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I, Anna Timmerman, LSU AgCenter Horticulture Agent for the greater New Orleans area, am writing in strong support of the proposed project at River Queen Greens to study the efficacy of roller crimped sunn hemp as a viable summer cover crop and weed suppression tool for summer vegetable production. The summer season is our most challenging and often the ample rainfall, paired with heat result in astronomical weed pressure, necessitating tillage at the expense of soil health. Locally, many farms go on a summer hiatus and the period of early July through early September is our “off season”. Studying how sunn hemp can work as both a soil building tool and a mulching material may unlock some new strategies for growers in our region working to extend our growing season through the environmentally challenging summer months.

The LSU AgCenter is happy to support and guide this on-farm research project, attend any resulting field days, and help to spread the word to other sustainable small farms and conventional growers within our southeastern Louisiana region regarding the outcome of this study via our publications and media outreach tools. We have seen a large interest in cover cropping as a soil health boosting strategy among all types of growers, though regional-specific data and recommendations are sorely lacking for our growing zone. It is my hope that this on-farm research project will help further the use of sunn hemp and other cover crops in our area, leading to greater sustainability and profitability for local farms.

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