



March 5, 2018

Dear Hoophouses for Health farmers, community partners, market managers, participating families, and supporters:

2018 is the seventh year that the Hoophouses for Health program has operated in Michigan and marks a milestone as we come to the end of our second round of funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. In those seven years the program has distributed \$833,995 to 66 farmers to purchase, construct, and grow in over 221,452 square feet of hoophouse production space. Participating families have used Hoophouses for Health vouchers and market cards to purchase \$240,210 of produce at participating farmers markets. Participating farmers have also provided 41,613 lbs of fresh, Michigan-grown produce to eligible schools and/or early care and education programs. When we reflect on those impressive numbers, we are overwhelmed with the impact and success of the program thanks to its dedicated farmers, community partners, and supporters. Some of the first participating farmers have "paid" back the cost of their hoophouse(s) in full, while others continue to make "payments" each year.

Hoophouses for Health has grown and evolved over time. At the start of our second round of funding, we expanded the program to include farm to school "sales", both to respond to feedback from farmers and community partners and to increase the program's impacts. By helping to remove barriers to relationships between farmers and schools and early care and education programs, Hoophouses for Health facilitated relationships that have lasted, in some cases, beyond program payback and increased farm to school sales across Michigan.

Now as we near the end of this funding cycle, we are again assessing the program and what has changed in the landscape around us. We have seen the number of hoophouses in Michigan grow exponentially along with the number of farmers using this technology to extend their season and even grow and harvest produce year-round. Additional programs, using both public and private funds, now have expanded to include hoophouse funding. As a result, we have decided that we will no longer provide funds for hoophouse loans. However, we will still provide administration of farmer payback, voucher and electronic funds distribution in participating communities, and technical assistance for farmers in the program. We are excited to keep these important parts of the program moving forward, and we will continue to provide support for community partners, market managers, and families to ensure that healthy, local foods get to children and families as intended.

As farmers are just beginning to seed new crops in their hoophouses, we look forward to a successful 2018 season as we continue the administrative and technical assistance portions of the Hoophouses for Health program. If you have any additional questions about the status of Hoophouses for Health program or have any comments you would like to share, please contact Rebekah Faivor at [Rebekah@mifma.org](mailto:Rebekah@mifma.org). Thank you, and good luck this season!

Sincerely,

Rebekah Faivor  
Hoophouses for Health Program Manager

