



4 August 2014

Facilities Engineering and Planning

RE: Rice University Farmers' Market – Innovation Credit Letter of Support

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept this letter as evidence of my support of the STARS Innovation Credit being submitted by Rice University for the Rice University Farmers' Market.

I served as the President of the Houston Farmers' Market starting in 2008, and continued in this role when the market was officially re-christened the Rice University Farmers' Market in 2011. The non-profit entity that ran the market was dissolved later that year, with its assets conveyed to the University. At that time, I stepped down from the role of President, but have remained active as an advisor to the market since then.

The Houston Farmers Market – now the Rice University Farmers' Market – was the first farmers' market in Houston. There are several aspects of the Rice University Farmer's Market that I believe meet the STARS innovation credit criteria:

- The year-round market is Houston's most popular Tuesday farmers' market.
- Rice University chefs are required to procure from the market as part of their performance reviews.
- Rice University students can now use their meal plans to purchase goods at the market.
- Market vendors provide food for once-a-semester farm-to-fork dinners hosted by the Rice student organization Real Food Revolution, and typically attend those dinners as guest speakers.
- Rice University chefs provide healthy recipes in the weekly market newsletters.
- Weekly market newsletters are sent electronically to the university's "alldpts" mailing list, which reaches most faculty and staff. In doing so, this provides the opportunity to educate these populations about food sustainability.
- Market vendors regularly host Rice staff and students for farm tours.
- Rice University's Housing and Dining department advertises farmers' market ingredients and dishes in the dining halls as a way to promote healthy eating and sustainability.
- The market helps to create a vibrant local agricultural economy.
- The market provides customers with the opportunity to engage in many aspects of food sustainability.

Broadly speaking, the Rice University Farmers' Market has played a critical role in the past few years of transforming the dining experience at Rice, and in raising awareness amongst the students in particular about healthy eating and sustainable agriculture. As such, I believe that this program is deserving of a STARS innovation credit.

Sincerely,



Richard R. Johnson

Director, Administrative Center for Sustainability and Energy Management