

# Food Chain Challenge – Entrepreneurs

## Minnesota Youth Institute



**Entrepreneur:** Carla Metz **Company:** Iron Shoe Farm, <https://ironshoefarm.com/>

Carla Mertz is a 6-year beginning farmer. Woman Owner and First-Generation farmer alongside her husband, Dave and 17-year-old daughter on their 63-acre diversified farm in Princeton, MN. Iron Shoe Farm started on the basis of sustainability, local food and knowing your farmer. Within 3 short years Iron Shoe Farm has provided produce and livestock for over 50 local area restaurants, and over 1000 customers. In 2020 Iron Shoe Farm has become one of the most supported local farms in Minnesota's restaurant scene, being sought out for their Mangalista/ Red Wattle Pork "the red velvet of pork", pastured poultry, and ever popular microgreens and edible flowers, artisan vegetables are also part of their line-up. Iron Shoe Farm hosts on-farm dinner series May through

October to showcase Twin Cities Chefs. Processing advocacy and Local Sourcing has been at the height of advocacy in 2020. The Pantry (their online market and on farm store, as well as a new value-added meat processing facility is part of a new Kickstarter campaign).

### Food Chain Challenges:

- Lack of processing to bring their own animals to: County rulings do not allow on farm slaughter/processing. They are currently on a wait list since March 2020. Should they Build their own small processing facility with retail store to support other local area farmers? (this is a 4-million-dollar project).
- Freezer and Cooler storage are scarce in their location. Since Restaurants have closed or operate at 50% capacity what is the best way to increase local sales within the marketplace through the processing facility? How can we build a social media capital campaign? Kickstarter?

## New Jersey Youth Institute

**Entrepreneur:** Susana Camarena **Company:** Tacombi, <https://tacombi.com/>



Susana Camarena is the Director of Impact and Chief of Staff to the CEO of Tacombi Holding, a hospitality company focused on sharing its love of Mexico through neighborhood taquerias and CPG products. One company goal is to positively impact the Mexican community in both sides of the border, which has inspired to launch the Tacombi Community Kitchen program, that Susana run through the Tacombi Foundation.

Before joining Tacombi, Susana served as Executive Director at Qualitas of Life Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides basic financial education to Hispanic families in New York to foster their financial security and improve their standard of living.

Susana's lifelong interest in Mexico's cultural heritage combined with her professional studies required her to visit many regions around the country where she learned firsthand the immense inequality in the country. These experiences strengthened her commitment to contribute to the development of marginalized communities and get involved in diverse community development projects both in Mexico and the U.S.

### Food Chain Challenges:

- How can Tacombi leverage Social Media to drive donations towards the Tacombi Community Kitchen program?
- What other initiatives can Tacombi implement, through the Foundation, to increase its impact in the community?
- How can the Tacombi Foundation leverage their beneficiaries' network to increase brand awareness?

## SLU Youth Institute

**Entrepreneur:** Sepehr Mousavi **Company:** SweGreen, <https://wegreen.com>



SweGreen is an Agtech company focused on urban farming innovations based in Stockholm, Sweden. SweGreen provides futuristic, smart, and circular vertical farming solutions for growing food in urban environments. SweGreen is a pioneering enterprise in offering their vertical farming solution in a service model enabled by an Artificial Intelligence and remote monitoring system – which they call Farming as a Service, FaaS. They offer locally grown and top-notch quality greens while helping to minimize the food's environmental footprint.

Sepehr Mousavi is Chief Innovation Officer and Co-Founder of SweGreen. Sepehr has studied MSc. of Agroecology at SLU and defines himself a sustainable innovation champion focused on impact and a technocrat futurist with ambitions to strive for helping build a better tomorrow. During the past few years Sepehr has been enlisted

as one of the '50 world's most influential global smart city leaders', won 'Education Leadership Award' by BBC Knowledge, was named on the 'Sweden's top 33 sustainability personae' list by Aktuell Hållbarhet and claimed no.19 of the top 101 'Swedish super talents' published by the leading Swedish business journal, Veckans Affärer.

## Wageningen Youth Institute

**Entrepreneur:** Mendelt Tillema **Company:** UmaMeats, <https://umameats.nl/#>



UmaMeats is a food development company focused on seaweed innovations based in Wageningen, Netherlands. UmaMeats creates food products out of natural ingredients to make healthy and sustainable products of which the taste is irresistible. Seaweed has the characteristics to become a major ingredient in the solution for the world food issue as it is a natural flavor and nutrient booster while it is highly sustainable. UmaMeats works on understanding the social, economic and technical aspects of the ingredient of the future to make its huge potential available in food products around the world.

Mendelt Tillema is founder of UmaMeats. He studied plant sciences at Wageningen University where the seed for his interest for seaweed was planted. During a program around healthy ageing in his home town, he got hooked by the idea of using seaweed in processed food products, as it changes food quality intake without having to try and change worn in eating patterns. This idea is transformed into UmaMeats, a startup which provides seaweed enriched food products throughout the Dutch food service. How that happened you can watch here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI3CE\\_VtSuo&ab\\_channel=TEDxTalks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI3CE_VtSuo&ab_channel=TEDxTalks)

### Food Chain Challenge:

- UmaMeats is currently selling frozen meat products enriched with seaweed to wholesalers, restaurants and caterers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic they face the need to also sell directly to individual consumers. From January/February UmaMeats will start selling the 'UmaBurger' (a seaweed enriched beef burger patty) at (online)retailers as well.
  - What SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) can you come up with for UmaMeats to successfully engage with their target audience?
  - The target audience that could be described as: Young conscious meat lovers that appreciate delicious food products made of natural ingredients.
  - Key words are: Natural ingredients, Clean label, low salt & low fat, the juiciest burger, Umami