

Emily Richey

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Chair Samantha Vang
Vice Chair Kristi Pursell
Representative Paul Anderson
Members, House Agriculture Finance & Policy Committee

Dear Chair Vang and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to express my strong support for Vice Chair Pursell's bill establishing a Next Generation Farmer Development Program (HF 1747).

My name is Emily Richey and I run Agate Acres farm with my partner Kyle Cook. We are in NE Minnesota, 5 miles west of Two Harbors. We are a small "beyond organic", low till vegetable, cut flower, and broiler chicken farm. We use a CSA business model, and have a farm stand and wholesale accounts. I am a board member of the Lake Superior Sustainable Farming association. Kyle and I are active members of the MN Farmers Union and National Young Farmers Coalition. Kyle is a member of the Veteran Farmers Coalition.

The Next Generation Farmer Development Program (HF 1747) is an exciting proposal to help young and beginning farmers gain on-farm training through meaningful employment that pays a living wage. The only way to learn how to farm is to farm. This program would help beginning farmers get a leg up and begin their careers. As the average age of active farmers steadily goes up, having skilled farmers to join the profession is necessary for our economy and overall good. This program would support that.

The Next Generation Farmer Development Program is also deeply helpful to emerging farmers in the beginning stages of their operation who need labor to grow their businesses, like us.

This bill will launch a new generation of farmers in Minnesota with the support they need to succeed.

Please continue to support farmers and the future of Minnesota agriculture. I appreciate your consideration of these proposals and thank Chair Vang and Vice Chair Pursell for their leadership as well as the Committee's work on behalf of Minnesota's farmers.

Sincerely,
Emily Richey