



The Following was written for the Com Post, a newsletter for the members of the Just Food Co-op in Northfield, MN.

Love good food? Love local food? Ever wonder how you can help grow the infrastructure (i.e. farmers) to ensure that local food continues to be available – and even grows! We’ve got a creative solution!

Just Food is launching an exciting venture in February in partnership with the Rural Enterprise Center (a program of Main Street Project), Renewing the Countryside and the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). Grow a Farmer is an innovative and practical way for all of us to invest in a robust, local food system.

Here is how it works:

Starting in February, Just Food will have Grow a Farmer seed packets available for sale.

Seed packets will cost \$5, \$10 and \$25.

When you buy a seed pack, that entire amount will be deposited into the “Grow a Farmer” Loan fund administered by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

Then, the new farmers who have received completed the Agripreneur Training Program at the Rural Enterprise Center in Northfield will be able to get low interest loans from the Grow a Farmer fund.

These loans will help them to buy things like chicks, organic feed, and the tools that they need to launch their own sustainable poultry farm.

The new farmers will pay back their loans over time, therefore ensuring that the funds continue to be available to new farmers.

Here’s the Difference you Make:

- More local food!
- Help low-income families earn a decent living!
(Note: Eighty percent of the people who have gone through the Agripreneur Training Program have a family income of \$20,000 per year or less, which means they don’t qualify for conventional loans.)
- Be part of a ground-breaking initiative
(that is – we think this is such a great model we’d like to challenge co-ops across the country to do the same).

So look for more information in the store and on the website about the launch of Grow a Farmer and other activities related to the initiative

