



Our Harvest Cooperative 2016-2017 Annual Report

We are a *worker-owned* local *farm and food hub*, working to make *sustainably-grown food* available to all of the Greater Cincinnati community. Our Harvest is committed to creating *family-sustaining jobs*, *strengthening* the local food system, *increasing access* to healthy food, and sustaining these efforts by *training new farmers*.

"We have such an issue around jobs and inequality in our country right now. My hope is that Our Harvest Cooperative and the Mondragon USW union co-op template can serve as a model for communities across the country as a way in which we can truly improve our food system, employ our neighbours, and create the type of society we all want to live in."

-Ellen Vera, Our Harvest Co-Founder

Our Harvest Cooperative
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OUR STORY

Our Harvest Cooperative gives people access to healthy, local food in a way that honors land and labor. We grow food responsibly, partner with other local growers, and develop innovative solutions to make healthy food widely available. Our goal is that all Greater Cincinnatians will have easy access to healthy food grown by fairly-compensated workers.

Our Harvest was founded in 2012 by the Cincinnati Union Cooperative Initiative (CUCI), a non-profit which develops a network of worker-owned businesses that sustain families.

2017 marks Our Harvest's 5th year in operation! Building a viable business model that pays all workers in the food chain fairly, expands food access, and restores soil health through organic practices is both rewarding and challenging.

The seasonal nature of produce, the intensive capitalization required, the low cost of conventional produce, and the unpredictability of the weather reduces the margin of error we have to work within. In addition, being the first Mondragon style union co-op means we are often building the road as we walk it. And we can't do it alone.

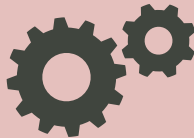
Since the beginning we have relied on the community in big ways through individuals co-signing loans, purchasing produce, investing in the co-op, and volunteering. As we celebrate 5 years, Our Harvest wants to formalize our partnership and honor the importance of the community by becoming a multistakeholder co-op and extending ownership in Our Harvest to community members as well as workers.

We need one another to build a fair and just food system.

OUR HARVEST BY THE NUMBERS

5

YEARS IN
OPERATION



14

DIVERSE &
TALENTED
PEOPLE



22

LOCAL FOOD
PRODUCER
PARTNERS

2

OUR
HARVEST
FARMS

11

WEEKLY
HARVEST BOX
SITES

12

ACRES
FARMED



1

DISTRIBUTION
CENTER



10

FOOD
ACCESS
COMMUNITIES

WHOLE SALE

PIPKIN'S

COUNTRY
FRESH

FOND
LUNCH & DELI

PIC'S PRODUCE

APPLE STREET
MARKET

CINCINNATI ASIAN
MARKET

FINDLAY
MARKET

GABRIEL'S PLACE

HEALTHY HARVEST
MOBILE MARKET

GREEN BEAN
DELIVERY



Farm team meeting



Harvest Day Food Access Program in Evanston



Food Hub Distribution Center



Zeke delivering produce



Cincinnati State Students Practicum at Our Harvest farm



Workshop to build new high tunnel

Increasing Food Access

Our Harvest operates its Harvest Day program, teaming up with Interact for Health, the Cincinnati Health Department, and community partners to find an economically sustainable way to deliver fresh local produce to food deserts. Interact for Health has been a key funder for this initiative.

Training of Worker Owners

Our founder and partner, the Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative, specializes in education and delivers weekly on-the-job educational sessions to worker-owners. Sessions serve to demystify financial statements, tap into people's collective intelligence about how to problem solve and build the business, develop communication skills, and integrate co-op values.

OHC's Policy Work & Systemic Change

Our Harvest staff are deeply engaged with the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council, Green Umbrella's Local Food Action Team, and the Cincinnati Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities Coalition.

Training the Next Generation of Farmers

Our Harvest serves as the practicum site for the Sustainable Agriculture Certificate program at Cincinnati State.

In 2014 Our Harvest launched a non-profit, Cultivate! Ohio Valley, and serves as the lab space for the Specialty Crop Grower Apprenticeship Program. In 2017, Our Harvest employs two farm apprentices.

Capital Investments

OHC has built a climate controlled propagation house, two GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) certifiable wash-out/clean-out facilities, and two on-farm walk-in coolers. We have restored 13 low tunnels for season extension, and constructed two new ones. We have acquired two refrigerated trucks, as well as tractors and other farm equipment. In 2017 we will construct additional cooling space for tomatoes at our warehouse location.



Farm team: Ben Nava, Olivia Nava-Meinerding, Nicole Greiner, Alex Otto, Stephen Dienger*.

Not pictured: Steve Edwards, Cori Yaeger.

*indicates worker-owner and board member



Food hub team: Zeke Coleman*, Megan Kennedy, Tomi Sauerhage. Not pictured: Mike Eck.



Leadership: Kristin Gangwer (CEO)*, Kristen Barker (Board President), Phil Amadon (Co-Founder and Board Member), Eileen Frechette (Board Secretary).

Not Pictured: Mary Steele (Bookkeeper).



WORKER-OWNER TESTIMONIAL



"I have come a long way as a farmer and as a manager, and I could only have done it with the support of the coop. I went from working by myself on a half acre, to now managing 5 farmers on over 12 acres. I could barely operate a tractor, and I had trouble

finishing the smallest building project. I can now run all 4 of our tractors with just about every implement, and a few years ago I undertook the construction of a pack house and walk-in cooler on one of our farm sites."

-Stephen Dienger, Co-Farm Manager

LOOKING FORWARD

For the past five years, Our Harvest has provided fair wages and year-round jobs to our team, has increased markets for local food producers and the availability of local food for community members, and has trained the next generation of farmers. We look forward to expanding on this great work: to growing the number of family-sustaining jobs we provide, to increasing our partnerships with other local producers, and to creating better access to healthy, local food for all Greater Cincinnatians. Now, more than ever, the work OHC is doing to support workers, land, and community is critical. We will face challenges, but we look forward to overcoming them with grace and determination, and only through the support of our partners and community.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT US

"I've been in the Produce business for 14 years, and I am very proud of our partnership with Our Harvest Cooperative. It is great to provide locally, sustainably grown produce, from a company that clearly takes pride in their work. I am amazed by how beautiful and vibrant the vegetables look. Our Harvest consistently provides big bunches of various greens that hold their freshness. Their root vegetables are simply unbeatable in size and color."

-Jason Wilson, Produce Manager,
Country Fresh Farm Market - Beechmont

"This is our second year doing the weekly produce boxes. Wow! Such a great value for local, organic vegetables. It has also forced me to expand my pallet and try out some new recipes."

- Emma Godfrey,
Weekly Harvest Box member

OUR GRATITUDE

We want to thank the amazing community of people who have supported us. We are grateful for all the people who are committed to restoring the earth, increasing food access, and who value paying farmworkers and all members of the food chain fairly. We especially thank those who have been willing to take a risk and lend patient capital with little financial return to help bring something into being that they believe in.