

Farmer Partner with the Hoosier Harvest Market SARE GRANT

Date: March 1, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Our farm, Arnold Farms located in Rush County, Indiana, has benefited tremendously from selling our products through Hoosier Harvest Market (HHM) and participation in the SARE grant to expand operations toward the southeast.

Selling through HHM increased our gross sales by **20.57% in 2020** and **13.18% in 2021**. A substantial portion of these sales are a direct result of HHM's expansion to southeast Indiana and participation in meal box programs facilitated by this grant. The lower percentage for 2021 can be largely attributed to the departure of a farming partner which impacted our ability to grow some crops intended for sale through HHM.

However, the impact of this grant on our farm goes well beyond these sales figures. Participation in meal bag programs has helped us scale up more rapidly and in a more coordinated fashion than we would have been able to otherwise. Listing our products on HHM has helped increase our farm's visibility, expand our customer base, and maintain customers beyond the farmers' market season. Access to HHM's transportation and distribution channels helps us spend less time on the road and more time on the farm. The ability to connect with other growers gives us a stronger sense of community and access to support or knowledge that would otherwise be more challenging or expensive to receive.

In rural southeastern Indiana, it's easy for a specialty crop operation focusing on direct marketing to feel lost among the sea of corn and beans. We have a great relationship with our neighbors growing large-scale grain crops, but participation in HHM provides an essential value for us through a community of growers facing similar challenges and opportunities combined with access to sales, distribution, marketing, and technological infrastructure. We think that continued investment in Hoosier Harvest Market is critically important to helping our region develop local food infrastructure because of our rural geography, underdeveloped local food markets, and limited regional production of specialty crops. Thank you so much for your support of this program, it has had a significant positive impact on our farm viability and quality of life.

Best Regards,

Emma Hawk
Oak Hawk
Arnold Farms