

## Crops for Hunger

In 2018 the church leadership board at Deep Run East Mennonite Church started an initiative to encourage new ideas and vision for the use of our abundant resources including buildings and grounds, new and innovative ways to serve God. I was reminded of an article I read in the Mennonite Weekly Review June 10, 2002 that I had saved. The article was about farmers in Minnesota raising crops to sell with the proceeds going to the Food Resource Bank now known as Growing Hope Globally. Growing Hope Globally partners with organizations who implement education and training programs along with providing resources to subsistence farmers with the goal to feed their families and improve livelihoods. Farmers in North America helping farmers in need around the world. I thought this would be an ideal way to use the 40 tillable acres that our church is blessed with. Our goal in starting a Growing Hope Globally 'Growing Project' is to raise sufficient funds to plant and harvest the crops so that the total proceeds from the sale of crop go to a program in support of subsistence farmers. December 2019 the congregation affirmed the idea and the congregation responded by allocating existing funds and making contributions. Team leaders for the project Phil Nyce, Henry Rice and Mark Schmidt and I began planning for the 2020 planting season. Along with other farmers in the congregation it was determined soybeans would be our crop. Our fields were planted on May 27.

While the soybean crop was growing sweet corn was ready for harvest. In April 2020 Joe Dise and his uncle Dean Overholt approached our team about wanting to help out families in need both locally and Crops for Hunger. The affects of the pandemic was part of the stimulus for their intention. The idea was to plant extra sweet corn to harvest and sell or give to the local people in need. As a team we were all in. But with Covid some of the ideas for distributing sweet corn were not feasible. So the idea of a roadside stand seemed to be one of the ways to distribute the sweet corn, offer without a cost but a free will gift supporting Crops for Hunger. Some sweet corn was also sold at local establishment and several freezer orders were taken. In the end sweet corn produced \$1,333 towards the crops for hunger Project.

Our congregation has been working for many years to provide assistance in Honduras with MAMA, Healthy Ninos and Children without Choices. Growing Hope Globally had a program in Honduras implemented by MCC 'Orocuina and Liure'. We decided to support this Growing Hope Globally program with the proceeds of our crop.

God blessed Bucks County with a wonderful growing season, timely rain and warm temperatures the crop was growing well. November 7 was finally the day that our soybeans were harvested. The crop exceeded our goal with a 62 bushel per acre average, we harvested 2,496 bushels. We arranged for our crop to be purchased by Weavers Toasted Grains in New Holland PA. Member Dale Overholt and his employer PV Transport generously hauled the crop to market.

Upon receiving a copy of the check from Weavers Toasted Grains I realize that the check was written for a greater amount than I expected. As it turns out the owners at Weavers Toasted Grain wanted to help out and generously contributed to the project as well. An unexpected gift! The soybean proceeds totaled \$32,166.79. We are grateful for the many people who helped out with this project, supported in prayer, and with material and financial contributions and what a blessing it has been.

Growing Projects can be small or large, crops or gardens, milk, honey and orchards, I've learned there are a wide variety of projects supporting the effort to relieve hunger in our world.



# CROPS FOR HUNGER



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