
Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 107 grants, 14 awarded in August 2024; 23 awarded in May 2024; 60 awarded in March 2024; and 10 awarded in January 2024.

Amount of Funds Awarded: \$85,000,00.00 total funds, 9,778,412.23 for 14 projects in August, \$24,900,588.76 for 23 projects in May, \$40,568,140.40 for 60 projects in March, \$9,752,858.61 for 10 projects in January.

For more information, please visit the grant program's website: www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/omdg.

NOTE: The below project descriptions were provided by the grant recipients. Recipients with an asterisk were awarded in January, double asterisk in March, triple asterisk in May, and four asterisk in August.

Alabama

Recipient: Venture Milk, LLC., Slocomb, AL***

District: AL-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$950,000.00

Match Amount: \$1,042,879.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,992,879.00

Expanding Deep South Organic Dairy Processing Capacity

This project increases output and lowers the costs of a small organic dairy processing plant serving underserved producers in economically distressed areas. By supporting a full-time sales position, it expands market access both for existing organic dairy producers and for dairy producers transitioning to organic. It does this through co-packing, two processor-affiliated brands, and other marketing channels it has developed and will continue to expand. Plant upgrades include adding packaging options optimized for food service and food product manufacturers that represent over a third of the national demand for dairy products. The desired central outcome of these activities is to develop product market matches that successfully generate sustained income for organic dairy producers by meeting the needs of existing sales outlets more efficiently and completely.

Arizona

Recipient: Agoge Life, Inc., Phoenix, AR***

District: AZ-ALL

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$2,054,000.00

Match Amount: \$2,054,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$4,108,000.00

Organic Hemp Protein Isolate - Market Development & Expansion Effort

Agoge, a sustainable organic product-focused company, has spent 2 years and significant funds researching developing a foundational set of products with organic ingredients to support improved health outcomes. The ingredients in its products are isolated hempseed proteins, certified Organic by the USDA. In short, Agoge is introducing the USA's first Organic Hemp Protein Isolate (OHPI). The project aims to open the OHPI market and drive the expansion of the upstream (supply) and downstream (demand) supply chain for this organic, sustainable rotational crop through education, marketing, and consumer buyer outreach. The objectives include: 1) Opening the OHPI market by providing the food ingredient sector with the USA's very first Organic Hemp Protein Isolate products a deeply researched foundational ingredient and its first 3 formulated finished goods. 2) Targeting and educating 8,000 consumers a month using traditional and digital marketing campaigns through education events targeting dietitians, nutritionists, doctors, etc., and 3) Hosting a 20x20 exhibitor booth at 10 of the USA's biggest ingredient and food conferences. The project will include OHPI industry connector events twice a year for 2 years across 4 different cities.

Recipient: Craig Schmitt, Peoria, AZ***

District: AZ-008

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$98,283.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$98,283.00

Expand Organic Grain Processing for NE Montana

The Schmitt's Farm converted to 100% organic in 2018. The farm grows spring wheat, hullless oats, lentils, yellow peas, chickpeas, hemp grain, canola, alfalfa, and flax. It has a crop rotation of 25% cereal grains (wheat, oats, etc), 25% Legume (peas, chickpeas, alfalfa), 25% oil seeds (flax, hemp seed, canola) and 25 % fallow with cover crop. A number of innovative practices are being tested continuously to get closer to no-till or minimum tilling using cover crops, interseeding multiple crops together and relay seeding crops together. The purpose of this project is to help address a current bottleneck in the organic marketplace: which is a lack of organic grain processing infrastructure. Goals include: 1) strengthening and expanding farm capacity 2) Providing grain cleaning services to other organic growers, and 3) increasing access to organic grains. The purchase of this equipment will allow Schmitt's Farm to increase its annual gross income, increase storage capacity by 13,500 bushels, decrease annual miles traveled by 60,000 miles per year, and increase processing capacity of organic grains by 800,000 bushels per year. The main equipment beneficiaries will include Schmitt Organic Farms and other farms in the region that will now have local or more regionalized access to organic grain processing. This will have a trickle-down effect leading to greater access to organic grain throughout the entire North west region. This will also positively impact buyers as

Schmitt's Farm will be able to more reliably provide them with products. In turn, consumers, bakeries, and restaurants will also have greater access to organic grains.

California

Recipient: California Certified Organic Farmers, Inc. Santa Cruz, CA*

District: CA-19

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$1,717,941.00

Total Project Amount: \$4,717,941.00

Marketing to Expand Economic Opportunity for Small and Underserved Farmers

California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), Inc. has over fifty years of experience working with organic producers and is now the largest member-based organic agriculture organization in California, and owns the largest organic certification company in the U.S. The purpose of this grant is to improve and expand market access for small and underserved organic farmers. The three goals for this grant are: 1) to address two key obstacles restricting growth in organic sales: which are the lack of consumer clarity on what "organic" means and a perceived lack of consumer confidence in the seal; 2) to create market paths for small and underserved organic producers by linking them with buyers actively looking to source their products; and 3) to educate and provide farmers with tools to talk to consumers and buyers about organic. These goals will be achieved by launching a multi-channel marketing campaign, creating a marketing toolkit, marketing trainings for farmers, and updating and disseminating an organic sourcing directory to school and retail buyers. The expected outcomes of this project are that consumers and buyers will gain knowledge about organic products and that small and underserved producers will increase organic production to meet the increased demand through direct-market channels and buyer business transactions.

Recipient: Rock Front Ranch, LLC., Santa Maria, CA**

District: CA-024

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$89,180.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$89,180.00

Organic Marketing Expansion of Fruit Business into Northern California

The Rock Front Ranch's (RFR) project goal is to increase market access to organic products by improving the efficiency of transporting organic fruit to organic minded consumers and generating employment opportunities in a community with persistent poverty. Rock Front Ranch (RFR) has provided organic jujube fruit to 29 Whole Foods in Southern California since 2017. Recently, the ranch has endeavored to serve Whole Foods and other organic stores in the Northern California region. Those efforts have been curtailed by lack of sufficient transportation capabilities and the prohibitive expense of contracting for 3rd party delivery. The addition of two delivery trailers would allow RFR to provide both fresh and dried organic jujube fruit to the entire network of Whole Foods in Northern California, an additional 39 stores, as well as other organic stores. Two trailers will provide the capacity to deliver fresh and dried organic jujube fruit to both Northern and Southern California markets simultaneously, increasing efficiency as well as creating two

to-four new employment opportunities for residents of the Cuyama Valley, a community with persistent poverty.

Recipient: California Craft Maltings, LLC dba Admiral Maltings, Alameda, CA**

District: CA-012

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,033.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,033.00

Grain Milling Equipment to Produce Organic Milled Grains and Organic Sprouted Grain Flours

The purpose of this project is to purchase and install milling equipment to allow for new product offerings and expanded organic capacity for milled raw grains. It is a natural extension of what Admiral Maltings already does to mill and package organic flour for bakeries and grist (raw grains) for distillers. Milling organic flour for bakers and distillers' grist uses similar agricultural ingredients to what California Craft Maltings already sources. But it is a different process from malting organic grain and requires new equipment. This equipment purchase will allow Admiral Maltings to increase the contracted acreage of organically grown grain, increase land under organic certification, and create a more resilient, local agricultural economy to supply bakers and distillers. It will lead to aggregate efficiencies for growing, storing, and processing organic grains. There is increased consumer demand to know who grows their food, where it is grown, where it is processed, and who mills it.

Recipient: Zego LLC, San Francisco, CA**

District: CA-011

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$1,013,286.00

Total Project Amount: \$4,013,286.00

Collaboration for Sustainable Growth: Advancing the Organic Gluten-Free Grain Value Chain, Expanding Processing Capacity, Product Access and Awareness, and Building Consumer Trust in Organic Food

ZEGO is a woman-owned B Corp-certified brand focusing on supply-chain transparency and purity testing using Montana Gluten Free's hull-less, high-protein, organic oats. ZEGO sells products in 1500+ stores nationwide. The project will increase processing and consumption of organic, gluten-free, high-protein oats and rotational crop millet in Montana and the surrounding growing region by creating a collaborative integrated value chain (CVIC). The goals are to 1) expand organic processing capacity at Montana Gluten Free (MGF) to alleviate a regional grain processing bottleneck that forces farmers to sell premium crops for bird and animal feed at 50% of full value; 2) develop more products from organic specialty grains for people with medically restricted diets due to allergies or gluten intolerance, toxin and pesticide concerns, or diabetes or to increase dietary plant protein; 3) increase special-diet consumer pull (demand) of organic grains by expanding product trials, adding sales channels, building consumer trust in organic food; and 4) benefit the environment by decreasing transportation miles and promotion of hullless oats, which produce 50% less carbon emissions, and drought-tolerant millet, which uses 1/3rd less water than other grains. In addition to the project goals Zego predicts that the project will 1) increase organic finished goods capacity

by integrating operations at MGF with faster and more efficient equipment for bag filling and improved processing efficiency; 2) upgrade food safety certification level; 3) establish a millet value chain by purchasing and installing equipment to dehull millet. It will also help setting up procurement contracts with regional farmer and developing 3-5 new organic specialty grain products, in collaboration with Snacktivist, targeting markets such as food service accounts and big box stores, and build B2B ingredient sales. The project will allow for the implementation of marketing strategies led by a specialized marketing director to increase awareness and adoption of organic specialty grains among special-diet and non-toxic living consumers; and collaborate with technology partner Food Vision to enhance ZEGO's purity transparency system, making product information accessible and expanding the scope of information to include links to farmers.

Recipient: Tidal Foods, Inc. San Francisco, CA**

District: CA-011

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$660,970.21

Match Amount: \$750,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,410,970.21

Unlocking Sustainable Ocean Farming: Processing and Product Manufacturing Expansion for US-grown Organic Kelp

This project paves the way to making regenerative kelp farming a viable industry for rural seaside farming communities that rely on volatile wild-caught seafood. Historically, kelp farming within the US has not been considered a lucrative industry because of perceived competition from Asian markets and a lack of profitable end markets for US-grown kelp products. As a result, 95% of seaweed products sold in the US are imported from Asia. Consumers are already proving they are ready for kelp-based snacks, so now is the time to invest in scaling up the kelp industry, spurring demand for more kelp farmers to grow a regenerative and ocean-friendly crop. The major limitation for kelp farmers is a lack of processing and product manufacturing capacity to transform kelp into high-value products. By providing a profitable end market for kelp 12 Tides solves this issue. This project scales up the production of a highly sought-after product line that provides high quality, consistent revenue to rural kelp farmers. Kelp is easy to grow, produces low CO2-equivalent emissions than corn, and can be reliably harvested year after year while mitigating ocean acidification and increasing marine biodiversity. This provides economic stability for farmers in communities historically reliant on increasingly volatile seafood industries as well as a healthy snack product for consumers. This grant allows 12 Tides to scale its processing capacity, support a nationwide launch, and expand the supply chain by purchasing from 27 new organic farms, while employing 144 staff, and supporting 275 kelp farming jobs in the U.S.

Recipient: Rumiano Cheese Company, Willows, CA**

District: CA-001

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$6,000,000.00

Expanding Market Opportunities for Organic Dairy Producers in Northern California Through Value-Added Processing and Marketing

Dairy is the largest organic commodity in the United States, with 1.6 billion in annual sales, yet organic milk represents just 2 % of the nations dairy production and is declining. USDA's Organic Dairy Market News reports that year-to-date sales of organic milk products are down 1.6 % from the prior year. As organic dairy production costs have increased in recent years, the price premium of fluid organic milk over conventional milk has eroded, leaving organic dairy producers, most of them small family farms, with shrinking on-farm profits that threaten their livelihood. To address this challenging issue, Rumiano Cheese Company, seeks to expand in-house processing capacity to make and market innovative, high-demand organic dairy products in channels that offer a higher price premium over fluid. Activities to be performed will include 1) installing a state-of-the-art processing line to upcycle organic cheese trim into value-added sauces, dips and spreads; 2) acquiring additional equipment to create artisanal specialty cheese wheels in-house; and 3) expanding marketing, sales, and innovation to gain retail access and build consumer demand for the expanded volume produced through this project. This venture's goals are to process an additional 32,372,700 pounds of fluid milk and cheese trim, generating approximately \$31.5 million in sales revenue and benefiting 27 Northern California pasture-based organic dairy producers during the project period.

Recipient: Community Kitchens Collaborative dba Heal the Earth, Cardiff by the Sea, CA**

District: CA-049

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$2,473,795.00

Match Amount: \$825,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$3,298,795.00

Improving the Viability of the Domestic Organic Avocado Market

Heal the Earth at Wild Acres Farm, a San Diego County nonprofit and avocado farm, will improve and grow the long-term viability of the domestic organic avocado market by coordinating a direct to consumer value-chain and launching a comprehensive regional marketing campaign. This project will facilitate the flow of avocados into regional markets by leveraging the expertise of, and building on the work done in partnership with, the Avocado Growers of California, the City of Escondido, and other stakeholders. Collaborative efforts will include marketing and outreach to buyers and consumers, promoting opportunities to sell and buy US-grown avocados at a local food hub, a feasibility study, and resulting strategic promotional efforts tailored to the needs of domestic organic avocado growers and US consumers. Heal the Earth will expand staff capacity, build and maintain relationships with certified organic growers, establish new and expanded markets for organic avocados, and develop and execute a marketing plan that differentiates the organic, US-grown product to both buyers and end consumers. Heal the Earth will 1) build relationships between organic avocado producers and consumers, 2) create alternative market channels for organic avocados and ancillary organic farm products, 3) increase consumer awareness of the benefits of locally-grown,

California-produced avocados. There is a growing demand for avocados, and organic fruit both supports local farmers and climate-smart growing practices.

Recipient: Vista Livestock Co. dba Burroughs Family Orchards, Denair, CA**

District: CA-013

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$1,166,250.00

Match Amount: \$388,750.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,555,000.00

Sustainable Growth Through Enhanced Market Reach and Product Innovation

Burroughs Family Orchards (BFO) is a certified organic and regenerative family farm committed to fostering a sustainable food system. This project is designed to increase consumption of BFO's organic almond and olive products, drive market interest, and meet the growing demand for high-quality organic products. BFO plans to broaden its market reach by expanding into new geographic regions, specifically in the Central and Southern U.S. territories. This strategic expansion will be facilitated through hiring a marketing contractor and a broker, who will work to increase the visibility and availability of BFO's organic almond and olive products. Additionally, BFO will invest in developing new and improved organic products, partnering with experienced consultants to expand their product range and drive market interest and demand for organic products. To meet the growing demand for organic almonds, BFO plans to enhance its storage and distribution capacity by investing in temperature and weatherproofing its existing warehouse storage space to ensure optimal freshness and shelf life of their products year-round. These enhancements will enable BFO to scale its operations in tandem with the rising demand for organic almonds. The project is expected to significantly improve BFO's ability to compete in the organic sector. It will advance their mission of promoting a sustainable food system, contributing to the growth of the organic market, and delivering high-quality, innovative almond and olive products to consumers across the nation.

Recipient: Wehah Farm, INC. dba Lundberg Family Farms, Richvale, CA**

District: CA-001

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$6,000,000.00

Expanding the United States Organic Rice Market by Investing in Production, Processing, and Marketing Infrastructure

In 2022, US farmers produced more than 16 billion pounds of rice to serve domestic and international consumers (USDA Economic Research Service). Still, less than 1% of the rice produced in the United States is organic, despite strong and consistent growth in US demand for organic food. With more than 82% of US households buying organic products regularly, the Organic Center notes demand in the US for organic rice exceeds domestic supply, encouraging significant competition from imports. In fact, US imports of rice have steadily increased over the past five years, growing more than 36% from the 2017/2018 crop year to the 2021/2022 crop year. This is primarily due to the major barriers that exist to producing, processing, and marketing organic rice, namely higher costs of production, and lack of processing and marketing infrastructure. To meet current US consumer demand and expand opportunities to build the US organic rice

market (project purpose), Lundberg Family Farms, the nation's largest organic rice producer and processor, will launch a comprehensive effort to support current and transitioning organic producers in increasing organic rice production. Project activities toward removing barriers to entry for producers include grower outreach and technology adaptation expanding processing capacity to create more and better markets for organic producers and executing marketing and promotional activities that will help to build commercial markets for US organic rice products. This project's goals (deliverables and expected outcomes) include achieving 3,000 new acres of organic rice processing and a \$17 million increase in domestic regenerative organic rice sales by the end of the project period.

Recipient: Straus Family Creamery, Inc., Petaluma, CA***

District: CA-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$6,000,000.00

Expanding Economic Opportunity for Northern California Organic Dairy Farmers

Straus Family Creamery, Inc. has over twenty-five years of experience processing raw organic dairy sourced from a network of farms in the Northern Bay Area region of California into value-added products. The goals of this grant proposal are to 1) Expand local dairy processing capacity and increase revenues for organic dairy farmers in the Northern Bay Area region of California 2) Help producers find solutions to rising expenses and improve their overall climate resiliency, 3) Support continued growth opportunity for organic dairy producers, and 4) Ensure opportunity for the next generation of organic dairy producers and, thereby, the future local organic dairy supply. To achieve these goals Straus Family Creamery will install new processing equipment, increasing yogurt and ice cream-making capacity by 200%. This expanded capacity will allow Straus Family Creamery to increase fluid milk purchases by over three million gallons per year at a 12.5% organic premium price to farmers. Straus Family Creamery will pursue national distribution for these products through existing key retail partnerships, increasing the value of organic yogurt and organic ice cream supply by \$10.4 million. To further address the crisis facing regional organic dairy producers the business will offset the cost of creating Carbon Farm Plans for up to ten dairies in its network, contributing to a reduction of feed costs and a strengthening of climate resiliency for these farms. Straus Family Creamery will also work with Chico State University to provide education and technical assistance to dairy students interested in transitioning their family dairy to organic and or pursuing a job in organic dairy.

Recipient: Ecocenter Inc. San Juan Capistrano, CA***

District: CA-049

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$2,975,397.00

Match Amount: \$995,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$3,970,397.00

Processing Capacity and Distribution Expansion for Value-Added Products

Despite having a high density of small farms, Southern California significantly lacks certified organic processing facilities, an issue that negatively affects small and underserved farms that rely on time-consuming, costly hand labor to process and add value to their organic commodities. To address this

bottleneck, The Ecology Center (TEC) proposes to expand its processing and distribution capacity for value-added products (VAP) made from organic corn, legumes, and fruit, by providing a shared processing service to facilitate market access for small organic farms. Project activities include 1) renovating its processing warehouse to accommodate new equipment for high-demand VAP including jams, tortillas, dried beans, and sauces, 2) expanding partnerships to benefit at least 15 organic farms, and 3) expanding TEC's current DTC sales model that reaches 70,000 consumers to larger channels, by leveraging partners' channels and relationships with regional groceries. This project will increase processing by 80,000 lbs. of organic corn, legumes, and fruit processed into 372,000 units of organic VAP. It will reach at least 40,000 more repeat consumers, influencing up to 400,000 new consumers by the addition of 10 or more sales channels. This project will facilitate market access for 15 or more Southern Californian organic producers (at least 10 of which are small, beginner, or underserved farms). It will also increase their profitability with access to processing equipment and increase consumption of locally made organic products—inducing approximately \$2.2 million in sales by the project's third year.

Recipient: Turning Green, Sausalito, CA****

District: CA-002

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$355,808.00

Match Amount: \$355,808.00

Total Project Amount: \$711,616.00

Growing Organics through Local School Procurement

Turning Green continues integrating local, organic food into California's K-12 school meal programs. This project will leverage the massive purchasing scale of the school food sector to grow the organic supply chain by bringing together school food networks, small disadvantaged organic farmers, and local agricultural support organizations. The project will provide added training and technical support to school food service teams and organic farmers to align planning, implementation, logistics, and metrics to grow the sale of organic products to schools in California. Given that much of the current food purchased and served in schools is not organic, this segment is an attractive and burgeoning opportunity to expand the organic marketplace. Turning Green has facilitated and supported procurement and has served fresh, local, organic, nutritious food in K-12 schools. In 2020/21, during the pandemic, they worked with a local school district of 28,000 students to transition its entire meal program to 100% organic with 41 new vendors, resulting in over \$17 million that flowed into the organic supply chain. Since then, Turning Green has partnered with seven more school districts to spur demand and enlist support from many small organic farmers to grow supply. Working with producers and school districts, Turning Green identifies gaps and market barriers while creating innovative systemic solutions for crop planning, delivering, and consuming high-quality goods. An experienced team is equipped to expand their work in building the organic market with school food programs. Leveraging local agricultural support organizations and school food networks, the project will provide added training and technical support to school food service teams and small disadvantaged farmers to align planning, implementation, logistics, and metrics to meet school requirements.

Recipient: Alexandre Dairy Farms, Crescent, CA****
District: CA-002
Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion
Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00
Match Amount: \$3,007,839.00
Total Project Amount: \$6,007,839.00

Alexandre Dairy Organic Dairy and Livestock Feed Infrastructure Grant

Alexandre Dairy (the “Dairy”), is the 1st Certified “Regenerative” US organic dairy, producing 100% A2/A2, grass-based milk, and organic hay and silage, is seeking funding to replace antiquated milk collection, cooling, and storage equipment and to purchase post-harvest hay collection equipment to increase domestic supply chain capacity and facilitate expanded market development. As a vertically integrated company, the Dairy supplies organic milk to Alexandre Family Creamery (“AFC”) for processing into Alexandre Family Farm (“AFF”) branded, as well as co-packaged, products. Nationwide demand for organic, A2/A2 grass-based, certified regenerative milk has significantly increased but the outdated raw dairy milk collection equipment cannot keep up with weekly demand and projected brand growth, and the Dairy’s ailing harvest equipment curtails its ability to collect and store feeds within a short harvest season. The Dairy currently produces 55% of its organic livestock forage annually and can increase production by 10-15% simply by upgrading equipment, helping to reduce regional pressure on organic livestock forages. Investment in new equipment supporting milk collection/storage, post-harvest hay/silage processing, and transport to provide on-farm resiliency, will support the Dairy’s investment in national market penetration of its organic farm-gate products. The project would benefit Pavel’s Yogurt Company and Kefir Lab, which AFC co-packs for and the Farm sells organic raw dairy, Rumiano Cheese, which the Dairy supplies with 25% of its weekly organic milk volume, and Humboldt Creamery which also uses 22% of the Dairy’s production to make organic fluid milk, ice cream and milk powder. In addition, the West Coast’s organic, pasture based dairy producers which support 85% of California’s organic fluid production will benefit from the Dairy’s brand penetration into new and expanded regions educating consumers about the importance of California climate friendly milk, innovative on farm certifications that add margin, and models for small organic family farm expansion and innovation focused on genetics, grass-fed and flash grazing practices.

Recipient: Ferriera and Son Dairy, Arcata, CA****
District: CA-002
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$99,811.50
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$99,811.50

Purchase of Equipment for Organic Dairy Business and Local Organic Market Expansion

Ferreira & Son Dairy has been certified organic since 2007 and became certified grass fed in 2016. Historic drought and increasing feed costs in recent years have forced local dairies to make decisions about the future of their generational businesses. In response to these industry and climate -based challenges, Ferreira & Son Dairy has embarked on a five-year plan to remain self-sufficient by expanding and diversifying production, taking over their own distribution thereby cutting the costs of middle distributors. During the first year, 2021-2022, Ferriera & Son Dairy completed the first phase of this expansion, building Humboldt County’s first truly local milk processing and bottling plant. The milk is processed right from the tank, bottled into glass bottles, then distributed directly to local stores. The next phase of the project is the

acquisition of equipment to expand production. The funds from this opportunity will enable the dairy to purchase equipment that will quadruple production from 300 to 2000 gallons per week of milk with diversified fats percentages that can be used to develop, produce and distribute other products that will generate more income for the dairy and increase growth of the market for organic products overall in the local economy.

Colorado

Recipient: Colorado Grain Chain, Denver, CO*

District: CO-008

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$269,270.00

Match Amount: \$314,570.00

Total Project Amount: \$583,840.00

Growing & Connecting Colorado's Organic Grain Economy: Enhancing Organic Grain Market Opportunities for Producers, Processors, and Value-Added Product Makers

By working with several high-influence partners in the organic food space, the Colorado Grain Chain (CGC) will enhance market opportunities for producers, processors, and value-added product makers of organic grain for human consumption. Although grains make up an average of 30-50% of dietary intake, the organic grain market for human consumption is relatively limited, with little emphasis on local sourcing. Since the inception of the Colorado Grain Chain in 2019, the non-profit organization's mission has been to grow and connect a community-centered grain economy in the state of Colorado. This work involves connecting the membership base of 50+ Business and Consumer Members to educational and marketing resources, partners, and technical assistance. CGC's membership base ranges from farmers, processors (millers and maltsters), to artisanal makers (bakers, brewers, distillers, chefs), food hubs, and institutions. The Organic Market Development Grant (OMDG) will allow Colorado Grain Chain to support stakeholders in the grain supply chain through the promotion of organic grains in value-added marketplaces in alignment with the Colorado Grown Grains marketing initiative, while building off and expanding current program models to organic grains. Specifically, the project seeks to support connections through the grain supply chain that a) incentivize the cultivation of diverse organic grains through Microgrants for small businesses/farms, b) enhance distribution of organic grains through increased visibility in value-added market channels, and c) increase market awareness and demand for locally sourced, food-grade, organic grain through event coordination and the continuation of the Colorado Grown Grains co-brand strategy.

Recipient: Honey Rock LLC, Delta, CO**

District: CO-003

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,597.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,597.00

Local Communities Celebrating Colorado's Peaches Year-Round

In 2022, a farm partner company received a grant to purchase equipment to turn organic peaches into puree that could be used in food service and production of beverages and value-added foods. The goal was

to make Colorado's celebrated peaches available year-round. An additional goal was to upcycle waste peaches. Tons of peaches go to waste each year because of minor imperfections or because they are too ripe to travel through traditional distribution channels. This summer, that company began puree production for restaurants, breweries, and other food producers. This project includes two goals; 1) to market this local resource year-round in ways that honor the goodness and flavor of the fruit and 2) to celebrate this local resource within the community, in ways that can nourish ALL community members. One solution is to package the puree in squeeze popsicles that are shelf-stable, to be frozen on-demand. The joy of a squeeze popsicle is a true celebration of local flavors. The plan is to keep the fruit content near 100 percent. This means that these organic popsicles will be healthful for everyone. This equipment grant will allow Honey Rock to purchase a popsicle machine, and supporting equipment, to make delicious, safely-produced servings of fruit. This will help keep costs down and make these items affordable for distribution to community schools, hospitals, and the food bank. This product is in line with the farm's initiatives to reduce food waste by upcycling peaches to 1) adopt the most earth-friendly practices, 2) level the farm's working hours by adding off-season work to solve local production and storage problems that keep local institutions from serving more local fruit, and 3) bring greater awareness to and appreciation of local agricultural resources.

Recipient: Tuxedo Corn Company, LLC, Olathe, CO**

District: CO-003

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$623,545.00

Match Amount: \$207,849.40

Total Project Amount: \$918,699.00

Colorado Organic Dry Beans- Processing Capacity Expansion

The project proposes a planning and implementation process for the development of a permanent certified organic, dry bean processing facility located in Olathe, Colorado. The facility will provide a certified organic process for the cleaning of dry beans received directly from field harvesting and enable versatile packaging of dry beans. The planning process will consist of completing Technical and Economic Feasibility analyses and Marketing and Business Plans for such a facility. The first goal is to optimize the technical aspects of processing to ensure efficiency and increase capacity in a certified organic dry bean cleaning and packaging facility. This will provide a finished product, packaged in various weights, which accommodate market needs and consumer demand. The project will develop a Marketing and Business plan to optimize economic benefits and purchase of equipment to implement a facility. Project is expected to improve access for producers in the Western Slope to sell products into regional and national organic dry bean markets, provide incentives to expand the volume and varieties of organic dry beans grown in these regions, and increase regional organic dry bean sourcing accessibility for buyers and consumers.

Recipient: Hobbs & Meyer, LLC, Cortez, CO***
District: CO-003
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Increasing Processing Capacity and Market Share for Certified Organic Drought and Heat Tolerant Grains and Legumes for Food, Feed and Cover Crops

Hobbs Meyer, LLC DBA Pueblo Seed Food Co (Pueblo Seed) is a family farm located in Southwestern Colorado. The farm has been certified organic since 2001 by the Colorado Department of Agriculture and specializes in open pollinated vegetable seeds, varietal garlic, and heritage grains and legumes on 30 acres. This project will allow Pueblo Seed to purchase equipment to increase capacity in its facility to scale up processing and develop new products from these crops for seed feed and food markets. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the farm began producing a line of 7 value-added grain products and working towards opening a seed and bakehouse. In 2021, the farm purchased a 5300-square foot commercial building in downtown Cortez. In 2022-2023, the farm purchased a food grade seed cleaning line and other grain processing equipment for making products and providing seed cleaning services to partner growers. During 2023, the farm increased the seed of 10 species of drought and heat tolerant grains and legumes. Organic drought hardy heritage grains and cover crops, in particular, are in extremely short supply in the U.S. (Hubbard et al., 2022). Pueblo Seed’s goal is to become a central organic supplier of cowpeas, tepary beans, finger millets, pearl millets, amaranths, grain sorghums, culinary ryes, culinary barleys, select wheat, and flour maize. The business will utilize its existing seed customer list and long-term relationships with national seed companies to increase the seed market and work through food hubs, food pantries, and institutions to increase food market share.

Connecticut

Recipient: Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Hartford, CT*
District: CT-001
Project Type: Market Development and Promotion
Award Amount: \$263,743.00
Match Amount: \$265,548.00
Total Project Amount: \$529,291.00

Increasing Market Access for Connecticut Organic Producers and Handlers

Consumer awareness about Connecticut’s certified organic producers and handlers is largely unknown. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture will use these grant funds to increase market access for certified organic producers, producers transitioning to organic farming, and certified organic handlers in Connecticut by coordinating with Transition to Organic Partnership (TOPP) partners, including the University of Connecticut (UConn) Extension and the Connecticut Northeast Organic Farming Association (CT NOFA). The goal of this project is to strengthen new and emerging markets, strengthen farm to institution market channels, increase producer and handler knowledge and skills to market their organic products, and foster consumer education to increase demand for organic products. Proposed goals will be accomplished by 1) evaluating the current market for CT Grown organic products in CT to understand consumers’ perceptions and understanding and to evaluate areas for growth and improved market access; 2) examining

opportunities for CT Grown organic product sales specifically for farm-to-institution; 3) implementing new communication strategies to reach consumers in the state to increase awareness and highlight CT Grown organic products and producers (which considers the information gained through the market evaluation), and 4) developing and conducting a workshop series for transitioning and certified organic producers and handlers to implement new marketing strategies and capitalize on areas for improvement identified by the results of marketing research.

District of Columbia

Recipient: Latino Farmers Association, Washington, DC**

District: DC-098

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$2,738,467.40

Match Amount: \$912,916.85

Total Project Amount: \$3,651,384.25

Expansion of Organic markets, Aggregation and Distribution for Underserved Producers and Consumers in the Greater District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia area.

The Latino Farmers Association's (LFA) project aims to foster equitable participation in the organic marketplace for historically underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, veterans, and beginning farmers, with a concerted effort to combat food deserts in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. To do so, LFA will pursue four key objectives. First, LFA will expand the organic vendor capacity of the Van Ness Farmers Market, in the District of Columbia, by facilitating a transition to an exclusively organic market and obtaining organic certifications for vendors via partnerships with the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) Regional Lead, Pennsylvania Certified Organic, and the Organic Trade Association. Second, LFA will open three new organic farmers markets in healthy food priority areas in the District of Columbia and one in Southwest Virginia. Third, the association will develop a scalable Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) producer-to-consumer system supported by a Virtual Marketplace, which will connect market vendors with individual and institutional consumers. LFA will develop a diversified marketing strategy to build robust relationships with institutional buyers, distributors, grocery stores, and food co-ops. Finally, LFA will enhance market accessibility for producers by acquiring one box truck, one mobile market, and one delivery van. This will enable LFA to increase the scale and variety of product offerings that are now limited by transport and storage constraints. By providing an enhanced distribution process that reduces the cost of transport to market and includes eggs, meat, dairy and value-added products, LFA will diversify the producers' income streams and cash flow, while lowering the collective carbon footprint.

Recipient: LS Wholesale LLC, Washington, DC**

District: DC-All

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$2,170,610.00

Match Amount: \$2,250,500.00

Total Project Amount: \$4,421,110.00

Opening up New Markets for Organic Chickpeas via Safe Quality Food (SQF) Certified Hummus

Little Sesame will expand the domestic certified organic chickpea market by increasing aggregation, processing, and distribution of its consumer-packaged line of hummus while simultaneously growing consumer demand through enhanced sales and marketing capacity. Over the past several years, droughts, flooding, and war in top chickpea-producing countries have led to an increased market demand for domestically grown chickpeas. That, paired with a growing interest in plant-based foods that rely on chickpeas and other legumes, creates a unique opportunity for organic chickpea producers in the United States. Yet, the market remains underdeveloped. Northern Plains farmers in the U.S. have difficulty finding direct sales relationships for chickpeas, a crop abundantly grown in rotation with wheat due to its soil-building properties. By achieving SQF certification, investing in manufacturing improvements, and implementing a shopper, trade, and field marketing program, Little Sesame will leverage market demand and create a much-needed direct market for 10 domestic chickpea farmers, purchasing 800,000 pounds of chickpeas annually across 2,000 production acres. Marketing efforts targeted at distributors, retailers, grocery stores, and household consumers will highlight the value of choosing products sourced from domestically grown certified organic chickpea growers and bring increased opportunities for certified organic producers for years to come.

Recipient: Organic Trade Association, Washington, DC***

District: DC-098

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$2,220,372.00

Match Amount: \$2,220,796.00

Total Project Amount: \$4,441,168.00

Growing Organic Markets through Consumer Education and Promotion

The project will stimulate the demand for and increase the sales of organic products by promoting the science-backed benefits of USDA certified organic products and farming to consumers. Organic is an umbrella term that addresses several individual product claims; however, consumers remain confused about the wholistic requirements of the USDA organic label and how they translate to benefits for people and the planet. By providing consumers with access to more credible information about what organic production and processing means and the benefits it provides, consumption of organic will increase. This joint project by The Organic Center and the Organic Trade Association (OTA owns the TOC) will be done in collaboration with Organic Voices and an Industry Advisory Committee (including TOPP regional leads) to develop fresh creative content on the regulatory and science-based environmental, animal, and human benefits of organic. Targeted content that motivates consumers to purchase pinpointed products like organic dairy, grain, and fiber will be prioritized. The creative content will be promoted through a full-scale integrated marketing campaign leveraging TOC and Organic Voices' existing consumer networks and paid advertising. Targeted efforts will ensure that promotion reaches beyond the mainstream organic markets into regions and communities where organic production is not already thriving. The Industry Advisory Committee will include partners from underserved communities and pinpointed markets to ensure the

creative and promotional campaign meets industry needs and expectations. The project will culminate by sharing learnings and successes in the creation of effective organic consumer marketing strategies, content, and messaging with the organic industry at large to increase their return on investment for future marketing opportunities. Printed copies of the final report will be disseminated to all addresses listed in the Organic Integrity Database (approximately 27,400 addresses), which includes around 19,000 producers (livestock and crop scopes) and 8,400 buyers (handler scopes).

Florida

Recipient: New Universe Food LLC, Live Oak, FL**

District: FL-003

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$97,804.42

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$97,804.42

Refrigerated Van for Shipping Organic Products

New Universe Food, LLC is a small business committed to promoting a healthier lifestyle by selling organic products. This grant will allow New Universe Food to purchase a much-needed refrigerated delivery van, allowing fulfillment of the promise to deliver fresh, high-quality organic products to a larger customer base along with supplying underserved communities who lack access to healthy, organic food. This van will further help them source organic produce from local and out of state organic growers and vendors that they can process as well as deliver to markets. The purpose of acquiring a refrigerated van allows New Universe Food to fulfill the promise of delivering fresh, high-quality organic products, and will also enable to reach a larger customer base. The company will be able to expand market reach and promote organic products by traveling to (and serving at) farmers markets, a range of food expos, community bazaars and fairs. The van will also be used for picking up organic fruits, vegetables and grains from other farms and vendors to process at the factory and to deliver to markets.

Georgia

Recipient: Georgia Organic Peanut Association, Inc., Camilla, GA**

District: GA-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$185,399.00

Match Amount: \$185,399.00

Total Project Amount: \$370,798.00

Enhancing the Value Chain for Certified Organic Peanuts in the Southeast

The goal of this project is to create a new market and enhance the value of certified organic peanuts produced and processed in Georgia. The project will forge a new partnership between the Georgia Organic Peanut Association, a farmer-owned marketing cooperative, and Oliver Oil Company, a small family-owned processor of cold-pressed culinary oil. Together, they will acquire parallel processing equipment that will enable, for the first time in the Southeast, the production of Certified Organic peanut oil by expanding processing capacity and preventing commingling of organic and non-organic products. This new enterprise

will be supported by a joint marketing campaign to stimulate demand. As a result of the project, one processing facility and one storage facility will obtain organic certification for the first time, fostering a new local supply chain for Certified Organic commodities. Marketing through the Georgia Organic Peanut Association, farmers will increase the production, processing, and sales of Certified Organic peanuts grown in the region by 50%. The project will have a beneficial financial effect on no fewer than 15 farmers in the Southeast, including two beginning farmers and two socially disadvantaged producers, and create one new job.

Recipient: Love is Love Cooperative Farm, Mansfield, GA***

District: GA-010

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$67,367.46

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$67,367.46

Expanding Organic Transplant Distribution to Meet Local Demand

Our goal is to increase access to certified organic transplants and meet the demand of local certified and practicing organic farmers, local non-profits supporting community gardens and urban farms, and educational non-profits serving the Metro Atlanta area. Certified-organic transplants are essential to maximizing vegetable production and overall profitability for organic vegetable producers. The closest regional supplier is 250 miles away and has become inconsistent after being purchased by a national company. Many farmers in the region decreased or limited their production due to the uncertainty this caused. Increasing processing to meet the growing demand from regional organic producers means purchasing pot-filling, media-mixing, and other propagation tools that will increase Love is Love's capacity to produce and deliver certified organic transplants. In addition, it will also increase material-handling capacity while decreasing costs and production variables to ensure a consistent and sustainable product for the organic vegetable farmers in the region. This equipment allows Love is Love to expand and secure its capacity to produce organic transplant so that the local farmers, educators, and non-profits can focus on what they do best growing, educating, and supporting local, organic food.

Hawaii

Recipient: Island Harvest Inc., Kapaau, HI**

District: HI-002

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Big Island Organic Packaging Project

The Big Island Organic Packaging Project will increase the packaging efficiency and capacity of Hawaii's organic producers of macadamia nuts and other organic agricultural products in Hawaii. Additionally, the project will allow for Island Harvest to offer co-manufacturing services to other organic producers. The main goal of the project is to purchase and install an automated packaging system with the capacity to pack up to 1800 pouches of organic macadamia nuts per hour. Currently, there are limited and inefficient

options for organic producers to package their products, and the installation of packaging equipment will help to alleviate this bottleneck and allow for the growth of the market for organic agricultural products. The increased capacity of packaging will allow Hawaii's organic producers to compete with non-organic consumer packaged goods, in online and in-store outlets, throughout Hawaii and the United States. This will improve the availability of organic products to consumers and reduce the cost for Hawaii's organic producers to bring their product to market.

Recipient: Robert Lawrence Bence II, Kula, HI**

District: HI-002

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$92,547.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$92,547.00

Kula Organic Micro-Dairy (KOA)

Only two dairies remain in Hawaii, and one plans to close, meaning Hawaii could end up importing all its milk. Neither of these dairies produces or distributes organic A2 milk. This raises concerns about Hawaii's reliance on imported milk. Kula Organic A2 (KOA) Micro-Dairy is a solution for Maui residents. KOA will produce organic A2 milk, cheese, yogurt, and kefir, a fermented milk drink, cultured from kefir grains -- healthy options currently unavailable. KOA can produce up to 20 gallons of A2 milk daily developing a domestic market for organic A2 dairy. Most of Maui's milk is A1 and imported, emphasizing the need for locally produced, economical, and environmentally sustainable dairy. The Micro-Dairy is operated by Hawaii Sustainable Farms' (HSF). The equipment will help Hawaii Sustainable Farms (HSF) to meet its goal to open and operate an organic, A2 micro-dairy on Maui, hire locally, distribute locally, and create new markets for organic A2 dairy on the island. HSF practices sustainable farming methods and is implementing its second USDA conservation plan. KOA aligns with growing interest in A2 milk and its potential health benefits. KOA Micro-Dairy will be the only provider of organic A2 milk in Hawaii.

Recipient: Wai'anae Community Re-Development Corporation, Waianae, HI***

District: HI-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$1,042,574.88

Match Amount: \$355,032.38

Total Project Amount: \$1,397,607.26

Mechanization and Technology Advances in Food Processing Capabilities Across a Diversity of Organic Fruit and Vegetables.

This project requests funding support to complete the last critical investment in processing which will enhance MA'O Organic Farms (MA'Os') capabilities to handle 10x more products while maintaining and eventually increasing a 65-product inventory while providing greater food flow handling to ensure high-quality product is distributed to a greater diversity of market segments. MA'O is currently in year five of a ten-year expansion effort, starting in 2018 and ending in 2027. Through this effort, MA'O is growing internship participation in its college-career farm leadership programs, increasing organic food processing, and creating new full time farmer positions. The goal of this project is to maximize processing capabilities within MA'O's newly constructed wash-pack facility, by introducing product inventory management and

food safety technologies. This will streamline and support MA'O's ability to handle 10 times more products, while maintaining and eventually increasing product inventory and throughput of organic produce to ensure products are distributed to a greater diversity of market segments. At the same time, the project will nurture community information exchange and capacity building in technology and food safety to train and empower new young leaders for Hawai'i's organic sector. This increases the supply of organic fruits and vegetables in the Hawaiian Islands, where 85-90% of food is imported, and local organic food is in high demand.

Recipient: Symbrosia Inc., Kailau Kona, HI***

District: HI-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$1,267,848.00

Match Amount: \$650,425.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,918,273.00

Advancing Sustainable Livestock Agriculture: Expanding Market Availability for Symbrosia's Organic Seaweed Feed Additive to Reduce Livestock Methane Emissions

Symbrosia's SeaGraze, a natural seaweed feed additive, reduces enteric methane emissions by over 80%, earning it recognition as the seaweed that could save the planet. USDA Organic certified, it provides unmatched value to ranchers and the environment. Cultivated in Kona, Hawaii, the fast-growing seaweed is processed into pellets, benefiting ranchers across the United States. This funding offers a unique opportunity for Symbrosia to advance its mission of reducing livestock methane emissions and promoting sustainability by increasing organic feed production. The goal is to expand post-harvest processing capacity by over 1600% , improving the market availability of domestically produced organic products. The funding will drive investment in expanded processing capacity, capturing a larger share of the organic feed supplement market. A targeted marketing initiative will attract more organic producers, offering a feed supplement that reduces greenhouse gases, saves on carbon credits for large-scale cattle ranching, and addresses social pressure on the cattle industry. This project will enhance the accessibility and market positioning of organic feed additives, placing the United States at the forefront of organic and climate-smart livestock practices. This initiative holds the potential to a drive significant reductions in livestock greenhouse gas emissions while fostering a sustainable and innovative agricultural industry.

Idaho

Recipient: Double Eagle Dairy, Inc., Murtaugh, ID**

District: ID-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$708,000.00

Match Amount: \$708,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,416,000.00

To Create a Marketplace for Purchase and Consumption of Organic Animal Feed.

The purpose of this project is to create a marketplace to sell organic feeds. Currently, a gap exists in the Idaho supply chain between organic commodities that are being grown in the area and the organic feed being consumed. Specialized machines and equipment are used to turn various organic commodities into

precise rations and mixtures for feeds. Farmers grow organic crops intended for animal feed but are unable to sell locally because the ability and/or capacity to process the organic commodity into animal feed is unavailable. Thus, the farmer resorts to selling crops to feed processors out of the area, causing the organic feed consumer to buy out of the area as well. This creates significant added costs for both buyer and seller. This project would address the supply chain issue directly. The activities to be performed are the purchase and installation of various machinery and equipment to be used to convert organic crops efficiently and accurately into precise animal feeds. This would enable to create a marketplace for organic animal feeds. The marketplace would create deliverable organic feed products that would include formulated pellets, total mixed rations, and processed commodities that could be used individually or incorporated into the customer's mixed ration for their feeding operation. The expected outcomes would be an increased processing capacity in the area for organic crop farmers and increased consumption of local organic feeds.

Illinois

Recipient: North Sky Farm LLC, Harvard, IL**

District: IL-016

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$627,767.00

Match Amount: \$239,948.00

Total Project Amount: \$867,715.00

Between a Farmers' Market and a Hard Place: Getting Out from Under the Market Tent and Into the Supply Chain. Reinvigorating A Local Organic Dairy Economy.

The project goal is to increase farmstead creamery processing capacity and, in doing so, to create a milk market for other organic producers to sell their milk to the North Sky Farm creamery. With the increased processing volume, North Sky Farm will be able to meet the expectations of a wholesale distributor allowing them to sell organic cheese to many more people. The project will increase cheesemaking capacity so they are able to buy milk from another dairy farm in addition to processing milk from their own farm. The project team will rearrange creamery space to accommodate larger equipment, update the wastewater system to accommodate a larger volume, increase personnel to process the larger volume of cheese, and work with a consultant to sell the increased volume of cheese through a distributor. In addition, North Sky Farm is creating a milk market for another producer. Increasing processing will allow them to reach the minimum volume needed to work with wholesale cheese distributors which will bring organic cheese to a much broader customer base. This project would double processing capacity. There are three main expected outcomes: 1) milk contracts offered to two organic dairy farms, North Sky Farm's own dairy and one other organic dairy thus creating a milk market, 2) processing will expand to a level to be able to sell through a wholesale distributor so their cheese will be able to be sold in mainstream grocery stores over a wide geographic area, and 3) an increase in sales volume to a level where the organic creamery is economically sustainable and is able to continue to employ at least four, and likely more fulltime employees beyond the end of the project period. North Sky Farm will achieve these goals by making some key changes to increase production capacity to remove processing facility equipment bottlenecks that curtail manufacturing capacity.

Recipient: Adelante Center for Entrepreneurship, Waukegan, IL***
District: IL-010
Project Type: Market Development and Promotion
Award Amount: \$1,284,315.00
Match Amount: \$465,065.00
Total Project Amount: \$1,797,380.62

Cultivating New Organic Markets for Urban Farmers

Adelante Center’s Garfield Produce (GFP) sustainable hydroponics urban farm produces premium quality microgreens for regional distribution in its clean facility located in one of Chicago’s most distressed West Side communities. Its products are sustainably grown year round and sold to local hotels, hospitals, universities, and restaurants through 7 regional wholesale distributors. Garfield Produce is the largest and most profitable minority and disabled veteran owned farm in the Chicagoland area. This project will allow Adelante Centers Garfield Produce to make the key investments that will facilitate the implementation of a consumer-facing retail organic microgreen product, including brand development, marketing, and product promotion in new and existing distribution channels. The project will also allow GFP to upgrade equipment to facilitate organic packaging, handling, food safety, and environmental controls will complement this project’s marketing and partnership focus for local urban organic producers. Adelante will facilitate a one-day conference to network existing rural and urban organic producers with organic buyers to share best agricultural practices, leverage collective facilities closer to the target market, and establish and test an alternative logistics supply chain to reduce costs and increase access to the Chicago (and other) nearby market(s). This will allow both Garfield Produce products and a more extensive list of smaller local organic producers to build collective capacity to grow into larger, more profitable, urban consumer markets. The project will include a feasibility study to assess the cost and benefit of expansion into new markets for organic products in Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Indianapolis. These programs will increase local urban agriculture jobs, expand business capacity, and allow organic products to reach local consumers who would otherwise never have access to nor understand the benefit of, organic produce.

Indiana

Recipient: Wild Pansy Farm, Crothersville, IN****
District: IN-009
Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion
Award Amount: \$929,474.00
Match Amount: \$540,000.00
Total Project Amount: \$1,469,474.00

Simply Indiana: Abundance to Share

In early 2023, Wild Pansy Farm launched the Simply Indiana soup line, with support from a Specialty Crop Block Grant through the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. The company produces 60 gallons (600 servings) of soup weekly in a shared commercial kitchen, using beans and vegetables from a network of 10 Indiana and regional organic farms. Most of these farms are beginning farmer-, woman-, and or veteran-owned. Wild Pansy Farm aims to expand processing to 1200 gallons per week by retrofitting the interior of an existing building and converting it into a purpose-designed soup manufacturing facility. This will help regional farms by providing a right-sized outlet to sell their organic produce at scale. Indiana Fresh Connect coordinates the delivery of Simply Indiana soup quarts to three food shelters in Jackson County, IN. By

moving to a purpose-designed processing space, Wild Pansy Farm can deliver to more food shelters. The new equipment will enable the soup to be served at schools in 18 southern Indiana counties, where eligibility for the Free and Reduced Lunch program is over 45%. Wild Pansy Farm will build annual processing capacity for \$800,000 worth of produce and beans from the region's organic growers, and configure the space to deliver 1,000,000 soup servings per year to its community, which is experiencing persistent poverty.

Iowa

Recipient: Andrew Miller, Silver City, IA***

District: IA-004

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Organic Oat Pre-Processing Equipment

The goal of this project is to secure on-farm processing equipment to bring locally produced nutritious organic rolled oats to the consumer markets while preserving the product identity. For the past 2 years, A. Miller Farms and supply chain partners have searched locally for identity preserved organic rolled oats. This search has yielded no results implying a large market hole. With this grant A. Miller Farms can complete the initial pre-processing steps of hulling raw oats and separating them with a gravity table to distinguish the best quality for food grade specifications on-site. It can then finish processing these oat groats at Grain Place Foods in Marquette, NE, and bring the final product back to A. Miller Farms to distribute and market as organic identity preserved rolled oats. The Farm has a local distribution partner that already has demand for these identity preserved oats. Further market exploration will cover Iowa Schools and Hospital Systems. In addition, A. Miller Farms has also identified national retailers seeking identity preserved aspects that customers desire. Current processing of raw oats into a finished product at a small scale is not economically viable due to transportation costs to a dehuller facility and then to Grain Place Foods. Other consolidated commercial sources that have been identified are not able to process oats as identity preserved and do not intend to.

Recipient: Kalona Creamery, LLC, Kalona, IA***

District: IA-001

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$1,999,842.00

Match Amount: \$1,999,842.00

Total Project Amount: \$3,999,684.00

Expanding Dairy Processing for Midwest Producers

Kalona Creamery, LLC is requesting grant funds to expand organic milk production, handling, and processing capacity. This project will help expand the market for organic milk sourced from independent, small-scale dairy producers in Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Kalona Creamery sells branded organic milk products to retailers and distributors throughout the country. In addition, Kalona Creamery provides processing and milk handling services to a wide range of organic food companies in the upper Midwest.

This project will allow Kalona Creamery to increase processing services to organic dairy industry participants, including organic farmer-owned cooperatives and food companies. Grant funds will be spent on equipment to expand organic milk handling, storage, and processing capacity for organic milk, butter, yogurt, and cheese. Grant funds will also be spent on equipment to upgrade food-safety and wastewater handling programs in the company's facilities. Ultimately, consumers will benefit from having increased access to high-quality organic dairy products sourced from small-scale, independent family farms.

Recipient: Levi Lyle, Keota, IA****
District: IA-001
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Expanding the Certified Organic Aronia Berry Market

Fresh aronia berries are the flagship of Levi Lyle's business. Blueberry, cranberry, and cherry fruit industries operate under a business model that has not served the infant aronia berry industry well. Iowa farmers have had to export aronia to Michigan where processing infrastructure exists. These locations require consolidation of produce into 100,000 pounds to conduct a "small run" of concentrate juice or consolidation of 1,000,000 pounds to gain access to cleaning and freezing facilities. Further challenges in aggregation and financial risks larger startups undertake exacerbate these challenges. The success of this 1-acre organic certified aronia crop develops out of a strong identity in place-based food. The business has expanded from farmers markets into health-food stores. For this project, Levi Lyle is partnering with a 10-acre organic certified grower to expand his Aronia Berry Organic Purée. The goal for this Aronia business is to successfully market a shelf-stable product created from the whole fruit ingredient, currently unavailable. Unique purée will be bottled in 16 ounces for retail. The Aronia Berry Organic Puree Project will bottle 4,000 gallons of whole berry puree for retailers partnered with this Aronia business. Market feasibility studies demonstrate the products currently available use highly processed concentrated juice, which requires a greater cost to produce in small batches, separates the juice from the fiber, and minimizes aronia's health benefits located in the fiber and polyphenols. This project will benefit the 100+ aronia producers in the region who are without a market by growing to serve the needs of a struggling aronia industry.

Recipient: Des Moines Industrial, LLC, Des Moines, IA****
District: IA-003
Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion
Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00
Match Amount: \$3,000,000.00
Total Project Amount: \$6,000,000.00

Organic Grain Gateway of Iowa

The Organic Grain Gateway of Iowa (OGGI) project will help stabilize the organic grains and livestock feed supply chain. It will offer new market access for Iowa's organic grain farmers, reduce reliance on imports for the coastal organic livestock markets, and ultimately increase organic grain production in Iowa. This will be achieved by assembling a dedicated organic grain aggregation and marketing terminal in central Iowa

with existing direct access to Norfolk Southern, BNSF and Union Pacific railroads the only site in Iowa with this connectivity. By the end of the project, Iowa's organic corn and soybean farmers will see an increased demand for organic products, specifically on the East and West Coasts which currently rely on imports to meet regional demand for these products. By connecting these three critical railways in one location, centrally located in the largest producing state of organic corn and soybeans, organic farmers in the state of Iowa will have direct access to new markets. Together, with the support of Iowa organic farmers, USDA NOP TOPP Partners, the Iowa Department of Agriculture, and The Organic Trade Association, the project will be a crucial step in sustaining the growth of domestic organic production by providing the infrastructure and market access needed.

Maine

Recipient: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Unity, ME*

District: ME-002

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$639,449.11

Match Amount: \$640,769.39

Total Project Amount: \$1,280,218.50

Northeast Organic Dairy Market Development: Strengthening Consumer and Institutional Demand for Local Organic Dairy Products

This project aims to strengthen consumer and institutional demand for local, organic dairy products produced in the Northeast (NE) US which face challenges such as contract cancellations and rising production costs. The project seeks to address this crisis by expanding the farm-to-institution market for organic dairy, increasing the number of retail outlets promoting organic dairy, and implementing targeted consumer marketing efforts to boost demand for products made with NE dairy. The first main activity is to increase grocery retail partners by onboarding food co-ops, independent grocers, and large-chain supermarkets committed to promoting and selling organic dairy from the Northeast. The Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership (NOFFP) will develop compelling program pitch materials, increase staff support to onboard and retain Retail Partners, and establish a retail peer group to share best practices in promoting organic dairy. The second main goal is to facilitate product innovation for bulk organic dairy. For this goal, NOFFP will collaborate with regional farm-to-institution partners to increase the number of participating colleges, K-12s, and hospitals buying NE organic dairy. Strengthening relationships between buyers, distributors, and processors will enable market developments, including the introduction of bulk formats for organic yogurt, cheese, and fluid milk, in response to institutional buyer demands. The final goal is to develop a marketing campaign through the development of new marketing strategies to engage consumers and educate them about the benefits of NE organic dairy. This includes creating brand awareness and loyalty for local organic dairy brands through Point of Sale (POS) marketing, consumer food demos, social media, and targeted messaging. The project is expected to benefit more than 286 organic family farms and 30 value-added organic processors.

Recipient: Renata C Scarano, Penobscot, ME**
District: ME-002
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$97,509.26
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$97,509.26

Niche Market Creation with Improved Soil Fertility Reducing Reliance of Fertilizer Inputs

The economic viability of this farm is made stronger by the synergy of growing and marketing a legume such as edamame with two distinctive benefits: 1) the creation of a niche market for value-added fresh and frozen edamame, generating an additional diversified income benefit for the farm and 2) Utilizing the nitrogen-fixing ability of soybeans to fix and incorporate between 30 to 50 lbs. of nitrogen per acre into the soil. The project fulfills the need to purchase processing equipment and a transport van which plays a critical role in the storage and delivery of fresh and frozen edamame, ensuring the end product maintains the proper quality, safety, and shelf life throughout its final distribution channels such as long-established Farmers Markets and the numerous retail outlets the farm serves throughout the state of Maine.

Recipient: Balfour Farm LLC, Pittsfield, ME**
District: ME-002
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$99,511.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$99,511.00

Growing Northeast Organic Cheese Supply by Expanding Farmstead Milk Processing

This project's goal is to expand on-farm processing capacity to increase consumption of organic cheeses. To address the lack of availability of organic milk for purchase, Balfour Farm is expanding on-farm milk production to increase the farm's on site processing. Proposed equipment purchases will replace existing equipment with larger capacity cheesemaking equipment to accommodate the planned 175% increase in milk production. The farm will increase the capacity for milk production from 12 cows to 20 cows by the end of 2025. The farm will replace the current oil-fired system, which is approximately 25 years old, with high efficiency propane system. This increases the volume of milk processed and reduces the time required per batch. A cleaner burning, efficient system will modernize process controls and be more a sustainable energy source. The automatic curd mill will solve two problems - workflow and employee fatigue. As more milk is processed, larger batches of cheese will take longer to mill the curds. The EBR curd mill will reduce curd cutting time. This will also reduce worker fatigue. The current hand operated mill places significant stress on the shoulder and arm joints while using. Replacing the mechanical cheese press with higher capacity pneumatic model will increase volume and provide for consistent process control, having a positive effect on product appearance, flavor, and texture. The farm's increased organic milk processing will result in an annual cheese production increase of 7,745 lbs.

Recipient: Aurora Mills & Farm LLC, Linneus, ME**
District: ME-002
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Expanding Soybean Production Capacity to Strengthen Maine's Food Systems and Increase Organic Acreage by Providing a Market for Profitable Organic, Food Grade, Regionally Grown Soybeans.

Soybeans have been historically grown in the central United States, however, climate change is causing droughts in these areas and affecting yield. Maine is warming and has ample water supply, creating an increasingly ideal climate for soybeans. As a nitrogen-fixing crop, soybeans are an ideal rotation crop for other grains, providing nitrogen for the next year's crop and reducing the need for synthetic and manure fertilizers. Although Maine farmers want to produce more soybeans, they lack access to processing infrastructure to enable them to take advantage of the premium, food grade, organic soybean markets. Aurora Mills Farm (Aurora) is one of the leading organic small grains and legume growers in Maine. Aurora is also a value-added producer that processes and mills organic grains and legumes, providing flour, rolled oats, soybeans and field peas to numerous New England based institutions and food producers. Adding bean polishing, destoning and a second cleaner to create a gluten free cleaning line to the existing processing infrastructure will open up new market opportunities for Maine growers. They will be able to grow and access the organic soybean market by using Auroras processing infrastructure. Soybeans, the easiest legume to market, require a stain free, stone free bean. Increased weeds, inherent in organic production, contribute to more staining in the combining harvesting process. Aurora currently has the ability to remove the weeds in the cleaning process, but stained beans are still left. Polishing and destoning will provide Maine's small grain and legume producers to access new gluten-free markets.

Recipient: Crystal Spring Community Farm, LLC, Brunswick, ME**
District: ME-001
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Expanding Access and Capacity for Certified Organic Produce into Regional Grocery Markets with Custom Packaging

This project will increase access for local organic products to large scale Northeast grocery chains by providing industry standard, cost effective, custom packaging of produce for small organic farms.

Organic products in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions are significantly underrepresented in large scale grocery markets where the vast majority of organic food products are sold. Small organic farms in the region do not have access to automated packaging machinery that can portion and pack bulk produce into retail size, industry standard UPC labelled units for large scale retail sale. Currently, small organic farms are packaging by hand into expensive small run packages. Reducing packaging costs will allow these farms to increase production volume and sales revenue. This project will allow the purchased, installed and calibration of equipment to provide custom packaging for four farms with the following goals 1)to increase the market share of organic products in large scale grocery stores throughout the Northeast, 2) to decrease

unit cost of small organic farm product packaging for retail grocery sales making these products more competitive while increasing sales volume, 3) to increase labor efficiency by reducing or eliminating low skill packaging tasks, and providing higher skill and ultimately higher value tasks for workers on organic farms, and 4) to foster and strengthen connections between small organic farms to develop shared pathways towards expanded markets.

Maryland

Recipient: Moon Valley Farm Inc, Woodsboro, MD **

District: MD-006

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Moon Valley Farm's Organic Legume and Grain Capacity Expansion for Mid-Atlantic Producers

This project will expand the capacity of Moon Valley Farm and its 40+ regional partner farms to grow, process, store and deliver organic legumes and grains to thousands of subscribers, direct market and wholesale customers across Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Moon Valley Farm is a certified organic, year-round, diversified produce farm that grows legumes and grains on a small-scale and aggregates legume, grains, fruits, mushrooms, eggs and more from partner farms. The Farm wants to increase processing and aggregation of these crops to benefit its crop rotation plan, whole-farm planning, and to meet customers demand. However, the business lacks the equipment required to increase production, storage, and delivery of these specialty crops. Moon Valley Farm's goals with this project are to expand capacity to process, aggregate, store and deliver high quality legumes and grains to meet regional customer demand with key pieces of equipment. This project will strengthen the community of farms, impact hundreds of acres, and increase the region's food security and climate resilience.

Massachusetts

Recipient: Valley Malt LLC, Hadley, MA

District: MA-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$1,000,352.00

Total Project Amount: \$4,000,352.00

Northeast Organic Roller Mill (NORM) Project

Valley Malt, DBA Ground Up, is a women-owned flour mill in Holyoke, MA proposing OMDG funding for a Northeast Organic Roller Mill (NORM) dedicated to Northeast organic grains. The project will increase processing capacity, reduce energy consumption, reduce labor, and capture a growing market demand for roller milled organic flour and organic baked products. The goals of the project would include 1) the installation of a roller mill system at the current Valley Malt, DBA Ground Up (VM/GU) facility by 2025; 2) the sourcing, marketing, and sales of 5 million pounds of roller milled flour annually by the end of the project; 3) the development of organic value-added products that create market demand and reach

underserved populations in the region. These goals will align with larger interventions that have been ongoing in the Northeast to explore regional markets and demand for organic food grains. Multi-state collaborations between the Northeast's public and private sectors in the last 15 years have supported the development of cereal grain cultivars adapted to the Northeast that are favored by bakers and farmers alike. Regional resources from university extensions, agronomists, and peer-to-peer networks across the region will support growers in providing 2,600 acres of organic grains for this project. The project will benefit stakeholders from the entire Northeast grain value chain. This includes small and medium sized organic and transitional growers, distributors of organic foods, commercial bakeries, institutional buyers, micro-bakeries, specialty food producers from underserved populations, and approximately 300,000 consumers of organic food in the Northeast.

Michigan

Recipient: Almar Orchards LLC, Flushing, MI**

District: MI-007

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,582.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,582.00

Expanding Organic Apple Production and Processing in Michigan

Almar Orchards is a 4th and 5th generation, family-owned organic apple orchard in Michigan, where organic markets are limited. A washing and sorting line would enable Almar to access a new commodity market through baby and kid food company, Once Upon a Farm (OFarm). This partnership would result in increased domestic sourcing by companies like OFarm and serve as an aggregator for other growers in the region. With the ability to clean and sort apples for the commodity market, Almar projects its sales volumes of organic apples could increase by 3 times the current rate over the next 5 years. This increase is driven by other apple growers in the region, who would also benefit from the grant. Nearby growers would be able to aggregate their crop through this wash line, thereby gaining access to new commodity markets. The increased capacity provided by the wash line would also enable Almar to expand organic apple production onto 100 additional acres that are currently fallow or being leased by annual crop growers. This development would result in a future production increase beyond the 5 year projections. Given that Michigan is the third largest apple producer in the country, there is significant opportunity to expand organic production in the state if access to a viable market is present.

Recipient: GF Grains LLC, Three Oaks, MI**

District: MI-006

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$75,450.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$75,450.00

Expansion of Supersack Handling Capacity for Identity-Preserved Organic Grains

The goal of this project is to enhance Granor Farm's capacity to handle, package, and distribute identity-preserved organic grains to various end-users. Granor Farm is seeking to meet the substantial demand from

its partners such as maltsters, millers, distillers, bakers, brewers, and other end users for certified organic rotational crops, with a focus on barley, wheat, and cereal rye. The project will purchase equipment allowing Granor Farm to weigh and batch identity-preserved grain with utmost care and cleanliness, ensuring precise filling of supersack totes. The built-in belt conveyor will eliminate lot contamination between crops and enable filling of multiple supersacks with high accuracy. The mobile design also allows for indoor filling during winter, enhanced operational safety and flexibility, and reduced weather-related delays. The implementation of the Brandt conveyor will eliminate excessive grain damage and contamination during packaging and post-harvest handling. By replacing traditional steel augers, the belt conveyor ensures the retention of no grain byproducts or extra kernels after operation, eliminating the need for grain purges while maintaining clean and contaminant-free grain lots. The improved capacity and safety measures will enable Granor Farm to meet growing market demands for organic products in Michigan and throughout the upper Midwest.

Recipient: Weinrich Farm LLC, Traverse City, MI**

District: MI-001

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Upgrading Equipment to Produce Organic Hay and Forage in Northern Michigan.

There is no certified organic hay and forage available for purchase within 200 miles of Weinrich Farm, and very little available anywhere in Michigan. Consequently, producing organic beef, lamb, or goat is currently not an option for farms in the area. This project will upgrade and expand the hay and forage making capacity of the Weinrich Farm, LLC, creating the only large-scale organic producer of hay and forage in northern Michigan. Newer and better hay and forage equipment will enable them to rapidly cut, bale and transport, making the business more efficient with existing organic transition pasture. It will also allow them to bring hundreds more acres into organic production over three years. This equipment will kick-start a supply chain for organic, grass-fed ruminants in this region. The project will allow Weinrich Farm to transition their own ruminants to organic feed, eventually enabling them to produce organic grass-fed beef. It will remove a barrier to organic certification for other local small farms who cannot currently access organic hay and forage. This project will create new revenue streams for several existing organic vegetable farms in northern Michigan that have under-utilized pastures which could be used for organic hay, forage, and straw. The project will also support the expansion of organic wheat in the area by enabling the production of forages as a profitable complement in a crop rotation.

Recipient: Cultured Ferments Company, LLC, Traverse City, MI**
District: MI-001
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Expanding Capacity, Adding Value through Aggregation Services, and Keeping Pace with Increased Demand for Organic Value-added Products in the Midwest

Northern Michigan is home to many organic producers, yet no capability exists for organic producers to develop organic packaged products with the raw organic commodities they produce. The purpose of this project is to expand market access for new organic packaged products by establishing aggregation and co-manufacturing services serving multiple organic producers in Northern Michigan initially, with continued growth throughout the Midwest. As a USDA Organic certified organic handler and processing facility, Cultured Ferments is well-positioned to introduce these services and transform a singular product line facility into one with the ability to package almost any viscous product in an organic format. This project will enable product development of organic kombucha made available in cans, along with existing glass bottle formats. The project includes the following activities: installation of a canning line to produce organic kombucha in canned format, partnering with area organic producers to provide co-manufacturing services, expanding delivery networks and maximizing efficiency, and serving area organic producers including small and underserved organic producers with access to new markets. The project is expected to expand networks for organic producers, particularly those in historically underserved areas, to develop and deliver organic packaged products, and provide them access new markets.

Recipient: Giovanni's Appetizing Food Products Inc., Richmond, MI**
District: MI-009
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Enhancing Organic Tomato Paste Production: Votator® Heat Exchanger Equipment Grant

The primary goal of the project is to enhance current manufacturing capacity for USDA Organic Tomato Paste in tubes, thereby meeting the increasing demand for organic products. As the sole domestic producers of this unique product, under the Giovanni's brand label, Giovanni's is committed to providing consumers with a high-quality, organic, and locally sourced option using only domestically grown ingredients. The equipment upgrade aims to streamline the production process and increase efficiency to meet the rising demand for organic tomato paste in tubes. By investing in the tube filling equipment, Giovanni's aims to achieve three objectives, which align with the purpose of the program: 1) Promoting sustainable agriculture through exclusive use of domestically grown organic tomatoes emphasizing the company's commitment to promoting sustainable agricultural practices within the United States. By supporting this project, the program can encourage and endorse responsible farming methods that minimize environmental impact and conserve natural resources. 2) Strengthening domestic manufacturing by enhancing domestic manufacturing capabilities and reducing reliance on imports. As the only US manufacturer of USDA Organic Tomato Paste, this project directly aligns with this goal, of contributing to the growth and resilience of the domestic manufacturing sector. 3) Meeting consumer demand for organic

products: With an increasing number of consumers seeking organic and locally sourced food options, this project addresses this demand by providing a unique and certified organic tomato paste in user-friendly tubes. This helps to foster healthier eating choices and supports the program's aim of promoting organic products in the market.

Recipient: Great Lakes Garlic Farm, Buckley, MI***

District: MI-001

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$94,425.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$94,425.00

Make the Whole Dinner Organic: Making Organic Side Dishes, Organic Animal Protein, and Organic Livestock Feed More Accessible to Northern Michigan Communities

Great Lakes Garlic Farm is a USDA Certified Organic garlic, grains, and vegetable farm in Grand Traverse County, in Northern Michigan. The operation includes a state-inspected commercial processing facility where it currently dehydrates, grinds, and hand-fills spice jars to create value-added products. The community has a lack of available dehydrated and shelf stable local organic products. By expanding processing capacity of organic ingredients, producing, and storing organic livestock feed, and establishing end-user markets for rotational crops, this project will ease existing bottlenecks and increase supply of several organic ingredients and products. Additional processing equipment will facilitate new product development of value-added products including additional dehydrated vegetable powders, cubed and minced shelf-stable products, and alternative flours. It will also introduce production and storage of organic livestock feed, enabling area farms to produce more organic animal protein to be made available for consumers in the community. This project will enable access to new markets through increased processing and these new product offerings, which can include developing value-added products for other organic farms in the community. Furthermore, establishing an end-user market for organic rotational crops strengthens Great Lakes Garlic Farm's organizational capacity and ability to process organic ingredients from other organic farms in the community and further diversifies the local food system.

Recipient: Maple Drive Farms, LLC, Addison, MI***

District: MI-005

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Organic Grain Cleaning Processing Equipment

The goal of the project is to purchase equipment to increase the capacity of Maple Drive Farms' gluten-free, certified organic cleaning facility. The most pressing need is to increase the capacity to clean, dehull, and separate organic buckwheat, e.g., to separate the hull from the edible groat (much like separating the meat of a nut from its shell). The funds will be used to acquire grain cleaning and processing equipment, specifically a second dehuller, a separator, new cleaning screens, a bucket elevator, ten bottom bins, a welded steel aerated grain bin, and upgraded downspouts and grain valves. The increased processing capacity and improved down spouting and valves should allow Maple Drive Farms to increase organic

dehulling capacity from around 50,000 pounds per year to at least 100,000 pounds per year, creating a higher product yield without compromising quality. The new storage and conveyance equipment will also substantially increase capacity to clean other organic gluten free grains, such as organic oats, soybeans, corn, and popcorn.

Recipient: Quality Roasting, LLC, Reese, MI****

District: MI-009

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$1,185,101.79

Match Amount: \$1,185,101.79

Total Project Amount: \$2,370,203.58

Refining the Organic Soybean Market of Tomorrow

The project goal is to create a robust organic soybean market tailored to organic growers, crushers, and manufacturers in the Great Lakes Region. This initiative aims to improve market accessibility and encourage higher consumer consumption of domestic food grade organic vegetable oil. To achieve this goal, Quality Roasting (QR) plans to develop an organic soybean oil refining line with the capacity to process over 18 million pounds of organic oil per year. The refining process of soybean oil involves degumming, bleaching, and deodorization to remove impurities and enhance the oil's quality, taste, and stability. This refining line will be an expansion of the existing soybean crush process, establishing a more extensive organic soybean market for over 1,400 growers in the region. Moreover, this project will expand the market opportunities for crude organic soybean oil by establishing a local market for the five existing soybean crush plants within the Great Lakes Region. Furthermore, the supply of refined organic vegetable oil will increase, benefiting 22 manufacturers who package the oil for consumers. QR initiated its organic program in July 2020, and there has been a remarkable increase in the production of organic soybean meal and oil. From a first-ear output of a few hundred tons, the company has scaled up to produce over 17,000 tons of organic soybean meal and oil in 2022.

Minnesota

Recipient: World Food Processing, LLC, Minneapolis, MN***

District: MN-005

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$539,281.00

Match Amount: \$599,419.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,138,700.00

Addition of Organic Pea Fiber Milling Processing Capacity

The project will add additional processing capacity for creating milled organic field pea fiber. Field peas are legumes used in organic rotational cropping systems. The organic market for field peas is being developed and expanded through uses of their components including milled flours, low and high protein content proteins, starches, and fibers. Organic pea fibers are primarily used in value-added markets in a milled, flour format. When peas are processed, the outer fibrous layer is removed and separated from the inside of the pea. This outer fibrous layer is called the pea hull and is very light, taking up a lot of space for storage and is only marketable to livestock at little to no value. The proposed project will add a fiber milling line to an

existing organically certified pea handling facility that produces pea hulls but does not have the ability to mill the hulls into a marketable product. The proposed pea milling project will be added to an existing building footprint and be ready to process 2023 crop organic peas into organic pea fiber.

Missouri

Recipient: McKaskle Family Farm LLC, Braggadocia, MO**

District: MO-008

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

McKaskle Family Farm Organic Processing Expansion

McKaskle Family Farm LLC is an organic processing and organic farming entity located in Pemiscot County, MO. The project will expand, modernize, and upgrade the processing, packaging, and handling by the McKaskle Family Farm LLC facility for organic rice and popcorn. This equipment will double the capacity of organic popcorn meal and organic rice flour processing and increase overall income and profitability of McKaskle Family Farm.

Montana

Recipient: Cream of the West, Inc. Harlowton, MT*

District: MT-002

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$602,996.50

Match Amount: \$602,967.50

Project Amount: \$1,205,934.00

Expansion of Organic Markets and Complete Organic Conversion for Cream of the West, Inc.

The project purpose is to fully convert Cream of the West to 100% organic and to continue the organic expansion of sister company, Gruff, over the next three years. Activities to be performed include working with the local organic farming community to establish new connections and outlets for local organic crops, expanding access for underserved communities to organic foods, building a new sales team, attending trade shows, hiring additional plant personnel, and increasing social media and web presence. Cream of the West will educate by working with school children through local nonprofit organizations and local farmers to bolster organic processing and develop current nutritional whole food classes for an exponentially increasing audience using education and social media. The expected outcomes are an increase in current organic sales, creation of new full-time positions, and establishment of new buyers in the form of brokers, distributors, wholesalers, food service operations and retailers. The intended beneficiaries are local Montana farmers, processors, industry partners, local school children, plant staff, the community of Harlowton, Montana, and organic consumers.

Recipient: Amaltheia Dairy LLC, Belgrade, MT**
District: MT-001
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$79,196.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$79,196.00

Providing Regional Access to Organic Goat Milk by Expanding Operations

Amaltheia Organic Dairy, LLC is seeking funding to provide wholesome, organic pasteurized goat milk to the public in this health-conscious community. Amaltheia is a sustainably focused, organic family farm that has been handcrafting organic goat cheeses for over 20 years. In 2005, the company was certified organic which aligned with the owners' values and the needs of the public they served. While they currently only sell cheeses, they would like to expand their offerings by selling pasteurized goat milk to consumers and grocery stores. The goals of the project include 1) expanding local access to organic goat milk, 2) expanding regional access to organic goat milk, and 3) increasing resiliency of Amaltheia Organic Dairy. The funding will be used to purchase equipment for a glycol chiller, a bottler, a plate chiller, and bottles. This will allow Amaltheia to sell 2,500 gallons during the first year and increase that amount over coming years to meet demand. Offering organic milk will help address both a local and regional need in the organic market.

Recipient: Big Sandy Organics, LLC, Big Sandy, MT**
District: MT-002
Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion
Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00
Match Amount: \$1,000,000.00
Total Project Amount: \$4,000,000.00

Upgrade and Expansion of Food Processing Line, for Organic Grains and Pulse Crops.

The primary goal of this project is to propel Big Sandy Organics, LLC (BSO) towards sustainable growth and innovation within the organic market. Through strategic initiatives, BSO aims to enhance processing capacity and redefine market dynamics, fostering a resilient and thriving organic ecosystem. To achieve this, the project will focus on two pivotal objectives. First, BSO will undertake a comprehensive Processing Capacity Expansion effort. This involves the reconfiguration of its processing facility, including the removal of interior barriers and the acquisition of advanced equipment. The result will be a substantial increase in processing capacity from 150lbs to 1000lbs per hour, facilitated by streamlined automation. This capacity expansion will enhance product quality, reduce labor-intensive processes, and drive down production costs. Simultaneously, BSO will expand the organic market by promoting collaborative product development and empowering new entrants. Through close collaboration with producers and handlers, BSO will diversify its product range and invigorate innovation. The introduction of accessible continuous processing systems will break down market entry barriers, stimulating demand and encouraging new organic producers to join the fold. In essence, this project seeks to position BSO as a trailblazing force in the organic sector, marked by enhanced processing capabilities and a vibrant market landscape. By addressing current limitations and fostering collaboration, the project envisions a future where BSO stands as a beacon of organic excellence, enriching consumer choices and cultivating a sustainable organic market ecosystem.

Recipient: Cold Springs Organics, LLC, Bozeman, MT**
District: MT-001
Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion
Award Amount: \$648,254.00
Match Amount: \$326,756.00
Total Project Amount: \$975,010.00

Feeding the Organic Transition: Pelletizing Organic Alfalfa and Leguminous Grains to Improve Market Access, Lower Costs, and Enhance Transportability.

Cold Springs Organics, LLC is requesting funds to install a pelleting line at their facility near Bozeman, MT. Certified organic livestock feed has been identified as a critical barrier to growing the organic livestock market. Organic livestock farmers looking to transition to organic have been faced with record high feed prices over the past three years while organic crop producers have experienced whiplash prices for their certified organic crops. Cold Springs Organics is looking to bridge this disconnect through the expansion of its grain handling operation by purchasing, installing and operating an alfalfa and complete feed pelleting facility. This project will work to both increase the overall supply of organic feed available across Montana and the Northwest Region. It will also allow Cold Springs Organics to expand market access for both crop growers and livestock raisers. By pelletizing perennial legumes like alfalfa, and offering consistent prices to farmers year over year, they will expand the overall organic feed processing capacity in the region, offering more options to livestock producers and crop growers. Cold Springs Organics will increase market access by shipping the pelletized feed via rail. They will expand the opportunities for crop growers to sell a wide variety of leguminous and cereal feed crops that maximize the soil health of the farm all while producing livestock feed at a price point that is commercially viable for broiler, layer, hog, and dairy producers.

Recipient: Casey Bailey, Fort Benton, MT***
District: MT-002
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Cropvention: Revolutionizing On-Farm Legume Diversity Through Advanced Handling Systems to Grow the Organic Market

Casey Bailey is a certified organic farm of about 6000 acres. The farm grows a mix of grasses and legumes and uses perennial alfalfa to offset weed cycles while adding nitrogen back to the soil. Casey Bailey grows wheat, barley, peas, lentils, chickpeas, the perennial grass Kernza, and grass finished organic cattle. The farm tends to be a 50/50 split between grasses and nitrogen fixing legumes. Currently, farm growth is limited due to a lack of storage facilities. This project will allow the farm to purchase on farm storage facilities which will enable a greater diversity of crops with improved ability to handle them efficiently. This will result in 100 fewer miles traveled for processing, an increase in annual income, 540,000 pounds more organic legumes processed on site, and a 9,000 bushel increase in storage. Overall, this project will help increase consumer access to organic legumes by increasing processing infrastructure for organic legumes. Project goals include 1) strengthening and expanding farm capacity 2) increasing consumer access to organic legumes.

Recipient: Douglas Crabtree dba Vilicus Farms, Havre, MT***
District: MT-002
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Direct from Farm to Plate, Glass and Critter: Identity Preserved Sales of Organic Rye and Rotational Crops

Vilicus Farms will purchase equipment to support the farm in maintaining, expanding, and creating new markets in Montana (and beyond) for organic rye, grains, legumes, organic animal feed, and organic seed. This investment significantly upgrades the farm's seed cleaning capacity, in both quantity and quality, and increases operational efficiency by locating all cleaning equipment at one site with dedicated storage and handling. These changes enable the farm to maintain and expand direct sales of identity preserved, single origin organic rye and grains to craft distillers and farms who wish to offer grains and legumes as part of their vegetable Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's). Screenings will be sold as animal feed, creating a new product for the farm and new farm-to-farm relationships. The farm will clean seed for on-farm use and potential sales to other farmers, to begin building a market for organic seed, which does not currently exist. Because of the limited organic processing infrastructure in Montana the farm will be able to support crop cleaning needs for other organic producers. This will help the farm and others take advantage of larger out of state market opportunities for organic grains. This project will impact at least 15 small farms and craft businesses.

North Carolina

Recipient: Reedy Fork Farm, LLC, Elon, NC**
District: NC-All
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Organic Feed Mill Expansion

Organic feed provides countless benefits to livestock and consumers alike, with outcomes including higher nutrient content, improved animal health, and environmental benefits. Unfortunately, there are few organic feed mills that meet the needs of small producers in the Southeast United States, prioritizing the use of local when possible and only domestic ingredients. This increases the demand placed on small organic feed mills. Reedy Fork Farm is already providing high quality feed to consumers in over forty states. This project's objectives are to expand existing markets by increasing efficiency in production, by increasing storage capacity, while improving and maintaining the quality of the organic products. Reedy Fork Farm is a small organic feed mill that faces significant efficiency and storage capacity needs. This proposal will allow them to purchase equipment that will improve the quality of the product, leading to customer satisfaction and quality livestock outcomes. By implementing these objectives, Reedy Fork Farm will provide a much needed increase in access to consumers and production to support the development and expansion of new and existing markets, as evidenced by an increase of between 600,000-900,000 pounds, or a 25% increase in sales.

Recipient: Tony Horton, Zebulon, NC**
District: NC-All
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$94,750.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$94,750.00

Grain Drying System for Organic Food-Grade Grains

The goal of this project is to mitigate the risk of sprout damage to vulnerable organic grain crops grown for a food-grade and seed market by providing infrastructure for an on-farm grain drying system, thus enabling Horton Farm to choose a harvest window and help avoid crop loss due to pre-harvest sprouting which damages the quality of grain for food-grade application and for viable seed germination. Specifically, Horton Farm has been growing Appalachian White Wheat, a regionally adapted hard white winter wheat variety for Carolina Ground flour mill since 2018. This variety came out of the USDA-Agricultural Research Service Uniform Bread Wheat trials and has respectable yields, a good disease package, and a strong market, but as a white wheat, it lacks the dormancy period at maturity that red wheats contain, so the crop is at a higher risk of pre-harvest sprouting. To build a resilient food-grade grain-based value chain in the South, Horton Farm needs this critical infrastructure to minimize the risk of relying solely on good weather during the harvest window of June - July. Since 2012, Horton Farm in relationship with Carolina Ground, has been producing high quality stone-ground flour made from certified organic grains grown predominantly in North Carolina and surrounding southern states, and serving bakeries throughout the southeast.

North Dakota

Recipient: Healthy Oilseeds, LLC, Carrington, ND**
District: ND-All
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$100,000.00
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Organic Oilseed Processing Capacity Expansion

Healthy Oilseeds is a small family-owned business that processes flaxseed, hempseed, borage, and other minor oilseeds. They cold press expel, mill, sift, and clean oilseeds. The products that come from processing are oils and protein, separating the organic oil from the organic protein. Healthy Oilseeds processes organic oilseeds 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and are not able to keep up with the demand for orders. The goal is to increase oilseed processing capability with the purchase of an additional head press increasing production to their facility. The expansion will also provide a larger organic market for organic producers to have another place to sell and market their organic crops. The upper Midwest is the key growing area for organic specialty oilseeds with Healthy Oilseeds being in the upper Midwest and buying directly from the producer. There is great demand for Healthy Oilseeds organic flaxseed and hempseed oil products grown and processed in the United States and they can supply these products that are certified USDA Organic and Primus Food Safety Certified. Organic producers and organic ingredient customers have trust in Healthy Oilseeds company and its products. The project will help supply the consumer demand and create a clear market channel for organic production of oilseeds to be processed close to where the seeds are grown.

Recipient: Anchor Ingredients Co., LLC, Fargo, ND**
District: ND-All
Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion
Award Amount: \$2,626,181.00
Match Amount: \$2,626,181.00
Total Project Amount: \$5,252,362.00

Anchor Processing Improvements

The purpose of Anchor’s processing improvement project is to increase the market for US producers by expanding organic storage and processing capabilities across Anchor Ingredients Co., LLC’s (Anchor) supply chain through improvement of current processes and installation of new equipment. This will be done through three activities. The first is to improve the product drags at internally owned facilities. This will allow for increased efficiency in moving organic products through value-add processing, storage, and inbound/outbound transit. Anchor’s current product drags cannot be operated in certain weather conditions which causes significant downtime. Additionally, these old/malfunctioning drags leak/spill product, causing additional work to re-clean spilled product as well as unnecessary loss of product. This goal will be completed over a two-week span at Hillsboro and Buffalo, ND locations in which the old drags will be disassembled, and the new clean product drags will be re-installed. The second activity is to install and update processing equipment, over six months. The new processing equipment will expand the channel for value-added organic products and increase organic storage capacity. Prior to Anchor acquiring the facility, it was not certified organic and didn’t have processing capabilities. The third activity is to create a new organic value-added product, by installing pelletizing processing equipment. Pelletizing hulls compresses the hulls into small, dense pellets. These pellets take up less space compared to loose hulls, allowing for more efficient storage and transportation. Pelletizing will increase Anchor’s storage capacity, and decrease the number of truck shipments to customers, as trailers are able to hold more pelletized product than non-pelletized product. It also allows customers to store these pelletized hulls more efficiently, thus creating additional capacity.

New Hampshire

Recipient: Westwick Farming LLC, Lee, NH**
District: NH-1
Project Type: Simplified Equipment
Award Amount: \$77,449.22
Match Amount: N/A
Total Project Amount: \$77,449.55

NH Grain Collaborative Organic Market Expansion

The requested equipment is intended to significantly increase the amount of NH grown organic grain and value-added grain products available in the NH and Northeast market. In 2022, Westwick Farming LLC Tuckaway Farm received and conducted a USDA Value-Added Production planning proposal surveying the growing, harvest, post-harvest, processing, and market challenges in the NH grain shed along the mid-tier value chain and the potential of growing a NH Grain Collaborative. Appropriately scaled equipment was identified as a main bottleneck in meeting and expanding this market. This equipment will address identified gaps in grain transport, processing, and packaging capacity, all of which will allow growth in the

marketplace for organic grain farmers and value-added producers, and increased access to organic culinary grains for consumers.

Recipient: The Butcher Block, INC. DBA North Country Smokehouse, Claremont, NH***

District: NH-02

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$600,000.00

Match Amount: \$713,141.40

Total Project Amount: \$1,313,141.00

Fully Cooked Organic Bacon Innovation & Market Expansion Project

North Country Smokehouse (NCS) is a vertically integrated organic meat producer committed to sustainable agriculture. The purpose of this project is to introduce two new innovative organic pork products to the domestic organic market, enhance the domestic organic supply chain, and support local economies by creating and retaining jobs. Through strategic product development, supply chain enhancement, and community engagement, the project aims to create improved market accessibility and awareness of organic meat products, thereby increasing demand and consumption. While the company currently produces more than 2 million pounds of organic meat annually, the proposed project is expected to increase production capacity by 175,000 pounds annually for three years. Activities include the procurement and installation of new processing equipment, development of distinctive packaging designs, and coordination of retail merchandising to optimize product visibility. Project activities will focus on strengthening the domestic organic supply chain and elevating public awareness about organic farming through an extensive, evidence-based marketing strategy consisting of print and digital advertising, public relations, and incentives offered to wholesale distributors. Community engagement efforts will involve collaborating with local staffing agencies and technical institutes to source local production talent, advertising job opportunities to the local Claremont community, and hiring and training local residents for new production and warehousing roles. The expected project outcomes include the introduction of innovative organic pork products to the market, creation of new, full-time employment opportunities, and enhanced public awareness about organic farming, animal welfare, and sustainability. Overall, the project intends to revolutionize the organic pork market, boost domestic organic supply chain, and create local jobs. These outcomes are expected to benefit producers, buyers, and consumers, making organic products more accessible, desirable, and appreciated nationwide. An estimated 4,000 producers, 11,000 buyers, and 15 million consumers will be informed about organic products, while 12 producers will increase, and 110 buyers will execute additional business transactions to meet increased demand.

New Jersey

Recipient: Two River Gourmet Mushrooms LLC**

District: NJ-All

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Organic Horizons: Strengthening Rural Organic Specialty Mushroom Production, Processing, Infrastructure and Distribution

The purpose of this project is to strengthen Two River Gourmet Mushrooms' rural organic specialty mushroom processing, infrastructure, and distribution. Restaurants, supermarkets, and specialty stores increasingly offer organic mushroom products, creating a demand-driven market. However, there is a clearly defined challenge centered around expanding infrastructure and capacity as well as processing, storage, specialized equipment, and handling/shipping, which have not kept up with the demand for organic specialty mushrooms. The specialized equipment will allow Two River Gourmet Mushrooms to scale processing to meet local demand and ensure reliable, safe, and exclusive Organic Delivery of its product to expanding consumers. This equipment will make certain that they are able to scale production in successful processing of high-quality organic mushrooms, meeting the demands of the target market. The dedicated delivery van will break the market access barrier that exists because of handling/shipping bottlenecks. This will also greatly streamline supply chain processes, from harvest to distribution, to reduce post-harvest losses and ensure efficient delivery of organic mushrooms to consumers. These expanded capabilities will set an example of sustainable agricultural production. It will also allow for the generation of employment opportunities within the local community, including farm workers, technicians, and sales personnel. The project's success will contribute to the economic growth of the region.

New Mexico

Recipient: Sunny State Products Inc, San Jon, NM**

District: NM-003

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$119,612.25

Match Amount: \$119,612.25

Total Project Amount: \$239,224.50

Add Technological Advancements to Organic Food Grade Grain Cleaning Facility

Sunny State Products, Inc. (SSP) plans to add a high-capacity electric eye color and infrared (IR) sorter to enhance the ability to clean organic food grade grain crops. As the organic food processing industry has increasingly added higher technological equipment, the need to improve the quality of organic food grains has increased substantially. Adding a color/IR sorter will allow SSP to clean and transform organic grain to the high-quality standards required by the food grade grain industry. Organic grains typically have a higher percentage of foreign material, organic matter, diseased and unacceptable kernels due to the organic growing conditions. The addition of a higher technologically advanced machine will enable SSP to accept more organic crops and convert the crops to a usable organic commodity in the food grade grain industry.

This project will also reduce the processing cost of the plant to provide organic food grain at a cheaper cost to current customers and to market to new customers in the organic food grade grain market. SSP will be able to provide more organic grain and incorporate more organic farmers into their already large group of organic farms to make cheaper organic food grade grains possible.

New York

Recipient: Gianforte Farm LLC, Cazenovia, NY**

District: NY-022

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$95,173.92

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$95,173.92

Purchase Of an On-Farm Grain Storage System for Value-Added Grains to Help Meet the Demand for Domestically and Locally Produced Organic Livestock Feed and to Enhance the Local Supply Chain

As capacity in the middle of the organic supply chain has not kept up with demand for organic products, there are a limited number of suppliers for feed grains in Central New York for dairy and livestock operations. These funds will be utilized to integrate a blower system, inventory scales, and supporting elements into the current operation at Gianforte Farm, LLC. While the facility currently grinds corn and soybeans for livestock feed, there is no efficient load out equipment for these feed commodities, leading to an overall lack of capacity and agility in the ability to supply current and future feed customers with organic feed. By integrating a continuous-flow system with the ability to efficiently load out, regional organic livestock and dairy producers will have an additional reliable, consistent, and competitive source of domestically/locally produced organic feed. This project enhances the regional organic supply chain and its resiliency, improves the local agricultural economy, and provides current and future feed buyers with additional options for purchasing domestic organic feed (which may be more cost-effective due to less transportation costs). In addition, this capacity expansion will result in an increase in purchasing of organic corn and soybeans from other local operations, thus enhancing the impact of this project while also keeping feed inputs local.

Recipient: Norwich Meadows Farm, LLC. Norwich, NY**

District: NY-019

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$95,261.08

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$95,261.08

Equipping A Commercial Kitchen at Norwich Meadows Farm for Production of Value-Added Products from Organic Local Vegetables and Fruits

Norwich Meadows Farm has been one of the most important suppliers of fresh, local, organic produce to the New York City region for more than two decades. The number of viable farms providing fresh local produce to this region is small and at risk of getting smaller due to intense pressure from national/global competition and increasingly difficult business conditions. It is safe to say that there is no other local farm providing the diversity, quality, and quantity of organic produce that Norwich Meadows Farm brings to

market each year. One key to their success has been continuous development of new markets, resulting in a uniquely diversified marketing program including direct sales at farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture's direct sales to restaurants and retail stores, and specialty wholesale distribution. Recently Norwich Meadows Farm has partnered with commercial kitchen operators and chefs to pilot a range of processed products using vegetables and fruits from the farm; these market tests have shown that there is a significant opportunity for unique organic processed products including sauces, purees, broths, dried/pickled products, and juices to be marketed through existing channels. They have already begun the process of building a 6,000+ square foot packinghouse; this structure will also be the home of a planned food hub. This project will allow for the purchase of equipment for a commercial kitchen to be in this building.

Recipient: Farmer Ground Flour, LLC, Trumansburg, NY**

District: NY-All

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,897.14

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,897.14

Increasing the Processing Capacity of Food Grade Organic Grains in New York State

Farmer Ground Flour buys and processes a diversity of organic grain crops, paying a premium to local farmers and providing a market for organic crops not otherwise grown in New York. Farmer Ground Flour contracts with local farmers for hard wheat, which is traditionally grown in western states, to produce bread flour for the Northeast market. By shortening the supply chain and reducing food miles, the carbon footprint of their flour is reduced relative to the industry standard. This project will help Farmer Ground Flour increase its annual grain cleaning and milling capacity, increasing the volume of grain purchased. By upgrading grain cleaning and flour milling systems simultaneously, they will have greater capabilities from start to finish without bottlenecks. A new grain cleaner will enable Farmer Ground Flour to process crops for long-term storage efficiently and with less waste, and a new pair of mills will increase their hourly milling capability.

Recipient: Breadtree Farms, LLC, Greenwich, NY**

District: NY-021

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$1,957,328.00

Match Amount: \$819,837.00

Total Project Amount: \$2,777,165.00

Expanding the Market for Organic Chestnuts in the Northeast U.S.

Breadtree Farms was founded in 2019 with a mission to build the organic chestnut industry to a watershed scale in the Northeast. This project will increase organic chestnut consumption by unlocking key gaps bottlenecks that currently constrain the growth of the Northeast organic chestnut industry. Chestnuts are a historically important, high-value staple food source that has been recently marginalized in the U.S. due to the 1904 introduction of *c. parasitica* (chestnut blight). A century of breeding has delivered hybrid trees well-suited for commercial organic production, which can yield 1,500-3,500 lbs./acre of a nutrient-dense, gluten-free perennial starch crop. Given growing consumer interest in grain alternatives, gluten-free

ingredients, and local/sustainable foods, Savanna Institute identifies a present-day market opportunity for a +50,000% increase over current production. A growing number of Northeast farmers (particularly historically underserved farmers) see organic chestnut agroforestry systems as a key strategy for diversifying agricultural landscapes and enterprises. The project will conduct a feasibility/technical development study for a best-in-class, global organic chestnut processing facility and complete key improvements to a Breadtree-owned, on-farm facility to deliver processing capacity for organic chestnuts. The project will allow the purchase and installation of specialized processing, handling, storage, and distribution equipment. Also, conducting outreach at buyer-engagement events, regional local food events festivals markets, product demonstration days targeted at handlers, organic consumer package goods, food advocacy marketing professionals-Increase regional producer coordination best practices through technical workshops, farm consultation visits, webinars, focused on best practices for product consistency, marketing, post-harvest processing coordination. Through this project, Breadtree and a national coalition of partners will address: the lack of existing in-region commercial processing capacity; demand for product development and strengthened supply-chain connections between buyers, consumers, handlers and producers; the need for improved supply-chain coordination between producers by building enhanced processing capacity, developing new paths-to-market, and engaging producers, while building relationships with consumers, handlers, and culinary professionals to increase market access and consumption. These interventions would transform the Northeast's organic chestnut industry and contribute to important strategic growth of organic chestnut industries in other U.S. regions.

Ohio

Recipient: Great Lakes Natural Fibers Inc. Wooster, OH**

District: OR-All

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,190.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,190.00

The Use of Wool as a Natural Alternative to Synthetic Weed Barriers, a Replacement for Peat, Vermiculite and Perlite Ingredients in Organic Potting Mixes, and a Medium for Seed Delivery

The goal is to purchase wool equipment to create a market for wool in the horticultural industry to replace products currently used with more sustainable, certifiable organic products that will benefit both sheep and crop farmers. The only regional aggregator of wool from shearing has stopped buying wool. Sheep farming in Ohio is increasing, and with it, wool production. Coarse and low-grade wool can substitute soil amendments and weed suppression materials used in horticulture. Wool stores up to 33% of its weight in water and slowly releases water once the surrounding environment drops below 65% relative humidity, is fully degradable, contains Nitrogen, Calcium, Magnesium, Iron, Sulfur, and other Micro Nutrients. Felted wool mats can replace plastic weed barriers. They can regulate soil temperatures, prevent moisture loss, add fertilizer, act as a pest barrier to slugs and snails, and provide excellent weed prevention. Shredded wool can be mixed with seed to be a delivery method for habitat restoration, landscaping, and crop establishment. Soil and potting mixes are currently amended with peat, vermiculite, and perlite to increase the water-holding capacity and provide aeration. Adverse ecological impacts resulting from these soil amendments include the depletion of peat bogs and the high carbon footprint of vermiculite and perlite from transportation and overseas mining operations. Wool pellets can provide aeration, hold moisture, and are naturally high in nitrogen making them the perfect slow-release, all-natural fertilizer.

Oregon

Recipient: Oregon Organic Coalition, Lyons, OR*

District: OR-005

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$547,600.00

Match Amount: \$547,621.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,095,221.00

Growing Markets for Pacific Northwest Organic Products

The Oregon Organic Coalition will lead a multi-sector project to grow the market for organic products from the Pacific Northwest (PNW). This project represents a major collaboration with partners including the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Organically Grown Company, Hummingbird Wholesale, the Good Food Foundation, Tilth Alliance, the Oregon Farm-to-School & School Garden Network, and others to promote Oregon and Washington-produced organic food and strengthen organic market channels. Its purpose is to drive consumer demand for organic products and expand valuable markets for organic producers, targeting the specialty/craft food and farm-to-school markets. While building organic market position across the entire food sector, it will focus on products with identified opportunities for significant growth, including barley and other grains, fruits and vegetables, hazelnuts, and wine grapes. Key activities will include assisting organic producers to become market-ready for wholesale sales, supporting their attendance at trade shows, and connecting them to buyers with values-based purchasing goals. Partners will also conduct strategic communications to educate consumers about the organic label and the benefits of organic food, strengthen organic food in the PNW identity and brand image, and build demand for crops and varieties that are regionally adapted, high-performing, and profitable for organic producers. The project will benefit organic producers through improved value chain coordination, promotion, and increased connections to high-value markets. It will also benefit small and mid-scale craft food manufacturing businesses, people served by farm-to-institution programs, and the public, through greater access to organically produced food.

Recipient: Camas Country Mill, LLC, Eugene, OR**

District: OR-004

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,999.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,999.00

Pearler for Organic Growth

Camas County Mill has been certified organic since inception of the mill in 2011. Organic is an important and rapidly expanding part of their mill business. Organic farming is important to Camas County Mill because it provides wholesome food to people with minimal disruption to the soil. Camas County Mill currently processes organic wheat, spelt, rye, emmer, oats, and buckwheat. These are all milled into flour as well as flakes. Currently, they operate four 950mm Engsko mills producing flour as well as a Roastech roaster flaker that produces flaked grains. This project will allow Camas County Mills to purchase equipment to meet increasing demand for healthier organic options. They are currently providing the grains intact with hull and bran to consumers. Having the ability to dehull and pearl barley themselves will

increase their organic offerings. The goals of this project include: 1) increasing interest and access to ancient grains in the form of pearled organic grains, 2) furthering organic grower base with organic crop options, 3) increasing resiliency of Camas County Mill and other organic farms, and 4) increasing consumer access to organic meat. This project will allow Camas County Mill to increase annual gross income, increase processing capacity by 15%, and increase the number of organic products processed by 125,000 pounds.

Recipient: Grange Cooperative, White City, OR**

District: OR-002

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$1,500,000.00

Match Amount: \$1,500,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Expanding Processing and Marketing Capacity for Organic Grain for Livestock Feed

In 2022, U.S. farmers produced more than 2.35 billion tons of grain feed to serve domestic and international livestock producers (USDA Economic Research Service). Still, less than 1% of the grain feed produced in the United States is organic, despite strong and consistent growth in U.S. demand for organic food. With more than 82% of U.S. households buying organic products regularly (Organic Trade Association), the Organic Center notes that driven by growth in demand for U.S. organic livestock feed the U.S. has become a substantial net importer of organic products. In fact, U.S. imports of grain feed have steadily increased over the past decade, growing from 40% in the 2011/2012 crop year to 60% in the 2021/2022 crop year. This is primarily due to the major barriers that exist to producing, processing, and marketing organic grain feed, namely higher costs of production and lack of processing and marketing infrastructure. To meet current U.S. consumer demand and expand opportunities to build the U.S. organic grain feed market, Grange Cooperative will perform the following activities: 1) expand its processing capacity to create more and better markets for organic producers and 2) execute marketing and promotional activities that will help to build commercial markets for U.S. organic grain feed products. This project's goals (deliverables and expected outcomes) include achieving 2,000 additional tons of organic grain feed processed and a \$1,655,000 increase in domestic organic grain feed sales by the end of the project period.

Recipient: Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, Corvallis, OR***

District: OR-004

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$191,373.42

Match Amount: \$191,373.42

Total Project Amount: \$382,746.84

Organic Hazelnut Market Development

The Oregon Organic Hazelnut Collective (OOHC) will develop a brand for Oregon Organic Hazelnuts and create educational marketing materials to be distributed to stakeholders in the hazelnut industry as well as to food and health influencers. The project objectives include 1) creating and distributing branded educational materials on the benefits of domestically grown organic hazelnuts in comparison to similar products 2) securing long-term customers that can purchase large volumes of hazelnuts each year through events and marketing campaigns for restaurants, community markets, influencers, etc. and 3) addressing

the infrastructure bottleneck in the supply chain. These materials would 1) educate stakeholders and consumers on the ethical and environmental issues surrounding imported nuts 2) advertise the health and environmental benefits of organic hazelnuts versus other nuts and nonorganic hazelnuts, and 3) ensure that consumers who purchase products with this label know that their hazelnuts originate from domestic, sustainable, and ethical sources. With these branded educational materials, the OOHC will increase the visibility of this crop at local markets, festivals, and food and health fairs. With an increased public presence, OOHC aims to establish lasting relationships between health and environmental influencers, American hazelnut growers, and small business owners, who can purchase larger quantities of hazelnuts each year. Effective branding, distribution of marketing materials, and events showcasing organic hazelnuts will have the long-term effect of addressing infrastructure bottleneck issues that currently exist in the supply chain. While hazelnut farmers can increase their harvest, when they attempt to develop independent sales channels, they are turned away by processors who are not interested in shelling and returning small batches of hazelnuts. With an increased demand in the market, there would be an opportunity for farmers to increase their production and for a new processing plant devoted to organics to come online.

Pennsylvania

Recipient: Pa Flax Project, Pottstown, PA*

District: PA-006

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$1,681,187.00

Match Amount: \$727,775.00

Total Project Amount: \$2,408,962.00

Reestablishing the Fiber Flax Industry in Pennsylvania and greater Mid-Atlantic

The PA Flax Project (PAFP) is a woman-owned cooperative business whose mission is to reestablish the fiber flax industry in Pennsylvania by initiating new organic production and processing capacity. Through this project, PAFP will engage with the beginning, middle, and end of the fiber flax supply chain. Growing high-quality fiber flax has a proven history in Pennsylvania, yet there is little to no infrastructure dedicated to the harvest and post-farm processing of fiber flax in the country – often called the ‘missing middle’. As it stands, PAFP sees no way to bring Pennsylvania's fiber flax to market. PAFP will support and educate producers, and work to build out the middle of the supply chain bringing Pennsylvania's organic flax for linen to market through planning and research of a long line fiber flax scutching mill. PAFP envisions this cooperatively owned mill providing an additional income stream to producers after their crop leaves the farm. With the support of partners, PAFP hopes to open the door to this high-value market for Pennsylvania farmers and manufacturers, putting 12,000 acres of organic fiber flax into production. PAFP will leverage its industry connections to establish contracts for domestic and international buyers of fiber flax and co-products produced in its cooperatively owned mill. This project aims to establish the first complete organic fiber flax supply chain in the Eastern U.S.

Recipient: Pocono Organics, LLC, Long Pond, PA**

District: PA-008

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$69,482.81

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$69,482.81

Post-Harvest Handling Equipment for Regenerative Organic Certified Microgreens Powder (PowerGreens)

Pocono Organics intends to increase the production of Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC) microgreens for processing into a value-added freeze-dried microgreen powder called PowerGreens. The processing method, combined with appropriate packaging systems, extends the microgreens' shelf life exponentially, maintains their high-nutritive attributes, protects the product's food safety, and supports the product quality of an innovative organic product. The equipment requested for processing and packaging will expand product market potential to nationwide retail and wholesale outlets through unique channels. It will ensure the shelf stability of increased production quantities and reduce energy consumption for storage and distribution by eliminating refrigeration needs. The product will be sold directly to consumers through physical and online stores and additional regional and national retailers. Various sized packaging options will expand organic market opportunities for wholesale target markets including juice bars, fitness centers, bakeries, dietary supplement companies, and health care institutions. A mixture of hemp, broccoli, and sunflower microgreens are grown in two-week successions, year-round using greenhouse operations. This production system supports the USDA's climate smart action goals by minimizing water usage and carbon emissions in a controlled indoor environment. The PowerGreens processing results in a nutrient-rich organic food source that can be produced and aggregated throughout the entire year, providing expanded market opportunity to organic farmers during colder months and creating strong supply chain security. The equipment requested will improve production and processing efficiencies resulting in minimal product loss, safe product preservation, and expanded organic market potential.

Recipient: Tuscarora Grain CO, LLC, Mohrsville, PA****

District: PA-009

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

The Harnessing Organic Market Expansion through Pelletizing Assistance (Home PA) Project

Tuscarora Grain CO LLC (TGC) will purchase and install a Century Pellet Mill. This mill will increase local capacity for pelletizing currently underutilized organic byproducts into new value-added products with ready markets. The project will build the organic livestock feed supply chain capacity, remove barriers to new organic market development, and benefit organic producers by accomplishing the following: Objective 1: Install organic-approved pelletizing equipment capable of processing 24 tons per day. Objective 2: Improve organic supply chain capacity and organic product development in Pennsylvania by providing third-party processing to local organic producers and feed mills. Objective 3: Increase the Pennsylvania organic community's access to organic amendment by 2,500 tons per year. These objectives will empower local organic grain producers and feed mills to engage with new markets through access to previously unavailable contract pelletizing. It will create a new market for domestically produced organic byproducts

by expanding TGCs capacity for processing, aggregation, and distribution. Additionally, it will reduce potential waste from grain and animal processing by offering value-added product development opportunities.

Recipient: Jonestown Farm Enterprises, LLC, Brackney, PA****

District: PA-009

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$670,214.60

Match Amount: \$677,452.80

Total Project Amount: \$1,347,667.40

Optimizing and Expanding the Organic Farmgate to Fork Ecosystem in Southeastern North Carolina

The proposed project outlines a transformative shared-services Farmgate-to-Market channel marketing system in Southeastern North Carolina, focusing on the constrained availability of organic crops. The initiative targets small, beginning, disadvantaged, and BIPOC farmers, strategically addressing economic disparities, social equity, and sustainable farming practices. The project aims to empower underserved communities, stimulate economic growth, and enhance climate-smart agriculture. Centered on a 150-mile radius from Wallace, NC, the project targets an area with low per capita income and a significant BIPOC population. It aims to fill market gaps for limited-availability organic crops like specialty beans, peppers, and herbs. By establishing a shared-services model, the project fosters collaboration among farmers, providing access to resources, transportation, marketing, and expertise. This approach empowers farmers, enhances efficiency, and reduces costs, ensuring direct market channels and incentives for organic producers. Partnerships with local organizations, agricultural offices, and community leaders ensure engagement and address historic disparities. The project supports disadvantaged communities by connecting farmers directly to purchasers, expanding markets, and increasing consumption of locally produced organic products. The project boasts a seasoned team with expertise in agriculture, supply chains, and marketing, collaborating with local partners for a holistic approach. Overall, the project aims to create a lasting positive impact by empowering marginalized farmers, fostering sustainability, and promoting equity opportunities in Southeastern North Carolina.

Recipient: Snipes Farm and Education Center, Inc, Morrisville, PA****

District: PA-001

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$24,318.13

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$24,318.13

Snipes Farm Organic Market Development Program

Snipes Farm and Education Center requests funds to produce organic, value-added products. Snipes Farm is USDA/PCO Certified Organic and runs a successful on-farm market and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) membership program. The Center has organic produce contracts with senior centers, hospitals, and social service agencies, to address hunger relief and food insecurity in the region. Snipes has experienced increased demand for its organic produce over the past 5 years and needs to add organic value-added products to their offerings. Products include tomato & hot sauces, applesauce, berry jams, pickled vegetables, teas, herbs, herbal products, and dehydrated products. Improved equipment will initiate the

production of value-added organic products for its customers. In the past 5 years the Center's overall organic produce sales increased 20%. At their on-farm market, Snipes sells value-added products bought in from other local farms and producers (honey, syrup, apple butters, herbal products), but none are certified organic. As one of the few certified organic farms in the area, the Center is well positioned to meet customer demand for organic value-added products, except for the for lack of efficient production equipment. The Center's overall organic vegetable sales have increased 155% since 2015 due to contracts to grow and deliver food. They employ regenerative agriculture methods to address soil health and climate change concerns.

Rhode Island

Recipient: Plants to Food, LLC, Lincoln, RI****

District: RI-001

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Plants to Food Equipment Expansion Project

Plants to Food is a manufacturing service partner for plant-based food brands. They bring over 25 years of manufacturing expertise and excellence in the areas of product formulation, testing, labeling, packaging, distribution, and more. Plants to Food has been cooking, blending, infusing, and packaging premium food products for over 25 years. In addition to product and packaging capabilities, they also offer R&D, labels, and nutritional software that creates nutrition fact panels per FDA guidelines. Plants to Food's temperature-controlled production facility is state-of-the-art with an innovative warehouse management process. This includes a dedicated pick and pack fulfillment line for direct-to-consumer and a separate pallet racking system for storage and carrier pallet loads. As the company continues to expand, they are constantly looking for new ways to accommodate growing demands. This project will include the purchase of a Rotary Fill and Seal Machine for Premade Doypack as well as a Piston Filler for Liquids and Pastes. This machine will increase processing by roughly 12,000 units per month. It will allow Plants to Food to take on seven new customers and supply four new jobs at its factory. Overall, Plants to Food will see a 10% increase in processing with this new machinery. With this purchase, its factory will see an increase in processing capacity by 4,500 pounds a month. As Plants to Food continues to grow, it receives an influx of orders beyond what the facility can currently produce. As a co-manufacturing business, this new equipment will not only help expand Plants to Food processing but also the processing of the various organic food companies they are partnered with.

South Dakota

Recipient: Berrybrook Organics LLC, Marion, SD**

District: SD-All

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$96,214.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$96,214.00

Alleviating Organic Egg Supply Chain Bottlenecks and Increasing Production Efficiency

Berrybrook Organics, LLC (Berrybrook) is a certified organic farm and value-added processing company. Throughout their 24 years producing and marketing organic value-added grains, meats, and eggs, their reputation for product quality and consistency has earned them a loyal customer base, extensive marketing experience, and valuable relationships with wholesale clients. The equipment requested addresses two needs: supply chain management/improvement through the purchase of a delivery vehicle, and processing efficiency through the purchase of an Egg Grader machine for organic egg processing. Berrybrook currently supplies Grade A organic eggs to two local grocery stores and nine Sioux Falls wholesale and retail customers. Last year, about 95% of total eggs produced were sold to these outlets. In addressing these two areas of need, Berrybrook will reach new organic markets, increase processing efficiency for their organic goods, and ensure a quality, safe organic product to consumers.

Tennessee

Recipient: Tiffany Leigh Stanley dba A Different Chick Farm & Orchard, Johnson City, TN****

District: TX-001

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,900.22

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,900.22

Value Added Processing Equipment for Organic Vegetable and Fruit

A Different Chick Farm and Orchard (ADCFO) has been growing produce since 2016 and has been certified organic since 2020. They are known for their hot pepper processing and have developed a line of spice blends, hot sauces, and pepper jelly made from their produce. The processing of these products can easily triple the value of the produce over fresh sales alone. The goals of this project are to purchase equipment to allow for greater processing volume of hot sauces and spice blends and deliver them to a wider geographic region in northeast Tennessee, western North Carolina, and southwest Virginia, including regional grocery outlets. This project aligns with the program purpose by increasing domestic organic supply chain capacity, expanding capacity for processing, and improving the ability to comply with regulatory requirements and quality standards. Additionally, it will allow access to processing equipment for other organic producers in the area.

Texas

Recipient: Yaupon Holly Tea, LLC, Cat Spring, TX*

District: TX-010

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$801,330.00

Match Amount: \$267,110.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,068,440.00

Promotion of Organic Yaupon Tea as a Domestic Alternative to Imported Tea Distributed to The Foodservice Industry

This project aims to increase the American consumer awareness of organic yaupon tea as a replacement for imported tea via the food service sector. An Organic Yaupon Marketing Plan will increase opportunities for consumer exposure to organic yaupon tea while also allowing for additional customers, buyers, and parties to participate in the domestic organic yaupon tea industry. Yaupon is a caffeinated plant native to North America and rich in polyphenols and antioxidants like imported tea. By using a hybrid of traditional tea preparation methods, organic yaupon tea has an almost indistinguishable flavor profile from imported green and black tea served in both hot and iced tea. Cat Spring Yaupon has created a cohesive marketing and outreach plan to increase the amount of organic yaupon tea served in restaurants, cafes, hotels, and spas. This plan incorporates the opportunity to promote and support additional organic yaupon producers through the American Yaupon Association while also supplying to tea companies who would otherwise be selling imported tea to their food service customers. This will also allow restaurants to substitute imported tea on their menus with organic yaupon tea thus giving their customers and guests an opportunity to sample and fall in love with the incredible domestic organic yaupon tea.

Recipient: Triple J Organics, LLC, Mission, TX**

District: TX-015

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$66,645.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$66,645.00

Diversifying Organic Supply Chains for Small Producers in the Rio Grande Valley

Triple J Organics is a minority-owned certified organic citrus orchard in Mission, Texas established in 1995. Triple J manages 25 acres of certified organic citrus groves, primarily of Ruby Red grapefruit and early season oranges, as well as Navel Oranges, Meyer Lemons, Tangerines, and Tangelos in smaller quantities. This project will increase consumption of locally produced organic orange juice in the Rio Grande Valley and increase the profitability and long-term viability of Triple J Organics through special purpose equipment purchases that allow Triple J to process 32,000 lbs. of “waste”, or seconds, oranges into fresh juice and deliver it safely to customers in the Valley. The project will target school districts as potential customers, as well as supermarkets, restaurants, health food stores, daycare facilities, and eldercare facilities as needed. Beneficiaries include Triple J Organics, local schools and businesses who purchase the new product, as well as other organic citrus growers in the Valley who may be able to cooperate and aggregate to produce a higher margin value-added product.

Recipient: Steelbow Farm LLC, Austin, TX**

District: TX-035

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$90,372.62

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$90,372.62

Steelbow Farm: Expanding Access to Local, Organic Produce in Central Texas

Steelbow Farm is seeking to broaden its delivery range and increase local food access and supply chain resilience by procuring a delivery vehicle. The overarching purpose of the proposed project is to expand access to local, organic produce by eliminating the current constraint of distance and delivery radius, while simultaneously addressing the growing demand for product in the current marketplace. Currently, Steelbow Farm has demand for their product that exceeds their capacity because they do not have a vehicle and therefore have a limited delivery range. This bottleneck is hampering Steelbow Farm's ability to rise to the organic market demands. They believe access to this equipment would drastically improve access to organic produce, as they could radically increase their customer base and range. For context, currently, within Travis County, only .06% of food is produced locally. The Austin and Travis County areas are seeing a decline in the amount of vegetable farms and farmland, which are disappearing at an alarming 16.8 acres a day. Amidst these startling statistics, this business is thriving and demand for their produce is extremely high. Steelbow Farm wants to be able to meet the market demand and fill the gap within the local food system. As organic vegetable producers, they are striving to increase the percentage of local food consumed within their community.

Recipient: Armagh Fine Foods LLC dba Armagh Creamery, Dublin TX**

District: TX-025

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$100,000.00

Enhancing Organic Dairy Production and Market Access in Texas

The primary goal of this project is to enhance and expand the production capabilities of Armagh Creamery organic farming and dairy operations. By acquiring essential equipment, the project aims to achieve increased efficiency, product diversification, and expanded distribution. This equipment will enable Armagh Creamery to venture into new product lines, including heavy cream and butter, expand production of existing products, and streamline the production process, reducing the workload on current employees and enhancing overall efficiency for creating new butter product lines. The acquisition of a delivery vehicle will significantly improve distribution capabilities, allowing Armagh Creamery to reach local retailers and drop locations in Central, North, and West Texas. This expansion will promote the availability of organic dairy products to a wider consumer base. The specific objectives of this project are two-fold: 1) to scale yogurt production to the full daily capacity of 10,000 units per day, two days a week. This increase will enable the creamery to supply more retailers throughout Texas and cater to the growing demand in the direct-to-consumer market and 2) to expand raw milk and cream production to 600 gallons a day for 3-4 days a week, resulting in a weekly output of 1800 to 2400 gallons. This expansion will further support the direct-to-consumer market and provide ample resources for the planned heavy cream and butter product lines.

Recipient: RKH GIN LLC, dba Woolam Gin, Odonnell, TX**

District: TX-019

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$1,000,236.13

Total Project Amount: \$4,000,236.13

Expanding Capacity and Improved Quality of Organic Cotton.

RKH Gin LLC, dba Woolam Gin is a primarily woman owned ginning facility that has processed organic cotton for 33 years, being the first United States to do so. It is located in a high poverty area in Lynn County, Texas and serves other high poverty areas including Dawson and Terry Counties. Woolam Gin is seeking a grant award to purchase and install equipment to expand the services and improve processing to increase production of organic cotton for farmers which will improve overall market production of the beneficial product. The overarching project purpose is to improve efficiency, therefore improving outcomes for farmers and the organic market. The equipment will increase production from 25 bales an hour to up to 40 bales an hour. The increase in processing will improve the housing time of cotton in the warehouse which will improve the grades and facilitate earlier entry into the marketplace, benefiting farm producers, processors, and consumers. The faster processing will improve turnaround for the farmer and further increase production possibilities. The primary partners and collaborators of the project will include participating organic farmers, the project manager, project supervisor, gin manager and other supporting human resources workers. This grant award will create improved markets and expand processing capacity which in turn will enrich market availability and further development of production resources and production.

Recipient: Texas Department of Agriculture, Austin, TX**

District: TX-ALL

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$197,603.77

Match Amount: \$197,603.77

Total Project Amount: \$395,207.54

Texas Organic Market Development & Promotion

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) will use a multi-faceted approach to promote local organic producers in the produce, grains, dairy, and fiber markets. Though these industries are each unique in their production, the issues they experience are similar. These challenges include, but are not limited to, lack of knowledge among consumers of each industry's availability/benefits, existing gaps between producers and buyers that result in barriers for growth, and an absence of public resources that assist organic farmers from promoting themselves more efficiently. Through this project, TDA will increase local consumer knowledge, support activities to develop new markets, increase demand for domestically produced organic agricultural products, and provide additional market paths for organic farmers in Texas. Goals of this project include: 1) increase public knowledge of Texas organic agriculture industry, 2) provide opportunities to improve market share and sales of local organic producers, and 3) build new connections between Texas producers and potential buyers to accomplish these goals. TDA Marketing will produce new marketing materials targeted for the organic industry, assist organic producers with attending trade shows relevant to their respective industries, facilitate business to business interactions, and run a social media campaign that highlights each industry. These activities will strengthen the relationships between Texas organic

crop/product producers and buyers, as well as better inform the public on the availability and benefits of Texas organic products. These relationships would aid in ongoing efforts to strengthen the supply chain, build on current opportunities with Texas agriculture associations, assist historically underserved communities, and increase demand for locally produced organic products. To further assist the organic industries of Texas, TDA will assist in the production of the Field View Organics program. This program aims to identify organic operations across the state and mark them for aerial spraying companies to help prevent potential chemical drift or contamination of organic crops. By supporting this initiative, TDA will protect the current organic producers across the state and alleviate potential concerns for new members wanting to enter the industry.

Recipient: Spicy Organic LLC, Frisco, TX****

District: TX-004

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$93,866.76

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$93,866.76

Grant for Simplified Equipment's Projects to Increase Efficiency and Output

Spicy Organic LLC, a dedicated provider of premium organic spices, herbs, and grains, proposes to purchase and install machinery equipment to streamline its production processes, enhance efficiency, and expand market reach. The proposed equipment will significantly boost processing capabilities, reduce manual labor, and improve the availability of organic ingredients in both domestic and emerging markets. By introducing a semi-automatic auger filler machine, production output is projected to increase substantially from 60 pouches to 900 pouches per hour. This advancement will not only result in enhanced efficiency and productivity but also bolster the domestic market demand for the company's organic ingredients. The Band Sealer will mark a significant leap towards improving overall efficiency and output. As pouches are sealed seamlessly and rapidly, Spicy Organic anticipates an increase in processing efficiency, enabling them to explore untapped markets and create new avenues for expanding the demand for their organic ingredients. The inclusion of a forklift machine will revolutionize this aspect of the company's operations. With the ability to efficiently move and store organic ingredients, Spicy Organic expects a notable surge in production output. The inkjet coding machine and conveyor system are poised to streamline this process, augmenting efficiency, and output. This will ensure precise and timely labeling, bolstering the availability and marketability of their products within the domestic market. The proposed enhancements will not only elevate processing efficiency but also facilitate entry into untapped markets, increasing the demand for Spicy Organic's premium organic ingredients.

Virginia

Recipient: Organic Marketing Institute, Sterling, VA**

District: VA-010

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$722,500.00

Match Amount: \$735,692.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,458,192.00

Increasing Awareness of Third-party Grass-Fed Organic Certification to Increase Demand and Consumption of Grass-Fed Organic Dairy

The Organic Marketing Institute (OMI) expands the marketplace for organic agricultural products by supporting innovative certification programs that extend the third-party organic certification baseline into novel product categories. OMI promotes third-party certifications that enhance National Organic Program (NOP) standards and offer transparency and full supply chain traceability while benefiting the environment. The Organic Plus Trust (OPT) Certified Grass-Fed Organic Livestock Program has set the first national standard for grass-fed, organic ruminant livestock production for meat and dairy that builds upon USDA-certified organic dairy standards and helps differentiate farmers' products. An end-to-end, third-party certification, it verifies all production and handling of certified products from farm through processing to sale. Grass-fed Organic Certification has seen initial producer interest and customer satisfaction due to the market stability, transparency, trust, and climate benefits of the products certified. There is demonstrated need and opportunity to scale the certification as a value add for organic producers, retailers, and customers. With funding from USDA, OMI will support farmers and brands, having the OPT Grass-Fed Organic Certification, with expanded marketing and promotional support. OMI will do this by enhancing supplier relationships, creating a marketing strategy that promotes the climate benefits, third-party integrity, full-supply chain traceability and regenerative characteristics of the products, and executing robust consumer marketing efforts. With these efforts, to grow the market for Grass-Fed, organic dairy products, supporting an additional 50 farmers per year and engaging an additional 10 brands over the course of the grant.

Vermont

Recipient: Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, Richmond, VT*

District: VT-All

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$1,016,593.00

Match Amount: \$1,019,076.00

Total Project Amount: \$2,035,669.00

The "Vermont Way" Forward: Expanding Market Access and Increasing Demand for Vermont Organic Products

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), in partnership with Vermont Way Foods (VWF) and Food Connects (FC), proposes to grow, and develop markets for Vermont's organic producers in three ways 1) expanding access to promising identified markets throughout the Northeast by developing sales channels to large retailers and other wholesale buyers with consumer bases that are validated by

market research to value and support the qualities inherent in Vermont organic food, 2) by developing new dairy, maple, and other Vermont organic wholesale products to be branded and marketed under the VWF brand and distributed regionally by FC, and 3) increasing consumer awareness and demand for organic food through targeted marketing and promotions in Vermont and throughout the Northeast. Key outcomes include new and expanded wholesale markets for Vermont organic producers, including an overall increase in the percentage of organic products sold through the Food Connects food hub, and increased sales of VWF organic products. Additionally, the project will result in increased awareness of and preference for locally produced organic food among regional consumers. Key beneficiaries of the project include organic dairy producers, organic dairy processors, additional food hubs (certified organic handlers), and organic maple producers. As VWF scales its production and increases sales capacity, they expect these initial producers to see increased sales to VWF, and ultimately, for VWF to onboard additional producers and processors. The project will leverage support from Migrant Justice to support the coordination of Milk with Dignity certification of VWF dairy products which aim to engender consumer trust in the values-aligned brand.

Recipient: Thornhill Farm, LLC, Greensboro Bend, VT**

District: VT-All

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$48,552.60

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$48,552.60

Grain drying & Cleaning Equipment for Thornhill Farm, LLC Grain Center

Grain farming is returning to the region, and the tide is rising. There are a growing number of bakeries and distilleries in Vermont and the region needs organic grain that is grown and processed locally. Many farmers cannot grow grain because they lack the capacity to clean, dry, and/or store grain. The grain drying machine and grain cleaning machine will be a great help and be used to process the grain of many farms. The purchase and installation of more efficient grain drying and cleaning equipment to replace less efficient equipment and hand labor will allow Thornhill Farm to 1) accept and purchase more organic grain from farmers on the day of harvest, and after, to dry and clean the grain, 2) to support the re-emergence of local and regional grain production in Vermont, New York, and Maine, 3) to increase local organic grain market availability by making a greater amount of grain and flour available on the market for baking and spirits, and 4) to ultimately, support Northeastern grain farmers, organic agronomy and soil health, and increase regional grain markets, all of which help mitigate climate impacts through reducing climate miles, increasing organic agronomy practices, reducing exposure to flooding and drought through water-soil interactions, and sequestering carbon.

Washington

Recipient: Mainstem Malt SPC, Walla Walla, WA*

District: WA-005

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$930,720.00

Match Amount: \$931,431.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,862,151.00

Driving Landscape-Scale Conservation in The Cascadia Region by Developing New Markets for Organic Malt

Through this project, Mainstem Malt will launch a new certified organic malt line that coordinates an ecologically responsible grain value chain from farmer to buyer. As a unique Certified B Corp malt company sourcing exclusively from Salmon-Safe certified farmers, Mainstem came to market in 2017 to provide regional producers with a premium market for grains being grown with exceptional water quality and habitat conservation practices. Since its founding, the company has made significant purchases of domestically grown Northwest grain all while retaining elevated transparency throughout the grain value-chain and simultaneously developing the market for domestic malt. Mainstem Malt aims to build upon this successful model to develop expanded markets for certified organic grain producers in the Cascadia Region. Together with a diverse set of partners, Mainstem Malt will increase domestic organic supply chain capacity for organic barley. The project will accomplish this by expanding expert staff capacity, building, and maintaining relationships with certified organic growers and processors, establishing new markets for organic malt, and developing and executing a marketing plan that differentiates organic, regionally grown, and produced malt to both buyers and end consumers. Mainstem Malt has commitments from certified organic and transitioning-to-organic growers who recognize the value of barley within a feed grain rotation and are seeking high-end markets for their crops as well as long-standing relationships with certified organic craft beverage makers. Paired with a growing demand for organic in the craft beverage sector, Mainstem Malt is eager to build out this important regional market.

Recipient: Lukens Farms, Inc. DBA Grace Harbor Farms, Custer, WA**

District: WA-002

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$99,860.70

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$99,860.70

Grace Harbor Farms Organic Milk Products Expansion

Grace Harbor Farms is a vertically integrated farm and food business. From the farm to the grocery store, they control their products through every stage of the supply chain. They sell wholesale and deliver directly 80% of their volume, using a distributor for the other 20% of clients that they cannot service easily themselves. Grace Harbor Farms is a trusted name in the greater Puget Sound area and have established a strong relationship with PCC Natural Foods, Whole Foods, Safeway, Albertsons, QFC, Fred Meyer, Town & Country, Haggen, and local independent Co-Ops. There is a strong demand for their conventional milk products and Grace Harbor Farms is now ready to partner with their organic dairy neighbors to bring more

organic dairy products to market. The addition of this equipment will allow Grace Harbor Farms to meet that demand.

Recipient: Puget Sound Food Hub Cooperative, Mount Vernon, WA**

District: WA-002

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$86,379.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$86,379.00

Equipment Purchasing for Puget Sound Food Hub Cooperative's Processing Program

The Puget Sound Food Hub Cooperative (PSFHC) is a farmer owned cooperative, incorporated in 2016, with a mission to support and champion local, family scale farms by providing a direct connection with buyers in the region seeking high quality, locally produced food. PSFHC member-producers include over 80 farmers, ranchers, and value added agricultural producers providing products sourced from the Puget Sound region of Western Washington. PSFHC purchases produce from its member-producers and then markets, sells, and distributes to a diverse customer base. PSFHC is focusing on the development of a strategic financial plan for sustainable expansion. This plan includes development of processing services that will add value to member-producers products, and provide them with enhanced and competitive market access. The strategy addresses the critical need for an efficient means to prepare certified organic and conventional produce for sale as fresh cut or frozen. The 50% of produce sold through PSFHC is certified organic, the forthcoming certification of its facility will ensure organic segregation strategies comply with use of this equipment towards producing certified organic products. PSFHC will utilize funds to purchase appropriate processing equipment that will create the capacity for the organization to provide this needed service as they expand member-producers' benefit offerings.

Recipient: Snowgrass Farm LLC, Leavenworth, WA**

District: WA-008

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$86,935.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$86,935.00

Machinery Acquisition to Expand Organic Production

Snowgrass Farm, woman-owned and located in rural Eastern Washington, seeks to purchase equipment with implements to expand processing and post-harvest activities in the winter months by providing access to their high tunnels during the winter and enabling them to grow year-round, increasing yearly production by 30%. The equipment will enable Snowgrass Farm to transport produce, planting materials, the washing, packing, processing, and storage of harvested crops. With winter access, they can grow continuously harvestable crops in their 2,760 sq ft heated tunnel, producing over 1,000lbs of produce the first winter. Improved accessibility will also increase spring production with earlier planting in both the heated and non-heated tunnels. Snowgrass Farm will sell directly to its rural community through local grocers and food banks, while also creating winter farm positions. This region does not have any organic farmers growing in winter despite the demand. Currently, Snowgrass doesn't grow between October and April due to cold

temperatures and heavy snowfall. While a propane heater in a high tunnel was installed, the tunnels remain blocked by snow and inaccessible for propane refilling.

Recipient: Tapenade, Inc. DBA Wilridge Winery, Seattle, WA**

District: WA-004

Project Type: Processing Capacity Expansion

Award Amount: \$2,909,121.00

Match Amount: \$975,557.00

Total Project Amount: \$3,884,678.00

Washington Organic Wine Market Share and Production Expansion

This project will increase the domestic and international market share for organic wines produced in Washington State and it will double the capacity of Wilridge Winery's production facility, thereby increasing the local market for USDA certified-organic wine grapes in Washington generally, and in the Yakima area specifically. By increasing demand and, therefore, the premium paid, for USDA certified-organic wine grapes, the project will encourage other wine-grape producers in Washington to initiate the USDA organic certification process. Starting with a market study and the development of a marketing plan in year one, Wilridge Winery will identify the factors constraining the expansion of organic Washington wines into the growing organic wine market. At the same time, the project will double the capacity of Wilridge Winery's USDA certified-organic processing facility in preparation for the implementation of the marketing plan. In year two Wilridge Winery will implement its marketing plan to persuade wine distributors (wholesalers), retailers, and consumers to purchase more organic Washington wine. The marketing plan will include intentional outreach to the highly diverse local viticulture community in the Yakima area which includes beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, limited-resource farmers, and tribal farmers. As a mentor in the Northwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), Wilridge Winery is committed to fostering strong connections in the local supply chain. By increasing the market share for organic Washington wines, this project serves the organic community at large by expanding the organic wine market, expanding the market for locally grown wine grapes, and encouraging partners to pursue organic certification.

Recipient: George J Otte DBA River Valley Organics, Tonasket, WA***

District: WA-004

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$15,510.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$15,510.00

Expand Market Opportunities and Economic Sustainability Through Increased Efficiency And Fruit Availability.

George J Otte DBA River Valley Organics is an organic family farm in rural eastern Washington. The farm grows, packs, and sells fruit. Production has expanded in response to a greater demand for quality local organic fruit from buyers, doubling the volume of fruit to process and sell. There is a need to increase packaging capacity. The project proposes to purchase a small packing line to wash and dry the fruit, rather than manually cleaning the fruit by hand. This will benefit the farm, its employees, other producers, buyers, and the local community. This will allow River Valley Organics to expand its markets to include additional

buyers and sell more fruit to current buyers. In addition, this will allow the business to offer packing services to other local organic growers, expanding their markets as well. Fruit availability, quality and freshness will be enhanced by packaging it in a timely manner. Employees will be able to sort and weigh the cleaned fruit instead of wiping each piece clean, which will be less physically demanding. By shifting job duties, River Valley Organics will be able to retain employees while increasing output. The estimate is that with this equipment, they can package four times as much fruit in a day as they currently do, making it more cost-effective. This will allow River Valley Organics to pack 600 boxes per day (according to manufacturer data), rather than the maximum 150 per day currently possible by hand-wiping each piece of fruit. By becoming more economically sustainable, the business will be able to continue to provide employment to local people in this impoverished rural area.

Wisconsin

Recipient: Bickford Farms Inc. dba Meadowlark Organics, Ridgway, WI**

District: WI-002

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$97,165.00

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$97,165.00

Grain Infrastructure Enhancement Project

This project's goal is to expand the on-farm cleaning and handling capacity to facilitate market pathways for diversified organic grain growers in the Upper Midwest. Bickford Farms Inc. dba Meadowlark Organics has successfully cultivated certified organic, food-grade grains and run a wholesale and direct marketed flour business since 2016. Significant progress has been made toward addressing the need for grain cleaning and storage infrastructure in the region by constructing granary (grain cleaning facility) and on-farm flour mill, Meadowlark Community Mill. Vertical integration enables storage, cleaning, milling, packaging, and distribution from a single location. One-third of the 1,000-acre farm produces culinary grains, and an additional \$150,000 of grain are sourced annually from regional farmers to meet demand. A flour mill produces and distributes approximately 13,000 pounds of flour per week. Together, they make locally grown organic grain accessible across the Upper Midwest. While the existing infrastructure has enabled growth, Meadowlark Organics' granary needs a gravity table, optical sorter, and connecting bucket elevator to clean a wider variety of grains with improved precision, and increased capacity. These purchases will serve area farmers who are seeking markets for their diverse crops such as wheat, rye, corn, buckwheat, and dry beans. With this funding, it will enhance grain cleaning equipment, and strengthen partnerships with local organic farmers. This project will advance market paths for domestic organic agricultural producers, contribute to crop rotation diversity, and promote sustainable farming practices in this region.

Recipient: The DeLong Co, Inc., Clinton, WI***

District: WI-001

Project Type: Market Development and Promotion

Award Amount: \$3,000,000.00

Match Amount: \$5,105,801.00

Total Project Amount: \$8,105,801.00

Organic Pathways: Fostering Domestic Consumption through Streamlined Grain Distribution

The DeLong Co., Inc. (DeLong) has spent 35 years working in the organic market, building, and maintaining relationships with producers, transportation companies, and end users. DeLong aims to revolutionize the consumption of domestically grown organic grains and livestock feed. The project provides direct access to the Union Pacific Railroad and the Belt Railway Company of Chicago, which offer seamless connectivity to all Class 1 railroads in the U.S. Through critical investments in infrastructure, equipment, and transportation capabilities, the project aims to address the barriers of limited storage capacity, inadequate quality control measures, segregation challenges, traceability, and transportation constraints while stimulating increased demand for organic products within the U.S. This project is expected to create over 36 million pounds of organic corn demand by increasing current storage capacity by 140,000 bushels, implementing proper equipment to segregate organic corn from conventional corn, and adding railcars throughout the three-year project duration. The project seeks to create positive impacts for organic grain producers within DeLong's customer base. DeLong has purchased organic grain from 697 producers in Wisconsin and Illinois, 70 of whom are small producers with less than 300 acres of land. Providing producers with increased benefits is of the utmost importance to DeLong. Ultimately, DeLong hopes to share these project findings and successes with existing and future producers to both eliminate entry barriers and provide a net increase in domestic consumption of organic grain.

Recipient: W. Hughes Farms, GP, Janesville, WI****

District: WI-002

Project Type: Simplified Equipment

Award Amount: \$19,917.23

Match Amount: N/A

Total Project Amount: \$19,917.23

Meristem Malt, A Farmer Led Craft Malt Operation in Wisconsin

Over the past three years, craft malt processing has grown by nearly 10 million pounds and is expected to continue increasing in the coming years. This means since 2019, craft malt production in North America has grown by 60% according to research conducted by the Craft Maltsters Guild. To date, there are no craft malt operations in Wisconsin, much less an organic craft malt operation. Currently, organic craft breweries purchase their grain and malt from out of state or even abroad. Other craft breweries are not necessarily able to trace their malt to the Midwest region. This project seeks to develop a craft malt operation in Wisconsin, the first of its kind. This operation will secure local grains from farmers in Wisconsin and process the grains into malt to be used by local craft breweries in the state. Craft malting is on the rise nationwide, and there is currently a void in Wisconsin to fill the gap between grain farmers and the abundance of craft breweries in the state. This malt operation in collaboration with a local farmer has a 500lb batch capacity to start and can directly be entirely purchased by a local craft brewer in Madison, WI. The equipment will enable Meristem Malt to take grain from surrounding farms to clean, process, and then transport the finished malt product to craft breweries and distilleries. The operation might expect to produce 8-10 tons of quality malt per week in future expansions in line with the capacity of other craft malt houses across the

country. The malt would go to craft breweries and distilleries, and over time could grow into a market for home brewers. The deliverable will be processed local grain as malt and delivered to a local craft brewery for testing and brewing. These brewers who value the opportunity to use local ingredients are beneficiaries, as well as the local farmers seeking to sell organic barley in the future. This creates a local value-added market for organic grain growers while allowing brewers to connect with a local product and use it to tell a value chain story.