



The Next Stage Grant

Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund



SUPPORTING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

The Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund (MCFM-CF) is committed to the success and sustainability of the local food economy. MCFM-CF designed the Next Stage Grant to provide funding to local, sustainable farmers and food makers who are improving sustainable farming and business practices or growing toward the next stage of their local food businesses.

The Next Stage Grant program embodies MCFM-CF's commitment to building a healthy, local, sustainable and organic food economy and is rooted in our educational mission. The goal of this grant program is to foster a shared learning community. Therefore, we expect grantees to share their grant project findings at MCFM-CF's annual grant showcase, with other farmers and food producers and through other outlets as applicable to grow the health of our local, sustainable food economy.

Mill City Farmers Market has awarded over \$90,000 in 50 grants to local farms and other small businesses since the grant program began in 2013.



2018 NEXT STAGE GRANT AWARDEES

Alternative Roots Farm	Season Extension through Improved Storage
Cherry Tree House Mushrooms	Winter Mushroom Production for Farmers Markets
Dawn2Dusk Farm	Compost-Heated Greenhouse Development
Twin Organics	New Venture Farms Pack Shed Improvement
Whetstone Farm	Occultation for WeedControl and Soil Health
You Betcha Kimchi	Adding Nutritional and Probiotic Content to Labels

The Next Stage Grant program is sustained by donations from our generous market community and sponsorship from CoBank. We are honored to be stewards of this program.

Alternative Roots Farm

'Season Extension through Improved Storage'

Alternative Roots Farm, located in Madelia, Minnesota is a certified organic family farm. Owners Brooke and John Knisley grow a variety of vegetables and apples and specialize in winter greens and fall and winter storage crops. Alternative Roots Farm is focused on making a connection with the community and changing the meaning of seasonal eating.

With help from the Next Stage Grant, Alternative Roots Farm

constructed a new storage facility for vegetables and fruit. This facility has given them the ability to store and sell products of the farm later into the fall and expand their Fall, Winter and Pantry CSAs. The storage facility, completed in late fall 2018, allowed Alternative Roots Farm to sell apples November through February for the first time!



"At the end of apple season our cooler was completely full of apples and produce. In the past we have not had a proper space for long-term storage once freezing temps hit. This has created the potential for thousands of dollars in sales, past the time when we are normally able to generate such income." -Brooke Knisley



Additionally, the project came in under budget, allowing them to purchase a commercial dehydrator for even more winter product. The Next Stage Grant accounted for \$2,500 of the \$20,000 project budget for building the storage and processing facility.



Cherry Tree House Mushrooms

'Winter Mushroom Production for Farmers Markets'

Cherry Tree House Mushrooms is a certified organic, log-grown mushroom farm in Clayton, Wisconsin. Owners Jeremy and Aimee McAdams are dedicated to supplying customers with high-quality medicinal and culinary mushrooms.

With funding from the Next Stage Grant, Cherry Tree House Mushrooms created a winter fruiting chamber inside their existing pack shed, allowing them to sell fresh mushrooms at winter farmers markets and eventually create a winter CSA share.

"Our summer production already exceeds our capacity for direct sales, but there is more opportunity for direct sales during the winter. A strong food economy needs foods like shiitake, oyster, and lion's mane mushrooms, which have profound health benefits and are tasty! Most customers expect fresh mushrooms even during the winter, and we have the ability of providing them with little environmental impact." –Jeremy McAdams

Mushrooms need optimal temperature, humidity and fresh air. These are maintained by:

- Temperature – Jeremy insulated the fruiting chamber with a walk-in box, installed electric heat and even preheats the fresh air that goes inside the chamber.
- Humidity – Water misters inside the new chamber maintain 90% humidity using reverse osmosis water.
- Fresh Air – Using a fan to force preheated fresh air through a pre-conditioned plenum the mushrooms receive fresh air. Mushrooms need the carbon dioxide in air to maintain quality.

Cherry Tree House Mushrooms constructed the winter fruiting chamber throughout the fall and winter of 2018 and into 2019. Their goal is to grow 25 pounds of shiitake, oyster, lion's mane and reishi mushrooms in bags of sawdust and other substrate in the new winter chamber each winter season. Locally grown mushrooms can be sold at a premium price in the winter and will add some much desired fresh produce to winter farmers markets.



Dawn2Dusk Farms

'Compost-Heated Greenhouse Development'

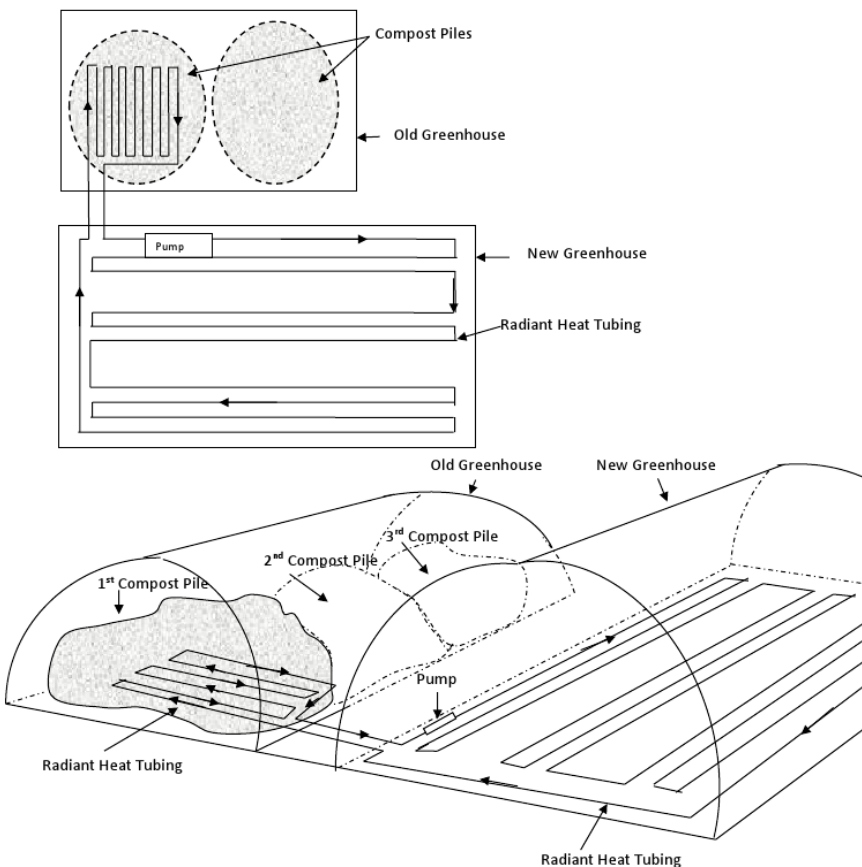
Dawn2Dusk Farms, located in Cambridge, Minnesota, is a 20-acre certified organic family vegetable farm. Farm Owners Moses and Lonah sell their vegetables and fruit at farmers markets and through wholesale accounts throughout the Twin Cities.

With funds from the Next Stage Grant, Dawn2Dusk built a new greenhouse throughout fall 2018 and spring 2019 that harnesses heat from compost for season extension, enabling the farm to grow spring seedlings and increase crop variation (new varieties of fruit, vegetables and flowers).

Farm compost, supplemented by spent grain delivered weekly from a locally brewery, is placed in a neighboring smaller greenhouse and heats the greenhouse through radiant heat tubing, rather than using traditional propane heaters.



“The new bigger and professional greenhouse enables us to grow a wider variety of seedling and starts. This will eventually increase diversity of plants at the farm and diversify our income in the long run. As we work to create a sustainable farm ecosystem, which will require all kinds of fauna and flora to coexist, a larger, heated greenhouse will enable us to start our own plants at an affordable cost.” -Moses Momanyi



Heated greenhouses are needed to start seedlings in late-winter and spring before they can be planted outside. Dawn2Dusk Farms will also use this warmer greenhouse to grow heat loving crops, such as tomatoes, in summer.





Twin Organics

'New Venture Farms Pack Shed Improvement'

Twin Organics is a certified organic vegetable farm in Northfield, Minnesota owned by brothers Andrew and Jacob Helling. Twin Organics sells a variety of produce to restaurants and at a local farmers market. They are also a member of New Venture Farms, a farmer-owned cooperative that helps beginning farmers attain land access and land ownership.

With the Next Stage Grant, Twin Organics purchased a brush washer to share with members of New Venture Cooperative. Having professional grade vegetable washing and processing equipment in their pack shed ensures safe post-harvest handling and improved shelf life of vegetables.

Twin Organics installed their brush washer in November 2018 and were able to wash thousands of pounds of fall and winter produce, including butternut squash and potatoes.



Whetstone Farm

'Occultation for Weed Control and Soil Health'

Whetstone Farm is a 40-acre family farm in Amery, Wisconsin, dedicated to sustainability for and commitment to their rural community. Owners Emily Hanson and Klaus Zimmermann grow a variety of vegetables and raise grass-fed sheep.

With the Next Stage Grant, Whetstone Farm purchased a number of heavy duty tarps to experiment with occultation in their vegetable fields. Occultation is a form of weed control in which you cover the soil so weeds are unable to grow. This greatly reduces the amount of labor necessary for weeding.

“Our first plantings of salad mix last spring, on beds that had not been tarped, needed to be hand weeded before harvest in order to make them worth harvesting at all. This is a huge expense of time and labor to hand weed salad mix. Once we got into the rhythm of using the tarps, we didn’t hand-weed salad mix again all season.” -Emily Hanson



In addition to experimenting with weed control, Emily and Klaus also performed a series of tests to find the best way to successfully hold down the tarps and are also studying the long-term effects of occultation, which among other things reduces tillage, on their soil health.



You Betcha Kimchi

'Adding Nutritional and Probiotic Content to Labels'



You Betcha Kimchi is a Minneapolis-based food producer that sources produce for its Minnesota take on the classic Korean condiment directly from local, organic farmers. Owners Joe Silberschmidt and Iman Mefleh sell their kimchi at farmers markets and through wholesale and grocery accounts.

With the Next Stage Grant, You Betcha Kimchi purchased nutrition testing and designed new labels for their jars, giving them access to more grocers, who require this labeling, and the ability to educate customers on the health benefits of fermentation.

“Since the addition of our nutrition label in May, we’ve gained 4 new co-op accounts, 6 bulk purchasing accounts including Target Cafe and Origin Foods, and 3 new restaurant accounts. We are also currently in conversation with a new distributor as we have had some interest from a local buyer at Lunds and Byerlys. Letting both our distributor and L&B know that we are the only local kimchi brand with a nutrition label has given us a great competitive advantage and has been key in accessing these new and larger markets.” –Joe Silberschmidt

As You Betcha Kimchi accesses more and larger markets, they plan to continue to fulfill their mission of supporting small-scale organic farmers, including development of a CSA-style pre-payment structure to assist farmers with their annual cash flow.





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For more information on these projects, please contact us at:
info@millcityfarmersmarket or 612.341.7580

Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund's mission is to support a healthier community through partnerships, educational programming, and support for organic farmers and local food makers.

Applications for MCFM-CF's Next Stage Grant open in January and are awarded in early April. Learn more about our grants and other charitable work at:
millcityfarmersmarket.org/impact

Healthy Foods, LOCAL FARMERS