

## **Northeast District Funding for Innovative Programs**

**Project Title:** Reducing Food Insecurity in the Hmong Population through the continued trials of unheated hoop houses for growing season extension.

### **Project Lead and Collaborators:**

- **Judy Knudsen**, Family Living Educator/Department Head, Brown County UW-Extension, (920) 391-4651 (LEAD)
- **Bill Wright**, Community Garden Coordinator, Brown County UW-Extension/Brown County Food & Hunger Task Force, (920) 391-4658
- **Lee Meyer**, Brown County Food & Hunger Task Force, (920) 336-3716
- **Paul Hartman**, Horticulture Agent, Brown County UW-Extension, (920) 391-4611

### **Situation Statement:**

Research shows that the Hmong population suffers the highest level of food insecurity of all ethnic groups in Green Bay. Of all households surveyed, Hmong indicated the greatest interest of all ethnic groups in community gardens as an initiative that would help them get the food they needed. The growing season for Hmong growers is limited due to the weather conditions present in Northeastern Wisconsin. The average first frost date for the Green Bay area is October 2, and the average first freeze date is October 15. While many cole crops will survive a frost, a freeze finishes the growing season for all but a few vegetables like kale and Brussels sprouts. The Brown County UW-Extension will partner with the Brown County Food & Hunger Task Force and the Green Bay Botanical Garden to further test the feasibility of using unheated hoop houses as a method of growing season extension in Northeastern Wisconsin. An unheated hoop house was erected at the Green Bay Botanical Garden last year and Phase I of the project showed that the fall season could be extended (we had usable greens until January 5). While it is too early to start Phase II of this project, we are certain that we will be able to plant earlier since the ground in the center of the hoop house still has not frozen (as of January 19).

This proposal will incorporate a research component as well as the development of educational materials to address this need. The existing hoop house will be slightly modified to allow for better ventilation and to maximize the growing area. Crops will be planted in the spring, summer and fall. Records will be maintained regarding temperatures, amount and timing of harvest, and varieties grown. We will also utilize results obtained from last year's Asian Vegetable Trials to select varieties which require additional warmth and may thrive under summer conditions in the hoop house. Educational materials will then be prepared explaining the proper procedures to be followed in order to be successful.

### **Project Goal(s):**

Reducing food insecurity of the Hmong population through growing season extension, thus ensuring access to more homegrown, high quality, and culturally appropriate foods.

### **Outcomes:**

1. To identify cultivars that will thrive under both cool weather and warm weather hoop house conditions and help reduce the incidence of food insecurity.
2. Through the development of educational materials, Community Garden Coordinators and other faculty and staff will learn about the specific vegetable varieties and methods which will allow for successful growing season extension.

3. Expose a potential employee (summer intern) to UWEX.
4. Through the weighing of harvested produce, determine if the hoop house is an economically viable option for small growers.

**Timeline:**

2004

March	Make modification to existing hoop house
April	Begin harvest and weighing of greens, record temperatures
May	Continue harvest and begin summer planting of warm weather crops
June-Aug.	Maintain summer planting and continue to record temperatures
Sept.-Oct.	Harvest summer crops and begin fall planting of greens
Nov.-Dec.	Continue to monitor temperatures and harvest greens

**Evaluation Plan:**

Information regarding cultivars grown, quantities harvested, and temperatures will be collected and analyzed to determine if a hoop house is economically feasible for Northeast Wisconsin. This information will be shared with County Extension offices throughout Wisconsin.

**Proposed Budget and Funding Request**

A request of \$4102 is being made for this project. An explanation of how the money will be used is as follows:

Salaries

\*Bill Wright, Community Garden Coordinator: \$2220  
 6 hours/week x \$15/hour x 4 weeks = \$360  
 5 hours/week x \$15/hour x 4 weeks = \$300  
 4 hours/week x \$15/hour x 20 weeks = \$1200  
 2 hours/week x \$15/hour x 12 weeks = \$360

Intern

\*10 hours/week x \$7.75/hour x 12 weeks = \$930

Supplies & Expenses

Travel: \$200  
 Hoop house materials, seeds, etc: \$252  
 Educational materials (print & distribution): \$500

\*All fringe benefits will be covered by Brown County

**Outside Funding:**

The Brown County UW-Extension Office and the Brown County Food & Hunger Task Force will provide in-kind contributions to this project.

**Past Resource Management Funds:**

Funds from 2003 were used to initially build the hoop house and conduct trials to determine the feasibility of the idea in Northeastern Wisconsin. Funds from 2003 were also used for the Asian Vegetable Trials. The results of these previous trials are being used as the basis for this additional research.