



 NEWS & UPDATES
OCTOBER 2023

{{First Name}},

It's not lost on me that October was a challenging month for many. **If you have the space to receive it, I am heartened to share news of a very good month at Foodshed Capital** as we continued our work providing vital resources to regenerative farmers and food producers. Perhaps everyone can agree the world needs some more good in it right now.

First off, **I am SO PROUD (not yelling, just really excited) to announce that FoodCap has been awarded a grant through the [USDA 2501 Program](#)**, which provides funding to support training, outreach and technical assistance to underserved and veteran farmers, ranchers, and foresters. Over three years, **we'll use the funds to build out our Business Support program, hire a full-time accounting lead** to increase our capacity for 1:1 financial advising, and provide more free public workshops and resources to help underserved farmers increase the long term success of their businesses. **We're hiring now—read on for more about our new [job opportunity](#).**

October was a big month for travel. From Alabama and Pennsylvania to rural Virginia and Washington D.C., **our team represented FoodCap's work on panel discussions, at a fancy farm dinner, and at funder convenings—sometimes literally out in the fields.** (Beats a hotel banquet hall any day, IMO!) Highlights below, including news of an exciting emerging partnership with [Rodale Institute](#).

Speaking of emerging partnerships, **we're cooking up another one with American Farmland Trust by way of their [Regenerate Virginia](#) initiative.** Yours truly will be advising on the development of a grant program to incentivize Virginia farmers as they plan for and implement regenerative practices. Before the grant program goes live, **AFT is offering full scholarships for VA-based farmers interested in boosting their business skills.** Scroll on down for details.

Finally, I'll share that (as any good comms lead should) I periodically sift through the list of those of you who open this little monthly newsletter. **I see you readers and clickers, and your engagement means a lot—especially right now—because I believe it translates to a collective desire for a better world that is better for all the life and people in it.**

Thank you for reading, for joining us in celebrating the wins, and for rooting for a better world. It'll take all of us.

Onward,

Erica Hellen
Director of Strategy & Comms.



NEW JOB OPENING

SEEKING:

Director of Farm Business Advising

Thanks to grant funding from the [USDA 2501 Program](#), we're hiring a [Director of Farm Business Advising](#) to help us build out our Business Support services—with a focus on deepening our support for Black, Indigenous, and other underserved farm business owners of color.

This individual must possess strong expertise in bookkeeping and accounting to ensure we have the capacity to dive deep on farmer financials. It's also critical they have **strong experience working directly with BIPOC business owners, and/or the lived experience to facilitate trusted partnerships.**

Know someone who might be a great fit for the role? **Click below to learn more, and please share with your networks.**

[Learn More](#)



FOODCAP ALL OVER THE MAP



Our intrepid Executive Director, **Michael Reilly (right)** at the **Environmental Grantmakers Association annual fall retreat** in Montgomery, Alabama.

Michael had the honor of joining Mark Watson of [Potlikker Capital](#) and Jasmyn Elise Story of [Freedom Farm Azul](#) on a panel discussion entitled: Racial Equity Healing, and Community in Land Ownership.

A highlight of the retreat for Michael was a moving visit to [The Legacy Museum](#), which provides an immersive journey through America's history of racial injustice.



Lending Associate Ashley Appolon and Michael made it to DC for the [Opportunity Finance Network](#) annual conference, which is a major convening for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) around the country.

A researcher at heart (see our [September newsletter](#)), Ashley connected with quite a few other CDFIs to share notes about data collection and analysis. In addition to pretty much completely taking over our back-end loan administration, Ashley has taken the lead on tracking our impact. **The connections she made will lead to continued improvements in how we assess the value of our work.**



For the second year in a row, FoodCap was invited to a glorious dinner party at [Esther Manor Farm](#). This Virginia-based farm is producing traditional African produce using regenerative practices. FoodCap supported owner Patience Fielding (right) in 2022 with zero-cost business support as she expanded her operation, and she has graciously invited members of our team to the annual celebration to share in her farm's bounty. What an honor!

Ashley represented FoodCap again this year and reported on the incredible food, as well as a fashion show celebrating traditional and modern African attire and its cultural significance.



A great time was had the **annual [Funders for Regenerative Agriculture \(FoRA\)](#) convening, which took place this year at [Rodale Institute](#)** in Pennsylvania.

Michael and I had a wonderful time learning from Rodale's incredible team of regenerative organic crop researchers, meeting with the current **[Rodale Institute Farmer Training \(RIFT\) program](#)** cohort, and discussing a meaningful and equitable transition to regenerative agriculture alongside a wonderful group of values-aligned funders. The FoRA team poured their hearts into planning this convening, and it showed.



In talking at length with the Rodale team, Michael and I were thrilled to discover **several opportunities for partnership and collaboration.** (Side note: I only say thrilled when I really mean it.) Examples include:

- Supporting the RIFT program graduates with further business support and financing as they launch their farm businesses, and
- Providing direct connections for BIPOC farmers in our network with the **[Rodale micro-grant program.](#)**

Stay tuned - I'll share more as opportunities unfold.



REGENERATE VIRGINIA FARM VITALITY COHORT



→ Receive a **full scholarship** (\$1250 value) for a 10-week online farm business course: The Farmer's Edge (Dec 2023 - Feb 2024)

→ Participate in a **cohort of Virginia farmers** that will meet virtually, monthly, following course completion (Mar 2024 - Sept 2024)

This opportunity is open to any farmer in Virginia who wants to improve their farm business for more regenerative management. If interested, please email rmcdonald@farmland.org



The Farmer's Edge, Course Topics:

- Basic Accounting
- Quickbooks and other systems
- Business and Financial Analysis
- Planning for Growth

Learn more at <https://juliashanks.com/thefarmersedge/#businessdev>

Farmland Trust is providing scholarships to Virginia-based farmers interested in building their skills in bookkeeping and accounting, business planning, and growth strategy. The scholarship will cover the full cost of **The Farmer's Edge**, a program tailored to small-scale farmers looking to grow their operations toward better profitability. The program will expand through a peer cohort, allowing farmers in the state to continue sharing notes and resources.

Farmers: email rmcdonald@farmland.org to get started. Others: please share this wonderful opportunity with your networks!

Learn More



SUPPORT OUR WORK

Announcing a new way to support!

In 2021, we joined forces with **Atmos Financial**, a climate-focused online bank that recognizes the importance of banking for a better planet. As an Atmos approved non-profit, we've been grateful to receive monthly support from their climate-conscious customers ever since.

Now, Atmos has launched **Joint Savings Accounts**. If you open an account using our **unique referral link**, we'll receive a \$20 donation - and you'll get a higher savings rate if you make recurring donations. Win win!

Explore Atmos

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