



***Get To Know Your MFVGA Board Directors
This month: Janssen Hang***



Hello MFVGA members and fellow farmers - Happy May!

It has been a long winter and a stressful spring, with snow, rain and cold weather; we continue to be challenged at all levels, but we are strong, we are resilient and we are optimistic that this year will be fruitful regardless of the obstacles we face.

My name is Janssen Hang and I am a farmer and a Co-founder and Executive Director of the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA). I grew up farming with my families, picking cucumbers for Gedney, a large pickling company, and later transitioning to mixed vegetable production, where we sold our produce at the Saint Paul and Minneapolis Farmers Markets.

As immigrants to the United States, my parents lacked the skill set in this post-industrial society, thus they were not afraid to use their labor and farming knowledge to earn additional income to support my siblings and me. To this day, the Hang Family Farm not only involves my parents and their seven children, but also their grandchildren, creating a multi-generational farming family.

For many years we farmed in various locations until 2014, when we made the HAFA Farm our home in Dakota County. With long-term land access, it allowed us to incorporate perennials, fruits and vegetables, explore high tunnel production, and continue to grow over 60 varieties of produce – from staples like potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and peas to culturally appropriate vegetables and herbs, such as Thai eggplant, Hmong cucumber, lemon grass, and mugwort.

One thing I have learned over the course of my farming career is that farming is hard work, it's laborious, and it never stops; yet it is so incredibly rewarding as it shapes us to be strong and resilient, builds a good work ethic while feeding our community, and ensures everyone has access to tasty, fresh, locally grown produce.

As warmer weather is in the forecast, we can start what we all enjoy: planting, cultivating, harvesting and overall, seeing the fruits of our labor continue to sustain a strong local food system.

Thank you for all your hard work and for supporting MFVGA. We wish you all good health and a successful growing season!

Janssen Hang