

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

On behalf of the Rice County Farmers Union, I would like to request your support for Representative Sencer-Mura's bill HF 1744 which includes funding for The Good Acre's LEAFF program. We work with the Community Action Center of Northfield and we believe in supporting market access opportunities for Minnesota's new and emerging produce farmers. By investing in the LEAFF program, more fresh produce grown by local farmers in Minnesota will make it to local food shelves.

This investment in supporting our rural food systems helps maintain a diverse food shelf, while protecting our rural communities. By keeping these dollars in our local economies, we not only are better able to meet the unmet demand for fresh produce at our local food shelves, but help nurture the emerging farmers necessary for a strong and healthy farm community.

With the Good Acre's long and successful track record of working with local and emerging farmers, we are excited to partner with them on developing a pilot program in Rice County.

Please support HF 1744 to help make sure more food from here is for here. The program lays a framework that will help strengthen the local food system and ensure that farmers have the market access they need to run a sustainable farm business. It also will help to make sure our most vulnerable citizens have access to the very best of Minnesota's bountiful harvest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven Read  
President, Rice County Farmers Union  
[steven@shepherdswayfarms.com](mailto:steven@shepherdswayfarms.com)  
8626 160<sup>th</sup> Street East  
Nerstrand, MN 55053-2309  
612-306-4210