community members weren't ready to let it disappear.

"It felt like a really important thing to do. We wanted to have it here. We wanted to bring it back," says Emily Maclure, Co-Owner of The Genny.

The community came together to form a trust, purchase the building, and restore the space. In 2021, The Genny opened its doors, returning a beloved gathering place to the heart of Albany. Today, the store is home to groceries, a busy deli, community events, outdoor concerts, and everyday conversations between neighbors.

For Maclure, who grew up in the area, opening the store felt like a homecoming. "I hope it feels like Albany's store," she says. "That place where people feel welcome and are grateful it's there."

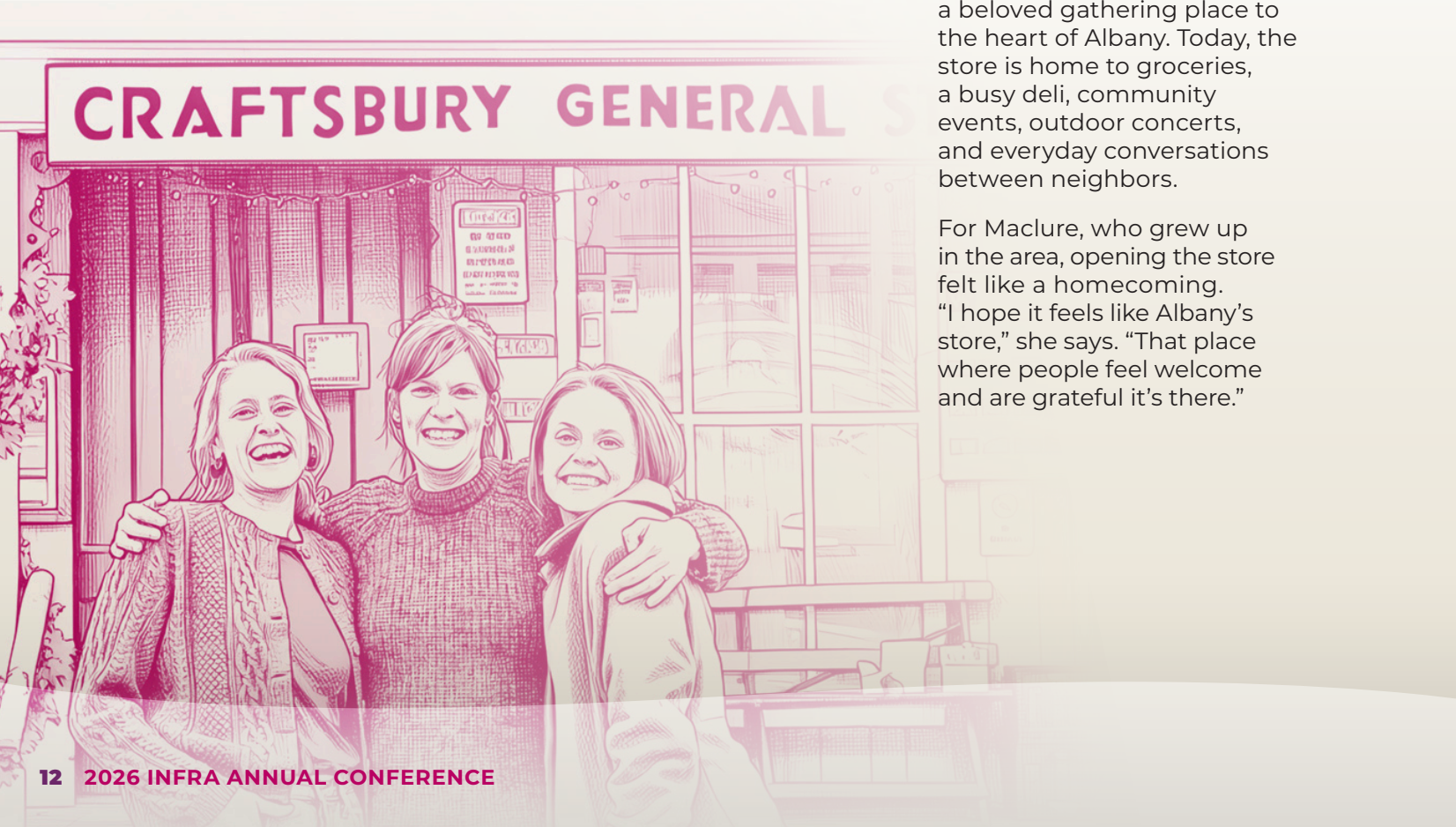


The impact extends far beyond what's on the shelves. One of The Genny's most meaningful initiatives is the FREE-zer Program: a chest freezer stocked with nutritious, single-serve meals available at no cost to anyone who needs one. Community members can support the effort by purchasing meals for the freezer, creating a simple but powerful cycle of neighbors helping neighbors. "People can just come and help themselves," says Maclure.

For residents like Lisa Robinson, a disabled senior living on a tight budget, the program provides more than a meal. "Being for free for people like me, it really works and helps," Robinson says. "If you don't have the extra help, you're not gonna make it."

The generosity doesn't stop there. "People come into the store and say, 'I want to buy a meal for the freezer,'" says Maclure. "The alchemy of these places, the secret sauce, are the people who come in and out."

Stories of regeneration are often told through soil, farms, and food systems. But sometimes regeneration looks like a community restoring a gathering place, creating opportunities for connection, and ensuring neighbors have what they need to thrive. At The Genny, a store that once sat empty has become a living example of what's possible when people come together around a shared purpose.



Regeneration of Community



RISING TIDE NATURAL MARKET: CREATING STAYING POWER THROUGH RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

As soon as you walk into Rising Tide Natural Market in Glen Cove, New York, you're greeted with a smile. From the 100% organic produce department to the robust deli counter, every inch of the 3,000 square foot store is intentionally curated to create a welcoming shopping experience. Founder and Co-Owner Jerry Farrell began his natural foods journey in the 1970s, when he would make weekly treks to Manhattan to stock up on whole grains, seaweed, and miso because there was no place to buy them in his own community on Long Island.

Inspired by the countercultural movements of the time, and a desire to bring natural foods to the community, Rising Tide opened its doors in 1976. By the mid-1990s, however, the landscape was changing. Competition in the natural foods industry was increasing, and many independent retailers were facing challenges they could no longer solve alone.

Determined to give independents a bigger seat at the table, Rising Tide was an early player in INFRA's founding and became INFRA's 11th member in 2005. "We joined INFRA because we thought there was an opportunity not only for a buying group, but also a platform for retailers to have an ongoing conversation," Jerry says.

When asked what has mattered most over the years, Jerry points to the relationships built through INFRA membership. "INFRA is a social network," he says. "In the 15 years since joining INFRA, we still have strong relationships with other retailers we talk to on a regular basis." Whenever there's a problem that needs solving or a topic that needs weighing in on, support is only a phone call away.

The staff at Rising Tide have also seen long-term value in INFRA's educational opportunities. Jerry's Co-Owner and partner Ashley comments, "The synergy I've felt at share groups is incredible. There's no replacement for sitting around a table with people who are doing the same thing as you are. Retail is such a challenge, and it's great to hear other perspectives." Jerry echoes that sentiment. "Whenever you can meet people in person, you start building relationships," he says.

The same spirit of connection that drew Rising Tide to INFRA is woven throughout the store itself. Relationship-building is a core part of the business model—from the customers, some of whom have been

shopping there for decades, to longtime staff. Ashley joined the team more than 14 years ago when she was bitten by the "retail bug" while working toward her PhD. But what kept her there was the culture Jerry helped create. "Jerry somehow created this place that is fully collaborative... there's no decision that leadership makes without talking to our core people. It's a place that's authentically friendly. Even as people have come and gone, that has stayed constant."

50 years after opening its doors, Rising Tide remains a testament to the power of strong, interconnected relationships. Not only between retailers, but between staff, customers, and communities. It is a reminder that lasting success is rarely built alone.

This was the foundational belief that INFRA was built upon: that by working together, independent retailers could stay in it for the long haul. Time and time again, members extend a hand, pick up the phone, and reinforce a simple truth:

Independent doesn't mean alone.



RISING TIDE, 1976



Regeneration through Interconnection

The choices made throughout the food system have impacts far beyond the shelf. From farmer livelihoods to biodiversity, thoughtful business practices can create ripple effects that strengthen communities and ecosystems alike.

Partner Article, Beyond Good



EMPOWERING THRIVING FARMERS AND ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

The thing about regenerative agriculture is that it's not the most important thing. At least not in the world of cocoa, vanilla or any agricultural product that comes from developing countries. While it may be central to our conversations about sustainability and agriculture in the West, people across the world have been farming regeneratively, in harmony with their local ecosystems, for centuries.

When Beyond Good started, we didn't set out to do any work in regenerative agriculture. Our only goal was for cocoa farmers to make a thriving wage. A 'living wage' was not aspirational enough for us.

For most farmers in Madagascar, middlemen were walking away with too much of the profit. We believed in a different business model—one that had the power to change the cocoa and vanilla industry for good.

It took us five years to accomplish our goal of providing our farmers with thriving wages. Doing big things takes time, and it took some mistakes to get there, but after five years, our cocoa farmers were making a thriving wage.

What we saw next surprised even us.

Once they had the means to thrive, farmers only one or two years removed from extreme poverty started to plant more shade trees and more cocoa trees. They did this on their own. Cocoa from Madagascar is a special variety (that's where the distinct flavor of Beyond Good comes from) and needs a mix of 60% shade and 40% sun to fruit.

Farmers didn't plant cocoa trees in neat rows. They planted a three-tiered canopy system that looked like a rainforest.

The forests took over fallow rice fields and land for grazing cattle. The forests took over a landscape that was deforested a century ago. Not only did this system benefit the farmers, but the forests they planted became a sanctuary for more than 85 species of animals, including five species of endangered lemurs. The farmers had naturally done what was best for the soil, plants, and animals. They had completely transformed the land for the better.

Some would call that "regenerative agriculture."

We call it "cocoa farmers making a living doing what they need to do to have a better life for themselves and their families."

People who eat our chocolate call it "Finally. What real chocolate should taste like."

—Tim McCollum, Founder & CEO of Beyond Good



Regeneration through Interconnection



EXPERIENCING CHOCOLATE & VANILLA PRODUCTION AT THE SOURCE: 2026 MADAGASCAR TRIP

In April, members of the INFRA Team along with folks from four member stores got the incredible opportunity of traveling to Madagascar to experience Beyond Good’s chocolate and vanilla production firsthand. We toured facilities, met the farmers behind the product, and saw many, many lemurs.

Want to learn more about Beyond Good’s mission? Stop by “INFRA & Beyond Good: Changing Village Life in Madagascar by Challenging the Global Chocolate Industry” for a guided chocolate tasting and sneak peek at this extraordinary experience.



Voices of Regeneration

There is no single path to regeneration. These voices offer perspectives on stewardship, community, collaboration, and the shared work of building a stronger future.



“Similar to the way that organic diet was going to heal humans, regenerative organic agriculture was the way we could heal our soil and agriculture system. **Early on, we became advocates for organic and used it as the minimum requirement for our business.**”

—Mark Squire, Co-Owner of Good Earth Natural Foods

“We’ve seen customers or even employees change the way they eat, and we’ve seen the impact that it can have on people’s lives. It can’t get any better than that when you can see that change.”

— Mary Walsh, Co-Owner of Swamp Rabbit Cafe & Grocery
From Common Roots “The Power of Sourcing Local with Swamp Rabbit”



“Responsibly grown food just tastes better. Having ingredients that deliver exceptional flavor is critical, so we sought out local organic farmers, farmers growing without pesticides, **ingredients that were made the same way they had been for hundreds of years.**”

—Sam Mogannam, Owner of Bi-Rite Market

“If we’re going to change our food system, consumers need to be demanding better product from farmers, retailers, and companies... **less than 1% of our population actually knows someone who grows or produces food in their community, and INFRA Retailers can play a big role in bridging that gap.**”

—Jeff Tkach, CEO of the Rodale Institute
From The Buyer’s Desk “Revolutionizing Agriculture with the Rodale Institute”



“I realized that creating connections between people is the reason I’m here... instead of ‘how do I sell the most of X’ or ‘how do I pay people the least amount as possible,’ my business has become so much more than selling product.”

—Erin Malone, Owner of Momo’s Market
From Common Roots “Connecting Neighbors with Momo’s Market”

Regeneration at the Conference

Regeneration is more than a theme for this year's conference; it's a principle woven throughout the event experience. From the venue where we gather and the food we share to the products we discover and the connections we build, we've intentionally looked for opportunities to reduce waste, support local, and create a gathering that reflects the values of the INFRA Community.



GREEN VENUE

The St. Paul RiverCentre is proudly LEED Gold Certified and dedicated to improving the sustainability outcomes of every event held within its walls. Through the RiverCentre's partnership with Green Cities Accord, attendee travel emissions are tracked and offset through tree planting initiatives across the Twin Cities.



The RiverCentre's Green Team also helps us minimize waste by coordinating food recovery efforts and partnering with tabletop exhibitors to donate excess food to local food shelves. Detailed sustainability reporting, including wind, solar, and waste metrics, helps us better understand and reduce our environmental footprint year after year.

THOUGHTFUL FOOD SOURCING



We're proud to partner with Chowgirls Catering to bring you fresh, organic, and sustainably sourced meals throughout the Conference. Chowgirls works with Minnesota and Wisconsin farms to source seasonal ingredients and prioritize organic, Fair Trade, and biodiverse foods whenever possible.

REUSE IN ACTION



This year, we're taking another step forward by introducing reusable sample ware throughout the Tabletop Show through our partnership with r.world. As the nation's leading reuse company, r.world delivers high-quality, U.S.-made reusables that have saved more than 25 million single-use items from the landfill.

CELEBRATING LOCAL CREATIVITY



Regeneration isn't only about environmental stewardship, it's also about investing in the people, traditions, and creative spirit that make communities thrive. We're excited to welcome crop artist Marta Shore to this year's Community Celebration. Be sure to stop by and experience her live process for this unique expression of Minnesota's agricultural art tradition.

Wondering where to return your cup so it can be washed and reused? Look for the yellow bins!





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