



December 16, 2020

To the House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use:

Good Afternoon Representative Clem and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to provide testimony today. For the record my name is Amy Gilroy and I oversee the Farm to School Program at the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Oregon Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Program

My role is to advise the Oregon Department of Education on the implementation of the program and to help producers, processors, ranchers and other Oregon farm and food businesses sell eligible products into the school marketplace. I provide one-on-one assistance to producers and food businesses to help them understand school food procurement requirements and provide them with the technical information they need to produce or manufacture products that meet school nutrition standards.

I also oversee the new ODA Farm to School Producer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program that was recently appropriated with the passage of House Bill 2579 for the 2019-2021 biennium.

The impact of the Farm to School Program cuts on farmers and processors was two-fold. One, the procurement funding available declined by \$5 million (1/3 of the overall budget) and many schools cancelled guaranteed orders from Oregon farmers and processors. Secondly, while ODA was pleased to be able to award six highly competitive projects, we were unable to fully address the infrastructure request of all small and mid size farmers applying for assistance.

Impact of the Farm to School Program Cuts

- Using a multiplier effect, a one-third cut (\$5 million) to the Oregon Farm to School Program budget is the equivalent of a \$10 million loss to the Oregon economy and a negative impact on approximately 130 jobs (*The Impact of Seven Cents*, Oregon Study & IMPLAN Analysis).
- According to ODE claims files from the past nine months, a few products were purchased in high volume by schools. The most common Oregon purchases made were in response to COVID 19 safety measures. Schools purchased pre-portioned, easy to assemble products such as apples, pears, pizza and other products such as flour tortillas for grab and go meals. Schools continued to purchase fresh produce such as squash, radishes, tomato, broccoli, cucumber, stone fruits, potatoes, and

others, as well as dairy products and some protein, but in very small quantities and less frequently.

The ODA Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure (F2S EI) Grant for Producers

- The purpose of the F2S EI Grant is to provide financial assistance to producers and processors for the purchase of equipment and/or installation of infrastructure necessary to overcome barriers to enter the school marketplace.
- ODA received a total of \$2.1 million in requested funds from 35 qualified applicants.
- \$500,000 of the \$15 million allocation in HB 2579 was the initial grant program funding level. These funds were reduced by 50 percent, to \$250,000 during the second special session. Six projects were selected for funding. Due to program cuts, some of the awarded projects had to be reduced in scope.
- ODA received many worthy projects aimed to provide minimally processed fruits and vegetable and protein products, but we were unable to award funding due to the program cuts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and I'd be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

Regards,



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Enclosure: ODA F2S Equipment and Infrastructure Grantees FY19-21





**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**

News Release: September 30, 2020

ODA awards \$250K in Farm to School equipment and infrastructure grants

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is proud to announce the selection of six awardees for the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program. The goal of this competitive program is to help Oregon farmers, ranchers, seafood harvesters, and food processors get more of their local products into more of Oregon's participating National School Lunch Programs (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Programs (CACFP), and approved Summer Food Service Programs (SFSP).



"We received a total of 36 applications requesting more than \$2 million from all over the state," said ODA, Director, Alexis Taylor. "Proposals included a variety of products, everything from tamales to fresh fruits and leafy greens. The awardees who were selected represent diverse nutritious products from across the state which our school children are sure to enjoy."

The \$250,000 in grants was made possible by the Oregon Legislature. Chair of the Oregon House Agriculture and Land Use, Representative Brian Clem introduced and championed House Bill (HB) 2579 in 2019, which expanded the Farm to School Grant Program to include assistance with equipment and infrastructure. This would include business improvements such as: a new well to irrigate crops and extend the growing season; a commercial mixer to scale up production; or cold storage to improve the quality and freshness of storage crops.

HB 2579 originally included \$500,000 in grant funds, but due to the state's economic downturn the grant program was reduced. Representative Clem worked with ODA, the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, and legislative leadership to retain \$250,000 for Farm to School equipment and infrastructure grants.

For more information about the ODA Farm to School Program please contact Amy Gilroy, at agilroy@oda.state.or.us 503-709-5360.



2020 Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant awardees:

Aichele Farms, Stanfield, Oregon

School Expansion Project = \$61,156

With the help of this grant, Aichele Farms will be able to make necessary upgrades to their cold storage facilities to extend the shelf life of fresh strawberries. The farm intends to sell to Morrow and Umatilla School Districts and increase the volume and frequency of sales to school lunch and summer meal programs in school districts west of the Cascades.

Ella Belle Farms, Talent, Oregon

FSMA Food Safety Compliant Well and Water Treatment System = \$19,393

Ella Bella Farm intends to sell tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, melons, corn, and squash to the Ashland School District and intends to sell to Central Point School District and other Southern Oregon school districts managed by Sodexo Food Service Management Company. This grant will help Ella Bella install a new well, pump house, and irrigation system necessary to obtain the food safety certification required by the school lunch programs.

Mama Tee Farm, Willamina, Oregon

Season Extension Tunnels for Farm-to-School Vegetable Production = \$14,436

Mama Tee Farm is a small and beginning, woman-owned diversified farm located in Willamina. Mama Tee's will use this grant to install caterpillar tunnels to extend their growing season and provide fruits and vegetables for the Willamina School District.

Mudbone Grown LLC, Corbett, Oregon

Feed'em Freedom to Farm = \$68,386

Mudbone Grown LLC is a small and beginning, woman, BIPOC, and veteran-owned diversified vegetable farm located in Corbett. With season extension infrastructure, Mudbone Grown will be able to expand the diversity of the products they produce, including the use of aquaponics to scale leafy green and vegetable production. Mudbone Grown intends to provide fresh and minimally processed produce to Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Hall as part of their National School Lunch Program and KairosPDX, a Charter School in the Portland Public School System.

Out on a Limb Farm, Parkdale, Oregon



Cody Orchards Farm Restoration Project = \$18,608

Out on a Limb Farm is a small and beginning family orchard located in Parkdale. Out on a Limb Farm intends to sell cherries, pears, and peaches to the Hood River County School District and other area districts. The producer will install cold storage infrastructure to improve the quality and freshness of crops.

Tortilleria y Tienda De Leon, Gresham, Oregon

Oregon Tamales for Oregon School Meals = \$68,021

Tortilleria y Tienda De Leon is a family-owned business in Gresham. De Leon sells wholesale products such as burritos, salsas, deli sauces, and entrees to local retail stores. The company also has two years of experience selling whole grain tamales to more than 10 school districts in the state. De Leon will purchase an electric tamale mixer to keep up with increased demand for tamales in Oregon schools participating in the National School Meal Program.

ODA NEWS BLOG

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