

Farm Worker Farms

A California Agriculture Social Business Owned & Operated by Farmworkers



The Farm Worker Farms (FWF) project is a social business enterprise and cooperative hemp farm owned and operated by farmworkers.

Farm Worker Farms' mission is to empower farmworkers as owners and operators of successful farms that use organic, regenerative and sustainable agriculture. Farm Worker Farms is using a unique business strategy to break out of the box that has limited the empowerment and opportunities of farmworkers in the past. It is designed to harness the best practices of the sustainable / regenerative agricultural movement and the social business / cooperative / organized labor movement.

The FWF project is establishing an urban indoor hemp nursery operation in the Bay View Hunters Point neighborhood of the city and county of San Francisco. Using the successful model of other indoor California hemp nurseries, FWF will grow and harvest high quality CBD hemp all-year-long to supply the rapidly expanding CBD consumer products market. Additionally, FWF will use its nursery operation to produce high quality CBD hemp seed marketed to the expanding hemp agriculture market.

Farm Worker Farms will be operated as a unionized “social business”, structured as a California LLC. FWF LLC will be a worker cooperative enterprise that is owned and controlled by its worker-owners. A social business generates profits but reinvest them into the company to further its social impact, instead of distributing dividends. The two most well-known social business in the United States are the Newman’s Own food company and the Give Something Back office products company.

FWF will operate as a social business and a union cooperative with a union contract that benefits the interests of its workers. Union cooperatives are worker owned co-ops where the worker-owners are union members with a union contract. Recology, the garbage company in San Francisco, is an example of an employee owned business with a Teamster union contract.

Located in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco, Farm Worker Farms will also serve as a CityGrow union apprenticeship site for local workforce development.

California Hemp

The new and legal California hemp agriculture industry has created a great opportunity to establish Farmworker Farms. Because it is the largest state by population, the largest agricultural state, and has no snow or frost in its prime growing areas; California is positioned grow into the USA’s largest hemp growing, production and consumption market. Hemp in California is highly profitable. It is regulated by the state and its 58 counties. San Francisco is the only combined city and county in the state.

California Farmworkers

California is well known for the birth of the United Farm Workers union and farmworkers movement. San Francisco is both a center for farm worker support and business innovation.

Farmworkers should be at the center of California hemp agriculture as growers, owners and managers. Farmworkers have always been at the center of agriculture. What they have always lacked is ownership and the empowering opportunity it creates. Farmworkers Farms is designed is seize the historic opportunity of the re-birth of California hemp agriculture and leverage it into a new model of economic opportunity for farmworkers. This will create a model that eventually can be replicated in any area and with any crop to benefit farmworkers anywhere.

Project Team

Farm Worker Farms is being developed by a team of experienced hemp business, farm and labor leaders. Collectively we have decades of experience developing hemp businesses, hemp farms, and organizing with the United Farm Workers Union, the United Food & Commercial Workers Union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the City of San Francisco and the State of California. Better World Advisors is facilitating the project.

The key elements defining Farm Worker Farms are:

- **Social Business**

Social business is a relatively new economic model developed by economics professor and Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus. A social business's profits are reinvested into the company to further its social impact, instead of distributing them as dividends to owners. A social business competes in the marketplace on service, price, quality plus branding. It pays taxes like a regular business. All revenues above operating cost are directed to advancing the mission of the social business.

The global social business movement has hundreds of successful examples of thriving enterprises, most started in the past ten years. Social Business is a specific business structure developed by Mohamad Yunus. The two most well-known social business in the United States are the Newman's Own food company and the Give Something Back office products company. The California Institute for Social Business (<https://socialbusiness.csuci.edu/>) and The Yunus Centre (<https://www.muhammadyunus.org>) provide information and services to the social business movement.

- **Worker Cooperative / Co-op**

Broadly speaking a co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. Co-operatives are businesses owned and run by and for their members. Whether the members are the customers, employees or residents they have an equal say in what the business does and a share in the profits. As businesses driven by values not just profit, co-operatives share internationally agreed principles and act together to build a better world through co-operation.

A worker cooperative is an enterprise that produces goods and is owned and controlled by its worker-owners. Ownership of a worker cooperative is vested solely with the worker-owners on an equal basis. Moreover, worker-owners control the resources of the cooperative and the work process. Each worker-owner has equal decision-making power and ultimate authority rests with the worker-owners as a whole. Worker control can be exercised directly or indirectly by worker-owners. If exercised indirectly, members of representative decision-making bodies (e.g. a Board of Directors) are elected by the worker-owners and subject to removal by the worker-owners.

Farmworker Farms will operate as a worker cooperative. It will collaborate with other worker owner farms and use the best practices developed by groups such as the Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives (BAWC) and the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) to guide its development and contribute to the cooperative movement.

- **Unionized Cooperative**

Farmworker Farms will be a social business and worker cooperative with a union contract that benefits the interests of its workers.

Union cooperatives are worker owned co-ops where the worker-owners are union members with a union contract. Union cooperatives collective bargaining agreements cover wages, benefits and working conditions. Worker-owners are able to look out for their common interests as both workers and owners. At the same time there are united with organized labor and the labor movement.

This is based on the successful model of Recology Inc. in San Francisco, an employee owned business with a Teamster union contract. US based Union co-ops include; Homeland Stores, an employee-owned, 80-store unionized grocery chain (UFCW 1000) in Oklahoma and Texas, New Era Windows in Chicago, and New York City's Cooperative Home Care Associates (SEIU) the largest worker cooperative in the United States, among others.

The labor contract negotiated becomes the baseline of benefits due to the membership and guarantees to the community that the working conditions are not unfavorable. Union membership for worker cooperatives gives the enterprise a legitimate standard of operations.

- **Bayview Hunters Point**

Bayview and Hunters Point, originally distinct San Francisco neighborhoods, were conflated long ago as the isolated area became marginalized and homogenized. Hunters Point was an important site for shipbuilding, and later became a site to decontaminate vessels exposed to atomic weapons testing, which created toxic waste; it was shut down in the 1990s. The area also housed a power plant that caused pollution and it too was eventually shut down. While these industries boomed, they attracted hordes of blue-collar workers, and when they closed, those workers were stuck in poverty at the edge of the city in an ecologically destroyed neighborhood with crumbling infrastructure. This history left Bayview with the highest rates of poverty, crime, and public housing developments in San Francisco.

Today Bayview is in a state of renewal, diversifying in both cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, ranging from working class, middle class, artist, and doctors who work in the nearby Mission Bay

The San Francisco Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure has a Bayview Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan (“BVHP Plan”) that it is implementing for community revitalization and economic development. Farm Worker Farms will work with city, business and community leaders to actively support Bayview Hunters Point’s community, workforce, and sustainable development goals.

- **CityGrow Hemp Apprenticeship**

The state of California has a Statewide Cannabis Industry Employers Joint Apprenticeship Committee created in response to the industries explosive growth. They work with San Francisco Community College, employers and labor unions on CityGrow, the city’s (and first in the nation) cannabis industry apprenticeship program for pharmacy technicians, cannabis nursery specialists, manufacturing technicians, and cannabis distribution drivers. This program also addresses workforce equity for communities of color.

Farm Worker Farms will work with CityGrow in San Francisco to develop a Hemp Apprenticeship program that will use its urban hemp nursery as an industry training site to develop and promote both local and state-wide hemp industry apprenticeship.

Summary

The Farm Worker Farms is a social business enterprise and cooperative hemp farm owned and operated by farmworkers. Its mission is to empower farmworkers as owners and operators of successful farms that use organic, regenerative and sustainable agriculture. The project is establishing an urban indoor hemp nursery operation in the Bay View Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco.

Using the successful and profitable model of other indoor California hemp nurseries, it will grow and harvest high quality CBD hemp all-year-long to supply the rapidly expanding CBD products market.

Farm Worker Farms uses a strategy to break out of the box that has limited the empowerment and opportunities of farmworkers in the past. The project is designed to seize the historic opportunity of the re-birth of California hemp agriculture and leverage it into a new model of economic opportunity for farmworkers. This will create a model that eventually can be replicated in any area and with any crop to benefit farmworkers anywhere.

**FARM WORKER
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