



## JANUARY 2024

\*{{First Name}}\*,

And just like that, January is in the rearview.

The first month of the year is always a blur at Foodshed Capital. Winter brings farmers time to slow down, plan ahead, and seek out the funding they need for the coming year, so **our pipeline is buzzing with applications from dozens of farms, bakeries, food hubs, and food justice organizations.**

Our full team meets once a week to discuss each applicant's operation individually, and quite honestly, these conversations light me up. With hardship all around us in the news, in our communities, and sometimes right at home, **it's such a lift to see this concrete list of real people doing real things to make our food systems work better for all.**

**If you're new to this newsletter, please accept my warm welcome and awkward wave hello.** For those of you who've been in our community for a minute (thanks for sticking around), maybe you'll recall that last fall we spent a ton of time mapping out a deeper

program of business support and looking far and wide for a new director to head up that work. Big news: we found him! **Read on for an introduction to FoodCap's first ever Director of Agricultural Business Advising**, and stay tuned for announcements about new programming and zero-cost business support services.

If you were really leaning in, maybe you'll also recall that we hit our lending targets for the 2023 at the end of the third quarter, so we paused lending over the fall months to completely revamp the application process. **I'm happy to report that I had nothing to do with that project at all and that the lending team absolutely knocked it out of the park.** I can confirm that FoodCap's loan application is now more accessible, less overwhelming, and just generally nicer to look at (yes, that felt important - farmers work too hard to navigate an ugly form).

I'll leave it there and sign off with my very predictable, yet completely sincere, note of gratitude to all of you. This little email list grows every month and dang if it doesn't make me smile to know you're all in this work with us.

**To more equitable, more regenerative foodsheds,**

*Erica Hellen*  
Director of Strategy & Comms.



GROWING THE TEAM





## Alex Pate

Director of Ag. Business Advising

We're so excited to welcome our brand new [Director of Agricultural Business Advising, Alex Pate](#). Through funding from the USDA 2501 program, **Alex will take the lead on expanding our zero-cost [business support services](#)**, with a special focus on working with BIPOC and underserved farmers.

Alex earned a Masters of Crop Sciences from Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and brings extensive experience in farm management, permaculture design, urban agroforestry, mutual aid food distribution, coalition building, and educational programming. Through his **ongoing work as an ag finance consultant at [NY FarmNet](#)**, he also works closely with a robust network of farm service providers in the Northeast.

If you're a regenerative farmer hoping to get a handle on your finances, access free business resources and training, or successfully apply for funding, **Alex will be your first point of contact.**

▶ UPDATE FROM THE FIELD ◀



*I am truly excited for  
what the future holds  
for local/regional  
food systems in New  
York State!"*

Julian Mangano,  
Della Terra Farms

Our team caught wind that **Julian Mangano of [Della Terra Farms](#) has been appointed to the USDA's [Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers](#)**. FoodCap was proud to support Della Terra in 2022 with a 0% loan to build out a compost program that transforms local food waste into prime farm fertility.

As an Advisory Committee member, Julian will advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the administration of the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grant Program, and make recommendations on how to increase minority participation in USDA programs. **We love to see a familiar face so directly involved with increasing equity and accessibility at USDA.**

Beyond this appointment and his compost projects at Della Terra, Julian is lead farmer at **[Restore Forward](#)**, a New York-based organization working to create safe spaces for Black people to heal and reconcile with the land. He is also developing plans for an eco-hub in Ava, NY, which he hopes will serve as a model for sustainable agriculture and economic growth. **The hub will include an incubator program for BIPOC women, a regional food hub, value-added processing, commercial composting, industrial hemp cultivation and processing, and renewable energy.**



FARMER RESOURCES



# 1. USDA VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS NOW OPEN

Looking to add value to your farm products? **Grant funding awards up to \$250,000 are available** to support planning and working capital needs for farmers seeking to increase revenue, access new markets, or scope a new value-added project.

A value-added product can mean turning strawberries into jam, or pork into sausage, but can also describe any product that is produced with a special character or identity, like organic, GMO-free, grass fed, or local.

This program has a hefty application package and requires matching funds (**hello, Foodshed Capital [Bridge Loans](#)**), and may not be a fit for all producers. But if awarded, a VAPG grant can be a great opportunity to boost your revenue and up your game.

**Applications are due 4/11/24. Find some helpful translation of the program [here](#), or dive in to the fine print and apply [here](#).**

# 2. FREE WORKSHOP: NAVIGATE RISK + ELEVATE YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE

This workshop from [New Entry Sustainable Farming Project](#) will help you **prepare for and respond to the unexpected on your farm**. Topics include “sensitivity analysis” and how it **builds resilience and adaptability** for a farm business, and “competitive analysis” to help you **better understand your market and price accordingly**.

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024 // 6-8 pm EST**

Learn more and register [here](#).

PLEASE



SUPPORT  
OUR WORK

**Support from folks like you makes it possible for us to provide  
0% interest financing and business support services  
completely free of charge.**

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