

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee, we thank you for your time and consideration of Bill #1334 in trying to make rhubarb the official state vegetable of North Dakota. We are a homeschool family and when we were studying North Dakota history, our kids recognized that North Dakota did not have a state vegetable and thought it would be great to give our favorite vegetable that honor. We then began our journey into learning how we could make rhubarb our state vegetable and we contacted our district representative Matt Heilman to help us down this path.

We believe rhubarb is a very worthy candidate for this honor as it has a large part in many cuisines and recipes of the heritages in North Dakota such as German, Scandinavian, and Russian/Ukrainian cultures. There are communities such as the Rugby, Aneta Community Orchard, and Grand Forks that hold annual summer festivals with rhubarb tasting competitions. Rhubarb even had a part in helping North Dakotans survive the Dust Bowl during the years of the Great Depression as described in the book *Prairie Cooks* by Carrie Young with Felicia Young. In the book there is a chapter titled "Entire County Saved By Rhubarb" and tells tales of a huge rhubarb patch in Williams County, North Dakota.

Due to its use in jams and jellies, breads, pies and other various desserts, some people incorrectly think it is a fruit, but this very distinct vegetable is much like North Dakotans as it is tolerant of cold weather and can survive below zero temperatures, and that makes it a perfect vegetable to grow in upper Midwest states like North Dakota. It has a tart and tangy flavor in its vibrant red and green stalks and also has many health benefits as it contains potassium, vitamin C & K, calcium, fiber, and antioxidants and is very low in calories.

Again we believe rhubarb is a worthy candidate to be the state vegetable of North Dakota and we thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

The Steckler Homeschool Academy