

FOR RELEASE: **Immediate**
CONTACT: Anne Nichols
831.658.1977 | anichols@proactusa.com

LOCAL FARM GRANT WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

Monterey, CA (February 5, 2018) – PRO*ACT proudly announces the 11 winners of its Cultivating Change Local Farm Grant Program, which awards \$75,000 in grants to local farmers who have taken the initiative to improve the safety, efficiency, and/or sustainability of their operations. Launched in 2015, the Cultivating Change program has awarded over \$200,000 to 38 farms in 18 states. This year, more than 100 applications were received, indicative of the increasing popularity of this competitive program, which encourages farmers to look to the future and implement plans for improved safety, sustainability, and growth.

Congratulations to Choctaw Fresh Produce in Philadelphia, Mississippi, winner of the Grand Prize worth \$20,000! Their winning project to construct raised beds, allowing the expansion of production on tribal lands that have poor soil quality, was selected by a panel of industry professionals, including Chef Rick Bayless of Frontera Restaurants. Panel members carefully reviewed and scored all projects, which focused on improvements in one of four categories: marketing, infrastructure, capacity building, or certifications.

PRO*ACT CEO, Max Yeater, shared PRO*ACT's goal to “really ‘cultivate change’ in communities through effective support of these local farmers who provide fresh produce, jobs, and inspiration to those they serve. It’s our hope that these investments provide the needed support for them to continue to grow.”

“Our team was amazed by the quality of the applications, ingenuity of projects, and ultimately enthusiasm from the community,” stated Anne Nichols, Sustainability Manager for Greener Fields Together. Six project proposals, representing a total of \$55,000 in grants, were selected by panel review, and five additional outstanding winners, who each received from \$1,000 to \$10,000 in grant funds, were chosen via popular vote. Tens of thousands of people from all 50 states participated in voting for and promoting farms meaningful to their communities—resulting in greater exposure for these farms, their products, and needs.

PRO*ACT's commitment to seed-to-fork sustainability is reflected in this generous investment in the nation's finest farms. Past winners have used the grant funds to purchase new equipment, implement conservation efforts, educate the community, install automation systems, construct new facilities, increase production square footage, and launch innovative sustainability programs.

Applications to participate in the Cultivating Change competition in 2018 will be accepted beginning on October 1. Requirements and contest rules, as well as profiles of all of our winners, can be found at www.cultivatingchange.org.

About [Greener Fields Together](#): Greener Fields Together is a collaboration of environmentally responsible parties, including farmers, distributors, and foodservice operators, who have come together to make steady, measurable improvements in sustainability and food safety practices through all levels of the produce supply chain.

About [PRO*ACT](#): PRO*ACT is North America’s leading distributor of fresh food to the foodservice and retail industries, sourcing from premier national, regional, and local farmers. PRO*ACT streamlines the produce supply chain, offering significant cost benefits and an easy, one-call solution to source the freshest produce from more than 70 third-party-inspected, independently owned, local distribution centers across the United States and Canada. PRO*ACT provides category cost management through commodity contract pricing, in-house consultation services, and integrated produce program distribution management.

PRO*ACT congratulates the following winners of this year’s Cultivating Change grants:

Farm	City	State	Project Title	Amount	Panel or Vote?
Choctaw Fresh Produce	Philadelphia	Mississippi	Construction of raised beds to allow us to expand our production on tribal lands that have poor soil quality.	\$20,000	Panel
PL88 Farm	Prentiss	Mississippi	Purchase Transportation and Shed for Watermelons and Vegetables	\$10,000	Vote
PPC Farms	Mission	Texas	Use of Floating Row Covers in Organic Brassica and Cucurbit Production in South Texas	\$10,000	Panel
Merchant's Garden AgroTech Inc	Tucson	Arizona	Install & Implement Food Traceability Tools and Processes	\$10,000	Panel
Reeves Family Farm	Princeton	Texas	Refrigerated Delivery Truck for Reeves Family Farm	\$6,000	Vote
Arizona Microgreens	Phoenix	Arizona	Germination Optimization	\$5,000	Panel
East Texas Aquaponics	Mineola	Texas	Improving Food Safety in Aquaponics	\$5,000	Panel
Costa Farm & Greenhouse	White Bear Lake	Minnesota	Streamline Packing Facility with New Storage and Maintenance Building	\$5,000	Panel
City Roots	Columbia	South Carolina	Helping Farmers Feed Families	\$3,000	Vote
Lone Tree Foods	Crete	Nebraska	Larger Truck to Meet the Needs of our Expanding Local Food Network	\$1,000	Vote
Long and Scott Farms	Mount Dora	Florida	New Horizons for Sustaining Our Family Farm: Processing	\$1,000	Vote