



April 2025



{{First Name}} ,

April moved fast! Big things happened and we've been deep in the work to ensure Foodshed Capital responds in the right ways.

First, I'm excited to share that **Foodshed Capital supported our first-ever agrivoltaics project (highlight below), bolstering the convergence of clean energy and regenerative farming while filling a critical capital gap** in this emerging space.

Our lending team also worked swiftly with an **inspiring non-profit as they navigated public funding shifts that froze the vast majority of their budget, finally supporting them with a bridge loan** to continue their food access programming. This effort was a stark reminder of how fragile vital food systems work can be, and **how critical nimble, low-cost capital can be in moments of crisis.**

Meanwhile, our team poured many hours into **supporting our bookkeeping fellows, who are sharpening their financial skills as they gear up for the growing season.** And, we got inspired on the road—I'm still distilling the many **insights shared at [RFSI's Women Transforming Food & Finance](#) conference in Atlanta**, and we made **exciting inroads with new agrivoltaics operations at the [Virginia Solar Summit](#).** There's nothing like stepping away from the screen to reconnect with the brilliant minds working to strengthen food systems work from all angles. We returned energized and deeply affirmed in our mission.

Finally, as farmers and food organizations alike have funding top of mind, **scroll on down for a couple grant opportunities** that might be relevant to your work.

Thanks, as always, for your belief, your support, and your commitment to a more just and resilient food system. None of the work happens without you.

To the foodshed,



Erica Hellen

Erica Hellen
Chief Development Officer
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Like what we do? Donate today!



Capital in the Field



Thy Neighbor's Farm // Torrington, CT



This was a fun one! **A first - and certainly not last - loan in support of agrivoltaics**, a dual-purpose land use practice that combines solar energy production with agriculture.

Thy Neighbors Farm began as Steven Thompson's backyard garden during the pandemic, responding to food insecurity among local families. Initially donating to food pantries, the farm expanded to 1.5 acres of vegetables in 2022 to better meet the enormous demand for local food production. They added sheep in 2023, and now in 2025, have a breeding herd of 100 ewes, grazing their flock in solar fields in partnership with local solar providers. **The end consumers of their products include two food banks, a homeless shelter, a community kitchen, and a veterans' support group.**

This year, they're implementing three grant-funded projects: a Connecticut Farm Transition Grant for chicken tractors, a Climate Smart grant for mobile fencing and sheep handling equipment, and a New England Regenerative Livestock Farming grant for soil building.

Foodshed Capital supported Thy Neighbors with a low-interest bridge loan to cash flow operations ahead of reimbursement.

In Steven's words, *"I can't believe this isn't a scam. It's so amazing what Foodshed Capital does for farmers!"* (Quite possibly the nicest compliment we've ever received.)

Black Food Black Futures // Bowie, MD



Black Food Black Futures is a project promoting whole-person health, including programs supporting regenerative Black farmers in the DelMarVa region. Since 2019, they have provided technical assistance, on-farm labor, market access, and grant support to help small-scale regenerative farmers thrive. Their mobile market, **The Black Food Truck**, connects local farms to underserved communities, increasing food access while creating economic opportunities for farmers.

Early this year, a sudden freeze of federal grant funds put 85% of the organization's revenue at risk. In response, they adjusted operations, prioritizing farmer support through grant writing assistance and sustaining the Mobile Market Program. A 0% interest loan from FoodCap helped bridge this gap, ensuring continued produce purchases, staffing, and market operations while they adapt and rebuild funding sources.

Armagh Creamery // Dublin, TX



Armagh Creamery is a family-owned, **USDA Certified Organic** dairy farm and creamery in Dublin, Texas, producing yogurt, brie-style cheese, and raw milk. Now in its fifth generation, the McDowell family's dairy heritage dates back nearly a century—from Northern Ireland and California to Texas, where they have been farming since 2010. **Throughout this journey, they have remained committed to organic farming, regenerative agriculture, and high-quality, farmstead dairy products.**

As a vertically integrated business, Armagh oversees every stage of production, from growing hay and managing their dairy herd to processing and distribution. Over the years, they have made significant investments in equipment, cattle, and operational growth. To strengthen their financial position, they are **prioritizing debt refinancing to lower interest costs and improve cash flow.**

A low-interest loan from FoodCap helped dramatically reduce Armagh's cost of capital, allowing them to scale production, enhance efficiency, and meet increasing demand for regenerative organic dairy.



Out & About



Virginia Solar Summit // Richmond, VA



Director of Programs, Emily Tybur, represented Foodshed Capital at the 2025 [Virginia Solar Summit](#), joining a panel discussion featuring Marcus Gray of Gray's LAMBscaping, Ashish Kapoor of Piedmont Environmental Council, Stacie Peterson of American Solar Grazing Association, Ethan Winter of American Farmland Trust, and Allison Wickham of [Siller Pollinator Company](#).

Recognizing a big gap for on-site financing, Allison (a three-time FoodCap borrower and beekeeper extraordinaire) looped us into the network to ensure regenerative farmers who are successful in securing a solar field lease have a lending partner who understands small-scale agriculture. **Traditional lenders already struggle to finance specialty crop and regenerative livestock farms** due to unfamiliar risks, limited financial data, and minimal insurance options. Agrivoltaics adds complexity with multiple revenue streams—beneficial for farmers, but even harder to underwrite.

Rather than financing the solar infrastructure itself, **Foodshed Capital is filling a critical capital gap and helping farmers make full use of leased agrivoltaic land.** With low-cost, flexible capital tailored to small-scale operations, regenerative farmers can appropriately scale up on new acreage. As the solar industry receives backlash for developing farmland, collaborations like these ensure **agriculture remains central to solar land use.**

Women Transforming Food & Finance // Atlanta, GA



Our Chief Development Officer, Erica Hellen, joined a remarkable group of women in Atlanta last week for **RFSI's Women Transforming Food & Finance** forum. The gathering brought together deep wisdom from across the food system—spanning land access, production, market development, value chains, and funding.

A central theme that emerged: how do we better connect the many organizations working in food systems with the farmers producing our food? We're energized to keep exploring how to weave these efforts together so they translate into real outcomes for farmers, communities, and the climate.



Funding Opps



Reinvestment Fund: Southeast Food Forward Grants

Grants and technical assistance to advance equitable healthy food access in underserved and resource-constrained communities in the Southeastern United States.

Grant Range: \$50-80,000

Deadline: May 13, 2025

Learn more and apply [here](#).



The SHOT Fund: Emergency Response + Movement Sustaining Grants

Eligible organizations are facing financial hardship due to frozen or terminated federally funded work, *and* play a critical leadership role in regenerative agriculture or regional food systems and have the potential to endure and lead long-term. Grants are recoverable.

Grant Range: up to \$150,000

Deadline: May 19, 2025

Learn more and apply [here](#).

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

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