

Seth Kroeck  
Brunswick  
LD 2212

Good afternoon Agriculture Conservation and Forestry Committee Chairs, Honorable Members and Valuable Staff.

My name is Seth Kroeck and for the last 21 years I have run Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick. We currently raise organic vegetables small grains and wild blueberries, marketed both in Maine and to markets south of Kittery.. Last year we received a \$137,000 grant award from the AIIP program to make improvements to our produce packing facility. These improvements have allowed us to safely and efficiently pack, store and deliver our products and the products of the farmers and processors we work with throughout the region. row.

Any Mainer will tell you that agriculture is a major part of both our economy of the character of state yet today only 15% of the calories we eat come from within our borders.. During the last century grain, livestock and fresh produce, in addition to potatoes blueberries and seafood, sustained the people of this state and surplus was sent to Boston, New York and beyond. Over the last 100 years Maine has not lost all its farmland or its skilled farmers but we have lost much of the infrastructure needed to produce, distribute and market food on scale. Simply stated our farms have not been able to make improvements needed to meet their productive potential.

Farmers (and fisherman for that matter) need improved buildings, cold storage, specialized equipment and access to energy that powers it all. Such improvements will allow producers to expand their operations, provide steady high skill jobs, support more local suppliers and most importantly feed more Mainers.

I urge you to support LD2212 and give the food producers in this state then same opportunity, year after year that we were lucky to have with the AIIP program.