



February 2025

Hi ***{{First Name}}***,

February was, shall we say, a big month for alliteration in the foodshed.

"Federal, frozen, funding, farmers" were the F-words that kept us up at night when freezing temps and back-to-back snow were - for once - the least of our concerns. The heartbreaking stories we heard from **farmers and nonprofits left high and dry by abandoned federal funding contracts**; the ripple effects to our food supply chain from layoffs of aid workers, researchers, and federal employees; the total breakdown of diplomacy... **it has been a constant and destabilizing distraction from the good work we all do.**

But—it did not stop us! I'm especially proud of our team's resourcefulness and focus, which allowed Foodshed Capital to close a pile of new loans and get capital out the door to some inspiring farmers and food businesses. Read on for highlights of three operations we supported, including one loan that almost didn't happen because of the federal funding freeze.

If you're a farmer in our network experiencing direct impacts from changes made by the new administration - particularly around payments you were set to receive but have not - [please reach out](#) so we can share your story. Bridge lending for grant-funded work is a big chunk of what we do, and **we are communicating with funders about opportunities to [backstop these loans](#)** so we can keep capital flowing at the leanest time of year for farmers.

Speaking of resources for farmers, I've included a couple opportunities below - scroll on down for details.

Thanks as always to all of you who keep up with our journey and make our work possible. **May you remember that "[most people are good](#)," find some distance from the F-words, and hold on tightly to joy and connection.**

Off to call my reps,



Erica Hellen

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Capital in the Field

Pinebrook Farm // Rice, VA



Founded in 2022, [Pinebrook Farm](#) is a woman-owned, Certified Organic diversified vegetable farm focused on community food access and conservation. Owner Lafern Joseph has spent the last three years carefully building soil, infrastructure, and relationships. Through sales to the [2020 Farmers' Cooperative](#), she has gained access to institutional food contracts that connect her regeneratively grown produce to students in the Chesterfield School District.

Our team has provided extensive coaching support to Pinebrook, beginning in 2022 with a 0% interest loan to purchase and install a high tunnel. We deepened our relationship in 2024, working closely with Lafern to develop her successful application for American Farmland Trust's Farm Vitality Planning Grant program, as well as the AMS Price Support program.

In February, we closed a second loan to Pinebrook at 0% interest, which will provide up-front funding for an EQIP cost-share grant to build a rainwater catchment system. The system will increase the farm's operational efficiency while reducing pressure on groundwater for irrigation.

Essex Food Hub // Rice, VA



Essex Food Hub (EFH) is a nonprofit aggregator and distributor connecting good food and people who are challenged to access it.

Founded in 2015 to strengthen the North Country food system, **EFH supports regenerative farms, values-aligned hubs, and farming collaboratives, and provides first- and last-mile distribution across the Adirondacks and down to NYC.**

In 2023, EFH received a major grant from NY Ag & Markets under **USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program**, but long reimbursement delays made it **challenging to cover costs**. EFH came to FoodCap in November seeking a larger loan to help cash flow their program; while the original amount was approved, it then had to be reduced and closing delayed by several weeks as we worked to confirm repayment in light of the federal funding freeze.

Thanks to regional funders stepping up with grant pledges, we were able to move forward with a smaller low-interest loan in February—demonstrating how philanthropy can provide stability in uncertain times and ensure food continues to reach those who need it most. **Interested in backstopping our bridge lending?** [Reach out here.](#)

Redd Cabbage Farms // Richmond, VA



Redd Cabbage Farms is an urban vegetable farm founded in 2020 on three acres just outside Richmond, VA. Redd Cabbage practices no-till cultivation, using cover crops and chicken tractors to clear weeds, build up soil health, and protect pollinator habitat.

Owner Dwayne Jones got started with a kitchen garden and a few laying hens, but it was his experience at the **Central Virginia Urban Farm Fellowship** that set him up to "jump in with both feet." The Fellowship is a program of **Happily Natural Day**, an organization that builds urban farms and green spaces in the Richmond metro area alongside community activities and educational offerings. Find info about the 2025 Fellowship below. (Fun fact—we also supported HND with a 0% interest loan in 2024.)

Redd Cabbage received a 0% interest bridge loan from **Foodshed Capital** to cover up-front costs for an **EQIP high tunnel grant**, which will allow him to extend his growing season, increase farm revenue, and feed more local folks.

Farmer Resources



Sky High Farm Grants

Sky High will award \$350,000 in grants (total) to individuals working in agriculture, food justice, and/or land sovereignty. Priority given to applicants who identify as LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, AAPI, immigrants, or members of historically marginalized or exploited communities.

Funding: 2024 grant amounts ranged from \$1,500 - \$30,000

Deadline to Apply: April 2, 2025

[Learn more and apply here.](#)



Training for New & Early Stage Urban Farmers in Richmond, VA

This 12-week program is led by Richmond's Duron Chavis, a skilled urban farmer, educator, and food justice advocate. Learn the skills you need to feed yourself, your family, and your community in an urban setting.

Cost: \$500; financial assistance available.
Deadline to Apply: March 15, 2025

[Learn more and apply here.](#)

Support Our Work

Today is the day to step up in support regenerative farmers.

Make a one-time or recurring donation using the link below, or [reach out](#) to make a grant pledge to help us keep bridge capital flowing to farmers. Thank you!

[Donate Here Now](#)

Foodshed Capital is a 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission to build more equitable, more regenerative foodsheds.

Follow along with our journey here:



Our Contact Information

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