

carolina farm 
stewardship association

IMPACT REPORT 2016





Robert Rockwell (left) with Roland McReynolds (right)

CFSA 2016

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LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

“May you live in interesting times.”

In a speech in 1936, the British statesman, Sir Austen Chamberlain, claimed this adage was a traditional Chinese curse. It wasn't, but the underlying sentiment he expressed, that historical epochs marked by societal ferment and transformation are a burden on those who live through them, resonates nonetheless. Thirty years later, Sen. Robert Kennedy offered a different perspective on this saying. He suggested that eras rich in new ideas, new discoveries, new technologies, new ways of doing business, new classes of leaders, while they may lead to change and disruption of previously dominant patterns, are also periods of creativity and growth that can benefit humankind.

At CFSA, our passion to transform food and agriculture is driven by the interesting times in which we live. The slow-motion catastrophe of global climate change; the crisis of diet-related disease rooted in inequitable access to healthy food; the expansion of corporate control over the food supply; the stark divide between America's urban and rural citizens; the unwillingness to confront these trials against the backdrop of political upheaval here and abroad. All of these herald uncertainty and a difficult path ahead. Yet these challenges are also opportunities for inspiration and innovation, fueling our hope for truly sustainable agriculture that is good for consumers, good for farmers and farmworkers, and good for the land.

This is an exciting time to be a part of the good food movement, and a part of CFSA. We are leading nationally among sustainable ag organizations in the work to promote family-scale farming and high-integrity food businesses, and the Carolinas are leading the South to catch up with the organic farming cultures of the Northeast, the West Coast and the Upper Midwest.

Over the last decade, CFSA has provided programs to build a healthy, just, sustainable food and farming system by addressing challenges like the loss of farmers and farmland; the need for research and resources tailored to help family farmers thrive; the struggle to maintain the integrity of sustainable agriculture in the face of greenwashing and profiteering; and the necessity of empowering people to control decisions about their communities' food supply. In 2016 we had a banner year in pursuing our mission. We are pleased to share with you this Impact Report that illustrates CFSA's labors through the stories and statistics of the people we are serving, and we hope it will inspire you to find more that you can do to join our work in the interesting times of 2017 and beyond.

Robert Rockwell
CFSA President

Roland McReynolds
CFSA Executive Director

PHOTOS ON COVER

Gordon Jenkins & Vera Fabian, Ten Mothers Farm; Suzanne Nelson, Reverence Farm; Carey and Natalie Howell, Howell Specialty Farmz; Piedmont Farm Tour at Woodcrest Farm

» ABOUT CFSA »

The Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) is a farmer-driven, membership-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that's on a mission to bring local, organic food to your table from a farmer who shares your values.

» OUR MISSION »

We help people in the Carolinas grow and eat local, organic food by advocating for fair farm and food policies, building the systems that organic family farms need to thrive, and educating communities about local, organic farming.

» OUR VISION »

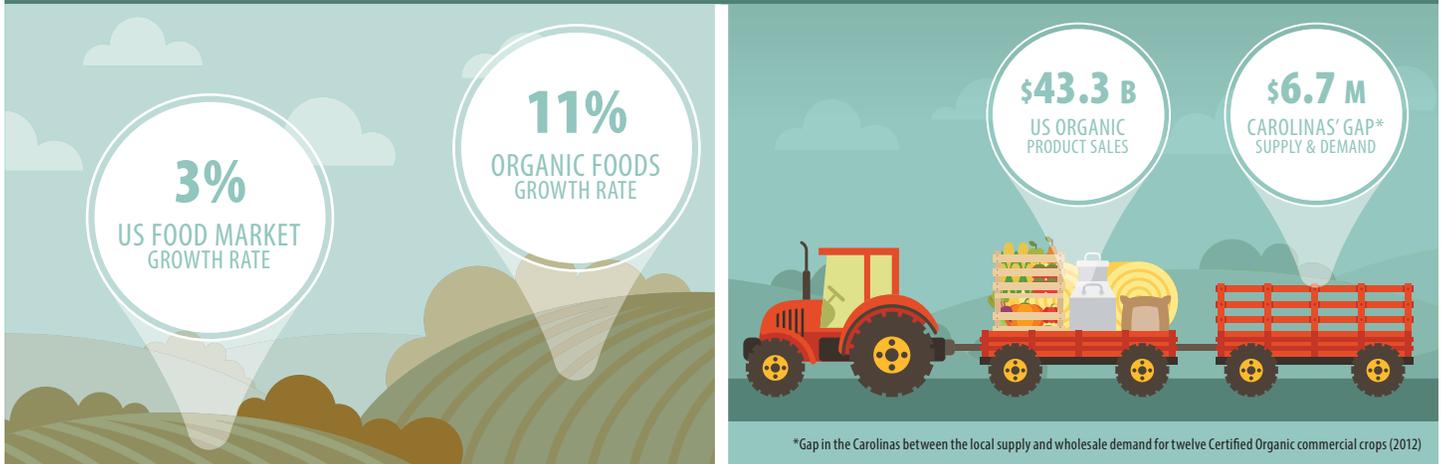
Create a regional food system that is good for consumers, good for farmers and farmworkers, and good for the land.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED

CFSA is working to protect the ability of family-scale farms and high-integrity businesses to thrive in the growing organic sector.

≡ THE OPPORTUNITY ≡

A GROWING ORGANIC MARKET



≡ THE CHALLENGE ≡

WHO WILL GROW OUR FOOD?

- The average age of farmers nationally is 58.3 years old.
- North Carolina has lost almost 9,000 farms and more than a million acres of farmland since the mid-1990s.
- The number of beginning farmers in North Carolina dropped 21% between 2007–2012.
- South Carolina has lost almost 400,000 acres of farmland since the 1980s.
- The number of beginning farmers in South Carolina dropped 19% between 2007–2012.

≡ THE CHALLENGE ≡

TRAINING, RESEARCH & RESOURCES

In addition to providing farmer training and resources on production, markets and other farm business skills, CFSA has identified gaps in farmers' need for:

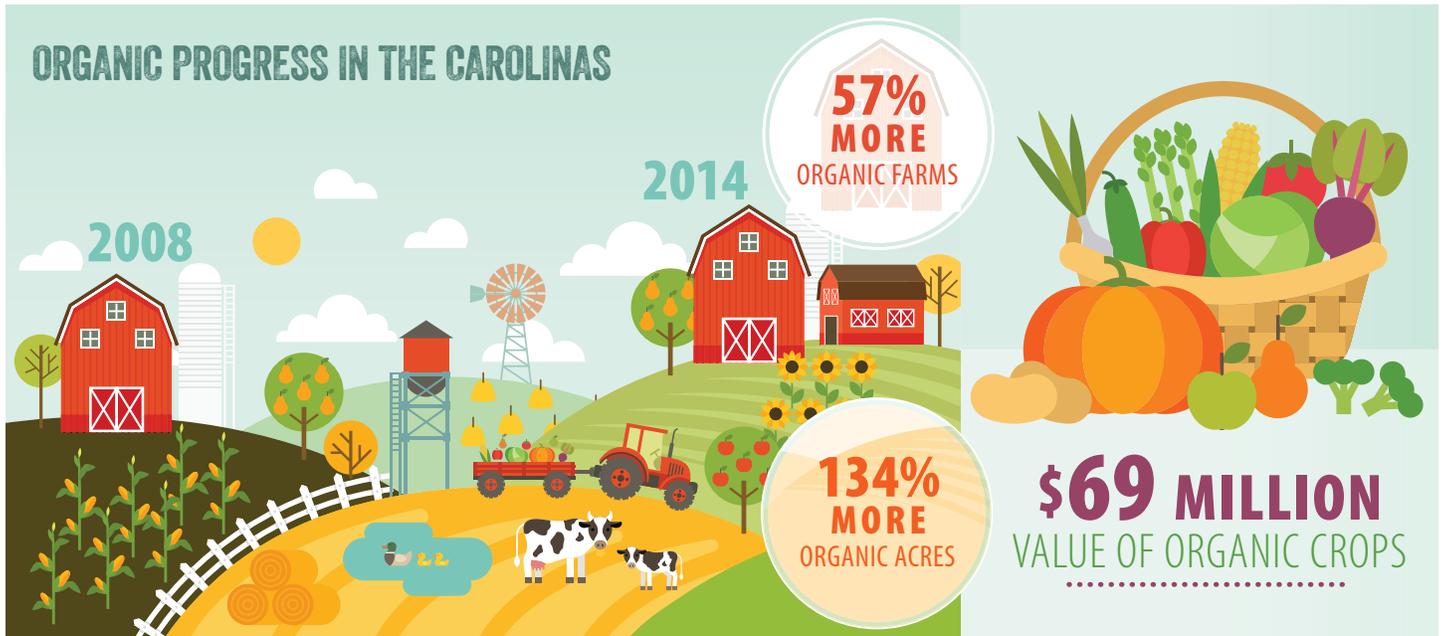
- Individualized help transitioning to organic.
- Assistance meeting the increasing food safety requirements of retail and wholesale markets.
- Farmer-driven applied research on organic practices in the Southeast.
- Sourcing organic inputs.

≡ THE CHALLENGE ≡

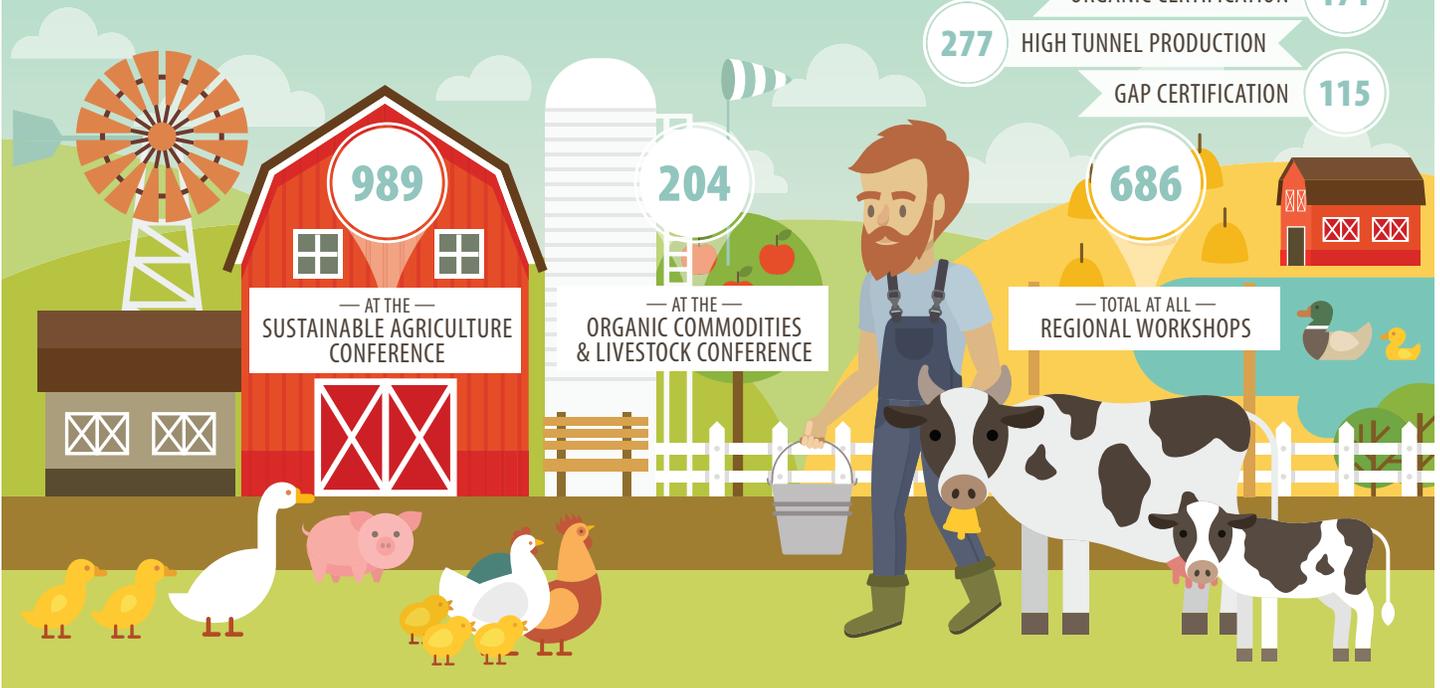
ORGANIC INTEGRITY

- As the organic food market has grown and large-scale food companies have expanded their offerings in the organic sector, the Consumers Union has downgraded its confidence-rating in the organic label, which has put public trust in organic agriculture at risk.
- The leadership of the organic farming movement in general is missing the perspective of farmers, especially from the South, in developing successful strategies to defend organic integrity and expand organic adoption by family farms.

BY THE NUMBERS



FARMER EDUCATION • CFSA 2016



BEGINNING FARMER TRAINING • CFSA 2016



FARM TOURS • CFSA 2016



FARM SERVICES

We provide technical consulting services to help farmers use sustainable and organic production practices, as well as become USDA Organic Certified and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certified.

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION CONSULTING

Lowers the barriers to organic certification for farmers by helping them navigate federal regulations, the certification process, and the landscape of certifying agencies and organic markets.

» THE IMPACT »

- Provided organic certification consulting for 27 farmers transitioning to organic.
- 2 farmers became USDA Certified Organic.
- Organic certification helps farmers obtain organic price premiums for their products, organic markets provide a financial incentive for producers to use more sustainable farming practices on their land, and consumers in the Carolinas gain increased access to local, organic food.

CONSERVATION ACTIVITY PLAN (CAP-138) TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Develops a detailed technical plan for farmers to identify conservation practices needed to address specific natural resource needs on their land.

» THE IMPACT »

- Provided CAP-138 technical services for 10 farmers.
- CAP-138 provides a rich assessment of on-farm natural resources and guidelines for farm management and environmental stewardship decisions, prepares farmers for organic certification, qualifies farmers to access NRCS funding for conservation practices, and protects the healthy farmland and watersheds all Carolinians depend upon.



BRENT BELUE, THICKETTY MOUNTAIN FARMS, COWPENS SC

» 2016 FARMER OF THE YEAR «

CHRIS SERMONS, BIO-WAY FARM, WARE SHOALS SC



Chris Sermons's 120-acre USDA Certified Organic farm is the result of his desire to transform family land from a hunting retreat to a market farm. Chris sells via a CSA, retail and farmers' markets, as well as farm-to-table restaurants in the Greenville area. Bio-Way Farm hosts educational tours, farm stays and participates in agricultural research. Chris is constantly cultivating his land ethic and putting it into practice through his love of permaculture principles.

HIGH TUNNEL CONSULTING

In 2016, CFSA began providing individualized high tunnel consulting to address the gap in production knowledge and overcome the many challenges required to grow in a high tunnel successfully.

» **THE IMPACT** «

- Provided individualized High Tunnel consulting for 14 farmers.
- High Tunnel production increases farmer competitiveness in the local produce market.
- Successful specialty crop production in a high tunnel (30' x 96') can gross between \$10,000 and \$20,000 a year.

FOOD SAFETY CONSULTING & RESOURCE HUB

Connects farmers with the tools, information, training and consulting on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification and the federal rules of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

» **THE IMPACT** «

- Provided individualized GAP consulting for 31 farmers.
- 14 farmers became GAP Certified.
- GAP certification helps farms gain access to new retail and wholesale markets.
- The addition of a Local Produce Safety Manager in 2016 enabled CFSA to expand services across both North and South Carolina.



ERIC SPEAR, SPRING THYME FARM AT LOMAX INCUBATOR FARM

ELMA C. LOMAX INCUBATOR FARM

Supports local, organic farming while equipping a new generation of farmers.



The 31-acre Lomax Incubator Farm in Concord, NC, is the only USDA Certified Organic Incubator Farm in the Southeast. Farmers-in-Training (FITs) start and build their own farm business, develop their skills in organic production, and prepare to successfully launch farms on their own land.

≧ THE IMPACT ≧

- Nine Farmers-in-Training (FITs) are enrolled and making successful progress on their farm business goals.
- Three FITs will graduate in 2017 and launch their farm business onto their own land.
- Seven aspiring farmers have already submitted applications for the 2017 FIT program.
- Each successful FIT will go on to provide many years of organic and sustainable farming in the Carolinas, contributing to our regional food system, local economies, resilient communities, and the environmental stewardship of our land for years to come.

APPLIED AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

CFSA started conducting applied research at the Lomax Incubator Farm in 2016 to address the needs of Carolina farmers. The results of the research will be shared in 2017 during high tunnel workshops, presented at the Sustainable Agriculture Conference, and published in CFSA's Regional Variety Trial Report.

A big thank you to The Avett Brothers and to Vivian Howard of A Chef's Life for featuring the Lomax Incubator Farm in the Fourth Season Premiere Episode.

In addition to training beginning farmers, agricultural education and experiences (classes and workshops, kids' camps, tours of the farm, field days, and volunteer days) are held throughout the year at Lomax for farmers, gardeners, producers, and community members.



LOMAX INCUBATOR FARM, CONCORD NC

Mary Bures, GoU

EDUCATION

We're equipping farmers to grow local and organic and building the network they need to succeed.

≧ 2016 BEGINNING FARMERS OF THE YEAR ≧

JILLIAN AND ROSS MICKENS, OPEN DOOR FARM, CEDAR GROVE NC



News and Observer

Jillian and Ross guided conference participants through their intensive field crop area and shared insights gained from their work transforming a 100-year-old tobacco farm into a sustainable produce operation at the 31st Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference.

CONFERENCES

31st Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference

This three-day conference is the oldest and largest sustainable agriculture conference in the Southeast, convening farmers, agricultural researchers and experts, buyers and food system stakeholders.

6th Annual Organic Commodities and Livestock Conference

This one-day conference targets the needs of larger scale commercial producers to explore emerging opportunities in the sustainable wholesale and organic markets and how to increase profits.

≧ THE IMPACT ≧

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- 989 attendees at Sustainable Agriculture Conference and over 173.5 hours of expert training and education.
- 204 attendees at Organic Commodities and Livestock Conference and over 60 hours of expert training and education.

NETWORKING

- Participants report that the opportunity to build a network of support is a significant benefit – colleagues they can call on, learn from, and exchange ideas with throughout the years, sharing resources and best practices.

“Every year, we look forward to the conference for the educational opportunities and even more so for the networking opportunities. The energy at the conference renews our faith in the direction we have decided to pursue, helps us meet people who do incredibly meaningful work in their communities, and who freely and happily share their information with us. We always come away re-energized, inspired and brimming with even more ideas and strategies.”

– Anonymous comment on post-conference survey, 2016

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

We're driving the conversation about local, organic agriculture – nationally, locally and at the state level.

ADVOCATING FOR FAIR FARM & FOOD POLICIES

CFSA's Policy Team supports our members, farmers, consumers, and everyone connecting them. We make sure local, organic agriculture is top-of-mind for policy makers at the local, state, and national levels.

- Our Executive Director serves on a number of state and federal boards and advisory councils, including the USDA's Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Organizational Council, NC & SC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Advisory Committees, and NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force.
- Our Policy Director serves on NC's statewide Local Food Council.
- Our new South Carolina Policy Coordinator serves on the SC Food Policy Council.

≧ THE IMPACT ≧

- Completed in-depth interviews and site visits with 34 organic and transitioning-to-organic farmers to compile critical information for the Organic Integrity Project.
- Helped ensure a federal law that makes labeling genetically modified foods a requirement.
- Contributed to a successful coalition effort to obtain state investment in SC's Healthy Food Financing Initiative.
- Rallied a persuasive voice for state investment to protect the only research station in North Carolina dedicated to organic and pasture based agriculture, the Cherry Research Farm.

“The addition of a South Carolina Policy Coordinator to CFSA staff is helpful on many levels: sharing information on the overall progress of CSFA, communicating the needs of SC farmers and ranchers directly, plus the added bonus of living in our community and knowing how farming and food issues affect our livelihood.”

– Adam Frick, West Ridge Farm, Little Mountain SC

≧ THE DURHAM FOOD COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM ≧

**JILLIAN JOHNSON, DURHAM CITY COUNCIL,
AND DAVID DESOUZA, ATTENDEE**



LOCAL FOOD COUNCILS

Partnering with other organizations through Community Food Strategies, we're strengthening the capacity of local communities to define and develop their own local food system.

≧ THE IMPACT ≧

- Food councils are influencing strategic planning processes, prioritizing local organic food production, improving farm-to-school policy and infrastructure, and developing more resilient food systems across the Carolinas.
- Four NC counties have begun or completed the process of forming new food councils this year.
- Three of these North Carolina councils worked with CFSA to host candidates' forums this fall which drew huge crowds and generated extensive conversation around food and agriculture.

FOOD SYSTEMS

We are continually working to develop new tools and identify new markets for farmers and producers to build their businesses, providing benefits across the Carolinas.

VALUE CHAIN COORDINATION

CFSA develops strategic alliances to ensure that sustainable food supply chains are developed in a way that is good for consumers, good for farmers and farmworkers, and good for the land. We play multiple roles including: market matchmaker, convener/relationship builder, resource prospector, policy thought leader, technical assistance provider, and catalyst/innovator.

≧ THE IMPACT ≧

- A major new project will positively impact and expand food systems resources in the Charlotte area (more info will be available in 2017).
- CFSA staff have served as facilitators, moderators or panel members at 19 collaborative food system events and projects this year.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS CONSULTING & DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

We connect farmers and agri-preneurs with experts and funders with the goal of expanding markets for sustainable agricultural products.

≧ THE IMPACT ≧

- Assisted eight food business projects this year, four in North Carolina and four in South Carolina, to develop and implement business plans.
- Connected eight additional farmers or producers with new markets this year to increase their revenue or expand their market for products.



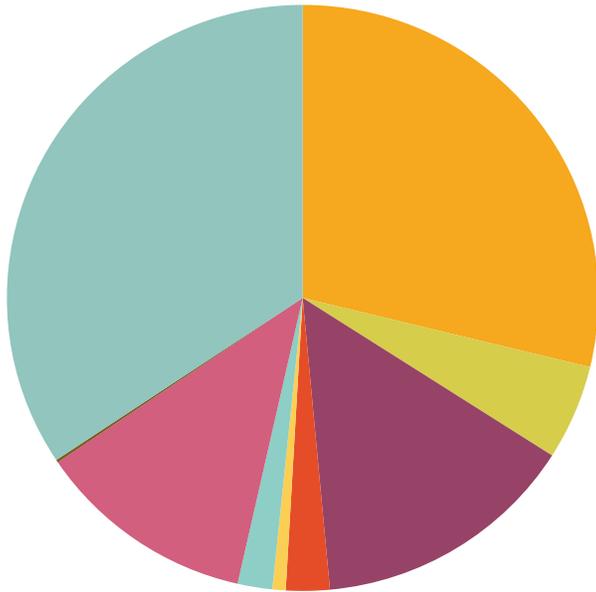
In five short years, Swamp Rabbit Café and Grocery in Greenville, SC, has expanded three times, employs more than 40 people, sources from over 200 local farmers, and will add a butchery in the coming year.

SWAMP RABBIT CAFÉ AND GROCERY, GREENVILLE SC

FINANCIAL PROFILE

JANUARY 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2016

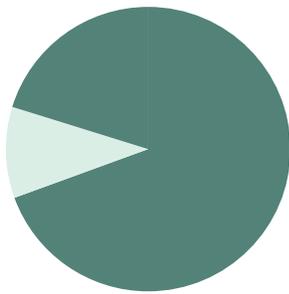
INCOME



	Grants	\$515,892
	Consulting	\$93,923
	Conferences	\$259,644
	Farm Tours	\$42,756
	Educational Events	\$12,984
	Memberships	\$33,987
	Fundraising	\$214,648
	Miscellaneous	\$2,780
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$1,176,614</i>
	Multi-year Funds Released 2016	\$615,044
	TOTAL	\$1,791,658

EXPENSES

**80 CENTS
OF EACH \$1
GOES DIRECTLY TO
PROGRAMS & SERVICES**



**At CFSA we are committed to using funds responsibly.
79.8% OF ALL FUNDS IN 2016 WENT DIRECTLY
TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

	Programs & Services	\$1,154,880
	Administration & Fundraising	\$292,315
	TOTAL	\$1,447,195

FULL AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Available by request or at www.guidestar.org.
If you have questions, we'd love to answer them.
Contact Jacob Leech, Operations Director,
Jacob@carolinafarmstewards.org.

ANNUAL MEETING

All members are encouraged to attend the CFSA
Annual Meeting which will be held at the Sustainable
Agriculture Conference, November 3–5, 2017.

RECOMMEND A BOARD MEMBER

Contact Elizabeth Read,
Communications and Development Director,
Elizabeth@carolinafarmstewards.org.
Candidate suggestions will be provided
to the Board of Directors.

SPONSORS

MAJOR CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENTAL GRANTORS

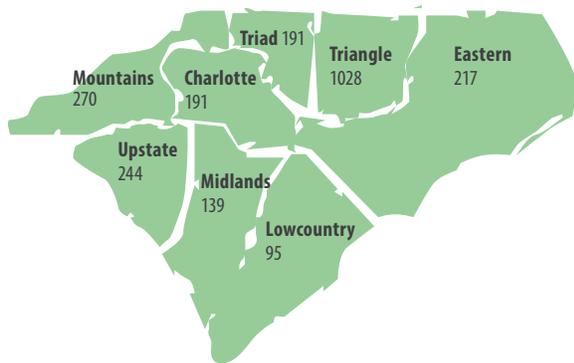
Barnstock	Farm Aid	South Carolina Department of Agriculture
BlueCross BlueShield of NC Foundation	North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Southern Risk Management Education Center
Cabarrus County	North Carolina Growing Together (via N.C. A&T State University)	Thorvin
Carolina Farm Credit	North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission	University of Florida
Center for Environmental Farming Systems (via NC State University)	S&D Coffee	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Clemson University	Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Co.	Wallace Center at Winrock International
Deep Run Productions	Slow Food Charlotte	Weaver Street Market
		Whole Foods Market

SPONSORS OF THE 2016 ORGANIC COMMODITIES AND LIVESTOCK CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE PARTNER	KEYNOTE SPONSOR	CONFERENCE SUSTAINERS
Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Co.	Braswell Foods	International Certification Services
PRESENTING SPONSOR	CONFERENCE SHEPHERDS	SQM Organic
University of Mount Olive	Nature Safe	Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative
	NC State University	Valent

SPONSORS OF THE 2016 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE SPONSORS	CULTIVATOR SPONSOR	GROWER SPONSORS
Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Co.	Ashevillage	Big Spoon Roasters
NC Sustainable Agriculture and Research Program (SARE)	David and Eranda Bradshaw	BioRegen Innovations Co-op
BARNRAISER SPONSORS	Clemson University Sustainable Agriculture Program	Center for Environmental Farming Systems
edibleAsheville, ediblePiedmont, edibleUpcountry	Food Strategies	Fertrell Company
HARVESTER SPONSORS	Food Animals Concern Trust	Fifth Season Gardening Co.
From Scratch Magazine	Freshpoint	Firsthand Foods
United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI)	Johnny's Selected Seeds	Green Fields Sandhills
SEED SOWER SPONSORS	Organic Valley CROPP Cooperative	Haw River Farmhouse Ales
AgCarolina Farm Credit, AgSouth Farm Credit, ArborOne Farm Credit, Cape Fear Farm Credit, Carolina Farm Credit	Southern Exposure Seed Exchange	Lucky Clays Fresh
Brandt Consolidated Inc.	POLLINATOR SPONSOR	Merrill Lynch
Whole Foods Market	American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	Money With A Mission
EDUCATOR SPONSORS	Atlas Greenhouses	New Country Organics
CCOF Certification Services	Banner Greenhouses	NC Farm Bureau Federation
Eastern Carolina Organics	Bitwater Farms	Pate Dawson – Southern Foods
International Certification Services	Durham Co-op Market	Rincon-Vitova Insectaries
NC Growing Together	Greenville Technical College Sustainable Agriculture Program	Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.
Organic Seed Alliance	NC Ag Research & Cooperative Extension Service	USDA Southeast Regional Climate Hub
	Natural Capital Investment Fund	Topo Organic Spirits
	Sow True Seed	
	Thorvin	



OUR NETWORK

2016 MEMBERSHIP BY REGIONS

When you join CFSA, you become part of a vibrant network of farmers, consumers, foodies, businesses and organizations all working together to ensure a healthy and sustainable food system – now and for future generations. In 2016, CFSA had 2,629 active members from the Carolinas and other states.

ENGAGING THE FARM AND FOOD COMMUNITY

In 2016, CFSA launched three new monthly e-Newsletters to more effectively reach and communicate with individuals across the Carolinas:

- The Stew, with 9,527 subscribers, tells the delicious stories of local and organic food and farms in the Carolinas.
- The Grower’s Toolbox, with 3,631 subscribers, reaches sustainable and organic farmers with expert tips, technical resources, upcoming workshops and helpful tools.
- The Buzz, with 2,835 subscribers, shares a monthly list of must-read news stories to keep ag-tivists and concerned citizens informed and ready to take action on important issues in sustainable agriculture and food.

With 8,607 followers on Facebook and 5,016 followers on Twitter, daily social media posts engage a wide range of readers and their friends across the Southeast and the nation.

Based on feedback from our members, we transitioned our communications to two annual mailed newsletters combined with more in-depth stories online and in our three electronic monthly newsletters.

2016 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AWARDS

CFSA is proud to recognize the institutions and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the sustainable food movement in North and South Carolina and helped make the Carolinas one of the fastest growing sustainable agricultural sectors in the country.

Career Achievement Award	Jerry DeWitt
Farmer of the Year	Chris Sermons, Bio-Way Farm
Beginning Farmer of the Year	Jillian and Ross Mickens, Open Door Farm
Activist of the Year	Chuck Marsh
Institution of the Year	Animal Welfare Approved
Business of the Year	Sow True Seed
NC Extension Educator	Joanna Lelekacs
SC Extension Educator	Zachary Boone Snipes

2016 WILLIAM W. DOW SCHOLARSHIPS

Named after Bill Dow, a pioneering organic farmer in the Carolinas, this year the fund was able to award 25 scholarships worth \$6,250. The scholarships give new and beginning farmers and ranchers the opportunity to participate in the conference, helping them build the network of training and support they need to become successful farmers.

≡ WILLIAM W. DOW SCHOLARSHIPS ≡

BRETT EVANS, WILL CARMINES, AND GEOFF SELEN, RED HAWK FARM, HURDLE MILLS NC



In just a few short years these young farmers have established a highly productive vegetable farm. They have put to good use their experience as Bill Dow Scholars and used CFSA consulting services on high tunnel production and transitioning to organic. In 2016, they moved from leased land to their own land and are now growing on four acres of fields and another acre in high tunnels.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

SUPPORT CFSA

When you join CFSA, you become part of a vibrant network of farmers, consumers, businesses and organizations all working together to ensure a safe, healthy, sustainable food system – now and for future generations.

Your financial support of CFSA is one of the best ways you can support local farmers and champion food that is good for consumers, good for farmers and farm workers, and good for the land.

≡ CONNECT WITH US ≡

PO BOX 448, Pittsboro NC 27312
(919) 542-2402 | carolinafarmstewards.org



BECOME A MONTHLY SUSTAINER

carolina farm
stewardship association

PERENNIAL Givers Guild



“ I became a member of CFSA before I even owned a farm, because I understood and believed in CFSA’s mission. In the years since I first joined, my commitment to strengthening sustainable and organic farming in the Carolinas has grown right along with CFSA’s important work. I know that organizations like CFSA deeply appreciate donations, but it is consistent, monthly income that enables CFSA to thrive, to grow, and to build for the future. Becoming a member of the Perennial Givers Guild is one of the best investments I can make in that future. ”

– Jackie Hough, Raft Swamp Farms, Red Springs NC

JOIN

“ The education that CFSA provides helped me tremendously and I’ve told many people that my membership dues are the best money I’ve ever spent in farming. They do a heck of a job educating the public about the benefits of sustainable, organic farming. I’ve never found any organization which comes close to supporting all the local farmers as well as Carolina Farm Stewardship does. ”

– Leland Gibson of Gibson Farms



Janette Wesley

GIVE



“ When we came back to the farm, as the seventh generation of farmers on this land, we had to learn how to farm again – learn how to grow better and healthier food, more sustainably. Growing organically requires us to learn everything about the nutritional needs of the crops, the biological life of the soil, integrated pest management, and how to steward the natural resources of our land. CFSA has been there for us every step of the way. ”

– Millard and Connie Locklear, New Ground Farm, Pembroke NC

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