



APRIL 2024

Greetings, *{{First Name}}*,

A couple days ago, I woke up farmer-early. Thankfully not so early that I ran into the bear that likes to come during the dark night hours of April to tip over the trash can and the bee hive, but early enough to get on the road to Charleston, West Virginia, where I'm happily **reporting to you live from the [National Farm Viability Conference](#).**

It's been an action-packed couple of days **learning from veteran farm service providers, having catalytic conversations in the hallways, and embracing the small thrills of meeting people in person** who we've been working "with" for months on the internet. Read on for a few highlights from our time here.

On the lending side of things, I'm proud to share **two highlights of our loan funds at work in April.** In a fun twist, both are **return borrowers who came back to us for different reasons to achieve their expansion goals.** We love the chance to build on existing partnerships with borrowers who are easily managing loan repayments and have a clear roadmap for growth.

Thanks, as always, for joining us on this journey, and for supporting Foodshed Capital in all the ways you do.

With gratitude,

Erica Hellen
Director of Strategy & Comms.



CAPITAL IN THE FIELD



The Garden International // Beltsville, Maryland

If you've been keeping up with Foodshed Capital over the last year or so, maybe you'll recognize [The Garden International \(TGI\)](#), a **Maryland-based urban mushroom farm** that has been growing gourmet specialty mushrooms since 2021.

Owners Cory Moore and Liz Robinson grow over 20 varieties of chemical-free mushrooms with a focus on **“restorative sustainable systems that work in harmony with nature.”**

From the start, educating the public about the nutritional benefits of mushrooms, how they grow, and their importance in the ecosystem has been a big part of the mission. TGI works with youth at local schools through their S.T.E.A.M. curriculum and offers Grow-Your-Own Mushroom Kits to **catalyze the next generation of mushroom farmers.**

Foodshed Capital supported TGI with a 0% interest loan a year ago to purchase new equipment and expand their market channels. **In April, we deepened our partnership through a second round of 0% interesting financing** to support their ambitious growth plan.

On their new 12-acre farm, TGI is constructing a **Mushroom Learning Center** where visitors will be able to see how gourmet mushrooms are grown, participate in environmental education programming like foraging walks, and attend classes and events. **The center will allow TGI to both substantially gear up mushroom production to meet demand and increase revenue, and expand their impact in the community.** We're so proud to partner with them as the business grows!



Triple E Farms // Romney, West Virginia

Triple E is a regenerative livestock farm run by brothers Tony and Phil Eash that produces 100% grass-fed beef, pasture-raised pork, chicken, and eggs, and is one of just a few "**Ecological Outcome Verified (EOV)**" farms in the mid-Atlantic. This holistic, outcome-based monitoring protocol for grassland environments allows Triple E to **use**

data to monitor ecosystem function and provide actionable insights for for regenerative management.

Triple E launched in 2015, and when Tony and Phil's father passed away from heart failure, the vital importance of healthy food really hit home. This drove them to increase their knowledge around nutrition and spurred them to make nutrient-dense, regeneratively grown meat more accessible to their community.

Foodshed Capital supported Triple E in 2023 with a loan to purchase a walk-in freezer, which allowed them to accommodate more inventory and expand to sales to new wholesale customers. In April, we supported them with a second low-interest loan to allow them to refinance other debt, **freeing up cash flow for operations that will allow them to increase efficiency and achieve expansion goals.**

Refinancing is a relatively area new of lending for FoodCap, but one that we know can be transformative **for established farmers who struggled to access affordable capital before finding us.** We're proud to have expanded our partnership Triple as they **steward over 500 acres with regenerative practices.**



FARMER RESOURCES



RAFI-USA Beginning Farmer Stipends



FARMER QUALIFICATIONS: WHO CAN APPLY?

APPLICANT CHECKLIST:

- Historically underserved farmers and ranchers, according to USDA's definition
- Less than three years experience as a principal operator, and are committed to owning and operating a viable, sustainable farm business
- Owner or co-owner of the farming operation, or plan to launch your farm business in 2024. (Only one co-owner of a collective farm operation may apply on behalf of their organization)
- Farming or ranching in the US Southeast: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MO, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA or DC

Attention, new and early-stage farmers!

The [RAFI-USA beginning farmer stipend](#) program supports the success of **historically underserved farmers and ranchers by helping to reduce financial barriers**. Stipends may be used to cover farming start-up and/or production costs. Individual applicants may request between \$3,000 – \$5,000 in funding.

Deadline to Apply: May 31, 2024

Learn more and apply here:

[Learn More](#)



OUT & ABOUT





FoodCap at the National Farm Viability Conference

Director of Ag Business Advising, Alex Pate, and Executive Director, Michael Reilly, and I are here in wild and wonderful West Virginia amongst a passionate group of peer service providers, farmers, advocacy groups, consultants, and ag lenders. Whether it's through market channel analysis or new frameworks for whole cost accounting; providing innovative land access models and affordable financing; or helping farmers develop concrete resilience strategies in the face of a changing climate... **this community of practice is dedicated to working through the sticky and systemic challenges facing farmers.**

It's not lost on any of us that **farm viability is tied to larger policy issues outside our realm of control that can take years, even decades, to shift.** Still, I'm galvanized by the collective desire to build on what we know in ways that more actionably shift the landscape for farmers.

Our team's wheels are turning about how we can **join forces to aggregate the wealth of resources we've collectively developed and work toward deeper food system transformation** - while continuing to make sure farmers have the capital and business support they need to run thriving businesses *right now.*

Many thanks to the [American Farmland Trust Growing Equity Partnership](#) for making it possible for the FoodCap team to be here!

PLEASE: SUPPORT OUR WORK

Foodshed Capital is a non-profit, charitable loan fund. We are a capital provider, but we are not a bank.

With interest rates between 0-4%, no fees for borrowers, and zero-cost business support services, **our work is only possible through financial support from folks like you.**

Financial gifts allow us to support farmers like Liz, Cory, Tony, and Phil as they work to make food systems more equitable and more regenerative.

[Click here to learn about all the ways you can support Foodshed Capital:](#)

Support Our Work



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