



# LEAFY GREEN FARMS

Good afternoon Representative Rahjes and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. My name is Leslie Montee and I represent Leafy Green Farms in Pittsburg, Kansas. I support HB 2564.

Leafy Green Farms is a veteran-owned and operated specialty crop business. We grow leafy greens including lettuces, herbs, and more inside of repurposed refrigerated shipping containers 365 days a year, unaffected by any outside factors such as weather or pests. Our farms use 90% less water than a traditional farm and we never use herbicides or pesticides. We remain dedicated to being good stewards of our land, and in our community.

In our mission to serve, it has been our longstanding goal to raise the nutritional needle, specifically in populations residing in food deserts, where nutritional equity is not an equal right. If the general public does not have access to healthy choices, what about the food insecure populations? While it is known that fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables provide essential nutrients to support overall health and prevent chronic disease, some citizens simply do not have the resources. But wealth should not dictate health.

Food banks are often the last to be thought of when it comes to the acquisition of fresh Kansas produce and other products. People face hunger in every county and every congressional district in Kansas. These are our neighbors. According to data from Feeding America, 291,430 people face hunger in Kansas every day. 93,960 of these are children. The average head of lettuce consumed in Kansas comes from 1,500 miles away, oftentimes picked before it is ripe to allow days of travel time. Local producers can deliver fresh products that have been harvested that day, resulting in a much higher quality product and a much longer shelf-life.

We were fortunate enough to participate in the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program in 2023. We provided over 4,000 pounds of fresh lettuce and other greens to the Kansas Food Bank under this program, and were able to deliver it to entities in our very own community. We developed strong, positive, and lasting relationships with the employees and administrators. They know us by name when we arrive, always greeting us with eager smiles. When asked if there is anything else we can do for them, their answer is always the same. "More!" is their simple yet direct response. Their request is loud and clear and we hear them. They want accessibility to more fresh, local, products for their clients. We are currently in the process of expanding our operation to be able to do our part to meet their request.

The availability of fresh and local products benefits everyone involved. With the ability to consume local products comes not only a diet that is rich in nutrients, but a lifestyle that is rich in connection. Buying and consuming local connects the farmer with a local customer, and the local customer can in turn feel connected to a community, something they may not often have the opportunity to feel. I have been a farmer's daughter my entire life, and I have learned many things. One of these things is that as farmers, we help our neighbors. Sometimes our neighbors need a helping hand. On behalf of Leafy Green Farms, I offer our hand in full support of HB 2564.

Today, I urge you to vote in favor of HB 2564. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Very Respectfully,

Leslie Montee  
Leafy Green Farms  
[Leslie.m@leafygreenfarms.org](mailto:Leslie.m@leafygreenfarms.org)  
417-349-9378



(620) 869-1202



[www.leafygreenfarms.org](http://www.leafygreenfarms.org)



3402 Airport Circle  
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762