



REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE IN THE HEARTLAND (RAH) PROJECT

A Farm-to-Hospital Model in the Upper Midwest

At Basil's Harvest, we are nurturing a healthful, equitable and resilient food system by connecting the health of people, farms and soil. Our work connects farmers, institutions, health systems and businesses to build just and regenerative supply chains.

Basil's Harvest has worked with partners throughout the value supply chain to conceptualize and implement the Regenerative Agriculture In The Heartland (RAH) initiative. This project is funded through the Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust, Food:Land:Opportunity is a collaboration between Kinship Foundation and The Chicago Community Trust.

The RAH Project serves as a real example of a farm-to-hospital model implemented in the upper Midwest region of the United States. This initiative illustrates the valuable role of hospitals in regenerative food systems: by purchasing regional food, hospitals are supporting farmers, promoting diversity on farmland and in the ecosystem, bolstering the local economy, and connecting patients, staff, and visitors to the origins of their food. This project focuses on institution-level procurement of food-grade milled oats from regional farmers practicing regenerative agriculture. Our partner, Health Care Without Harm, helped coordinate the project as part of a national farm-to-hospital pilot program.



Food:Land:Opportunity
Localizing the Chicago Foodshed



This system is leveraged by three main actors:

1. THE FARM ➤ 2. THE MILL ➤ 3. THE HOSPITAL

This procurement map illustrates the newly established supply chain which brings regenerative oats from Doubting Thomas Farms to hospital trays at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Our work with oats connects the science of soil health, regenerative agriculture and human health. Doubting Thomas Farms' oats are a delicious and sustainable grain that are rich in nutrients yet affordable. Greater soil health on farmlands can lead to direct benefits to human health.

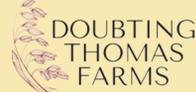
To explore this, we've partnered with Agroecology Solutions, Rodale Institute Midwest Organic Center, and the Bionutrient Institute to measure ecological impacts of regenerative agriculture. By testing soil organic matter and crop nutrient density at Janie's Farm and Cow Creek Organics Farm, two regenerative and certified organic farms in east-central Illinois, we have begun to explore the connections between soil health and nutrient availability in the foods we eat.

Sustainability you can truly taste!

To find out more about Basil's Harvest and the RAH initiative, visit us on social media @basilsharvest or email Kelly Bloedorn, Communications, kelly@basilsharvest.org or Erin Meyer, Executive Director, e.meyer@basilsharvest.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



1. THE FARM



Our story begins with oats grown by Doubting Thomas Farms in Moorhead, Minnesota. Doubting Thomas is a sixth generation regenerative family farm, certified organic, and deeply committed to its community. Noreen Thomas (far left) farms alongside the families in her community and advocates for a healthier food system for all. As a research chemist with a degree in food and nutrition, Noreen is deeply interested in crop nutrient density as well as plant seeds and the stories they carry.



2. THE MILL



At Janie's Mill, head miller Jill Brockman-Cummings uses artisanal methods to roast and flake the oat groats helping to preserve the nutrient density, taste and shelf stability. Janie's Mill is a family operation in Ashkum, Illinois and produces a variety of delicious grains and stone-milled flours. Jill's methods create a high quality product with excellent taste, delivered directly from the mill to the hospital. Regenerative oats make a high value option for patient meals.



3. THE HOSPITAL



The oats travel about 100 miles to OSF-Saint Francis Medical Center (SFMC), in Peoria, Illinois. These are prepared into oatmeal, granola, and other foods for staff, visitors, and patients. With approximately **6,000 employees** and over **650 hospital beds**, OSF-SFMC serves **over 75 pounds of oats per week**.

