# *Thank you for your commitment to green initiatives at the University of Illinois. One of the ongoing requirements listed in the terms of the funding agreement for your project is the submission of semesterly reports with key information about your project. In addition to this form, please provide additional financial documentation and/or progress photos if available.*

# *Please be as accurate as possible in describing the project (including possible setbacks or challenges in meeting the initial goals of the project). Not fully meeting your project's goals will not disqualify you from making future funding requests as long as your reports are as complete and accurate as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Micah Kenfield, Program Advisor for the Student Sustainability Committee, at* *kenfield@illinois.edu**.*

**Project Name:** Fermenting Foods for Education and Waste Reduction

**Date of Report Submission:** Fall 2016 Semester Report

**Project Purpose:**

The idea for this project grew as a result of the ongoing relationship between the Department of Crop Sciences Sustainable Student Farm, the Food Science and Human Nutrition Pilot Processing Plant, and University Dining Services. It was made aware to us that many of the hot chiles that are grown at the Student Farm are just composted, as there is not a high demand for unprocessed peppers from Dining Services. As a result, a plan was devised to take the excess hot chiles that were not purchased by dining for use in the creation of a fermented hot sauce that could be served in the various University Dining Halls, as well as other University-run eateries such as the Bevier Café. A test batch was created in the Spring of 2016, which was quite successful. As a result of the successful test, a final plan was put in place to move forward with the project. The hot sauce represents a healthy and delicious product that also reduces food waste and provides hands on experience for students to better understand the fermentation process as well as food processing as a whole. Goals for the project include reduction of food waste, preservation of fresh produce that is grown by the Student Sustainable Farm, and providing hands-on educational experience for students.

**Detailed Accounting of Expenditures to Date:**

Pickl-It Big Bundle of Five Fermenters

Pickl-It Medium Bundle of Five Fermenters

Pickl-It Decant’R 4-Pack 3/4L Fermenters

Pickl-It Condiment Trio Bundle

Spring 2017 – will purchase remaining items for large batch processing – above for recipe development only.

**Project Progress to Date:**

In reference to our original calendar, several of our milestones were achieved ahead of schedule. Materials for the project were acquired in Early June, and the first test batches of hot sauce was produced in mid-June and then processed in mid-late July. First year production was started in September of 2016, and processing and bottling was completed in October of 2016. This was a small first production run, but the farm is growing a higher quantity of peppers for next year’s large production runs.

**Student Involvement and Outreach to Date:**

Students have been involved in all facets of the project. Students volunteering at the Student Sustainable Farm assisted in the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of the hot peppers. Students in Food Science and Human Nutrition have been helpful in recipe development as well as testing the first batches of the hot sauce for overall liking of the product as well as providing suggestions on how to improve the product. Student workers at the Food Science Pilot Plant have been active in all stages of the production of the product. This includes receiving and checking quality of the peppers, producing and canning the hot sauce itself, as well as distributing hot sauce for tasting samples. They have also assisted with recipe development as well as critiques for the recipe to create the most desirebale hot sauce we can.

**Marketing and Promotion Efforts to Date:**

We have done little marketing to this point as until recently, the project was still in test phases and was not distributed to University Dining on a large scale. We plan to include this project in many of Dining’s marketing effortsin 2017, as well as the “grand re-opening” of the FSHN Pilot Processing Plant activities.

**Additional Comments:**

With the growing season for hot peppers being done for right now, large scale production of the hot sauce will not begin until next Summer. Now that a set recipe is in place and most of the materials to produce the hot sauce at scale have been acquired, the Food Science Pilot Plant will be more than equipped to produce a considerable amount of hot sauce for the University Dining Halls in the Summer/Fall of 2017. This project provides a unique experience for students to be a part of the production of a product that could be seen all over campus.