



# Carolina Farm Stewardship Association STEWARDSHIP NEWS

FALL 2015

VOLUME 35, ISSUE 4

## Grow Local & Organic

### How CFSA is Working for You Across the Carolinas

Dear Members and Friends,

It is with great pride that we offer you a very unique newsletter at the end of 2015. Our Board of Directors reaches out annually in this season of gratitude and hope to ask for your continued support. We thought how better to inspire you, than to share stories of some of our members – *those that inspire us*. These stories are only a few of so many stories this year which represent the impact you, our members, are making as we work together.

Your support enables CFSA to help local, organic farmers succeed with expanded resources, professional consulting, local workshops and training across both North and South Carolina, the Sustainable Agriculture Conference and the Organic Commodities and Livestock Conference, direct technical assistance, and our new addition of the



*High Hoop House, one of the resources at the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm*



*Farmers in Training learn flame weeding at the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm, Cabarrus County, NC*

Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm. Because of you, CFSA is able to provide the support that farmers need to produce the healthy, fresh food that feeds families in the Carolinas.

In addition to training beginning farmers and helping thousands of family farms across the Carolinas thrive, your gift will make it possible for us to advocate for fair food and farm policies, incubate self-sustaining food projects, and promote local and organic food through our regional farm tours, local food councils, and direct consulting.

We hope that as you enjoy these stories you will consider making a contribution to CFSA this season. Your gift to our annual fund will make it possible for CFSA to continue our work to ensure a safe, healthy and sustainable food system – now and for future generations.

#### **Your support is more important than ever.**

Please give today. You can donate online at [carolinafarmstewards.org/give](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/give) or use the enclosed response envelope to mail in your donation.

Your gift to CFSA is one of the best ways you can support local farmers and champion food that is good for consumers, good for farmers and farmworkers, and good for the land.

#### **Thank you for being an important part of the sustainable food movement!**

Sincerely,  
Jerry DeWitt  
Chair, CFSA Board of Directors

CFSA is on a mission to bring local, organic food to your table  
from a farmer who shares your values

## CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

CFSA is a membership-based organization in North and South Carolina. Our mission is to advocate for fair farm and food policies, build the systems that organic family farms need to thrive, and educate communities about local, organic farming.

### CONNECT WITH CFSA

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## From the Director

### Putting a Network to Work

We are using this edition of Stewardship News to spotlight how the network of people who make up CFSA are working to change our society's relationship with food and agriculture. Over the years I've written dozens of times in this column about how our community is successful when we team up across the artificial lines that have come to segregate farmers, consumers, farm laborers and businesses into adversarial economic units.

Corporate agri-food has had great success in building its power and profit through a divide-and-conquer approach, allowing it to mask the destruction of our shared natural resources and economic subjugation of farmers. But as we know, there is a strong and growing counter-trend to demand agriculture that works with nature and in the best interests of people.

In this newsletter we're showing examples of how our staff works with you, the membership of CFSA, to create sustainable food systems centered on local and organic agriculture, and we're proud for the opportunity to share success stories.

You'll read about new farmers who are rebelling against the 'conventional wisdom' and embracing the challenge of producing organic food for their neighbors. The choice to get into farming is never an easy one; the work is often grueling and sometimes lonely, and the risk of financial failure due to extreme weather and unpredictable markets is great. And when you're opting out of the corporate commodity system, it can be hard to find the assistance necessary to help you get on your feet.

As you'll read about in these pages, CFSA provides that support system. From direct training in organic production at the Lomax Incubator Farm, to on-farm consulting, to connecting members in a web of mutual encouragement, CFSA is a lifeline for new farmers that give the rest of us a healthier diet and environment.



*Roland McReynolds, Executive Director*

Raising sustainable crops and animals is one part of the challenge of restoring sanity to our food system; new marketing systems are equally crucial. That's why CFSA has worked on food distribution projects for more than a decade, and examples of that work are featured here, too.

There are hundreds of entrepreneurs, advocates, and neighborhood leaders who are investing themselves in building new models of food distribution, and CFSA has become the go-to resource throughout the Carolinas for such dedicated people to learn effective strategies for how to achieve their goals.

Sustainable farmers, food businesses and food system pioneers all experience sooner or later that a big part of the reason it can be so hard to raise and distribute organic food and agriculture products is that government policy stands in the way.

All too often the people and businesses that have been part of the sustainable agriculture movement have not been involved in decisions about what kind of farming and food systems our society ought to have. And all too often, those who are not at the table turn out to be on the menu. That's why CFSA members have always demanded we be a voice for better agriculture policy, and why we've worked to make a stronger advocacy network to channel the strong public de-

*continued on page 7*

## Association News

### 30th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference: Building a Sustainable Food Movement

The 30th annual conference, was held in Durham, NC, Nov. 6-8, and featured over 80 food and farm workshops, farm tours, and hands-on intensives. Farmers, gardeners, foodies, and agriculture professionals from all across the Carolinas came to learn about the latest in sustainable farming methods, urban farming, food policy activism, and how to build local food systems.

We were especially proud to be able to send 25 beginning farmers to the conference on the William W. Dow Memorial scholarship. Thank you to the generous donors who made this possible!

Conference highlights included our annual award ceremony, Michael Twitty's incredible keynote, and, as always, the amazing local and organic meals.

Check out the blog at [www.carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/blog) for great stories from our conference bloggers and plan to join us next year!

### Congratulations to CFSA's Sustainable Agriculture Award Winners

We are pleased to recognize the following recipients of our 2015 sustainable agriculture awards. The awards honor institutions and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the sustainable food movement in North and South Carolina and have helped make the Carolinas a leader in sustainable agricultural sectors in the country.

#### Lifetime Achievement Award

*John O'Sullivan*

#### Farmer of the Year

*Portia McNight and Flo Hawley, Chapel Hill Creamery*

#### Beginning Farmer of the Year

*Dani and Joe Rowland, Rowland's Row Family Farm*

#### NC Extension Agent of the Year

*Der Xiong, Catawba County*

#### SC Extension Agent of the Year

*Harry Crissy, Clemson University*

#### Institution of the Year

*Farmer Foodshare*

#### Business of the Year

*Country Farm and Home, Pittsboro*

#### Activist of the Year

*Grace and Cary Kanoy*

carolina farm  
stewardship association

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### Thank you to our 2015 Sponsors!

*Please join us in showing appreciation to our conference sponsors*

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*John O'Sullivan receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Sustainable Ag Conference, with Shorlette Amons and Roland McReynolds*

## Beginning Farmers – the Future of our Food System

Living in a pop-up camper to save money. Farming evenings and weekends after a full-time day job. Up and out by 5am on Saturdays to sell at the farmers market where sales are as variable as the weather. Huge learning curves in soil science, growing a variety of crops, planning crop rotations, pest management, irrigation, harvesting, processing, food safety, equipment operations and maintenance, organic standards, marketing, taxes, licenses and a business plan . . . This is Ben Street's life as a beginning farmer.

"Do you feel like quitting?" I ask him. "Sometimes," he admits.

But then he lights up and shares how exciting it is to see something grow; to know that he is providing nutrient-dense and delicious, healthy food for his community; how he is inspired by the other new farmers and the wisdom of sea-

soned farmers; how rewarding it is to be working in tune with nature; how thrilled he is to be part of a movement which is creating a viable, sustainable future for us all.

**The USDA estimates that about 70% of farmland will change hands over the next two decades.**

**The average age of farmers today is 57. As many as 50% of US farmers will retire in the next ten years.**

This is where CFSA and the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm in Cabarrus County, NC, make the difference. Lomax is the only certified organic incubator farm in the Southeast. Farmers-in-Training like Ben gain access to land and equipment, specialized training and support, and the essential hands-on mentoring from qualified and experienced successful farmers which they need to succeed.



*Ben Street, Farmer in Training at the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm*

"Programs like Lomax are necessary to ensure a future of sustainable food systems which will surely become increasingly imperative to the survival of humanity. Lomax has provided me with the tools and resources necessary to attain a real world experience of what it takes to be a farmer." - Ben Street

**Read more about Ben Street and the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm at [carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/blog)**

## Lowcountry Street Grocery Bus Hopes to Drive out Hunger with help from CFSA Business Development Consulting

"Nell," the retrofitted school bus of Lowcountry Street Grocery (LSG) made its debut appearance this fall right before the floods that devastated South Carolina. This two-aisle grocery store on wheels, set up in a Whole Foods parking lot, served as an outlet for sweet potatoes and other crops from local farms, helping farmers get crops out of the fields and into a market before the rains came.

"This is just one example of how we are utilizing traditional business tools to create a more synergistic and sustainable way to make necessary change and do good," says Lindsey Barrow, Founder and Director of LSG. "Our model is to take what IS working within our local food economy and extend it to the communities that need it most. It's about making the concept of 'local' work for ALL locals."

Lowcountry Street Grocery is working to provide and sustain healthy food access in Charleston's food deserts. It is one of the eight select-



*Lindsey Barrow, Founder and Director, and Kate DeWitt, Associate Director, Lowcountry Street Grocery - photo courtesy of Jonathan Boncek*

ed food projects the CFSA Business Development team is providing development consulting services with this year. CFSA staff provided assistance in launching a successful Kickstarter campaign, developing a business plan, and identifying additional resources for LSG.

"CFSA is a conduit for connections and support," says Lindsey. He points out that while direct services from CFSA were essential in helping

LSG achieve their start-up goals, the work of CFSA goes beyond those.

"CFSA is building a community which will rally around farmers and small businesses and help us all become involved in where our food comes from."

**Read more about Lowcountry Street Grocery and the other seven current Food Projects at [carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/blog)**

## Micro Market Farms Transform Neighborhoods in Henderson, NC

Ardis and Henry Crews, of Henderson, NC, don't let any moss grow under their feet. Instead they are transforming their community by growing micro-enterprise urban farms called "Micro Market Farms." In the past 18 months they have helped establish seven of these urban farms and the city of Henderson has agreed to give them fifteen more abandoned lots to work with.

"We grow more than vegetables," says Ardis, Founder of SOFFA (Southern Organic Female Farmers Association). "We grow community," explains Henry, Founder of NC Green Rural Re-Development Organization.

"We grow viable small businesses for local folks, places for youth to learn, and relationships with neighbors who re-learn how to be neighborly. The garden opens doors and neighbors begin to share ideas and act together for community re-development."

CFSA has partnered with Ardis and Henry to train members of the



SOFFA co-op members in Henderson, NC, completing GAP Certification with CFSA staff and partners

SOFFA co-op to become GAP certified and are working to complete a CAP plan, enabling the first three farms to receive EQIP cost-share funds for hoop houses. The city even passed an ordinance allowing hoop houses in the city. CFSA is presently helping two of the farms become Certified Organic.

The SOFFA members have begun selling at a local farmers market, a Farm Owned Grocery Stand (FOGS), to Farmers Food Share, and to restaurants. Realizing that big conventional tractors would not work on city lots, Henry even became the NC Distributor for Grillo Walk

Behind Tractors and Hoss Tools to make these available to the micro market farmers. Training in repair and maintenance will become another micro-entrepreneurship opportunity for the community.

As they continue to develop the Micro Market Farms in Henderson, the Crews look to have a strong future in their community. As Morris White, Vance County Extension Director said, "If you turn your back on them for five minutes, something new will have been done already."

Read more about SOFFA and CFSA Farm Services at [carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/blog)

## Food You Can Trust Starts at the Source

Why does a retired school teacher become a member of CFSA and a champion of sustainable farming?

Ask Mazie Smith of Swan Quarter, NC, and she'll quickly tell you how she believes her own health was seriously affected by adverse reactions to defoliants being sprayed on the cotton plants in her area. She will enthusiastically go on to convert you to CFSA membership and support for local, organic food!

"I became intent on learning as much as I could about what is sprayed on plants around me in conventional agriculture and the impact on humans and animals" Mazie shares. "My research led me to an NC State University webpage on Organic Farming Information. It was here that I learned of the work CFSA accomplishes and the resources, workshops and other learning opportunities provided by CFSA."

CFSA members know that where your food comes from and how it was grown is very important. As Mazie learned, CFSA members believe that food you can trust starts at the source – with the farmer.



Mazie Smith, Swan Quarter, NC  
photo courtesy of Tiffany Randalls

"I now seek out local farmers and farmers markets to find humanely and organically raised meat and dairy products, along with vegetables that I can feel safe eating, preserving and serving to my family."

"The things I have learned from CFSA have empowered me to ask better questions and to seek out those food businesses that take stewardship of the land seriously. I take comfort in dealing with businesses that are already CFSA members and to encourage those who are not, to join."

"I am truly excited to be a new member and I look forward to continuing to learn and make a difference – for the health of us all – together with CFSA!"

Read more about Mazie and CFSA resources for consumers at [carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/blog)

## Family Farm in South Carolina Increases Market Sales with Organic Certification

When Lisa Rees and her husband, Taylor, moved back to their family land in 2013, their neighbors warned them, "You can't grow organically down here." The admonitions didn't stop the owners of Five Forks Sustainable Farm LLC in Pageland, SC. In just two years, with the expert technical assistance of CFSA Farm Services staff, Five Forks Farm has completed a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) and an Organic Certification Transition Plan.

In August of this year, Lisa excitedly shared with us that "we got our organic certification and our sales at the Farmers Market increased by six fold this week! Thanks for all of your help and advice . . . I'm sure we would not have come this far without the help of CFSA!"

Lisa and Taylor have big plans for their farm in the next ten years. Although they are currently planting only about two acres of vegetables and fruits, their 382-acre farm



*Lisa and Taylor Rees with daughter, Christine  
Five Forks Sustainable Farm LLC, Pageland, SC*

was part of an original land grant from King George and they hope to pass on a family legacy of healthy, natural, beautiful land producing an alternative to conventional agriculture.

"Since there are not many organic farmers in our area," Lisa says, "the

network of CFSA farmers has been a lifeline for us. We don't feel so alone and we have a wealth of resources and farming friends to draw on and learn from."

**Read more about Lisa and Taylor and CFSA Farm Services at [carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/blog)**

## Why Food Councils and Food Networks?



*Grace and Cary Kanoy*

Grace and Cary Kanoy, of Davidson County, NC, believe putting down deep roots in a place and being an active part of a community are important. They are always being asked, "Why do we need a food network?" and "Why is food so important to you?"

"For a thriving community to exist," Grace explains, "residents need

to be healthy. Health comes from clean air, clean water, healthy food, physical activity, and a loving, supportive community. A healthy community that feeds itself is an independent and stable community. This is the kind of place we want to raise our family in."

From a business standpoint, when residents, neighbors, and family members are healthy, it means healthy workers and better productivity. A healthy workforce attracts businesses and companies. Healthy students mean better attendance, better school performance.

CFSA is working with Grace and Cary to establish the Davidson County Local Food Network. CFSA staff provides resources, support and technical assistance through our partnership with the Center for Environmental Farming Systems' Community Food Strategies initiative. Food councils are being formed at county, regional and

state levels to create intentional networks around food system issues and to provide members with the skills and knowledge to identify local solutions to food systems challenges.

"CFSA is our go-to resource for agriculture policy and sustainable ag resources for us in our own homestead and for our community network," says Grace.

"CFSA has had an enormous influence on our lives, introducing us to a wealth of experts, leaders and role models – from participating in farm tours, the Sustainable Ag Conference, learning about food councils and food policy, and becoming part of a larger community who are trying to live honest lives and make the world a better place."

**Read more about Grace and Cary and CFSA food council support and development at [carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/blog)**

## Showing Up and Speaking Up - CFSA Advocacy Work Makes a Difference



*Katherine Spann,  
Prodigal Farm, Rougemont, NC*

Kat Spann of Prodigal Farm in Rougemont, NC, knows first-hand how important it is for our legislators to hear our stories and see the direct impact their policies have on their constituents and the communities they represent.

"We all need to work as a team with CFSA," she says, "being willing to step up and do something – attend Land and Water lobby day and local and state agricultural gatherings,

send an email, make a phone call, and, sometimes, show our face."

Kat encourages us to "be authentically yourself and tell your own story." She tells of the day she was all dressed up and prepared to speak before the Durham County Commissioners about zoning ordinances for farmers markets. While waiting for the issue to come up on the agenda, she was called back to the farm to care for a doe having trouble delivering her kids.

A couple hours later, after suffering her only loss of a doe in childbirth, she checked back in and found that the Commissioners had not yet gotten to her item on the agenda. She decided to head back to the meeting and speak, covered in manure, urine, placenta, and her own exhausted tears because "this is what farmers look like." It was a powerful image. Farmers are often out of sight and out of mind for elected leaders. It is up to us to put a face on the issues that affect farmers.

Many elected officials don't know a farmer, but we can change that.

CFSA staff, members, partners and friends work together to advocate for fair farm and food policies. We work to change agriculture laws and regulations to benefit local and organic small and mid-sized farms.

For Kat, CFSA is an essential part of the team farmers need. Farmers have little time to read the full legal briefs and parse the nuances of the regulations but they do care passionately about the outcomes. So does CFSA.

CFSA staff can do the research, develop the connections, and build the relationships to provide the strong foundation farmers need on which to do their part. Kat reminds us, "CFSA knows when our stories need telling – and our role is to show up and speak up!"

**Read more about Kat and CFSA Advocacy work at [carolinafarmstewards.org/blog](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/blog)**

## Association News

*- continued from page 3*

### Welcome New Board Members

The following were elected to the Board of Directors at our Annual Meeting, held November 8, 2015. You can read their bios and learn more about all of our Board members at [carolinafarmstewards.org/our-leadership-2/](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/our-leadership-2/).

- **Ardis Crews**
- **Ben DuBard**
- **Jennifer Lapidus**
- **Fred Miller**
- **Patrick Wagner**

### And a Thank you to Retiring Board Members

Join with us in expressing our gratitude to the following for their years of voluntary service and leadership:

- **Barbara Lawrence**
- **Eric McLamb**
- **Frachelle Scott**
- **Bob Sykes**
- **Samantha Wallace**

### Staff Transitions

We welcome Lisa Fouladbash in the new position of Organic Policy Coordinator. And we are grateful for the service of Keith Baldwin who has moved on to work independently. Go to [carolinafarmstewards.org/contact-us/](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/contact-us/) to learn more about Lisa and all of our staff.

## Save the Date!

### 6th Annual Organic Commodities & Livestock Conference

A training event for  
commercial-scale growers

**Thursday, March 7, 2016**  
**Mount Olive, NC**

## From the Director

*- continued from page 2*

mand for local, organic food into a force for policy change at the local, state and national levels. You'll read stories here demonstrating how important that work is, and why it's vital for all of us to be involved.

The impacts the sustainable agriculture community can have are multiplied when we work together, and CFSA makes that collective impact happen. Your financial support of our work and active participation in the activities of the organization are the energy that fuel that success. We ask you to continue that support and participation as our community takes ever-greater strides in rebuilding an agriculture that is good for farmers, good for communities a

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