**Panel Questions**

All: As an introduction, give a 2 minute snapshot of your organization and your work.

Open to Allison: *Give a summary of the sector. What are we good at? What are we missing?*

Emily: Where are the gaps? Who is being left out? What conversations need to be had or what questions need to be answered?

Myles - describe your last few years as a food entrepreneur - tell the story

John: What are the opportunities that you see as the most useful and viable? What are the barriers that concern you the most?

Lightning Round: If you had $100 million dollars to invest in this sector and 35 acres with a Farmer's Market in the middle, what would you spend it on?

Additional questions (just in case):

What’s the problem that should have already been solved, and how would you solve it?

Summary of the sector – what is done well? What is missing?

What

Why

How

Infrastructure

Pitfalls of Storage, Facilities, Manufacturers

Labor force – workforce development and pathways for careers

Case studies on indoor growing – funded and supported by philanthropy

**Bios:**

**Allison Hohn**is the Executive Director of Naturally MN, formerly known as Grow North, leading strategy and growth for the organization. Prior to joining Naturally MN in 2020, Allison spent 10+ years building a holistic understanding of the food product development cycle as a food scientist at Land O’Lakes and Target Corporation, where she mentored corporate accelerator companies on product development, go to market strategies, and scaled production. She also served as the Director of R&D for the 15/16 Group, an NYC-based consulting firm advising startups in various capacities. She is passionate about supporting entrepreneurs across MN from ag tech companies to CPG brands and welcomes introductions to all those in the industry.

**John Castillo** is the President of Food Ops, a Twin-Cities based consulting firm immersed in the national CPG entrepreneurial ecosphere, with a vision to grow the entrepreneurial food community. His extensive background runs the gamut of corporate manufacturing operations, with a broad spectrum of corporations ranging from small entrepreneurs to Fortune 500 companies. He has worked full time and/or consulted for the United States Army, Boston Scientific, Malt-O-Meal, Post Consumer Brands, and Angie’s Boomchickapop. John’s expertise includes manufacturing startups; research and development platforms; FDA-regulated manufacturing; quality assurance; and training for both skills development and team building.

**Emily Paul**is a partner at Food Works Group and has led teams and organizations for over a decade in the non-profit and for-profit food space. Her focus is in addressing the locality and seasonality, as well as cultural, economic, and equity factors of local food systems. Emily works to address the needs of food institutions, non-profit organizations, and individual entrepreneurs as well as the systems in which these stakeholder groups are connected, with deep experience in hunger relief, kitchen operations, and non-profit strategy. Prior to joining Food Works Group, Emily was director of programs and strategic partnerships at The Good Acre, a non-profit food hub that supports under-served farmers, food makers, and local institutions in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Emily currently serves as board chair of the Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund, and previously served as a director of Twin Cities Co-op Partners, a co-op retailer and wholesaler servicing upper Midwest co-ops, restaurants, and major natural foods retailers.

**Myles Olson** is the co-founder and COO of Coconut Whisk, an allergen friendly baking mix company. He has 5 years of in-the-trenches experience scaling a small food company from scratch. Starting in a small college apartment, Myles led the manufacturing, R&D, logistics, and distribution efforts to scale Coconut Whisk to over 300 stores nationwide. With humble beginnings, his journey from home kitchen to co-man is reflective of many food entrepreneurs within the community.