

# VOLUNTEER SHOWCASE

November 2012, Minnesota

## Leftover Crop Not Going to Waste; Volunteers Collect and Donate to Local Food Banks

In summer 2012, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices throughout the country received a challenge. States were asked to plan two gleaning events using Earth Team Volunteers and then donate the produce to local food banks.

The Park Rapids Field Office in Minnesota gladly accepted the challenge and moved forward with planning. Wayne Warmbold, human resources executive with the R.D. Offutt Company and affiliates (a potato grower and frozen processing facility in Park Rapids) was contacted about picking the leftover potatoes from a harvested field. Warmbold said, "You are definitely welcome to pick them. It's good that they won't go to waste."

**Gleaning: the process of collecting crop remaining in a field after harvest**



*Earth Team volunteers glean a potato field in Minnesota. The crop was donated to a local food bank.*

NRCS and the local Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District promoted this event by placing an ad in the local paper, distributing event posters and word of mouth. Their outreach efforts worked. The field office had an additional 11 Earth Team Volunteers in the field.

The R.D. Offutt farm employees liked the idea of giving the leftover potatoes to the local food shelf and were very helpful with the gleaning event. Ready to pick and happy to help with the food drive, volunteers were guided to an easily accessible field and directed to areas in the field with potatoes remaining on the ground.

In just 2.5 hours, 2,000 pounds of potatoes were collected. Food from the gleaning event was distributed to the Hubbard County Food Shelf in Park Rapids, MN and the Akeley Community Food Shelf in Akeley, MN.



The Earth Team is the volunteer component of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a USDA agency. For more about NRCS and the Earth Team, visit [www.usda.nrcs.gov](http://www.usda.nrcs.gov).

If you are interested in volunteering, call (888) 526-3227 or visit your local NRCS office to learn about volunteer opportunities.