

Nutrients for All: Smallholder Farmers



Nourish the people who feed the world.

Worldwide, the farmers who produce the food we consume are chronically malnourished. We see the irony, and we believe this must change. In response, we are partnering with progressive companies to trial employer-sponsored packages of wellness services for their smallholder farmers.

Smallholder farmers are a key workforce population, and they are essential to producing the food that sustains growing populations. Many medium and large agribusiness companies contract with smallholder farmers to provide them with crops. In the recent past, agribusiness companies have recognized that it is to their benefit to assist their smallholder farmers in growing crops, encourage sustainable farming methods, and implement fair trade pricing. Now it is time to include wellness as part of these efforts.

Smallholder farmers' work requires both physical stamina and consistency, and they are routinely exposed to health threats specific to farming – extreme weather, disease-spreading insects, animals, and pesticides. Combined with poor health, smallholder farmers are at high risk for illness, injury, and reduced productivity.

We believe that it is far more cost-effective for companies to invest in integrated wellness programs for their smallholder farmers that combine “full nourishment” with primary health, sanitation and wellness education, enabled and measured by modern information technology. In fact, we believe that companies with integrated wellness programs will see significant increases in productivity that will more than offset the cost of offering these programs.

GAIN has developed a certification process that would ensure that farmers are enrolled in a program to ensure good nutrition supported by evidence-based nutrition practices. Ashoka and select leading Ashoka Fellows support this approach and are eager to partner with agricultural business, documenting both the interventions and measurable outcomes (e.g. productivity, injury and accident rates, days lost to illness and injury, and nutritional repletion) as part of an overall integrated wellness strategy for smallholder farmers.

The World Bank estimates that countries may lose two to three percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a result of malnutrition. We know that this does not need to be the case.

This is a call to action. [Join us.](#)

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