STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2021

THANKS TO YOU, WE PROVIDE FRESH, LOCAL FOOD TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS AND SUPPORT FARMERS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS.
"We have been serving on average over 500 families every week, and Farmer Foodshare has been a key provider of fresh food and eggs to our pantry in a continuous basis. It is a delight dealing with the staff of Farmer Foodshare. They are dedicated to their mission and always go the extra mile to help feed those in need in our community."

- Staff at Iglesia Emanuel Food Pantry

THANK YOU

I think we can all agree that 2021 was quite a year. As our community weathered yet another year of a global pandemic, food insecurity was at a record high, supply chains were disrupted, and food prices skyrocketed. The importance of a just and resilient local food system has never been more apparent – and our mission, to provide fresh, local food for all, has never been more important.

As the incoming Executive Director of Farmer Foodshare, I have been absolutely floored to learn how much our committed staff and Board were truly able to accomplish last year. I’ve listened and learned about the challenges FFS faced in 2021, from leadership turnover to unprecedented pressures on the emergency food system... and I’m here to tell you that what this team was able to accomplish despite these challenges is nothing short of incredible.

Last year, with your support the Farmer Foodshare team...
- Supported a network of 30+ local farmers through our wholesale market & food hub
- Returned nearly $400k back to the pockets of those local farmers
- Delivered over 350k lbs. of fresh, local food to the emergency food system
- Provided over 300k local-food-based meals to people experiencing food insecurity
- Launched our first-ever farmer mini-grant fund to support new and beginning, women-owned and BIPOC farmers.

And we have BIG dreams for the coming year. With your support, we plan to grow and diversify our Farmer Network to support the strength of our local foodshed. We plan to double our contributions to the emergency food system. And we plan to continue centering equity and justice in all our efforts.

Thank you again for being part of the Farmer Foodshare community. Your continued commitment to bringing our region’s agricultural bounty to our neighbors of all income levels is truly inspiring.

Please enjoy this report. I hope you feel as proud of these accomplishments, and the role your support plays in this work, as we do here at Farmer Foodshare.

Warmly,

Kelly Crar
In 2021 we supported a network of over 30 local farmers through our wholesale market & food hub. Through these connections we facilitated $396,550 dollars back to the pockets of those local farmers so they can invest in another season of growing nutritious produce for our community.

At this time, 27% of the Farmer Network is comprised of new & beginning farmers, women- and/or BIPOC-owned farms. To continue to bring more diverse experience into our food system, we launched our first-ever farmer mini-grant fund to support new and beginning, women-owned and BIPOC farmers. In 2021 we raised $11,000 for farmer minigrants, with plans for more to come.

We work with 40 institutional buyers who are eager to source fresh, nutritious produce from here in North Carolina. In addition, farmers are proud to be feeding everyone in need in their community, with nearly 50% of the produce going back into the emergency food system.

"Working with Farmer Foodshare has opened the door to markets that we’d otherwise be unable to serve. The customers in more urban regions are just too far and too expensive for us to serve efficiently from a rural county. Our sales through the Wholesale Market have grown steadily... Farmer Foodshare purchased and distributed tens of thousands of dollars’ worth of our greens that had been chopped by a local processor. They went directly into the lunches served in local school cafeterias, feeding the next generation of fresh food eaters."

- family farm in Warren County
HUNGER RELIEF

While the pandemic rocked our worlds in 2020, the needs of our community did not let up in 2021. At the center of our emergency food system work are our 23 community partners – food banks and community centers at the front lines of distributing food to those in need.

Nearly 50% of food aggregated by Farmer Food Share in 2021 was distributed to the emergency food system. A core part of this work is the 4,947 local food boxes sourced, packed and distributed to community partners for food-insecure individuals & families.

We tallied it all up and this year we distributed 361,610 pounds of fresh, local food to the emergency food system. What does that look like? That’s 301,342 local-food-based meals provided to food-insecure neighbors through donations, partnerships & food box programs in one year.

Farmer Foodshare helps us provide fresh and local produce to students when they are not in school. The local produce is amazing! The quality and variety can’t be beat. We are a small organization but sometimes need to buy in bulk. Farmer Foodshare is always able to accommodate us.

- Aviva Tulasi, Chair Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School

“You know, I am diabetic, and this food does me right... I have not had cabbage since my mother passed, and cooking it brought back such wonderful family memories.”

- Raleigh Food Co-Op partner participant.
LOOKING AHEAD

We have big dreams for 2022, and plans to turn those dreams into tangible change.

Our partners and farmers are energized to grow with us, and we know our community is ready too.

In our Farmer Support Network we plan to grow and diversify our network to serve more than 45 farmers, with a focus on new and beginning, BIPOC-owned and women-owned farms. One of the ways we are planning to accomplish this is through the Beginning Farmer Mini-grant program, designed to support farmers who are looking to grow their farm operations and need key purchases, such as a piece of equipment, to accomplish their goals. This access to capital can be a major limitation for budding farmers, and we know making this step easier will have huge ripple effects in our local food system.

In 2022 we plan to increase our food donations to community partners by 50% this year to meet the ever-growing food insecurity needs in our community. This means we plan to distribute 540,000 lbs. of fresh, local food to the emergency food system, equaling 450,000 local-food-based meals provided to the emergency food system. It’s an audacious goal, but we know we our community needs it, and that together we can make it happen.

Our work is far from done. According to the USDA, North Carolina is the 10th hungriest state in the nation, and 1.6 million North Carolina households don’t have enough to eat.
At Farmer Foodshare, we are incredibly grateful to all our community partners, funders, volunteers and donors that make this work possible:

First, thank you to our community partners: Iglesia Emanuel, Root Causes, Feed Durham, Eno River Donation Station, Camp Chestnut Ridge, Durham-Chapel Hill Jewish Federation, Interfaith Council for Social Service, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, Club Nova, Fed Up, Fuel Up, Grow To Life, Mustard Seed, Urban Community AgriNomics, Parktown Food Hub, Peach, Porch, Residential Services Inc, Reality Ministries, The Help Center NC, and Table.

Without you, we would never have been able to connect with the many food insecure families and individuals that benefited from the fresh, local food we sourced last year.

Also, thank you to our incredible community of supporters, funders, and sponsors. Over 250 individual donors contributed to our food justice work in 2021, as well as the following organizations: Agri Supply, Amazon Smile, Armacell, Bella Bean Organics, Benevity, Berenfield Charitable Fund at Schwab Charitable, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, CharityVest, Coon Rock Farm, Creating Small Change, Cypress Creek Renewables, Dominion Energy, Duke Community Care Fund, Duke Energy, Duke University Health Systems, Durham Congregations in Action, Durham Coca-Cola Bottling, Durham County, Durham County Agricultural Development Fund, Durham County Health and Human Services, Durham County Water and Soil Program, Facebook, Fidelity Charitable, Finmark, Global Giving, Healthy Diets, Hendrix Foundation, Hillsdale Fund, Impact Assets, Lora L. and Martin N. Kelley Family Foundation, Network for Good, OneCause, Orange County, Pallet Alliance, Pledgling Foundation, Quality Equipment, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Strowd Roses Foundation, Schwab Charitable, Starfish Fund, State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC), Town of Chapel Hill, Town of Carrboro, Triangle Community Foundation, Trust Company of the South, Truist Foundation, USDA - Agricultural Marketing Service (LFPP), USDA - National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Wegman’s Food Markets, Whole Foods, YourCause.

Our work to support farmers and eaters of all income levels last year would not have been possible without your generous financial investments.