

Capital Investment



Hmong American Farmers Association

Hmong American Farmers Association Bill: HF 4281

“Request for capital improvement to appropriate \$2 million from the general fund to the Hmong American Farmers Association for the purchase of the HAFA Farm, a 155 acre farm in Vermillion Township (Dakota County).”



What is the Hmong American Farmers Association?

- ▶ The Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA) is a community-based organization that works with over 100 farmers to support and uplift Hmong farming families in Minnesota
- ▶ The typical Hmong farmers has been commercially farming for over 25 years and grow 60 different types of vegetables on 10 acres or less
- ▶ Hmong farmers are at the forefront of the local Twin Cities food economy, accounting for more than 50 percent of all the farmers in the metropolitan area's farmers markets



- ▶ Unfortunately, despite their experienced, Hmong farmers face numerous obstacles to farming, including lack of access to land tenure, capital, alternative markets (beside the farmers markets), training and research, no to mention structural racism in traditional agricultural institutions and in rural communities.
- ▶ Hmong farmers were on average making \$5,000 per acre compare to mainstream mix vegetable producers who are making \$8,000 per acre (2012)
- ▶ As a result, the average income for Hmong farming families (\$32,000) is significantly less than the median income of Minnesota farmers (\$41,899)



Theory of Change

HAFAs were created to foster equity in the food and farming industries and to dramatically change the landscape for Minnesota Hmong farmers. Thus, our theory of change is rooted in a “Whole Food Model” which asserts that all aspects of the food and farming industry (Land, Markets, Capital, Training and Research) must be simultaneously and freely accessible to immigrant farmers to truly build intergenerational and community wealth.

We believe that good intentions alone will never get our farmers to parity, and that a just and equitable food and farming system demands a shift in power. We believe our actions will lead to our intended outcome because of three main reasons: we use a community organizing tactics that are fundamentally about people coming into their own political consciousness; we work with whole families and cohorts of farmers because system change requires organized people; and we bring people together because change will never come without a collective consciousness.

LAND ACCESS PROGRAM

- ▶ HAFA manages 155 acre farm located in 20 minutes from the Twin Cities
- ▶ HAFA Farm provides Hmong farmers with long term land lease
- ▶ Provides farm infrastructure, such as a wash, rinse, packaging and cold storage facility and irrigation to every farm parcel
- ▶ Model sustainable practices such as contour planting and cover cropping
- ▶ Host farm tours with elementary, middle and high school students, Ag specialist



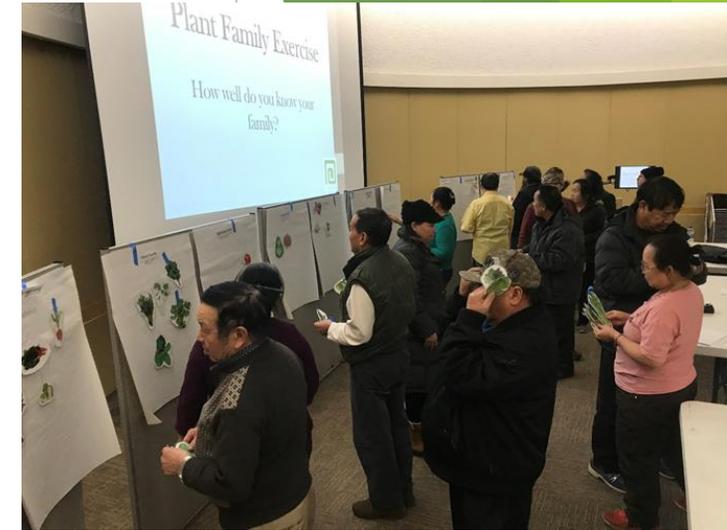
FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- ▶ Partner with Ridgewater College and Lutheran Social Services to grow farmer's farm business acumen
- ▶ Support farmer with generating farm business plan to access microloan
- ▶ Created a Individual Development Accountant (IDA) with a 1:1 match to leverage farm asset purchases



TRAINING / RESEARCH PROGRAM

- ▶ Develop a robust, multi-module, bi-lingual bi-cultural training program that is annually conduct from November to April
- ▶ Training topics includes: Soil Health, Break-even Analysis and high tunnel production
- ▶ Partner with MDA and University of Minnesota on multi-year project such as the efficacy of bees on the HAFA Farm, the effects of cover crop on water and soil quality and the effects of climate change in pest migration.



ALTERNATIVE MARKET PROGRAM

- Train farmers on food safety and good agricultural practices (GAP)
- Aggregate produce from HAFA farmer members through the HAFA Food Hub:
 - **Farm to School Program-** serving 24 school district
 - **Wholesales, Restaurant and Co-Ops**
 - **Farm to Family**
 - Veggie Rx Program- Partner with 4 healthcare clinic to increase food access to low income food insecure families
 - In-Home daycare- partner with 18 daycare providers to increase access to fresh healthy produce for children
 - **Community Food Drive**
- Food Sales has grown from \$12,000 (FY2012) to over \$400,000 (FY2020)



OUTCOME

- ▶ Creates parity between Hmong farmers and mainstream producer, making \$8,000 per acre and some surpassing making \$11,000 per acre
- ▶ Increased Hmong farmers self-efficacy through a financial viable farm business operation and how they contribute back to their community
- ▶ Equitable access builds a vibrant local food economy and creates pathway to intergenerational and community wealth

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A multi-lane road runs diagonally from the top left towards the bottom right. The surrounding area is filled with large, rectangular agricultural fields, some of which are brown and appear to be recently plowed or fallow, while others are green. A small cluster of houses with blue roofs is visible on the left side of the road. In the top right corner, there is a small white circle with a black 'N' inside, indicating North. The entire image is framed by a green border with a white diagonal line on the right side.

Thank you

Janssen Hang- Executive Director
Hmong American Farmers Association
Janssen@hmognfarmers.com