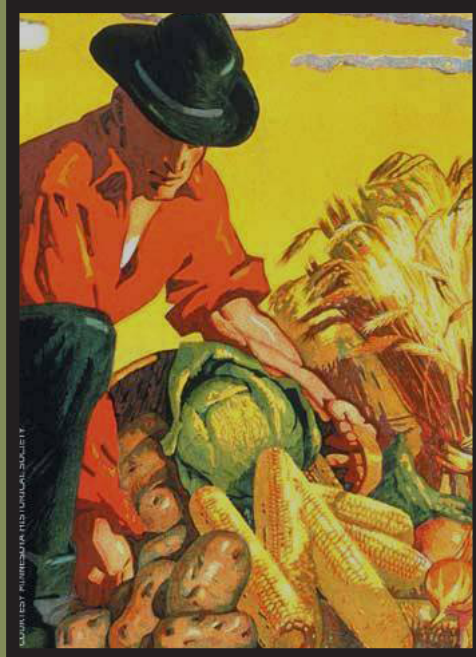


SOW THE SEEDS

A fund to support sustainable food systems



"...Acres and acres of crops were swept away, many of them just on the brink of maturity. In 24 hours, we had lost a third of our entire season's work... The word 'bankruptcy' was in the air... And then word came that help was on the way... the lead horse of the cavalry, carrying the highest and brightest flag, was the Sow the Seeds Fund...I was reduced to tears of gratitude."

Jack Hedin, Featherstone Fruits & Vegetables



SOWTHESEEDSFUND.ORG

THE STORY OF SOW THE SEEDS FUND

The Sow the Seeds Fund initiative supports sustainable food systems in the Upper Midwest. Sow the Seeds is a project of The Wedge Community Co-op and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minneapolis.

In August 2007, massive "once-in-500-year" storms hit southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin and northeast Iowa. Some areas received over 20 inches of rain in a three-day period. These floods were disastrous for many farmers in the region. In fact, for many producers the devastation threatened to end to their farming careers. Especially hit hard were organic and sustainable farmers who raise crops and livestock products for local markets in the upper Midwest.

In response to the floods, the Wedge and IATP launched a special "Sow the Seeds" flood relief effort within just a few weeks of the storm. Retail food co-ops, restaurants, churches and nonprofit organizations collected donations from hundreds of donors. Foundations and businesses took notice and generously contributed as well.

A committee of agricultural and community leaders reached out to affected farmers and reviewed producer applications for financial aid. In just five months, over \$390,000 was raised and distributed to 31 area farmers who applied for support.

The timely aid from the Sow the Seeds Fund allowed farmers to buy hay to feed their livestock through the winter and repair fences in their pastures. Others used the support to repay loans and outstanding bills, clear fields of debris or replaced damaged equipment. The local farmers who received financial assistance include vegetable and fruit growers, organic dairy and beef farms, a goat cheese maker and an ice cream producer, and producers of hazelnuts, turkeys and chickens.

As one producer told us later, "I can't tell you

how much the support of Sow the Seeds and its contributors has meant to us... I am humbled by your generosity. Your energy has renewed my optimism, at a time when that warm April breeze seems distant... I offer my most heartfelt thanksgiving to Sow the Seeds and to everyone who supported the Fund with contributions, large and small."

With the 2007 flood relief effort now concluded, the Sow the Seeds Fund will continue to support local sustainable food systems in the Upper Midwest. In 2008, Sow the Seeds will support

season extension strategies that enable fruit and vegetables to be grown in our Northern climate for a longer portion of the year. Season extension can help expand our area's supply of fresh, locally grown produce while offering new opportunities to interested farmers. You can learn more about Sow the Seeds at www.sowtheseeds-fund.org or by calling

JoAnne Berkenkamp, IATP's Program Director for Local Foods, at 612-870-3410.



"Nothing can really prepare you for 22 inches of rain in a couple of weeks. Slopping through the rain day after day with soggy produce takes its toll. You begin to feel as if the whole world is against you. Then you learn of people like yourselves who take notice, who sympathize, who want to do what it takes to help... The money that was granted to us through Sow the Seeds will go a long way to help us recover our losses from the flooding. A thousand thank you's for all you have done..."

-Rufus Haucke, Keewaydin Farms

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Ceres Trust
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in honor of Kris Diller
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Western Insurance Agency
Whole Foods Market

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Faye Jones, **Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service**; Jai Kellum, **Avalanche Organics**;
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