



March 3, 2023

MFMA Supports S.F. 1727– TGA – LEAFF Grant program

Chair Putnam, and Members of the MN Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee,

Minnesota Farmers' Market Association works to build a strong local foodshed in Minnesota because our state is much more resilient when communities are equipped to produce food and sustain themselves. MFMA stands in support of H.F. 1744, granting money to The Good Acre to continue and expand the LEAFF program.

MFMA supports all farmers' markets in Minnesota, wherever they are. We are at a record-high 362 farmers' markets, with more onboarding this year. We do the research and curriculum development, offering trainings on food safety, MN food laws and licensing, cottage foods, sales tax on foods, business plans, etc. This winter, we have 32 zoominars scheduled, during the day, evenings, weekends – making the training as accessible as possible. We've offered a handful with interpretation into various languages – and need to offer more.

Many of the farmers selling to TGA through the LEAFF program are farmers who sell at farmers' markets. Ag Econ 101 confirms that multiple sales channels for local food farmers is a brilliant risk management strategy. LEAFF helps these food farmers' sustainability, while delivering Minnesota-grown food to communities in need.

There are many local foodshed initiatives in front of your committee this year that need to get funded – we'll encourage Leadership to set a high budget target for Agriculture so these critical initiatives can get funded during this year's historic budget surplus.

Sincerely,

Kathy Zeman
Executive Director
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association

MISSION

MFMA provides services, programs, and leadership that support and promote farmers' markets across Minnesota.