



THE GOOD ACRE
FOOD + COMMUNITY

March 22, 2022

Dear Chair Sundin, Vice-Chair Vang, and Members of the Committee,

I'd like to request your support for provisions included in the Governor's proposed supplemental budget as outlined in HF 4366. Investments in soil health, farmers markets, farm business management grants, and farm and rural mental health, among other things are critical investments to Minnesota's agricultural sector.

Support for emerging farmers and hunger relief are also included in the proposed supplemental budget, including \$1.5 Million dollars allocated (see line 23.27) to the Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund (LEAFF) which we operate out of our food hub in Falcon Heights. During the growing season, funds from this program are used to purchase produce at fair prices from emerging farmers, 100% of it is then donated to hunger relief partners serving the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota. Farmers in the LEAFF program can sell thirty different produce crops into program, many which have cultural significance to Hmong and Latinx communities.

Not only does LEAFF bring culturally-relevant produce to communities in need, but the program trains under resourced farmers in growing for wholesale by providing a wholesale outlet with minimal barriers. This is done through hands-on experience, not a webinar or a presentation, but by real-world skill-building because LEAFF is an actual market channel. This program has a proven track record of helping emerging farmers learn new skills and expand their wholesale channels beyond LEAFF. It is a program that is accessible, useful, and responsive to the unique needs of emerging farmers.

Please see the attached fact sheet which includes some highlights of LEAFF's impact in its first two years as well as testimonials from program partners and farmers. Funding HF 4366 will be a big step forward in creating a stronger and more equitable local food system. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Nikki Warner
Communications Director
nikki@thegoodacre.org
612-787-5969

