

THE OFFICE OF VICE MAYOR STEVE KAY
200 EAST MAIN STREET – 5TH FLOOR
LEXINGTON, KY 40507



Date: September 22, 2015

Subject: University of Kentucky STARS Innovation Credit – UK Food Connection

Dear STARS review committee:

As a key sponsor of Lexington's local food program, Bluegrass Farm to Table, I am excited by the University of Kentucky's commitment to "town gown" and "farm gown" relations through the UK Food Connection. Lexington, like the state of Kentucky, is known for its beautiful farmland and signature Bluegrass. In Lexington, this unique natural landscape is publicly protected and sustained by an urban services boundary restricting sprawl. This unique agrarian context is now mutually complemented by a local university program that can help support our world class environment for future generations.

The synergy of people, purpose, and place in support of the local food economy is an outstanding and innovative strength of the UK Food Connection. The program represents an enduring investment in the social layer of local food sustainability, which warrants its award of innovation credits beyond food/beverage dining purchasing and low impact dining. The UK Food Connection has, for example, partnered with Bluegrass Farm to Table, the Kentucky Horticulture Council, Fresh Stops, and Louisville Farm to Table. This program is unique among Kentucky higher education institutions, and it is a social investment in education and capacity-building that will help ensure our future generations have an economy, culture, and environment in healthy balance.

The University of Kentucky's leadership through the UK Food Connection should be a model for all Kentucky institutions of higher education. I support the inclusion of the UK Food Connection as a STARS innovation credit and am hopeful that its neighboring institutions will soon complement the synergy it is building.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Kay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "S" and "K" being capitalized and prominent.

Steve Kay
Vice Mayor