



Farm to Head Start in Minnesota: Planting the Seeds for a Community-centered Food System

A Case Study of Connecting Smallholders to Markets

This case study looks at a marketing initiative in two counties in Minnesota (MN), USA, which connects the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA) with the Head Start Program run by the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties (CAPRW) in Minnesota. IATP's experiences in this 'farm to head start program', demonstrate the need for targeted policies to ensure thriving localized food systems that respects the traditional food cultures of local communities and enhances the economic and social wellbeing of the communities concerned as well as to ensure that our next generation of kids are nurtured on healthy food habits. These policies would include, but are not limited to, support for *small acreage* farmers (also known as smallholder producers in international contexts) access fair markets on their terms; and incentives for local food processors accommodate the distinct and locally specific needs of *small acreage* farmers.

Head Start is a federally funded anti-poverty program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition and parental involvement services to low-income children and their families. The Farm to Head Start initiative discussed here aims to ensure reliable markets for *small acreage* farmers (who previously have relied primarily on farmers markets or direct-to-consumer sales) while both providing fresh, healthy foods in Head Start childcare meals and teaching children where that food comes from.

Farm to Head Start initiatives operating at Head Start centers in MN (and other "Farm to Childcare" initiatives) are a relatively new outgrowth of the more familiar "Farm to School" initiatives operating in kindergarten through grade 12 settings! Currently, there is only one official Farm to Head Start initiative in Minnesota, which



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wrapped up its second year of implementation in St. Paul in 2015. Building on its success, there are now plans for six additional Minnesota Head Start programs to begin implementing Farm to Head Start initiatives over the next two years from 2016 through 2017. This paper will provide contextual background on Farm to Childcare and related organizations before providing a more detailed case study of the successful HAFA and CAPRW Farm to Head Start initiative in St. Paul.

Contextual Background²

The current food supply system in the U.S. is largely built around large scale agriculture and processed foods with implications for both producers and consumers.

At the same time, U.S. consumers enjoy an abundance of low-cost food, spending a mere 10 percent of disposable income on food. But it comes with many costs: ecological, socio-economic and nutritional. In 2010, the average American consumed 2,590 calories (of which over 350 calories were from added sugars and sweeteners) per person per day, an increase of 25 percent over 1970 consumption. In 2013 the National Center for Health Statistics estimated that more than 68 percent of U.S. adults are overweight or obese (with a body mass index of 25+). While the percentage of obese children in the U.S. is dangerously high at 17 percent among children age 2-19, the diets of many children are also below nationally recommended levels for nutrition. On average, children in the U.S. consume less than half of the daily recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables, and their diets are low in fiber, vitamins and minerals and high in fat and sugar.³

Farm to School initiatives with students operating in kindergarten through grade 12 settings have been shown to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, and the preschool years represent an even more critical time in a child's life for developing lifelong eating habits. Recent research has focused heavily on the importance of early childhood intervention to instill healthy eating habits as a preventative strategy.⁴ Children's early eating patterns largely determine their later eating habits, giving Farm to Childcare initiatives the chance to make a long term impact on participating children's overall lifelong health. Farm to Childcare can be one public health strategy to improve children's nutrition and reduce their levels of diet-related disease.

The U.S. food system is also built around large-scale agriculture, and farmers account for just one percent of the population. Small family farms—those with annual sales less than \$250,000—make up 90 percent of U.S. farms. However, commercial farms, which make up the other 10 percent of the sector, account for 83 percent of the value of U.S. production.⁵ Interestingly, the last decade has seen an increase in garden-farming and small scale farming. According to 2007 data, 13 percent of U.S. farms, or 294,000 of them, were *small acreage operations*—ten acres or less—and yet, altogether these accounted for just 0.18 percent or approximately 1.7 million acres of the 922.1 million total acres of farmland in the U. S.⁶

In addition, the U.S. food system is built in support of large scale producers. There is a severe lack of infrastructure to support smaller-scale farmers accessing this market. Smaller-scale farmers often do not have the necessary training, knowledge of food safety practices or required expensive food safety equipment to work with institutional markets. Food processor companies often are unwilling to work with smaller farmers whose delivery volumes are low, and, in fact, their equipment and tight schedules may not allow for processing smaller orders. In this context, members of the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA)—with small acreage operations of five acres on average⁷—face an uphill challenge to participate in the Farm to Head Start initiative. It has been made feasible, however by the dedication and flexibility of all participating organizations.

Background on Farm to Childcare

In the last decade, Farm to School activity in the kindergarten through grade 12 settings has been growing, both nationally and at the state level in Minnesota. The most recent USDA Farm to School Census found that there are currently 4,322 districts serving 23,513,237 children participating in Farm to School initiatives across the United States.⁸ In Minnesota, the Census found that 208 districts are currently implementing Farm to School activities, up from less than 20 districts identified in a previous survey in 2006.⁹ The Farm to Head Start initiatives we will examine in this paper are a subset of the larger “Farm to Childcare” (also known as “Farm to Preschool”) movement, which focuses on the young 0-6 age group. We will be looking specifically at the Head Start childcare setting.

“Farm to Childcare” does not refer to one set program with specific requirements to follow, but rather encompasses a wide variety of activities.¹⁰ Childcare centers that wish to start a Farm to Childcare initiative can adapt the basic premise, choosing from a wide variety of activities to construct a flexible program that suits their own needs. In Minnesota, there has been one previous, formal, large-scale Farm to Childcare initiative: in 2012, childcare provider company New Horizon Academy (NHA) partnered with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) to jointly design and conduct a pilot Farm to Childcare initiative, launching in 14 of their childcare centers, though that project did not work as closely with participating farmers as this Farm to Head Start initiative. After success with this pilot, NHA and IATP expanded the initiative to all 62 NHA centers across Minnesota in 2013, and they have continued to implement Farm to Childcare since that time. The Farm to Head Start initiative we will examine as a case study in this paper is an adaptation of this model and built on their implementation experience with specific focus on children from vulnerable communities.

Farm to Childcare Goals

Farm to Childcare initiatives have two distinct target populations they intend to benefit: the small-to mid-size farmers (those with gross cash farm income (GCFI) less than \$350,000 and those with GCFI from \$350,000 to \$999,999),¹¹ whose produce is served in the childcare’s meals, and the children who get access to fresh, healthier food options. The childcare market represents a new, alternative place to sell produce for small to mid-size farmers. But it is especially beneficial for smaller farmers, who may previously have relied primarily on farmers markets or direct-to-consumer sales. Children’s taste preferences are most actively developed between the ages of three and five, and younger children are often more willing than older children to try new foods.¹² These initiatives also focus on building children’s farm and food knowledge by incorporating educational activities in the classroom and making connections with farmers and their local food system.

Farm to Head Start

Accessing institutional markets is a significant opportunity for *small acreage farmers in particular*, in that it offers them the potential to plan ahead and count on sales, bringing them stability; it also allows them to make fewer sales of significant volume rather than many smaller sales of lesser volume which calls for devoted time to staff tables in farmers’ markets. In addition, farmers who get the necessary food safety training and build the necessary relationships with produce processors or distributors to access the childcare market also find themselves in a better position to leverage their knowledge and place in the supply chain to access additional institutional or other larger-volume markets. The optimum result is an increase in farmers’ income and overall economic stability.

In addition to the local farmers, these initiatives also intend to benefit participating children. Head Start programs provide care to children from vulnerable communities. Families must be below a defined income threshold for their children to qualify for enrollment, many of them come from new immigrant families and/or communities of color, and some are homeless. The vulnerable communities served by Head Start are disproportionately affected by diet-related diseases, such as obesity and diabetes, which makes it especially important for Farm to Head Start initiatives to reach these disadvantaged children. Increasing implementation of Farm to Head Start programs to reach vulnerable children early in life, particularly between the ages of 3 and 5 when their taste preferences are at their most formative and as they are building an understanding of where food comes from, aims to build good eating habits and deepen Head Start children’s connections with their local farm and food system from the get go.

In addition to impacting these two target groups, changes to the food supply system are also vital to Farm to School/Childcare initiatives. Because the current food supply system in the U.S. is largely built around large scale agriculture and processed foods, there is a severe lack of infrastructure to support smaller-scale farmers accessing this market. Childcare catering companies and food services may not have the training, knowledge or equipment to cook with raw produce delivered from the farm, as they likely rely in part or exclusively on “heat and serve” prepared foods. Processors and caterers may balk at potentially higher prices smaller local farmers charge and may be unused to considering other factors

beyond price when deciding on purchases. Teachers, children and families may not have access to fresh produce due to economic constraints and may initially be reluctant to try foods that are unfamiliar to them. Farm to Childcare initiatives must consider all of these factors when planning and take the time to do necessary training, food supply chain building and relationship building to create investment in the target groups if initiatives are to succeed.

The Head Start Context

The Head Start arena has its own complicated infrastructure to consider in Farm to Head Start implementation design. Head Start is a publicly funded antipoverty program, and the Congress of the United States authorizes the amount of federal spending for Head Start each year. In 2014 it had federal appropriation funding of over 8.59 billion dollars to serve nearly one million children, families and pregnant women in centers; family homes; and family child care homes in urban, suburban, and rural communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and tribal territories.¹³ (The Obama Administration has been more supportive of this program; however, this amount leaves many deserving children outside the ambit of the program). Federal grants are awarded directly to public agencies, private nonprofit and for-profit organizations, tribal governments and school systems for the purpose of operating Head Start programs in local communities. The Head Start program is administered by the federal Office of Head Start (OHS) housed in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). OHS administers grant funding, oversight and training

to the agencies that provide Head Start services, as well as federal policy direction.

Head Start food programs are guided by the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which sets baseline standards for nutrition in childcare and provides payments for eligible meals and snacks served to children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides the funds for CACFP, and meals and snacks served by Head Start must meet the minimum nutrition standards set by the USDA in order to receive reimbursement. These nutrition standards have recently been updated to include more servings of fruits and vegetables (as well as limiting fat, salt and sugar and requiring servings of more whole grains), which may make Head Start programs more interested in Farm to Head Start.

The local Head Start programs that receive grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services develop individualized programs that meets the needs of their own local communities. Minnesota has 34 federal Head Start grantees, including nonprofit corporations (most are Community Action Agencies), Native American reservation governments and a school district.

At the local level, individual Head Start programs' food service operators—whether they are in-house or external catering companies—need to have the willingness and skill necessary to work with fresh products for Farm to Head Start to work. Because much of the burden of implementation will fall to them, it is vital to involve them in the planning process of any Farm to Head Start initiative and construct initiatives in a way that works with their regular food service system.

CASE STUDY

Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties Head Start Program's Farm to Head Start Initiative Partnering with the Hmong American Farmers Association

In 2013, IATP was planning the next iteration of their Farm to Childcare model, starting with a goal to build a deeper connection between the childcare centers and the local farmers supplying their food. They were in conversation with the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA), a member-based non-profit organization committed to advancing the prosperity of Hmong American farmers and their families through education, research, advocacy and economic development. HAFA defines its mission as advancing “the social and cultural prosperity of Hmong American farmers in Minnesota through economic development, capacity building, advocacy and research.”¹⁴ It seeks to provide comprehensive services to the 128 Hmong farming families that make up its membership including providing training and technical assistance on topics such as food safety regulations, sustainable growing techniques, and making contracts with customers; access to a stable piece of land for them to farm;¹⁵ cooperatively used cleaning and packing equipment; cold storage space; and coordination between multiple farmers to meet demand for larger volume sales, as in the Farm to Head Start Program. They also complete research projects and advocate for policy that will support their farmer-members. Coming from an immigrant community, many Hmong American farmers are not able to read and write in English and now rely on HAFA's support to navigate complex systems they may not fully understand.

HAFA's farmer-members' business models were largely based on direct-to-consumer sales, particularly at farmers markets. Farmers markets require significant amounts of the farmers' time to staff, and one of HAFA's goals was to develop an “alternative market” program for their farmer-members, connecting them with new customers beyond the farmers markets where they are used to selling, including institutional markets. HAFA hopes that institutional sales (to Head Start programs, schools, hospitals etc.) will provide their farmers with a more stable income they can plan on, and larger volume sales overall. Beyond the



economic benefits they seek for their farmers, HAFA wants to create deeper community connections in our food system.

HAFA's alternative markets program provides their farmers with needed support¹⁶ to prepare them to sell to institutional markets. Moreover, since individual farmers can't meet the demand for institutional sales alone, HAFA staff act as the intermediary with institutions placing the orders by coordinating multiple farmers to pool their crops and arranging for the produce to be cleaned, delivered to a processor to be chopped/sliced/etc. and then delivered to be cooked on schedule. Additionally, HAFA provides infrastructure and equipment for farmers to wash and pack their produce and store it in a cold, climate-controlled environment until it is ready to be shipped.

Prior to partnering with IATP, HAFA had already begun selling members' produce to some local schools, hospitals and grocery stores, giving them experience and infrastructure that readied them for a successful Farm to Childcare program. HAFA also has a strong commitment to community empowerment, equity

and equal access to healthy foods, which made them particularly interested in working with Head Start programs. They consider Head Start children and families a part of their community, and nourishing the children is entirely consistent with their mission.

Based on parent and childcare staff feedback from their previous Farm to Childcare experience, IATP was also interested in adapting their Farm to Childcare model to include more culturally responsive content, a stronger family engagement component and a strong focus on serving vulnerable children and families with less access to healthy local foods. Head Start's expertise in these topics made them an ideal partner to learn from, and IATP sought to find the right Head Start program to partner with in a pilot Farm to Head Start initiative. Because of the established relationship with HAFA, the Hmong population in Minnesota and Hmong peoples' deep agricultural roots, IATP was particularly interested in partnering with a Head Start program that had a large population of Hmong children and families in their community.

They found the perfect partner in The Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties (CAPRW) Head Start Program.

CAPRW Head Start serves a diverse community of 1,120 children between the ages of 3 and 5 and their families, with a large population of Hmong, Karen and East African new immigrants. They offer both half-day or full-day classes in nine centers located throughout Ramsey County. Most centers operate four days a week from September through late May, but one center operates all year. In addition to offering high quality child care and educational activities, CAPRW centers also house medical and dental clinics, hold monthly family fun night events that include family educational components, and provide parents with social services such as connections with job search or food assistance programs. CAPRW hires staff from within the communities they serve, and deeply involves staff and children's families in decisions about the direction of their organization. Because of their holistic understanding of child, family and community empowerment, their own organizational values and goals align perfectly with those of Farm to Head Start initiatives.

In fact, when first launching CAPRW's Farm to Head Start pilot, the planning process began with a conversation about the values of each partner organization and the alignment of the goals they had for this new initiative. In designing the implementation strategy,

CAPRW worked closely with HAFA, who would be the farmer partners growing and supplying food to CAPRW as well as helping develop culturally responsive content for the curriculum, and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, who would provide training and technical support and experience from implementing Farm to Childcare with New Horizon Academy. The planning group recognized that they couldn't adopt the New Horizon Academy model of Farm to Childcare as is. Together, they adapted IATP's Farm to Childcare model and curriculum to align with the values put forth in the initial planning meeting, as well meeting Head Start Performance Standards and taking advantage of their integrated approach to comprehensive care.

The initial planning for the pilot was the most time intensive period, but once the planning phase passed, the initiative operated fairly smoothly. Because of the streamlined infrastructure they already had in place, CAPRW integrated Farm to Head Start themes easily into their already-scheduled staff training and family engagement events. Farm to Head Start curriculum activities specific to a given local food were highlighted in the classroom on Mondays and Tuesdays, and then that food—grown by HAFA—was featured in children's meals on Wednesdays and Thursdays. This approach worked well, as it familiarized kids with the foods first and then gave them a chance to eat the foods as part of their normal meals. Incorporating culturally responsive recipes drawn from the cultural backgrounds of the Head Start children—including Hmong backgrounds—also helped instill a sense of pride about their communities' food culture. By the end of a two-week period, children had at least eight exposures to that period's featured food. Recipes focused on simple menu preparations to make the food visible to the children and to help keep the food prep straightforward for cooking staff. Activities designed to teach young children about local foods and farming ranged from math and science to art and sensory play.

CAPRW and HAFA worked closely with IATP and representatives from CAPRW's catering company and HAFA's processor to plan the overall logistics of implementation together. All organizations expressed that starting from a place of shared values and trust made this initiative uniquely special to them, and was the biggest factor contributing to success of the program because it gave them the motivation to work through times when implementation didn't run smoothly. The

willingness of these partners to work together was vital to coordinating activities to make sure Farm to Head Start ran smoothly.

For the Farm to Head Start initiative, the bulk of the work on the frontlines was devoted to setting up the logistics of sourcing, delivering and serving the local foods from HAFA at the Head Start centers. This work was done by members of the Farm to Head Start Planning Committee, made up of:

- CAPRW's Nutrition Coordinator (and sometimes Director as well)
- HAFA's Alternative Market Coordinator (and sometimes Director as well)
- IATP's Farm to Institution Project Director
- Staff person from CKC Catering—CAPRW's catering company, responsible for cooking meals
- Staff person from Russ Davis Wholesale Processor—a processor that HAFA had previous experience working with, responsible for chopping/slicing/processing HAFA's produce

One of the biggest tasks of the pilot phase was actually building the supply chain to connect HAFA's produce to CAPRW's catering company CKC. The project coordinators needed to work outside the standard procurement and processing system that is set up for large scale orders of processed foods. CKC does not usually receive whole product directly from farmers, but rather from a processing company that does the chopping, peeling or cutting to turn whole foods into useable ingredients that can be measured out and used to prepare meals. In addition, the processor serves as third-party verification for the safety of the food, which lessens caterers' liability. Processing companies, too, are set up to handle large amounts of food and it was difficult to find one that was willing to take orders for the relatively small amount of product needed for the program each week. The project coordinators were able to meet in person with CKC, HAFA and Russ Davis Wholesale Processor, and they agreed to process CKC's produce starting in the fall. Russ Davis is unique among local processors in that they have built internal systems to support purchasing from local producers, and developed a tracking system to provide their customers with transparent information on what farms grew their produce. They have also been a key partner in helping local farmers understand institutional food

safety protocols by employing a food safety consultant able to do on-farm site visits and provide advice.

Once that system was in place, it was still challenging to maintain coordination and communication between partners at different steps of the food supply chain. When purchasing from local producers it is not always possible to predict when foods will be ripe, and sometimes crops can fail unpredictably. Partners had to be flexible and ready to change plans if crop availability required altering the schedule they had planned at the beginning of the season. In the beginning of implementation, it wasn't clear who was responsible for making sure this information was communicated to all parties, and there were some stressful misunderstandings when deliveries changed. Eventually, partners developed a shared document that was sent to all partners whenever a change needed to be made, with CAPRW's Nutrition Coordinator acting as the main communicator between organizations.

HAFA's Alternative Market Coordinator position is entirely dedicated to coordinating farmers' to access institutional and other markets, so the Farm to Head Start initiative is within the normal scope of her duties. She participates in the planning team and manages communication and coordination with HAFA's farmer-members to ensure crops are harvested, washed, packed and delivered to Russ Davis on time.

The most difficult part of the program for HAFA is working within a food supply system that is scaled for much larger producers. It was initially difficult to find a processor willing to work with their relatively small volumes, and once that relationship was established it was still sometimes challenging. In fact, one of the most positive impacts of this Farm to Head Start initiative has been its influence on all partners along the supply chain to help them understand how to work with small-acreage farmers. Not only has HAFA built a supply chain for their own access to additional institutional markets in the future, they have also paved the way for other smaller farmers to work with the same partners. In evaluation of the program, CAPRW Head Start, CKC Catering and Russ Davis Wholesale Processor all indicated that flexibility was key to partnering with local farmers like HAFA. They each acknowledge that it was sometimes challenging to work in a way that was different from their usual way of doing business, but emphasized that it was worth it to them because they understood the larger benefits to the local community and economy,

and of course to the Head Start children, many of whom hail from the local community, who were able to eat HAFA's produce.

Making the transition from selling at farmers markets to institutional markets can be challenging for HAFA's farmers. HAFA farmers in the alternative markets program have chosen to participate and sought assistance from HAFA to gain access to new markets. They do need to go through additional food safety training to sell to institutions, and also need to shift their mindset from harvesting whatever produce happens to be ripe to planning ahead and planting crops to be ready for harvest at a specific time. The transition is challenging, but the work they do is not just for the Farm to Head Start program; once the farmers have put in the time and effort to make the shift, they have preparations in place for HAFA to connect them with other institutional markets as well. The goal is to transition these vulnerable farmers from an uncertain market to one that they will be able to count on and plan around, ultimately creating a more stable overall economic situation for them. They are on their way: in 2015, they had 12 institutional contracts and \$102,000 in annual sales from the HAFA Food Hub.

Summary

It is striking to see the alignment of values and commitment to partner relationships that has guided the on-the-ground implementation of CAPRW's Farm to Head Start initiative. Because the planning process started from a place of shared goals and values and gave equal ownership to CAPRW and HAFA, they have leveraged that shared trust to overcome implementation challenges that could have halted Farm to Head Start before it could succeed. For the actual organizations carrying out implementation, the core program is remarkably consistent, and all partners are committed to a holistic definition of success that includes other organizations' goals.

There is still work to be done in the larger food supply system to reduce barriers to entry for small farmers on their own terms, especially those from vulnerable minority groups as HAFA's farmers. There is also a need for further research into the precise economics of how money travels along the supply chain from CAPRW to CKC to Russ Davis to HAFA in order to ensure the program is benefiting HAFA farmers appropriately. However, at the local level, Farm to Head Start is operating very smoothly.

There are conflicts of interest in the bigger picture, however, where the scale does not easily allow for the intense relationship building that brought CAPRW and HAFA together. For example, among organizations like the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)—both of whom are very supportive of Farm to Head Start initiatives—there are bureaucratic constraints that prevent the agencies from working outside of their own designated areas. This can be a problem for initiatives like Farm to Head Start, which span across multiple sectors. While this so far hasn't hindered implementation of CAPRW's Farm to Head Start initiative, it could greatly boost the rate of expansion of Farm to Head Start across the state if these two key organizations were to promote these programs collaboratively and could each do more to support them in their own realms.

As more Farm to Head Start and Farm to Childcare initiatives are implemented across the state, it is important to make sure programs are constructed in a sustainable way, meaning they are fully integrated into organizations' standard operations and do not place an undue burden on any one partner. As it stands, this model of Farm to Head Start has taken all partners' perspectives into account in its design, leading to equal commitment and all partners integrating Farm to Head Start activity into their regular work plans. However, it is evident that the larger design of the food system in general does place a large burden on small farmers to do a substantial amount of work to even access this market. In the CAPRW case study, the local farmers that are members of HAFA have the support of their member organization to make sure they are ready to access the market and to coordinate their sales. Most small farmers do not have access to such a member organization.

Farm to Head Start initiatives are one strategy to help local farmers access new markets, and success for the farmers involved must always be considered in addition to children's improved nutrition when evaluating their success. For Farm to Head Start initiatives to be sustainable and succeed across the state of Minnesota, there is much more work to be done. There are additional challenges to develop successful Farm to Head Start initiatives that benefit not only the Head Start children but also the vulnerable communities they hail from, including but not limited to, replicating the supportive services HAFA provides its farmer-members, and the careful attention CAPRW

pays to connect with farming communities that their children hail from when possible. However, the experience of this case study shows that when groups are willing to work together for a successful outcomes it is possible to overcome challenges.

Endnotes

1. For more information on Farm to School, please visit the following two sites. 1. National farm to School network and 2. USDA's Farm to School Program.

2. Center for sustainable Systems, University of Michigan, US Food Systems, October 2015: http://css.snre.umich.edu/css_doc/CSS01-06.pdf Accessed on January 14, 2016.

3. Mary Kay Fox, MEd; Elizabeth Condon, MS, RD; Ronette R. Briefel, DrPH, RD; Kathleen C. Reidy, DrPH, RD; and Denise M. Deming, PhD, "Food Consumption Patterns of Young Preschoolers: Are They Starting Off on the Right Path?," JADA, J Am Diet Assoc. (2010): 110, S52-S59.

4. Gollust, S. E., Kite, H. A., Benning, S. J., Callanan, R. A., Weisman, S. R., & Nanney, M. S. (2014). Use of Research Evidence in State Policymaking for Childhood Obesity Prevention in Minnesota. *American journal of public health*, Volume 104, No 10, 1894-1900.

5. White house, 2013: Economic Report of the President, Ch.8, Challenges and Opportunities in the U.S. Agriculture, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/erp2013/full_2013_economic_report_of_the_president.pdf Accessed on January 14, 2016.

6. USDA, ERS (April 2014) Working the land with 10 acres: small Acreage farming in the United States, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1391688/eib123.pdf> Accessed on January 14, 2016.

7. These individual plots make up the larger HAFA Farm, which operates similar to a cooperative.

8. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2013, November 30). USDA Farm to School Census. Retrieved December 10, 2015 from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmto-school/census#/>.

9. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy & The Minnesota School Nutrition Association. (2012, March). Farm to School in Minnesota: Fourth Annual Survey of School Food Service Leaders, p 3-4.

10. Farm to Childcare activities include: serving locally grown foods in childcare meals and snacks; taking field trips to local farms, farmers markets and community gardens; promoting and increasing access to local foods for providers and families; offering nutrition and/or garden-based curricula and incorporating farm-themed classroom activities into daily schedules; planting a garden at the childcare center; in-class food preparation and taste testing; parent workshops; implementing preschool wellness policies which address Farm to Childcare principles; and influencing policies at the local, state or national level.

11. USDA, (2015) Family Farms are the Focus of New Agriculture Census Data, <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdamediafb?contentid=2015/03/0066.xml&printable=true> Accessed on January 15, 2016

12. Leann L. Birch, "Development of Food Preferences," *Annual Review of Nutrition*, (July 1999): Vol. 19:41-62.

13. Information retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/factsheets/2014-hs-program-factsheet.html> Accessed on January 15, 2016.

14. Hmong American Farmers Association mission statement, Retrieved December 10, 2015 from <http://www.hmongfarmers.com/>

15. Each HAFA farmer (or, more usually a family) has around 5 acres that they control themselves. These individual plots make up the larger HAFA Farm, which operates sort of like a cooperative (though they aren't designated as an official co-op). HAFA Farm is a "155-acre research and incubator farm located 20 minutes outside of Saint Paul." There are 128 Hmong farmers who are members of HAFA (according to their newsletter 11/2015). In 2015, they had 12 institutional contracts and \$102,000 in annual sales from the HAFA Food Hub.

16. HAFA support includes training on food safety protocols for institutional markets, training and help with record keeping and completing necessary paperwork, in-person tours of processing companies that would receive their product to ground their understanding of size and variety requirements, and support through the transition to a different business model that requires timing their harvests with orders rather than harvesting whatever happens to be ripe that week.