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Michigan Agriculture Advancement awarded USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities grant to support Michigan foodshed

Hickory Corners, Michigan. (December 13, 2022) – [Michigan Agriculture Advancement](#) (MiAA) has been awarded a \$4.9M USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities grant with Star of the West Milling Co. of Frankenmuth, MI.

Dr. Julie Doll, CEO of MiAA, and Lisa Woodke, Sustainability Director for Star, crafted the proposal, “A Climate Smart Strategy for the Michigan Foodshed: Nourishing our Land, Farmers, and Rural Communities,” and will co-lead the work over the next five years.

“We are thrilled to have more resources to work on food grade grains and legumes for Michigan,” Doll said. “This work will support farmers in growing these crops, with a focus on enhanced human capital and robust social networks across our food system, especially for women and beginning farmers. The project makes a strong investment in people: we will support farmer-to-farmer learning, training the next generation of agronomists and farmers, and financially and technically supporting farmers with growing and marketing their crops.”

The project will work hand-in-hand with Michigan growers to document and reward existing climate-smart management and help support new practices for food grade crops.

Agronomists will help farmers collect data and use a technology platform compatible with their farm. Star of the West will then be able to help food companies source these climate-smart grains for use in their products.

“Star of the West has been facilitating sustainable agriculture for years, and this grant will increase our presence and allow us to offer more to the farmers we work with that grow the food we enjoy. With our long history in flour milling, partnered with our dry bean and food grade soybean programs and a new offering in oats, we are excited to be working in this climate smart and sustainable food space,” said Woodke.

Additional partners include the Artisan Grain Collaborative, helping to identify barriers to and opportunities for a more robust Michigan grainshed, and Shiftology Communication who will amplify the stories of Michigan farmers.

An advisory board will help guide the work and includes representatives from Hasenick Brothers Farm, MSU's Kellogg Biological Station, Midwest GRIT, Van Buren County Conservation District, the Wisconsin Women in Conservation program, and the Bavarian Inn Restaurant of Frankenmuth, Michigan.

Doll notes that "This investment from USDA will help Michigan build a vibrant, climate-resilient food system that is consistent with our values of growing good, healthy food for our communities."

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Michigan Agriculture Advancement (MiAA) – founded in 2020 – works for agricultural systems that prioritize farm resiliency, farmer and rural community wellbeing, food value, and environmental benefits. www.miagadvance.org

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