

Aung Thin farmed vegetables, rice and small livestock at his farm in Karen State of Burma. Internal armed conflict forced him and his family to a refugee camp in Thailand, and eventually to Minnesota in 2008 with his family of six. His intention was to provide opportunity for his family, children and grandchildren for education and away from war. He joined Minnesota Food Association's Big River Farms Training Program in 2011 because he wants to farm and he believes in fresh food, Karen food, and maintaining a Karen traditional diet and traditions as best he can. He worked on Big River Farms as a farm apprentice and went through the full training program. He wants to know where his food comes from and what it is for his own reasons and values; not because there is a movement going on in the USA. Aung Thin says that one significant assistance from MFA was plot planning and understanding when



to plant what and how in a northern climate. He credits the MFA staff for their personal assistance, and MFA for creating the opportunity for him to farm in America. For three years now he has worked on Big River Farms in all aspects of organic vegetable farming, and is maintaining a 1-acre farm that produces a wide range of vegetable. He admits that he grows a lot for the US market, many crops that are not so familiar to him, but he also grows a lot of his traditional crops and uses the leaves, flowers and stems for food and sale as well. Broccoli stems, wild mustard greens and squash and pumpkin leaves and flowers are all good food when you know how to prepare them. Zucchini is one of his favorite to grow because it grows well and has plentiful flowers and young leaves to eat. He sells to Big River Farms CSA, and he also sells to his neighbors in St Paul. He donates much of his food to neighbors and food shelves as well. He came to America looking to gain hope for his family and he has found it so far in farming with MFA.