the Farm newsletter

fall 2020
Farmers grow more than food.

Fall is a season for contemplation and for celebrating the beauty of transition as winter approaches. Nowhere is this more evident than on local farms, with farmers gathering in the harvest and preparing for the next season’s time of relative respite.

This season, and indeed every season this year, looks and feels different. This year, many people have experienced the anxiety of food insecurity for the first time. Our local farmers stepped in, making it possible for people to safely and easily purchase local products and the materials we need to grow our own food. As the pandemic continues, many of us have turned to tending our own gardens as a form of solace, cultivating an appreciation for the people that grow our food as we water our own seedlings, pull our own weeds, and pick our own tomatoes.

This newsletter includes the stories of a few of the farmers making this possible, captured in our recent report, *Farmland Access in the Hudson Valley: Stories of People and Places in Columbia and Dutchess Counties*. Last year, staff interviewed farmers and non-farming landowners to collect their thoughts, wisdom, and advice.

What did we find? Non-farming landowners are learning about the needs of local agriculture and the myriad challenges farmers face simply to stay afloat. Farmers are learning how to interact with non-farming landowners, in efforts to reach common ground. We hope their stories will inform and inspire people to continue finding ways to better understand the dynamic nature and relationships between the people and the farms that define our rural landscapes and food systems.

If you’d like to read the full report (and we hope you will!), head to clctrust.org/farmstories. You can also visit clctrust.org/farm to learn more about how to buy local food, find Columbia County farmers, and support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers, who are especially impacted by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

The changing seasons coincide with a change in our leadership here at CLC. We are excited to announce that Troy Weldy joined our staff as President in late September. We are also thankful for Executive Director Peter R. Paden, who, after fourteen years of leading the organization, is reaping his own harvest of a job well done and easing into retirement. To send a congratulatory message to Troy or a note of thanks to Peter, please email info@clctrust.org.

Thank you. Stay well.

Peter R. Paden  
Executive Director

Troy Weldy  
President

Thank you
American Farmland Trust  
Bard College  
Dutchess Land Conservancy  
Equity Trust  
The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation  
Mellam Family Foundation  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets  
Scenic Hudson  
Woodcock Family Foundation
How you can help

Buy local
Consider gifting a Community Supported Agriculture share to a family in need, if you can. A list of local farms is available on CLC’s website.

Advocate
Learn about the issues facing farmers in our community, and speak up on their behalf.

Waive rent
If you own land that you lease to a farmer, think about lowering payments or eliminating them altogether.

Support CLC
Your gift makes these programs possible, and it directly benefits local farm families.
Support the Annual Fund!

Your gift to the Annual Fund makes it possible for farm families to stay on their land, for new and beginning farmers to find land, and for landowners to ensure Columbia County’s agricultural heritage remains intact.

Visit clctrust.org/donate to make your gift today.
Schuyler and Colby Gail of Climbing Tree Farm contacted CLC through the Farmer-Landowner Match Program to help them find land, and made a successful match with a neighbor who operates a neighboring farm on protected land.

Cynthia Creech of Artemis Farm raises heritage Randall Cattle (a breed she has helped re-establish after the herd dwindled to just 16 individuals) on protected farmland in New Lebanon. Should Cynthia sell her farm, it will be sold at a price affordable for another farmer, thanks to her work with CLC and partners.

“I’m grateful to know that our land now is protected; it’s an essential part of making farming accessible for many more generations to come,” says Sarah Chase of Chaseholm Farm. The Chase family worked with CLC to apply for grants to protect their farmland and pass it on to the next generation.

“Being able to purchase this land and buildings at an agricultural value has allowed us to secure the land that we are farming. Now that we own the land, we can focus on growing great crops and grains,” say Chris Cashen and Katie Smith of The Farm at Miller’s Crossing.

“It was really amazing to work with a group of people who actually wanted to work together... who wanted to talk and listen to one another, and collaborate on this project,” say Don and Marnie MacLean of Thompson-Finch Farm, which CLC, partners, and over 300 community members raised over $1.5 million to purchase and protect forever.

Read more at clctrust.org/farmstories