

**LOCAL FOOD HUB IMPACT REPORT**  
**2017**

## **Dear Friends of Local Food Hub,**

Thank you for visiting our 2017 Impact Report. We hope the stories you read here help shed light on the value that supporting your local food system has for our community's health, economy, environment, and the sense of place that makes Central Virginia special.

I also want to share with you some of our exciting plans for the coming year, which your support has made possible.

### **Food access**

A new delivery vehicle dedicated to our food access programs – secured with community support — will allow us to expand the Fresh Farmacy program to as many as 60 additional low-income health patients, and make sure that farm-fresh food gets to them as efficiently and safely as possible.

### **Growers helping growers**

Our new Grower Advisory Committee is helping shape our programs for helping farmers get a leg up in the new local food economy. We're especially excited about this year's peer-to-peer workshop program, and on the food safety resources we'll be bringing to our partners.

### **New products**

We've formed new partnerships with 11 area producers. They make products such as organic tortillas made from non-GMO, Virginia-grown corn; cheese and yogurt made from pastured cows raised in the Shenandoah Valley; and organic, antibiotic free chicken. With this expanded range of produce, grains, eggs, honey, and more, there is now a local option for just about everything in your kitchen.

Our board, staff, and partner producers are invigorated and excited for a new year, and we look forward to seeing you. Stay tuned for our event schedule, and don't hesitate to contact us if you want to visit our warehouse for a tour and a chat.

Warmly,

Kristen Suokko  
Executive Director

We've accomplished a lot this year.

11

farms and producers began working with us for the first time.

904

thousand pounds of fresh, Virginia-grown produce was distributed through our partnerships.

292

health patients and employees benefited from our food access programs.

246

thousand dollars of fresh produce and protein sold to schools and universities

## How it Works



## GROWER SERVICES

Local Food Hub partners with more than 60 small family farms in Virginia. While we believe paying a fair price is the most important thing we can do for farmers, we also recognize that training, technical assistance, cost-share opportunities, and networking are all critical to reinstating small farms as the food source for our community. We help our partner farms learn to successfully navigate the wholesale marketplace and make their operations more financially viable



**337** thousand dollars in increased purchases  
from 53 of our partner farms

## Innovations in Agriculture

**Each fall, we honor two of our partner farms that have demonstrated creativity and innovation in order to grow or expand their farm business. Our partner farms are incredibly resourceful, and tenacious about keeping their farming costs low and production outputs high. Although all our partner farms impress us with their resourcefulness, this year we honored Phantom Hill Farm and Sunnyfield Farm .**

Kathryn Hanks and Chris Pohl of Phantom Hill Farm are both under age 30 and farming on less than an acre in Louisa County. They designed an automated watering system and microgreen bed that reduced human labor needs and increased efficiency. Phantom Hill Farm is one of our top growers for our food access programs, growing nutritious greens year-round in their unheated greenhouses along with a plethora of other vegetables. This was their second time winning our competitive Innovation in Agriculture Award.

Marina and Petr Dronov immigrated to the United States from Russia in order to be near family. After farming part time for years, they finally purchased their own land to found Sunny field Farm. Despite speaking English as their second language, with the help of Local Food Hub, they successfully navigated complex federal and industry jargon to obtain a premier food safety certification. This has enabled them to sell into new markets through Local Food Hub, including UVA Hospital and Student Dining, James Madison University Dining, and major distributors like Sysco Foods.

In 2017, they created a bin hauler (pictured above, driven by Petr), a drivable tool that enabled them to easily maneuver between crop rows while harvesting corn, peppers, or watermelons in large quantities. Previously, they were walking the rows with handheld buckets to harvest the fruit, which meant they had to walk back to their washing station each time they filled two heavy buckets. The bin hauler increased their efficiency and capacity by more than seven times, and made it a lot easier for Petr and Marina!

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It's awesome to be apart of this [Fresh Farmacy Program] that encourages a lifestyle change [and] dietary changes by supplying really healthy leafy greens, not sprayed with anything...The opportunity to have people learn about eating healthy, fresh, live vegetables is amazing.

**PHANTOM HILL FARM, LOUISA COUNTY. LOCAL FOOD HUB  
PARTNER FARM SINCE 2014.**

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## DISTRIBUTION

Local Food Hub forges close relationships with local farmers, and provides services and infrastructure for the distribution of fresh, high-quality food. We are a regional leader in ensuring that small farms regain their economic foothold in the marketplace, and that the knowledge and choice of local food becomes the norm, not the exception, for all segments of our community. We work with every farm on production planning, marketing, food safety, product development, and more.

**23 new products purchased from partner farms and producers**

### **Increasing options for local throughout the year.**

**In 2017, we took several exciting steps towards developing a more diverse, year-round product line. Thanks to newly formed partnerships, we now offer organic tortillas made from non-GMO, Virginia-grown corn, cheese and yogurt, made from pastured cows raised in the Shenandoah Valley, and organic, antibiotic free chicken. These partners have helped us offer more options for local that go beyond seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables. With our range of produce, grains, eggs, honey, and more, there is now a local option for just about everything in your kitchen.**

Unlike many traditional distributors, Local Food Hub does not pass the cost of business to its partner producers. Inclusive in our services of distributing local food, we handle all marketing, liability insurance, customer requirements, and order minimums. By not charging for these services, we are creating more opportunities for small, local producers to access the market and stay in business.



Food is a cornerstone of health, friendship, culture and community. It brings people together around something we all share.

NATHAN WELLS, LOCAL FOOD HUB FOOD ACCESS FELLOW

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Creating a vibrant, resilient local food system takes a whole community working together. We're fortunate to partner with other area organizations to ensure that the choice of local food is available to all segments of the community. By working together, we're putting fresh, nutritious food in the hands of those who need it most, and educating the next generation about the value of local food.

203 health patients addressing medical problems through food  
44 percent of patients reduced body weight

## Patients eating their way to health.

Ronette Hill is a patient in our Fresh Farmacy: Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program. Not only is she now eating fresh vegetables that she would not have eaten before starting the program, she has reduced her reliance on medications, and loves making fresh salads with her daughter

Our Fresh Farmacy: Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program is a partnership with area health clinics that “prescribes” patients a biweekly supply of fresh fruits and vegetables, grown by our partner farms. The prescriptions include recipes and educational programs that help to encourage home cooking and develop familiarity with new foods, and seeks to develop a culture of healthy eating.

Community partnerships not only make our food access programs possible, they ensure we’re going where we’re needed the most. In 2017, we organized a discussion amongst community health leaders, including the UVA Employee Wellness Program BeWell, our local Health Department, and the UVA School of Nursing. The group analyzed the intersections of income, health statistics, and food access, and found that low-income communities often had poor health with minimal access to fresh, healthy food. We have taken steps to bring our programs to these areas in Charlottesville, and continue to participate in community-wide discussions about addressing equity and justice through food.

Partnerships also play a critical role in program expansion. Through the partnership with UVA Employee Wellness Program BeWell, we were able to offer Fresh Farmacy to 95 UVA employees. And, we were able to offer Fresh Farmacy to Charlottesville’s Region Ten – a nonprofit organization that provides a robust array of services to adults with mental health, intellectual disability, and substance addition needs.

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Vegetables are very important...[Fresh Farmacy] has encouraged me to continue with my exercises. I’m pushing myself to do things. I’m encouraged!

FRESH FARMACY PATIENT

## PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Local Food Hub strives to create a community in which the knowledge and choice of local food is the norm, not the exception. Education is key to making informed choices, and there is so much to learn about Virginia's rich agricultural bounty and its many benefits.

200 community members celebrated local food and farms during our Community Food Awards ceremony

### Local food and farming stories from our community, and across the nation.

**It's been an exciting year to work in the local food system. On a local level, we have seen more of our community recognizing the importance of sourcing locally. We hosted a record-breaking crowd of more than 200 people at our warehouse for our annual Community Food Awards Ceremony, where we honored 11 of our partner farms and customers for their commitment to small family farms and healthy communities.**

We gained the attention of local media outlet Cville Weekly, which prominently featured our Fresh Farmacy program on the cover of their weekly newspaper and in a feature story about the positive impacts the program is making in our community. This movement is not limited to Charlottesville. Across the country, people are realizing the importance of a food system with family farms at the center, and according everyone access to fresh, healthy options. As part of our goal to be a repository of information on local food, here are some of our favorite informational resources from the past year.

[C-VILLE Weekly](#), on our Fresh Farmacy Program.

A national look at the impacts and benefits of fresh farmacy programs, in [Pennsylvania](#) and [California](#), by National Public Radio.

Public school districts from across the nation that are going above and beyond federal nutrition standards to [serve students the healthy food they](#)

need and deserve, by The Food & Environment Reporting Network's Ag Insider.

The harsh impact of a changing climate on the southern peach crop, which was felt by peach growers here in Virginia, by New York Times.

USDA's Running a Food Hub: Lessons Learned from the Field report, featuring Local Food Hub.

A growing number of young Americans are leaving desk jobs to farm, by The Washington Post.

Food Tank's best farm and food books to read, from the memoirs of an Asian-American peach farmer to the best manual for permaculture design.

The Federal Reserve's Harvesting Opportunity: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities, a compilation of research, essays, and reports by community development experts around the country that demonstrates the impacts of local food systems and economies.



Learn the origins of the food you buy, and buy the food that is produced closest to your home.

**WENDELL BERRY, FARMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST**

## THE NUMBERS

TOTAL OPERATING: **\$875,888**

What it takes to get food from small farms to our community partners, and to you.



INVESTMENT IN FARMS: **\$1,231,022**

The amount that went back into our small farms as a result of our work



YOUR INVESTMENT: **\$434,724**

Our community's support for what we do.

## Our Partner Farms and Customers

Local Food Hub's farms represent the bounty and diversity of the Virginia foodshed. Some operate 100 acre farms, others less than five acres. They are certified organic and conventional farmers, orchardists and value added producers, and those new to farming as well as seasoned veterans.

We distribute their food to retail stores, restaurants, buying clubs, schools, universities, and other food businesses, including hospitals and senior centers. We want to make sure that all customers have access to fresh, local food where and when they want it. All products are identified by farm and county, so customers know exactly where their food was grown, developing a relationship from farm to table.

