



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: –Local Farmers benefit from grant to extend growing season.**

Bellingham, Washington: The Whatcom Community Foundation (Foundation) awarded \$27,400 to purchase hoop tunnels and to evaluate the technology's effectiveness in extending the growing season in Whatcom County. The grant was made to Sustainable Connections, the projects fiscal sponsor, from the Foundation's Sustainable Whatcom Fund. There is considerable interest locally and nationally in the use of hoop tunnel technology, a type of greenhouse made from hooped metal covered with plastic and other insulating materials.

According to Billy Tate of Moondance Farm, a project participant, "The high tunnel project is a great example of the community's interest and support in our local food system and looking at ways in which we can strengthen it. This project should be a great learning experience for farmers and the community alike." Tate added, "Hopefully it will shed more light on how critical it is to support our local farmers. The high tunnel project is aimed at growing more food locally by extending our seasons. It will increase the amount of locally grown fruits and vegetables available during a greater portion of the year. Hats off to the Whatcom Community Foundation's Sustainable Whatcom Fund Advisory Committee for thinking forward and supporting a project that directly contributes to strengthening the business model for a segment of the farming community."

The hoops for the demonstration project were delivered to eight local farmers on Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. Participating farmers will extend the season by growing early and late season vegetables. The group will work together to collect and share data throughout the duration of the project. Participating farms, most of which have Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and sell at the Bellingham Farmers Market, are: Osprey Hill Farm, Moondance Farm, Holistic Homestead Farm, Growing Washington, Nooksack Nine Farm, Rabbit Field Farm, Cedarville Farm and Terra Verde Farm.

Whatcom Community Foundation connects people who care with causes that matter. Since its inception in 1996, the Foundation has awarded grants totaling more than \$7 million dollars to local organizations working to strengthen and enhance the Whatcom County community.

For more information, visit [WhatcomCF.org](http://WhatcomCF.org) or contact the Foundation at (360) 671-6463.