

# WHAT MOTIVATES FARMERS TO SAY YES! TO GLEANING?



More Motivating

Motivating

Less Motivating



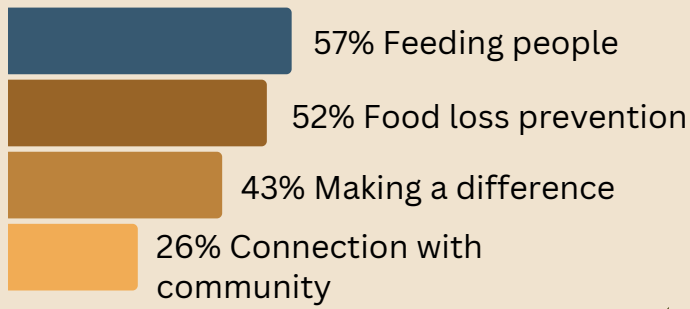
Social Impact

Environmental Impact

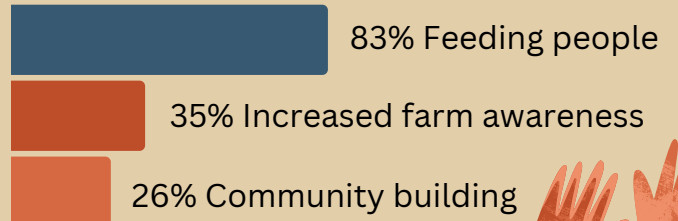
Economic Benefit

## Social Impact of Gleaning

### Personal Benefits (to farmer)



### Societal Benefits



### Perceived Drawback to Farmer

26% Discomfort with strangers on farm

### Perceived Drawback to Society

9% Reliance on donations year after year

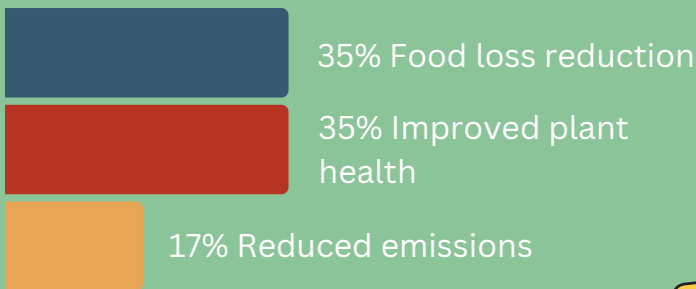
**Key Takeaway:** Gleaning organizations should consider emphasizing community impact and hunger-reduction when recruiting prospective farmers.

“ [Gleaning] benefits me as an individual ... I got into farming because I love to feed people and make sure that people have healthy food to eat. So being able to get that food to underserved communities, as close to home as possible, is just very fulfilling to me and makes me sleep easier at night.   
Farmer Interviewee

“ [Gleaning benefits] people who need high quality nutrition but can't afford it. They have a better outcome in life, health wise and mentally, when they're eating healthier food ... specifically food that's gleaned, that's vegetables, grains, things that combat heart disease, or combat obesity or diabetes.   
Farmer Interviewee

## Environmental Impact of Gleaning

### Farm-scale Benefits



### Global Benefits

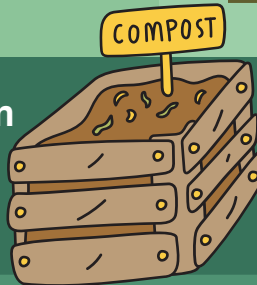


### Perceived Drawback to Farm

48% Lost opportunity to improve soil fertility treatment

### Perceived Drawback Globally

9% Lost opportunity to improve soil fertility treatment



“ Most food goes into landfills. And when food and carbon-based things decompose in landfills, [they] produce methane instead of like CO2 because there's no oxygen, and methane is so much worse [of a] greenhouse gas ... I think on the whole, most gleaning is net 1,000% for the environment.   
-- Farmer Interviewee

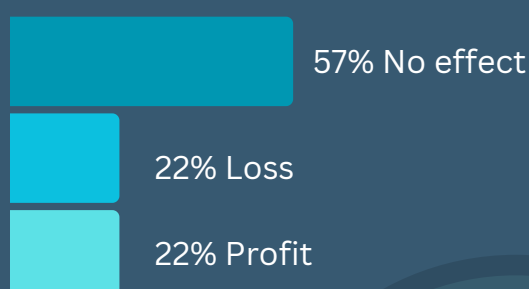
“ It is a very simple way to give back to my community and to reduce food waste. If you put effort into growing something, you might as well at least have somebody eat it, even if [you're] not able to sell it. --Farmer interviewee

**Key Takeaway:** Every farmer understands problems related to food loss differently, so gleaning organizations should approach food loss from several different angles when engaging with prospective farmers.

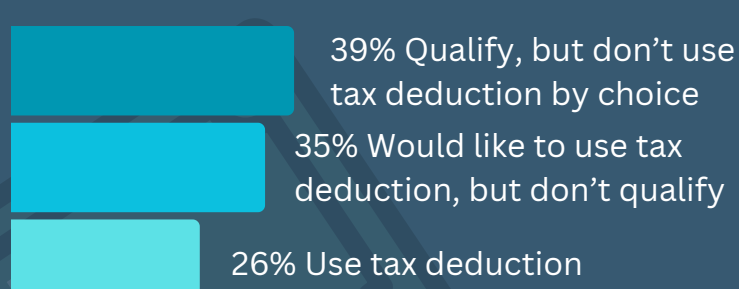
**Key Takeaway:** Gleaning organizations could talk with prospective farmers in a politically sensitive manner on the relationship between food loss and environmental problems affecting farmland.

## Economic Benefits of Gleaning

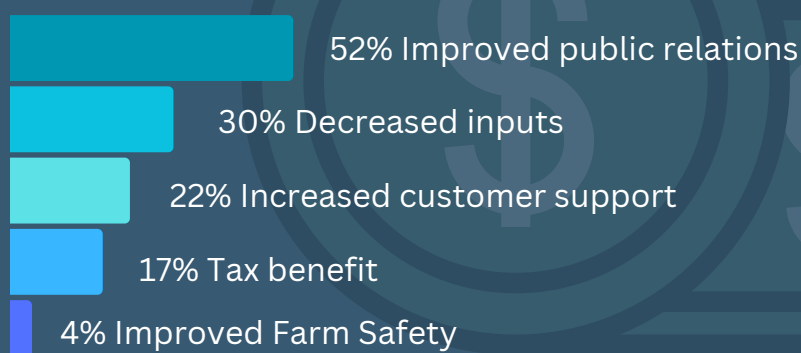
### Effect on Farm Profitability



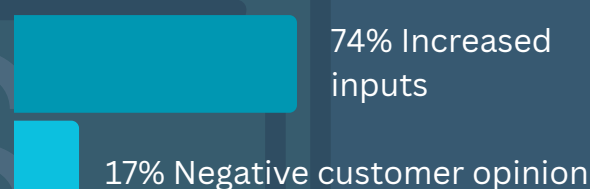
### Use of Federal Tax Deductions



### Other Important Economic Benefits



### Perceived Drawbacks



“ In the past two years, pandemic grant funding allowed us to get paid for [donations] at wholesale price. That funding is out, and we looked for more funding. [Gleaning] was too engrained in my soul to stop bringing them lots of food, so we just kept on doing it. -- Farmer Interviewee

“ Most of what's being gleaned is excess anyway. We really don't have any market for it. So, to this point, gleaning has no negative impact on our profitability -- Farmer Interviewee

**Key takeaway:** Farmers in this study are more motivated by social and environmental factors to participate in gleaning than economic incentives, with social benefits being the strongest.

**Key takeaway:** Federal-level tax deduction did not seem to be a significant motivator for farmers to participate in gleaning.

### About this Research

Study interviewees included 23 fruit/vegetable growers from rural, suburban or urban farms in Connecticut, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina who participate in gleaning.

Research findings suggest that farmers recognize social, environmental, and economic benefits of gleaning participation. Farmers in our study were most motivated to participate in gleaning due to social benefits, specifically hunger reduction. Economic benefits were not as incentivizing as expected, based upon findings from previous studies. Participants generally did not recognize the connection between gleaning and environmental benefits, such as emissions reductions. The findings suggest that gleaning organizations should place special emphasis on the hunger-reduction aspects of their work. There is also opportunity for gleaning organizations to inform prospective farmers of gleanings' wide-ranging benefits, especially related to the environment.

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