



FRY FAMILY FARM

Certified Organic

P.O. BOX 1014 / TALENT, OR 97540 / PHONE: 541.535.8044 / FAX: 541.535.8044 / FRYFAMILYFARM.ORG

JOINT COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

OREGON STATE CAPITOL

900 COURT STREET NE

SALEM, OREGON 97301

MARCH 19, 2023

CO-CHAIRS SENATOR FREDERICK AND REPRESENTATIVE MCLAIN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

I AM WRITING ON BEHALF OF FRY FAMILY FARM IN SUPPORT OF THE FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM IN THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S BUDGET. THIS GRANT PROGRAM PROVIDES CRITICAL FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO PURCHASE OREGON FOODS, HANDS-ON FARM AND GARDEN EDUCATION PROGRAMS, EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FOOD PRODUCERS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE FARM TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY. SUSTAINING THE CURRENT LEVEL OF \$10.2 MILLION DOLLARS WILL SUPPORT DEPENDABLE BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FOOD PRODUCERS AND MAINTAIN CONSISTENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT CONNECT STUDENTS TO AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION.

FRY FAMILY FARM HAS BEEN SELLING TO SCHOOLS FOR ALMOST 10 YEARS, SINCE 2012. DURING THAT TIME, WE HAVE GAINED A LOT OF EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL SCHOOLS. WE WERE ONE OF THE FIRST FARMS IN OREGON TO BE ACCEPTED INTO THE DoD FRESH/UNPROCESSED FRUIT & VEGETABLE PILOT PROGRAM. TODAY WE SELL TO OVER 20 SCHOOLS AND 5 SCHOOL DISTRICTS INCLUDING: MEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT, PHOENIX/TALENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, CENTRAL POINT, EAGLE POINT AND GRANTS PASS SCHOOL DISTRICT. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE WORKED WITH OTHER LOCAL FARMS TO SOLVE SOME SHIPPING LOGISTICS FOR SCHOOL PROCUREMENT.

AS A PARENT, FARMER AND ROGUE VALLEY FARM TO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER I SUPPORT THIS GRANT PROGRAM BECAUSE IT BUILDS SKILLS FOR WELLNESS AND HEALTH



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IN KIDS AND COMMUNITIES. WE LOVE THE FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM AND FEEL LIKE THIS IS SUCH AN IMPORTANT PROGRAM FOR FARMERS TO PARTICIPATE IN. WE HAVE BEEN ADVOCATING FOR THIS PROGRAM TOO MANY LOCAL FARMS, SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY FOR A LONG TIME. TEACHING YOUNGER PEOPLE HOW TO MAKE HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES IS CRUCIAL TO BOTH THEIR HEALTH AND THE HEALTH OF THE FARMING COMMUNITY. INCREASING THE AWARENESS OF LOCAL FOODS AND SEASONALITY AVAILABLE FOODS AT A YOUNG AGE WILL HELP THEM MAKE BETTER CHOICES IN BUYING FOOD AS THEY GET OLDER. THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR US AND WE ARE EXCITED TO EXPAND, BECAUSE GETTING NUTRITIOUS LOCAL FOODS TO KIDS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE DO. INCREASING OUR PRODUCTION SCHOOL MAKES US FEEL GOOD ABOUT THE FUTURE.

AS A FARMER I BELIEVE IT BUILDS A STRONG LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM AND SUPPORTS OUR LOCAL ECONOMY. OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE GROWN AND SOLD A LARGE VOLUME OF PRODUCT TO OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS. WE ARE ONE OF THE ONLY PRODUCERS IN THIS REGION TO BE GAP CERTIFIED AND REGISTERED WITH THE PILOT PROGRAM, AND HAVE OVER 29 VEGETABLES ELIGIBLE TO SELL TO SCHOOLS. IN THE LAST YEAR, WE HAVE SOLD OVER 60,000 POUNDS OF VEGETABLES; RANGING FROM TOMATOES, PEPPERS, CUCUMBERS, SQUASH, PUMPKINS AND MORE. OUR SALES TO SCHOOLS HAS STEADILY INCREASED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. IN 2014, WITH FOCUSED EFFORT, AND WE MANAGED A TOTAL OF \$13,134. IN THE LAST THREE YEARS WE HAVE BEEN SELLING AN AVERAGE OF OVER \$20,000 TO OVER 5 DISTRICTS. THIS VOLUME AMOUNTS TO APPROXIMATELY 3% OF OUR TOTAL CROP SALES.

I ASK THAT YOU SUPPORT INCLUDING THIS GRANT PROGRAM IN THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S BUDGET AT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF \$10.2 MILLION SO THIS PROGRAM CAN CONTINUE TO SUPPORT HEALTHY KIDS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

AMBER FRY

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541-301-0842

AMBER@FRYFAMILYFARM.ORG



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