



# Healthy Food Access For All Minnesotans



## Good Food Access Program Grant Recipient Profile

### LAMECKER'S GENERAL STORE Kerkhoven, Minnesota

New refrigeration units will help expand community's food options.

Kerkhoven, Minn. bills itself as "a small town with big possibilities." But Scott Lamecker knows firsthand how quickly those possibilities can shrink with the loss of a community anchor like a grocery store. "When a town loses its main business, it hurts all the businesses in town, and it hurts the town," he says.

Scott has been running Lamecker's General Store in the Swift County community since 2014. He has worked hard to keep up with customer demand for groceries, updating his store twice in five years, but reached the limit on his refrigeration and freezer equipment.



*"Having a grocery store keeps people in town, and draws them in."*

That's where support from the Good Food Access Fund came in. Without the grant, Lamecker's would have been limited to purchasing smaller, used equipment—like the kind they bought several years ago, which is already experiencing problems.

"The grant allowed me to purchase the refrigeration units new. My store saves money in the long haul since modern units use less energy and are less likely to need repairs," says Scott. "I'm also able to buy them in the size we actually need to stock the foods the community wants."



The storefront sign of Lamecker's stands in the town center of Kerkhoven, Minn., a rural food desert community of 700 residents.

Kerkhoven residents are looking forward to the expanded grocery selection. Scott has been working with some of the town's newer Latino residents to offer culturally appropriate, nutritious foods. "I'd love to expand a whole section for healthy Hispanic foods," he says. "The new freezer units will definitely help with that."

The larger refrigerated cases will also be an important asset to Kerkhoven's senior citizens because they will hold more fresh produce, including locally grown. "With our home delivery service, our seniors will be able to get more healthy foods in their homes, even in the winter," says Scott.

In Scott's view, the Good Food Access Fund is something that's going to help make Kerkhoven an even better town than it is already. "Having a grocery store keeps people in town, and draws them in," he says.



#### ABOUT THE GOOD FOOD ACCESS PROGRAM

Recognizing the need for food access solutions in Minnesota, the American Heart Association, together with local and state coalition partners, advocated for the creation of the Good Food Access Program within the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in 2016. The program provides grants, loans and technical assistance to local enterprises for innovative food access solutions.

Learn more at [www.mnhealthykids.org](http://www.mnhealthykids.org)