



COMMUNITY  
FARM  
ALLIANCE

# TRIENNIAL REPORT

2020 - 2022

FARM  
IS THE  
FOUNDATION  
FOR  
GROWTH



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# COMMUNITY FARM ALLIANCE

CFA works to organize and encourage cooperation among rural and urban citizens through leadership development and grassroots democratic processes to ensure an essential, prosperous place for family-scale agriculture in our economies and communities.

CFA envisions a food and fiber system that provides nutritious food for Kentuckians in a manner that is socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable. We envision a system vital to the state's economy.

## GOALS

- Improve the quality of life in rural and urban communities.
- Hold institutions accountable.
- Foster development of policies and programs that reflect the mutual needs and priorities of rural and urban communities.
- Create participatory economic development systems in rural and urban communities across Kentucky.

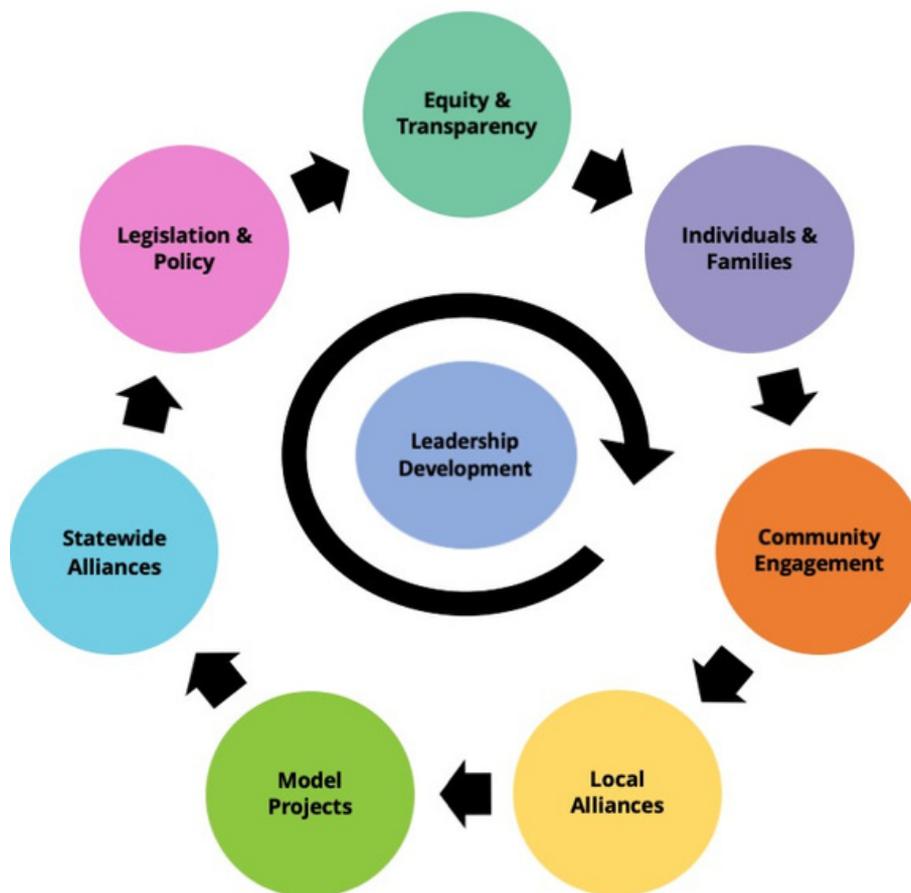
## BELIEFS

- We believe the prosperity of rural and urban communities are linked.
- We believe economic development depends on citizens cooperating to restore agriculture.
- We believe in agriculture founded on sustainable farming methods and traditional practices, in farms that produce products for people rather than commodities for markets.
- We believe in the independent family farmer. They are the most reliable, efficient, and careful producers of food and fiber. Healthy farms provide a foundation for a strong community.
- We believe all workers and farmers must be allowed a fair return for their labor.
- We believe that communities must be economically stable in order to be healthy. That economic stability must be controlled locally.
- We believe that all people have the right to organize in order to identify their own long-term needs and to secure those needs. Democracy must be inclusive. All people – regardless of race, income, gender, sexual orientation, age, citizenship status, nationality, or religion – must join together to create responsive policies and prosperous communities.

# CFA'S THEORY OF CHANGE

From over 30 years of experience in community organizing, Community Farm Alliance members know that making real and democratic change is hard work, and takes time and patience. An economic and social transition begins with constructive grassroots dialogue, is built on successful models, and secured with good public policy.

CFA uses several strategies to build democracy, create public policy, and aid community development. Through community organizing, leadership development, and strategic alliances with other organizations, CFA works to bring a critical public voice to policy makers. Working locally, CFA also develops community-based projects that directly build communities and can be used as models for good public programs and policy.



## THE VOICE OF CHANGE

The most powerful and effective tool people have are their stories. At the core of CFA's work is the creation of leaders and their stories, first on their issues in their communities, and then before policy makers. First and foremost, we listen to people, their problems, and their ideas for solutions. Staff and experienced members then mentor emerging leaders to craft their stories into succinct, powerful messages. CFA presents emerging leaders with opportunities to tell their stories first in supportive settings and then in increasingly conflicted arenas.

# A NOTE FROM MARTIN RICHARDS, CFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Community Farm Alliance's annual Board and Staff Retreat in January 2020 was one of exuberance in anticipation of celebrating CFA's 35th Anniversary, launching our strategic planning process, and generally continuing our great work. And then things took an unforeseen turn, actually, multiple turns over the next two years. Instead of celebrating, we rolled up our sleeves and got to work. I think that is what CFA's Founders would have wanted because that's what they did during the 1980s farm crisis.

In this report, you will find how CFA responded to this unprecedented series of natural and social crises, including:

- CFA and regional partners launched the Central Appalachian Family Farm Fund (CAFFF) to help offset some of the economic impacts of the pandemic and natural disasters on our most vulnerable farmers
- CFA partnered with the Black-led social enterprise Black Soil, to create the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund (KBFF), shifting critical funding directly to Kentucky's Black farmers
- CFA provided mini-grants to 25 farmers markets and supported four "free farmers markets" to offset challenges brought on by disasters.

During these times hunger increased across the state so CFA provided financial support to:

- Feeding Kentucky to support mobile food pantry distributions
- FoodChain in Lexington to provide hot, free, meals for food-insecure families and seniors
- FeedtheWest to purchase produce grown by Black farmers to be distributed for free to community members during the Breonna Taylor protests

In solidarity with Black Lives Matter demands, CFA advocated for local, state, and federal police budgets to be redirected towards social services such as food security, and worked with two communities to rethink their budgets. CFA redirected staff time for two weeks towards front-line support in local communities, to educate ourselves on the effects of the racist food system on Black families, and research long-term interventions.

CFA was only able to adapt and pivot because of our generous general support funding, and for that we are eternally grateful. Almost four years later, CFA looks and works very differently. I believe that throughout all of CFA's work is a new sensitivity to the well-being of Kentuckians, their families, and their communities; especially in consideration of equity and climate change impacts. That consideration is extended to the well-being of CFA staff.

As I conclude my 13-year tenure as CFA's Executive Director and after over 28 years as a CFA member, the evolution of Community Farm Alliance continues to be amazing but always responsive to the ever-changing world in which we live and work. I have never been prouder of this organization, and I have never been more excited for what the future will bring. It is my sincerest wish that you will be a part of this work.

Gratefully,



# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

For thirty-eight years, Community Farm Alliance members have proven that permanent, positive change begins with constructive grassroots dialogue, is built on successful models, and is secured with good public policy. CFA's Healthy Communities Initiative Programs, Kentucky Double Dollars, and Fresh Rx for MOMs, operate at the nexus of these ideas, supporting Kentucky farmers while creating robust nutrition incentive programs that reach Kentuckians where they live, shop, and eat to create a healthier future for the Commonwealth. The triple bottom line of these programs is a win/win/win for the health of Kentuckians, our communities, and our economies. In many ways, the food systems of Kentucky are failing to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens. Hunger is prevalent in Kentucky, with 575,300 residents reported as being food insecure. This hunger is inherently related to one's ability to purchase enough food.

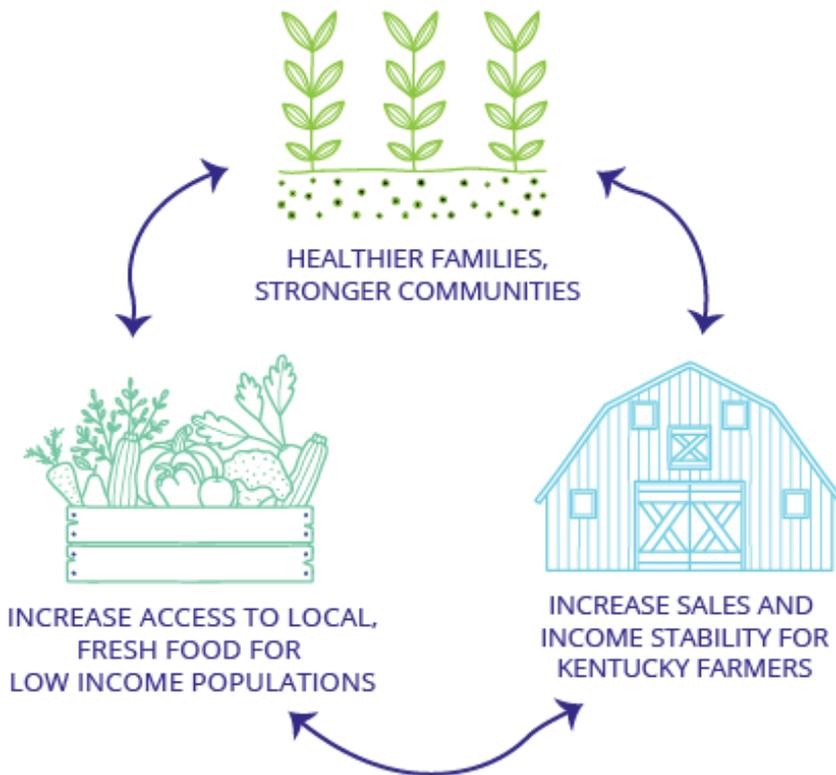


CFA's Healthy Communities Initiative has been an important market-based strategy for supporting local food systems while increasing the accessibility and affordability of Kentucky-grown foods for Kentucky's neediest families.



# KENTUCKY DOUBLE DOLLARS

The mission of the Kentucky Double Dollars program is to remove obstacles for WIC FMNP, SFMNP, and SNAP participants to increase the purchase and consumption of locally-grown food with point-of-sale matching incentives at multiple access points across Kentucky, including urban and rural farmers' markets, Fresh Stop Markets (community-driven, sliding fee scale farmers markets), and pilot retail sites.



*“The market was providing affordable locally grown produce to the neighborhood while allowing a connection with the refugee population. Bring culturally relevant food that everyone can purchase thanks to the Double Dollar program. Multiple customers were able to buy bags of fresh produce they wouldn't have been able to normally without spending tons of money.”*  
 ~Amir Hussein, Farmer's Market Coordinator (New American Farm Market)

Kentucky Double Dollars provides financial incentives to participants in the following programs:

- SNAP (SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM)
- WIC (WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN)
- SFMNP (SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAMS)

Incentives can be used to obtain fresh, Kentucky-grown food at the following sites, where participating:

- FARMERS MARKETS
- FRESH STOP & COMMUNITY MARKETS RETAIL STORES

The end result is healthier food for Kentucky families, additional income for Kentucky farmers, and stronger more resilient local food systems.

KDD'S ECONOMIC IMPACT		
2020	2021	2022
\$504,196	\$1,022,514	\$748,424
<b>TOTAL \$2,275,134</b>		

# KENTUCKY DOUBLE DOLLARS

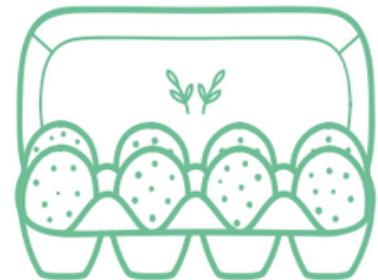
## SNAP FRUIT AND VEGETABLE

- Up to \$12 per person per day
- Valid at participating farmers markets and community markets
- Matches amount that SNAP customers spend at the market
- Valid for Kentucky-grown fruits and vegetables, edible herbs, and plant starts



## SNAP MEAT, EGGS AND DAIRY

- Up to \$8 per person per day
- Valid at participating farmers markets and community markets
- Matches amount that SNAP customers spend at the market
- Valid for Kentucky-raised meat, eggs, and dairy products



## RETAIL LOCATIONS

- Up to \$10 per person per day
- Valid at participating retail stores
- Given with any \$10 SNAP purchase
- Valid for Kentucky-grown fruits and vegetables, edible herbs, and plant starts



## WIC & SENIORS FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

- Up to \$16 per person per market season
- Valid at participating farmers markets
- Given to participants in WIC and Seniors Farmer's Market Nutrition Program
- Valid for Kentucky-grown fruits and vegetables, edible herbs, and plant starts



# KENTUCKY DOUBLE DOLLARS

## From Jamie Fitzwater, KDD Director:

Kentucky Double Dollar's economic impact for 2020-2022 was an estimated 2.3 million dollars. This has real-world, direct impact on small-scale farmers and their respective economies throughout Kentucky. This impact results in the creation of new jobs and lasting infrastructure, greatly contributing to our overall food security and the health of families statewide.

One of our most notable achievements during this period came out of tragedy. After the catastrophic flooding in eastern Kentucky, local citizens, farmers, and community leaders were able to self-organize to distribute thousands of pounds of free food to the most vulnerable. This quick problem-solving was possible because of a foundation of networking, infrastructure building, and personal connections brought about by the local food economy, bolstered by programs like Kentucky Double Dollars.

COVID presented an entirely unique set of challenges for Kentucky citizens, and farmers markets in particular were really able to shine during this difficult time. Kentucky Double Dollars at markets experienced huge growth during the pandemic, with 2021 being our peak programming year ever, with over a million dollars of economic impact.

Many customers learned for the first time that they had a safe, healthy place to shop just down the road, and because of Kentucky Double Dollars, their dollars were able to go further than they ever had before, keeping their families fed well and supporting local farmers in the process.

KDD is also positively impacting the health of our communities. The University of Kentucky's Community and Economic Development Institute of Kentucky (CEDIK) has led the impact evaluation of KDD. CEDIK has found that 91% of surveyed participants report less consumption of processed foods, with 80% of participants surveyed reporting greater nutritional awareness.

*"The Double Dollars were a tremendous help. I am on a fixed income and with the high prices at the grocery I could use my Double Dollars at the Farmers Market and really help stretch my food budget. The market had some great buys and the fresh local produce was truly a blessing."*

*-KDD Customer*

# KENTUCKY DOUBLE DOLLARS

From Jamie Fitzwater, KDD Director:

The KDD expansion to retail markets further amplifies all of these impacts. In 2022, our retail partners spent over \$188,000 with local farmers. With only five retail locations operational that year, this really highlights how important this program is at the local level. Imagine if we were in just 50 stores across Kentucky!

We were able to drastically increase retail redemption from 15% of incentives issued in 2021 to double that—over 30% in 2022. This was the result of a lot of hard work on the part of our team and the outlets working together to figure out the best way to convince customers to take advantage of our program.



Our team has worked tirelessly to introduce legislation to enable innovative programs throughout the state like KDD to best utilize federal funding by providing the much needed match for these programs. The Healthy Food and Farms Innovation Fund will be a huge help to us and other programs like ours in supporting Kentucky farmers and healthy families. We were also able to spend some time lobbying for federal farm bill priorities that would support Kentucky Double Dollars and small-scale farmers throughout the state.

In summary, Kentucky Double Dollars is a core piece of infrastructure for local food systems in the Bluegrass State. The effects of this program ripple outward, spreading impact far and wide for local farmers and healthy communities.



# FRESH RX FOR MOMS

Fresh Rx for Moms is CFA's produce prescription program that provides Medicaid-enrolled expectant mothers with a weekly "prescription" of locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables for 24 to 40 weeks of their pregnancy. In 2018, CFA helped to pilot this produce prescription model at the Community Farmers Market in Bowling Green through a partnership with WellCare. Despite barriers presented by the ongoing pandemic and extreme catastrophic weather, Fresh Rx for MOMs continues to increase participation and impact.

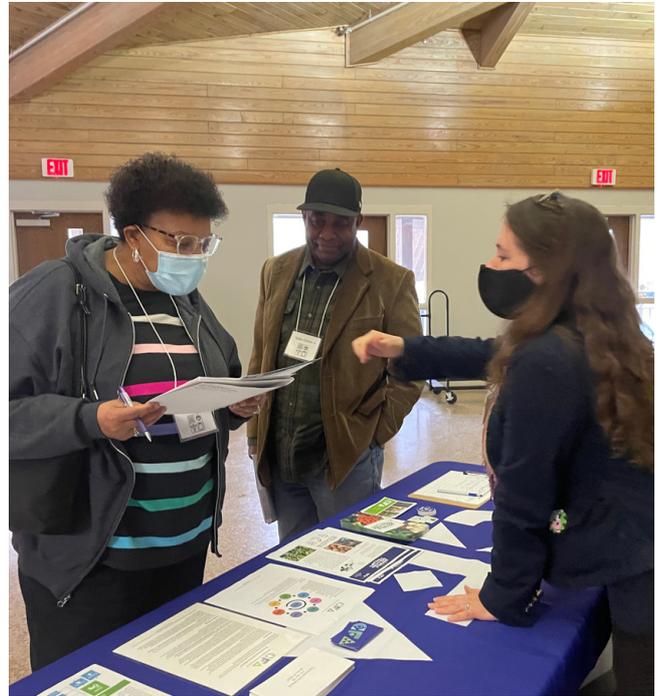


Since the initiation of the pilot in 2018, Fresh Rx for MOMs has grown to support nine outlets during the 2022 farmers market season, two of which piloted innovative models that responded directly to participant-identified challenges, including a delivery meal-kit model and a CSA model. This expansion marks a crucial step in reaching a wider audience of expectant mothers who stand to benefit from the program thanks to vital partnerships with farmers markets, community organizations, and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). FreshRx for MOMs is an instrumental force in promoting healthier communities and eradicating barriers to fresh produce access, all the while championing local family farmers throughout the state.

**293**  
**PARTICIPANTS**  
**REDEEMED A**  
**TOTAL OF**  
**\$89,633**

*"Because of Fresh Rx, my son and I were able to find permanent housing and move out of (an emergency shelter). The vegetables helped us to eat healthy and save much-needed money for our next chapter of life."*

# VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

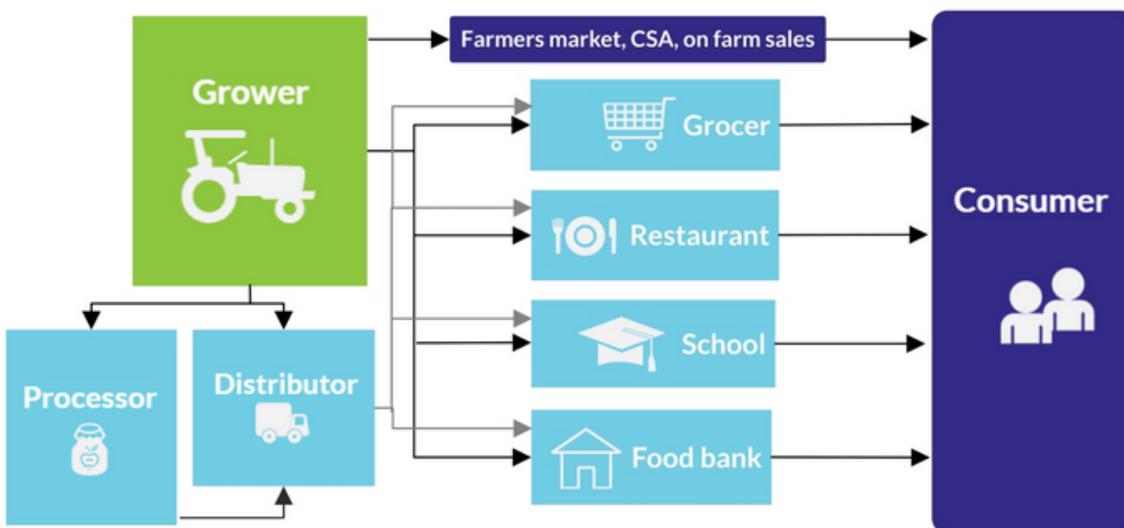


Community Farm Alliance works with communities and partners to support food system value chain development across the Commonwealth, through the work of our Farmers Market Support, Farm to School, and Farm to Table Teams.

We support continuing and emerging farmers through technical assistance, providing workshops and educational resources, and through the facilitation of conferences, like the Eastern Kentucky Farmers Conference and the Kentucky Black Farmers Conference.

Like the many links in the value chain, our work is intertwined with the work of Kentucky's farmers, consumers, and food and farm-focused organizations. No piece of CFA's work is siloed, and each effort is vital to creating a fair farm future.

## LOCAL FOOD VALUE CHAIN



Food Systems are complex, and there are often **many steps** between a food's farm source and its consumer. Farm to table work seeks to **retain the food's farm identity** and values all the way through the value chain to the consumer. Also, when **more points in the supply chain** are utilizing locally grown foods (processors, food service, retailers), the greater the impact on the local farm economy.

# FARMERS MARKET SUPPORT

Since 2012, the Farmers Market Support Program (FMSP) has worked to support and develop Kentucky farmers markets by providing technical assistance, training, connection to resources, and network development. These efforts help ensure profitable market outlets for farmers, access to fresh food for all members of the community, and help to create sustainable food systems. Farmers markets are an excellent strategy for providing economic opportunity to beginning and small-scale farmers with their low-cost and low-risk entry points. For many communities, both urban and rural, farmers markets have been a proven catalyst for community development.

## Programs Managed by the FMSP:

- FMSP Technical Assistance
- Farmers Market Resiliency Program
- Market Manager Cost Share



**1,102 FARMERS  
REPRESENTED/IMPACTED  
THROUGH FMSP MARKET  
PARTICIPATION**

**65 MARKETS  
PARTICIPATING IN FMSP**

**\$8,678,089 TOTAL  
ESTIMATED GROSS SALES  
OF PARTICIPATING  
MARKETS**

**40 MARKETS WITH PAID  
MARKET MANAGERS**

# FARMERS MARKET SUPPORT PROGRAM

## **From the FMSP Team-**

Something that is hard to quantify but is so integral to our work is relationship building. It starts with direct 1:1 technical assistance but grows out from there. We learn the strengths of different leaders and connect them to others who may be struggling. We learn about the creativity of markets as they develop programs and encourage them to share their stories with others. Leaders build trust with us and with each other. This building of trust and mutual support was best illustrated when we were able to pivot quickly as emergencies struck with COVID and the 2022 floods. The ability for the markets leaders to contact any FMSP staff members directly, and for CFA admin's trust that FMSP staff will respond to leaders appropriately gives the FMSP team the ability to build strong relationships with market leaders.

One of the joys of working in the Farmers Market Support Program is traveling around to farmers markets across the Commonwealth and talking with market staff, vendors, and customers. This is a great way to learn what is going on at various markets, share ideas among markets, and help vendors and markets make connections in and beyond their own communities.

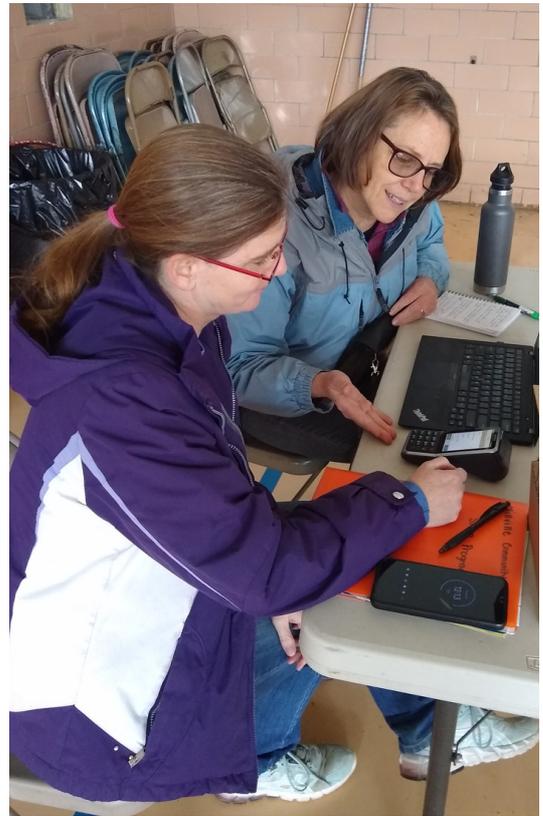
One such story of connectivity began during a National Farmers Market Week visit to the Middlesboro Farmers Market. During that visit, our staff connected with a local mushroom grower with an interest in expanding his business. Knowing that there is a consumer base at other markets (and with individuals and organizations) in nearby counties, our staff began building connections between this mushroom grower and those potential markets. Though Bell and Perry Counties are not that far apart on a map, the travel time via roadways is significant. A multi-stop journey for the mushrooms between Bell and Perry Counties is currently being pieced together which would allow the mushroom grower to build a customer base in Perry County which, hopefully, will create a financially viable market to which the grower can regularly deliver mushrooms in the future. In the meantime, mushrooms have been procured for some special events in counties surrounding Bell County which will introduce his product to new customers and also help to build his customer base.

The success of technical support like this is hard to quantify in numbers. We may have specific contacts to count and topics addressed but the true success of technical support is measured in the broadness of the networks created and the ability to pull from these networks when mutual aid is needed.

# FARMERS MARKET RESILIENCY PROGRAM

## From the FMRP Team –

The Farmers Market Resiliency Program is a customized training and support program for board members, market managers, and farmers market vendors aimed at increasing long-term resiliency at Kentucky's farmers markets. This program is geared toward markets that are hiring or planning to hire a new market manager. The Farmers Market Resiliency Program helps markets build their capacity for long-term sustainability, by assisting marketing in hiring and training a new market manager or training an existing market manager to be a skilled and effective leader. The goals of the Farmers Market Resiliency Program are to help Kentucky farmers markets increase vendor and market manager success; attract new and diverse vendors; increase participation in food access programs; and strengthen their business plan and management structure. The Farmers Market Resiliency Program provides streamlined and adaptive market training and technical assistance for market managers, vendors, and board members and fosters a peer-to-peer learning network.



Equally important to the training we offer is the larger networks that participants develop during the training program. The development of relationships among participants, between mentors and trainees, between partner organizations and trainees, and CFA staff to all the above helps build resiliency that lasts beyond the one year of training. As a surprise but very welcome development, FMRP participants wanted to continue meeting even after the MM training was completed. They saw value in sharing ideas with each other and appreciated the opportunity for CFA staff to be present for support.



# FARMERS MARKET RESILIENCY PROGRAM

11

**MARKETS HAVE  
SUCCESSFULLY  
COMPLETED  
THE PROGRAM**

26

**IN-DEPTH  
NEEDS SPECIFIC  
TRAININGS  
HAVE BEEN  
DELIVERED**

Although the following remarks were submitted anonymously from a 2022 post-survey, it well illustrates the importance of the program to these participants:

*“This was a great program, very informative. It let me know I wasn't alone and gave me resources to reach out to if needed. Some markets have wonderful programs and ideas to reach new vendors and customers. It is helpful to spin those ideas to fit our needs, each market is unique but we all have the same goals. I am hopeful that we can all help each other to succeed.”*

*‘I personally thought that CFA did a great job with the resiliency program. It was very informative and could really help out new and struggling markets. I’m hoping that more of our vendors and board members will participate next year.’*

*“This is such a fabulous group of caring people. It is so nice to share and to learn together and support one another, especially in such a burnt out season.”*

# MARKET MANAGER COST SHARE

FMSP also facilitates CFA's Market Manager Cost-share program (MMCS), which provides a one-on-one match for participating markets to help cover their market manager expenses. This program is an effort to better equip markets with the administrative oversight needed to successfully manage their market. Having a dedicated Market Manager builds the capacity of markets to implement healthy food incentive programs and other special programming that increase vendor sales and create equitable access to fresh local food.

The MMCS is an easy process for applying for grant money. Because of the reporting requirements, markets implement data collection systems like customer counts and vendor sales. They then have data to show the impact they have on their community which can lead to more funding opportunities. Some quotes from participating markets:

*"Having a market manager for the South Frankfort Food Share makes this food access and sliding scale market possible. We were also able to partner with Frankfort Independent Schools to serve 241 summer meals at the June and July food shares- which pop up at a local city park with a splash pad, playground, and basketball courts. This new location and continued community outreach helped increase participation - and farmer sales for the food share in 2022. Farmer sales through the food share (including food purchased for the cooking demos) were over \$11,000 in 2022- and farmers were able to just drop those produce items off, know that they were already sold, and leave the marketing to the VISTA member and food share volunteers."*

– South Frankfort Food Share in Frankfort, KY

*"Having a market manager allowed for more staff time to be dedicated to ensuring that the market was an inclusive, well-run market. The market manager made sure that interpreters were present for the vendors and the customers. The market manager did outreach to local community groups and churches to let them know about the SNAP and DD programs. The manager also visited ESL classes weekly to explain the market and DD for the newly arriving refugees to understand and access the fresh produce."* -New American Farm Market in Louisville, KY

*"We are so appreciative of Community Farm Alliance and all they have made possible for our market to accomplish. We work on a shoestring budget, so there is no way we would be able to offer the programming we do, such as Double Dollars or Fresh RX for MOMS, without the support of CFA, plain and simple. It really does take a village to make our farmers market a successful one and we are so thankful that CFA is a part of our village."*

-Brandi Button, E.D. Sustainable Glasgow, Market Manager of Bounty of the Barrens Farmers Market

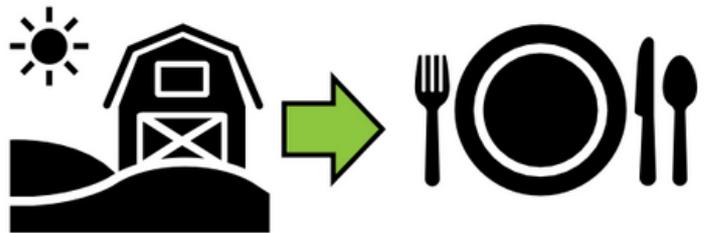
# FARM TO TABLE

CFA's Farm to Table team is working to support and bolster Kentucky's local food value chain. The goal of this work is to connect the dots of the local food system more effectively between restaurants, institutions, and direct consumers to producers and processors. Through research, technical assistance, and relationship building, the program takes note of the resources available and works to build demand and production capacity, with a goal of uplifting and igniting local food champions across the region. The Farm to Table team provides direct outreach and support to buyers and producers in the region, with a focus on connecting producers to institutional buyers, restaurants, and other wholesale outlets through market facilitation.



## What are the Farm to Table Priorities?

- Help producers access new markets
- Assist in accessing resources, training and knowledge
- Help farmers desiring to scale up their operations
- Create new market opportunities (e.g. farmers markets, fresh stop markets, farm to school programs)
- Develop consumer demand for local foods
- Develop infrastructure for greater processing, aggregation and distribution capacity
- Outreach and support for farmers of color
- Facilitate local farm products in food access supply chains



## What is scaling up?

- Increasing production volume
- Extending the season
- Value-added production
- Adding new products
- Gaining additional markets for products
- Achieving food safety certifications

# FARM TO SCHOOL

## From Laurie White, Farm to School Coordinator-

I think the reach of the taste test mini-grants might be the top achievement of this period. Through the USDA's Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program Grant, together with the Kentucky Horticulture Council and with additional funding from the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, 50 mini-grants of \$1,000 were awarded for taste testing Kentucky-grown fruits and vegetables with students in Kentucky schools. Through these grant activities, at least 10,223 students tasted Kentucky-grown fruits and vegetables in 55 schools across the state.

School district grantees spent \$23,364 on produce from 90 farms from Johnson County in the east all the way to Union County in the west and from Kenton County in the North to Cumberland County in the South. Taste tests included 75 different kinds of Kentucky grown fruits, vegetables and herbs, including favorites like strawberries, but also bok choy and pawpaws. Providing students with the opportunity to taste new fruits and vegetables is important for encouraging healthy eating patterns through the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, as demonstrated with the following quotes from participating schools:

*"Strawberries were offered in the cafeteria for intermediate students who demonstrated their love of strawberries with a standing ovation."*

*"Students in the younger grades are eating more vegetables at lunch (my long-term goal), due in part to the taste test. Thank you!"*

*"Students are more willing to eat fruits and vegetables than expected, especially if they are fresh. Some vegetables that I would not have expected students to like —asparagus, green onions, broccoli, radishes—were immensely popular."*



# FARM TO SCHOOL

In a survey at the end of the project, 27 out of the 30 grantees who responded indicated that they would conduct additional taste tests in the future, and 24 stated they would participate in farm-to-school educational activities. These activities have had a real impact on future sourcing for Kentucky-grown foods in school meals, with 20 out of 30 respondents indicating that they would work toward sourcing from Kentucky farmers in the future.

Some of the taste test activities involved bringing a farmer into the classroom and some involved trips to visit farms. All involved connections between schools and farms in their communities.



## School Food Trade Shows

As an initiative of the Farm to School Network, CFA staff worked to bring farmers and farm food products to school food trade shows. Farmers were invited to exhibit and/or sample their farm foods to gatherings of school food professionals.

*"The event last year was great! We added 1 school system which has 10 schools. We have one other potential school. I'm not sure we would like to participate this year, only because we are at near capacity."*

# EASTERN KENTUCKY FARMER CONFERENCE

## From Farm to Table Team:

Since its inception in 2016 EKFC has become THE farming event in eastern Kentucky. It is the place for mountain farmers to network with one another and with resource providers. The workshops are geared toward small-scale farming in the mountains and many of the session leaders are farmers themselves. Not only does this provide farming education in the context of lived experience farming in eastern Kentucky, but it also provides leadership opportunities to continue to grow the local food system in the mountains.

Beginning in 2020, the Kentucky Horticulture Council, the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the University of Kentucky's MarketReady Program, and other partners began hosting a buyer-grower meet-up as a pre-conference event. This has been a great opportunity to showcase local farmers and their products (and help them up their marketing pitches) to local buyers including buyer representatives from restaurants, schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

A youth track was initiated at the 2022 conference. This has served as an opportunity to provide agriculturally focused education to kids and youth with the aim of raising up the next generation of eastern Kentucky farmers and as a way for families to take part in the conference together. As one participant noted, "I love the addition of the youth track, and also the square dancing. Both made this conference a lot more fun for my kids!"



## EKFC 2022

**132 ATTENDEES**

**13 ORGANIZATIONS TABLED**

**20 WORKSHOPS**

**2 SPECIAL NETWORKING SESSIONS**

**(VETERANS, FARMERS OF COLOR)**

**1 YOUTH TRACK WITH 3 SESSIONS**

# EASTERN KENTUCKY FARMER CONFERENCE

*“We are taking classes at the 2022 Eastern Kentucky Farmers Conference and the electric is out! As farmers, we keep plowing through anyways, nothing stopping us!”*  
- 2022 EKFC attendee



*“Networking, learning, relaxing, and gleaning as much as possible. A very good seed sowing event... who knows what may grow out of it!! Tremendous seminars, speakers, food, and entities who come along side of the farming community.”* – Ebenezer Farms Meta page (the Yoder family) (From the 2022 EKFC)

*“Went to the East Kentucky Farm conference today. They had many knowledgeable speakers. I'd have to say Letcher County was represented well today Frank Campbell talked about high tunnels, and it was a very educational class! Valerie Ison Horn was the keynote speaker and all eyes and ears were on her as she walked all of us through all that she and Letcher county have accomplished in agriculture! Was well worth the drive and met a lot of really good people who are out there to help the Kentucky farmers!”*  
- A Perry County farmer



*“I love this conference because there's great networking and most of the speakers are folks actually farming in the mountains!”*  
- Reed Graham, Breathitt County ANR Agent

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE WORK

2020 – 2022 was a tumultuous period that included multiple catastrophic floods across Eastern Kentucky and the COVID-19 pandemic, which tested our local, state, regional, and national food systems. These challenges have stretched and even broken many of the value chains that bring food from the farm to our plates, whether they are the long chains tied to retail groceries or short chains like farmers markets. As a result of the nature of our work, Community Farm Alliance and our partner organizations were able to quickly respond to challenges facing our local food systems in a myriad of ways that provided support to farmers, markets, and eaters.



# EMERGENCY FUNDS

Through CFA's partnership with the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky, Black Soil, Farm Aid, and many others we were able to provide financial support to small-scale farmers across Kentucky in response to several emergencies that happened during this period. The Kentucky Black Farmer Fund (now the Mattie Mack Fund) supported Black farmers through the financial impacts of either rapidly increased or decreased demand due to the pandemic. The Central Appalachian Family Farm Fund (CAFFF) supported farmers across Appalachian Kentucky with the financial impacts resulting from the pandemic, the March 2021 flood, and the catastrophic July 2022 flood.

The access to funding through the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund and the CAFFF further highlighted the difficulty that farmers of color and small-scale farmers have in accessing federal funding, particularly financial resources provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Learning this led CFA to develop educational materials targeted to farmers of color and small-scale farmers about accessing USDA programs. Learning this also contributed to CFA's increased advocacy efforts surrounding USDA programs, in an effort to remove barriers and help these resources to become more accessible.

Behind each of the quotes below is the story of a farmer who was impacted by disasters over the last two years and how the funding and other assistance CFA offered benefitted them.

## CAFFF 2020 (pandemic):

*"Loss of income due to cancellations of events, lowered farmer's market attendance, and inability to sell goods outside of the state/county due to travel restrictions and concerns of contracting COVID-19 have decreased the amount I can reinvest in soil improvements and fall plantings."*  
– Whitley County farmer

## CAFFF 2021 (flood):

*"Thanks. It is greatly appreciated. Hopefully now I can get everything fixed back and bring the rest of my livestock back home."* – Breathitt Co. farmer

*"Thank you so much. This grant will go on the new fencing and a hay storage shed. All on higher ground. Again, thank you."*  
– Clay Co. farmer

## CAFFF 2022 (flood):

*"I can't wait to start ordering my heirloom seeds again, especially my greasy grits. And I'm hoping that I will be able to find my old-fashioned hoes at the flea market. You all are simply the best. I have been so down about this all and you have given me hope to begin getting started over. I simply can't thank you enough."*  
– Breathitt County gardener

# CAFFF

(Central Appalachian Family Farm Fund)

**CAFFF 2020 (PANDEMIC):**  
**\$103,129 AWARDED TO 138**  
**FARMS ACROSS 20**  
**SOUTHEASTERN**  
**KENTUCKY COUNTIES**

**CAFFF 2021 (FLOOD):**  
**\$250,000 AWARDED TO**  
**202 FARMS ACROSS 27**  
**EASTERN KENTUCKY**  
**COUNTIES**

**CAFFF 2022 (FLOOD):**  
**\$414,500 AWARDED TO 123**  
**FARMS ACROSS 11**  
**SOUTHEASTERN**  
**KENTUCKY COUNTIES**

**\$91,645 AWARDED TO 191**  
**GARDENERS ACROSS 8**  
**SOUTHEASTERN**  
**KENTUCKY COUNTIES**



## CAFFF 2020 (pandemic):

*“Ironically, I have a higher demand for produce than pre-COVID 19. Many local residents are inquiring and searching for fresh local produce and I am working harder to meet that demand and require more help with labor...As a result of Covid 19 I have had to spend extra funds on packaging supplies to be in compliance with safety regulations.” – Letcher County farmer*

## CAFFF 2022 (flood):

*“We used our CAFFF grant “to build raised beds which will enable us to use the part of the field that is normally standing in water after wet periods.” – Breathitt County farmer*

*“Thank you all again! As we replant things this year - my grandchildren (ages 1 1/2 (2 of those) and 3) will get to learn about gardening and growing food and how seeds turn into plants! I’ll keep you updated if you would like! Thanks so much again - for everything.” – Letcher County gardener*

# FREE FARMERS MARKETS

**32 FARMERS BENEFITTED  
FROM \$110,000 OF INCOME**

**4500 POUNDS OF FOOD WAS  
DISTRIBUTED**

**1000+ PEOPLE IMPACTED BY  
FLOODS RECEIVED FREE  
PRODUCE, MEAT, EGGS, AND  
DAIRY FROM LOCAL FARMS.**

*“I was getting ready to harvest about 40 dozen corn to the farmers market, but after the flood it looked like it had been rolled over with a blacktop leveler. This free market has helped me out because ... I lost my income. It’s stressful and it’s tiring but it’s satisfying to give it to people knowing that they lost their farms and gardens.” - James Holliday, farmer at Knott Co. Free FM*

*“I lost all of my garden in the flood. I lost my beans, my corn, my tomatoes, my potatoes, everything. So, what little I can get back, I’m so appreciative for.” - Customer, Knott County FM*



On July 28, 2022 wide-spread flooding in Eastern Kentucky destroyed garden produce that people depended on for food and income. The Free Farmers Markets and the EKY Canning Coalition helped farmers recoup lost income, resupply winter larders for home gardeners, and increase access to fresh food for local residents. This emergency support was a result of the collaborative efforts of multiple nonprofits, community groups, and community members. Funding to purchase fresh produce was provided by a variety of non-profits and philanthropic funders, and farmers across Kentucky and neighboring states helped to fill in gaps in the food supply. Together, this collective implemented the Free Farmers Markets and the EKY Canning Coalition at four markets in Eastern Kentucky. These efforts were successful as a result of the interconnected network of food system practitioners in this region. CFA and our partners have been working to build food system networks for many years, and times of emergency illustrate the strength and necessity of these networks, in real-time. CFA staff members are able to nimbly respond to pressing needs because we continually work across programs within the organization.

# FARMERS MARKET COVID RESPONSE

## From the Farmers Market Support Program Team-

When retail operations closed because of COVID regulations, Kentucky farmers markets were neither included nor excluded in the definition of essentials services allowed to remain open. Market leaders didn't know if it was permitted or safe to operate their markets and government entities were slow to publish information specific to farmers markets. CFA filled that information gap. As soon as recommendations were being released from the CDC about safely operating grocery markets, the Farmers Market Support Program was able to use that information to help develop the COVID-19 FM Toolkit to help markets develop their own protocols to keep customers and farmers safe. We hosted Zoom calls for market leaders to update them on best practices that we were seeing through our national farmers market networks and peer-to-peer sharing between markets on how they were meeting the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Although federal grants were available for COVID relief funds, most markets hadn't the time or capacity to apply for them. CFA again stepped into the gap by securing funding for COVID mini-grants that could be quickly and effectively awarded to FMSP markets. These mini-grants helped markets purchase subscriptions to online platforms, PPE, cleaning supplies, signage, hand washing stations, and other COVID mitigating supplies so that farmers markets could continue to operate safely.

*"The elderly, we often find, forget their masks but need them the most. These extra supplies have been so helpful to this population. We are so grateful!"*  
-Franklin Co. FM



# FARMERS MARKET COVID RESPONSE



*“We used the funds to help purchase masks, sanitizer, hand washing stations, no contact thermometer bags, labels, signage, paper tickets, and more. One program, FARMacy, is a pickup program now and utilize this bagged and labeled produce that is placed in recipient's vehicle. What I see is relief and comfort from our vulnerable populations. Of our senior participants, if you have told me market manager that they feel safe at the market, and that fewer hands have handled the produce. I know of a cancer survivor who has come a few times, mask and away from anyone, but comes to pick up produce in the open air with sanitation procedures in place. He would not do so if he felt unsafe.”*

*-City of Whitesburg FM*

**EMERGENCY  
FUNDS USED:**

**\$5531.86**

**NUMBER OF  
MARKETS SERVING  
AT-RISK  
CUSTOMERS THAT  
REMAINED OPEN  
WITH THE HELP OF  
CFA EMERGENCY  
FUNDS:**

**36**

# POLICY AND POWER BUILDING

During the Farm Crisis of the 1980s, a group of Kentucky tobacco and dairy farmers came together to face the fallout of Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz's industrial agricultural driven policy of "get big or get out!" They concluded that the problem wasn't "on the farm", but was a result of public policy. With the prospect of so many farmers losing their farms, their first action was direct service to their neighbors by setting up a suicide hotline. To keep farming, and to allow their sons and daughters to keep farming, CFA's founders realized that they must organize to change public policy.

In 1985 Community Farm Alliance was formed to bring the grassroots voice to public policy.



That work has continued for over 38 years in support of Kentucky's small, disadvantaged family farmers and the communities that depend on them.

Over the years, much of CFA's policy efforts have been focused on fighting bad public policy and regulations, often against the "one size fits all" policy that penalizes small farmers in favor of industrial agriculture.

However, CFA has also been proactive in creating public policy to address issues that have been identified by CFA members and our collaborators. Since 1985 CFA has passed or defeated over two dozen bills in the Kentucky Legislature, contributed to six Farm Bills, submitted an average of a dozen federal letters of support per year, and issued numerous Op-Eds about food and farming issues facing Kentucky.

Occasionally CFA has participated in legal actions such as in 2021 when CFA joined the Amicus Brief by Rural Coalition, Intertribal Agriculture Council et. al, represented by Southern Poverty Law Center, in support of the USDA in defense of Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to provide funding and authorization for USDA FSA to pay up to 120 percent of direct and guaranteed loan outstanding balances for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

During this period, CFA has rebuilt much of the "policy muscle" it takes to do the proactive policy work at both the state and federal levels.

For more information visit: <https://cfaky.org/policy/>

# HEALTHY FARM AND FOOD INNOVATION FUND

In 2014 CFA launched Kentucky Double Dollars to leverage federal food and nutrition program funds to:

- 1) Increase sales and income to Kentucky farmers
- 2) Increase access to local food (especially fresh produce) to low-income populations.

In 2019 CFA undertook a legislative campaign to create the Healthy Farm and Food Innovation Fund that would create sustainability and accessibility for food security programs that utilize Kentucky grown products, such as KDD.

After several years of public and legislative education efforts, CFA got HB 384 introduced in the 2023 Legislative Session. HB 384 was unanimously approved by the House Agriculture Committee and received 2 readings on the House floor. However, 2023 being a short Session time ran out before it could be delivered to the Governor for signing.

During this campaign, CFA increased its recognition in the Legislature (including legislators seeking CFA for advice on different bills and policies because they knew CFA was a trusted policy resource), developed close working relationships with Legislative Leadership and:

- Trained and prepared multiple farmers and directly impacted people to testify in front of committees.
- Developed a social media campaign
- Sent out action alerts
- Helped community members call their state legislators

**PRESENTED AT 5 INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**BUILD A LIST OF OVER 20 COMMUNITY MEMBERS INTERESTED IN THE CAMPAIGN**

**HAD OVER 30 MEETINGS WITH LEGISLATORS AND DECISION MAKERS**

**TABLED AT 10+ EVENTS AND FARMERS MARKETS**



# 2023 FARM BILL



The current five-year Farm Bill expired September 30, 2023. CFA, Kentucky Food Action Network (KFAN) and national partners National Family Farm Coalition and National Sustainable Ag Coalition have been working to shape the next Farm Bill to better support farmers (especially BIPOC farmers), and local/regional food systems while increasing food and nutritional security.

## What has been done towards these efforts?

- CFA Executive Director testified before the US Senate Food and Nutrition Subcommittee on Food As Medicine: Current Efforts And Potential Opportunities December 2022
- Presented three Farm Bill Webinars
- Hosted five in-person Farm Bill presentations
- Facilitated 22 Congressional Meetings
- Planned more than 10 CFA Farm Bill Days at farmers markets
- Attended, planned, or presented at over 15 conferences and events
- Created a 3-part Farm Bill Basics video series to inform people on what the Farm Bill entails and how that will impact them

**You're invited to**  
**FARM BILL BASICS**  
*with CFA*



Join Community Farm Alliance for a workshop on the Farm Bill! You will learn what is in the Farm Bill, it's importance, and ways to advocate.



# KENTUCKY FOOD ACTION NETWORK

The Kentucky Food Action Network was formed in 2019 with leadership from Community Farm Alliance, Feeding Kentucky, the Kentucky Equal Justice Center, and the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy. KFAN stands on the shoulders of the work done by the CFA initiated Kentucky Food Policy Network that existed in 2012-2014.

Through Working Groups and led by a Steering Committee made up of Kentuckians from across every section of our food system, KFAN works to identify strengths and gaps in Kentucky's food system, ensuring collaboration and the elimination of duplication of services, and works to develop actionable recommendations that enhance economic growth through the state's agriculture industry while cultivating a safe, healthy, and available food supply.

KFAN has grown to over 160 members supporting community leaders and directly impacted farmers and consumers. KFAN has created reports, participated in two Kentucky Legislative sessions, and traveled to Washington DC to lobby on the Farm Bill. Highlights from KFAN include:

- Two KFAN members traveled to Washington D.C. where they had six congressional meetings
- KFAN was invited to a roundtable with Congressman McGarvey to discuss Farm Bill issues
- KFAN trained and prepared multiple farmers and directly impacted people to testify in front of legislative committees
- KFAN facilitated 15 Advocacy Trainings
- KFAN members and staff have had over 30 meetings with legislators and decision-makers
- KFAN hosted a full network summit with over 50 members
- 8 Congressional meetings regarding the Farm Bill



*“Going to Washington DC was a phenomenal experience. I am very grateful to have had such a vital role in Washington DC and to represent KFAN Steering Committee with all the zeal, intellect and knowledge that I've gained thus far.” - Tania Whitfield*

*“It was a pleasure working with Tania Whitfield, Kimmie Ishmael, and Cassidy Wheeler to help educate legislators and their aides about the importance of the Farm Bill and its positive impact on Kentuckians. Need is need; no matter if rural or urban, limited resources, ethnic background...when there's a need, it's necessary to come together and not hesitate to make a difference.” - Rosie Allen*

# FARM TO TABLE POLICY

We made a couple of presentations to farmer groups and farmers market leaders about the 2023 Farm Bill that resulted in farmers and farmers market leaders directly engaging in the legislative process. In particular, Kimmie and Laurie made a presentation at the OAK conference in January 2023 that resulted in dozens of messages from farmers being presented to Kentucky's congressional delegation in DC. Our presentation at the FMSP farmers market gathering had similar results. The Farm Bill is such a huge beast of policy and money that it can feel unapproachable. We were able to pull out aspects and proposals that had direct consequences for farmers market leaders. Our Kentucky members of Congress definitely heard from their constituents about the farm bill this year.

In 2020, the Department for Public Health released plans to increase fees for commercial food manufacturers, potentially a 2000% increase for some farm-based value-added producers. The proposal grouped all food manufacturers by food safety risk level of product, without regard to size of commercial kitchen or sales volume. CFA's cottage foods working group worked to gather and share information about the proposed changes, created a template letter for submitting public comments, collaborated with Ky Horticulture Council on a survey of value-added producers, recruited producers to testify in a public hearing and prepared and delivered public comments at the hearing as well. In the end, DPH revised the proposed fee structure to limit fees for manufacturers with income under \$100,000.

**400+ PUBLIC COMMENTS  
WERE SUBMITTED**

**17 PEOPLE GAVE TESTIMONY  
IN THE PUBLIC HEARING**

**8 OUT OF 8 KY MEMBERS OF  
CONGRESS HAVE HAD VISITS  
TO THEIR DC OFFICE FROM  
CFA STAFF AND/OR  
FARMERS AND RECEIVED  
HANDWRITTEN MESSAGES  
FROM KENTUCKY  
CONSTITUENTS**

**17 OUT OF 22 ATTENDEES AT  
OUR OAK CONFERENCE  
SESSION "FARM BILL: WHAT'S  
IN IT FOR YOU?" SAID THAT  
THEY LEARNED SOMETHING  
USEFUL. 13 ATTENDEES SAID  
THAT THEY WOULD USE THE  
INFORMATION FROM OUR  
PRESENTATION IN THE NEXT  
YEAR.**



# FARMERS MARKET POLICY

Although we aren't doing direct policy work, we are making connections on the ground which help form policy both locally and nationally. For instance, Kentucky was one of the first states to implement electronic benefits for the Farmers Market Nutrition Program. As the program rolled out, market leaders had concerns about how they would be able to implement the program at their markets. Challenges included Wi-Fi access, and knowledge gaps with both vendors and customers on how to operate the technology. CFA was able to step in and offer direct support to markets as they implemented these changes as well as foster peer to peer round tables on Zoom where markets could share challenges and solutions. We then communicated our markets' experiences with our national FM network including the FM Coalition who

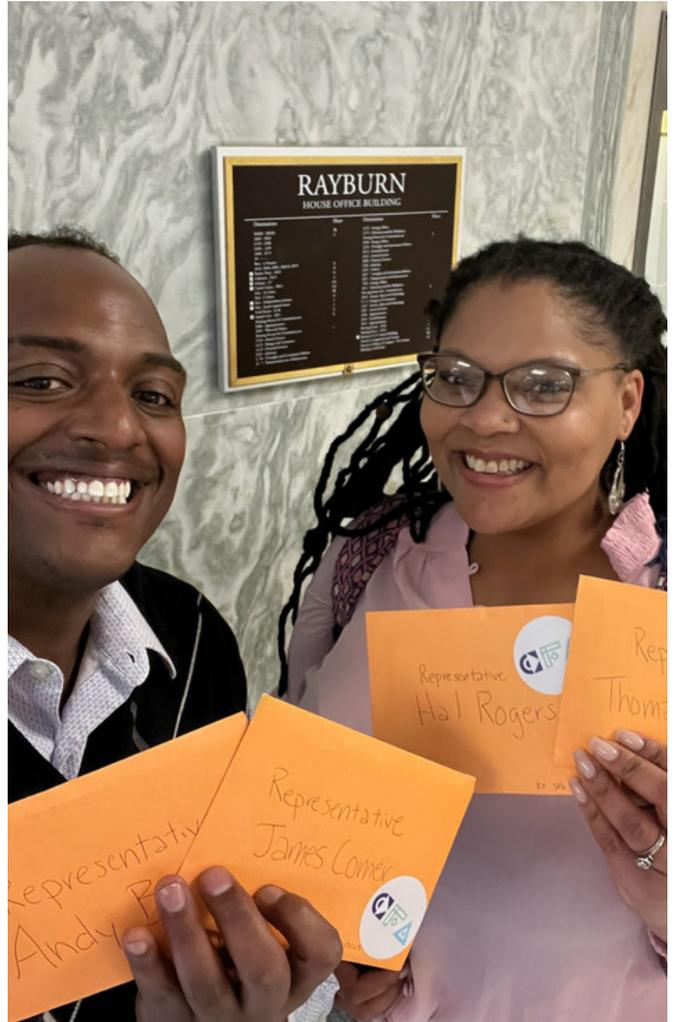


used that information to make recommendations for the upcoming farm bill regarding eFMNP. This is one example of how CFA has been one of the few voices that advocate for rural farmers markets on the national stage. FMSP team members are conduits for communication during campaign building between policy advocates and farmers market vendors and leaders. This communication is done at site visits, FM Gathering, CFA Days, social media, newsletters, and 1:1 TA.

# BLACK FARMER POLICY

**From Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin, Food System Equity Organizer:**

The ability to take Black farmers to DC, on a plane, to tell their stories, with no filter, is indeed an accomplishment. An even bigger one that we heard and saw. People of color, BIPOC, and Black folk, we understand the narrative that policy is created without us in mind. In a time that we truly could not be thought of, as if we were property, we weren't HUMAN. We fought through those injustices, we rallied, we lobbied, and we made change. Having those farmers have representation within the Farm Bill literacy and outreach. Webinars are made just for the barriers we as BIPOC, historically underrepresented and socially disadvantaged, go through just on the color of our skin.



Having these farmers sit with politicians, eye to eye, expressing what our lives are like versus what they may have heard or perceived. Rebuilding the relationship between CFA and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, reestablished leadership and a sense of power around policy. Now we see Kentucky farmers in headlines and in newsletters, sharing the work we are doing and the change we see in the future. Working with Federation, Kentucky was able to vote in and help with the priorities for Farm Bill, as CFA works with NSAC and NFFC, education was amplified around storytelling and accountability.

# PATCHWORK INITIATIVE

## From Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin, Food System Equity Organizer:

Community Farm Alliance's Patchwork Initiative was launched in 2020 as a mission-based strategy that utilizes CFA's Theory of Change to provide resources for community engagement, program development, policy and advocacy, and equity building to build a comprehensive support system for Kentucky's farmers of color.

CFA approaches this as a collaborative strategy, working with stakeholders in the food system including the farm community, federal, state, and local government, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector.

Patchwork means literally stitching the pieces together. The largest accomplishment of this program has been the reconnection between Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and Kentucky Agriculture.

By uplifting their stories, and modifying CFA resources, we have been able to meet Kentucky's BIPOC farmers where they are.

This has directly resulted in an increase in the participation of BIPOC farmers and those who are working in the food system when it comes to USDA programs. This work has been further supported with intentional showing up and inclusion for BIPOC farmers at local agriculture events and opportunities. All of this sums to one large accomplishment: The identification of privilege, the acceptance of biases, and sparking a conversation about how we prioritize equity and inclusion in all we do. It means a lot to go across the United States and see members and friends from other organizations. We see our work, our mission, and the CHANGE that is happening as the result of our work.

Ag Educator Jeff Coles says, "Tiffany says we (Black Farmers) are going to DC, I said okay! I am on my way! I know she has my back and we have hers. We are farmers and we are HERE!"



# PATCHWORK INITIATIVE

**From Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin, Food System Equity Organizer:**

The creation of tools such as the BIPOC Farmers Toolkit, have been game changers for this work. Working with the Bill Emerson Hunger Fellows, this resource was created as a third-person experience of the repetitive systemic barriers BIPOC farmers push through to keep land and to keep up with the majority. These conversations along with the creation of the Inaugural Kentucky Black Farmers Meetup (later renamed Kentucky Black Farmers Conference) brought over 100 Black farmers from around the state to Central Kentucky. Between the conferences and the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund, we collected enough contacts to create a Black Farmers Directory and enough data to conduct analysis on the needs of our farmers. The Kentucky Black Farmer Fund went for two rounds, supporting 52 farms across the state and distributing \$38,650.

The Patchwork Initiative has led the recreation of the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund in 2023 – which has now been renamed the Mattie Mack Farmer Fund. The Mattie Mack Farmer Fund has been created to support various on-farm odd costs and/or cost-share funds to support socially disadvantaged farmers across the state and possibly in the region.

Policy and federal resources are priorities to influence change. By partnering with with Black Soil and Kentucky State University in the USDA 2501 Federal program, CFA has provided intentional opportunities to engage with farmers of color and assist them with targeted education for USDA resources, funding opportunities, and technical assistance programs. Working directly with state and federal agencies, we created several live and pre-recorded informational videos and brought these resources to various agricultural events and roundtable discussions.

All of this work makes for a bridge for trust and relationship building, thus creating a foundation for success. We also created a social media group that started with 40-50 farmers, and now we have over 250 farmers in the group. Sharing, networking, building.



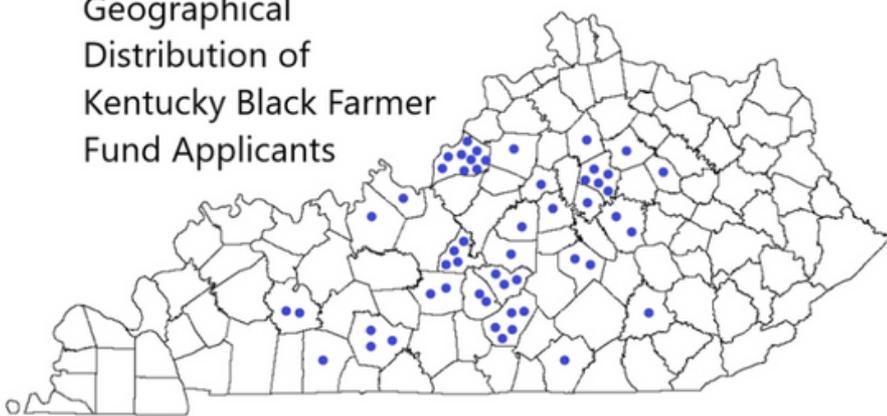
# MATTIE MACK FARMER FUND

(Previously the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund)

In 2019, COVID-19 created opportunities and challenges for all small-scale farmers. For Black farmers, these new demands were piled onto existing challenges, stemming from systemic historical inequities.

Farm Aid offered funds for COVID relief. CFA added funds as well as a fundraising campaign to create the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund, adding funds from Just Transition, Foundation for Appalachian Ky, Gates Foundation and Luther Mason memorial. The name of the fund was changed to the Mattie Mack Farmer Fund in 2023. \$75,899.75 was raised.

Geographical  
Distribution of  
Kentucky Black Farmer  
Fund Applicants



## KBFF Successes

**1st Round:**  
**43 farms totaling \$31,900**  
**2nd Round:**  
**9 farms totaling \$6,750**

**Total 52 farms in 26  
counties across the state**

### About Mattie Mack:

Mrs. Mattie Mack was a dairy and tobacco farmer, born in Georgia and raised in Kentucky. She was a Community Farm Alliance leader, an organizer in the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and a powerful advocate for minority farmers. She testified in hearings about USDA discrimination against Black farmers.



*“COVID 19 affected my community by having empty shelves of the nearest grocery store. We are already in a food insecure community and the strain on the supply chain put an even deeper strain on this food insecure community. Production needed to be increased to help my community that was in need.”*  
– Fund Recipient

# BLACK FARMER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**From Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin, Food System Equity Organizer:**

The Black Farmers Needs Assessment was a small but mighty victory. At the time we created this assessment, we were engaging with about 30 BIPOC farmers. We created the Needs Assessment to be a holistic approach to seeing where Black farmers were, and how they were entering or expanding their markets and customers. Looking to the farmers to identify what they considered agricultural wins, the resources they were interested in, already engaged with, or had no clue about. Though less than 30 farmers completed the assessment, those assessments there were clear indicators of the gaps. Black farmers did not have a healthy relationship with the land grant universities, didn't know many USDA programs that provided funding for socially disadvantaged farmers, and very few had relationships with the USDA Farm Service Agency outside of getting a farm number. In response to these findings, CFA tailored programming, technical assistance, and outreach to meet the needs identified by Kentucky's Black farmers.



## ARE YOU A KENTUCKY BLACK FARMER?

We are striving to appropriately serve our Kentucky Black farmers. Within the many conversations between farmers and Kentucky's local food systems we have continued to discover the gaps in the resources, communication and support for Black farmers, exclusively. This assessment is designed to better equip ourselves and other organizations with the tools to better connect with Black farmers. We have \$25 stipends available for the first 100 black farmers who complete survey.

*"This assessment was the catalyst for campaigning for Black farmers in Kentucky, bringing awareness, resources, and technical assistance to a level to meet Black farmers where they are. Working in this capacity, I was able to identify some of the reasons and causes for these disruptions – and work with these farmers to help develop solutions."*

*"Working with the land grant, I was able to identify some of the reasons and causes for these disruptions. Farmers often come in the doors of the HBCU and question where the Black farmers are? These questions are the evidence of missed opportunities to gain knowledge or a relationship. Since our presence, the increase of Black Farmers at Third Thursday events, as well as more opportunities to work with Black owned farms have increased."*

- Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin

### **KSU THIRD THURSDAY: JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION**

**RESOURCES, STORYTELLING, RESILIENCE**

Thursday June 16, 2022

10am- 3pm ET

Kentucky State University Research Farm

1525 Mills Ln. Frankfort, KY 40601



# BLACKER BERRIES PODCAST

In the Blacker Berries CFA podcast series, CFA Communications Fellow Von Barnes (Farmer Von from Kentuckiana Backyard Farms) met with farmers of color from around the state, capturing and sharing their stories.

The goal of this podcast is to provide a platform for sharing the stories of Kentucky's farmers of color while helping them connect to a larger network of fellow farmers and opportunities within the local food community of Kentucky.

The farmers interviewed came from a diversity of agricultural backgrounds, representing family farms, community gardens, youth programs, aquaculture operations, and so much more! In 2022, 26 episodes were released with 2,640 views!

Shown on the right are quotes and images taken of the farmers who were interviewed as part of this project in 2022.

You can watch all episodes of the Blacker Berries: The Farmers of Color Story Project on the Community Farm Alliance YouTube Channel. Just use your phone to scan the QR code on the right.



*"Blacker Berries has been able to connect different generations of farmers across the landscape of agriculture. I have had people refer to BB in conversations to talk about farmers they didn't know or learned more about." - Von Barnes, Kentuckiana Backyard Farms*



**"FOR INSPIRING BLACK FARMERS, I WOULD RATHER THAT THEIR ADVICE COME FROM A COLLABORATION OF BLACK FARMERS AND NOT JUST ONE PERSON. WE NEED TO GET OUR PLANS TOGETHER. THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO GO AROUND LOOKING FOR TO DIFFERENT WORKSHOPS AND SOURCES FOR INFORMATION."**

**Kenya Abraham**  
SLAK MARKET FARM | FAYETTE COUNTY



**"I WANT PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS FRESH FOOD AND ALSO KNOWLEDGE. I WANT YOU TO BE ABLE TO COME OUT TO THE FARM AND LEARN HOW TO DO A LITTLE GARDEN BOX AND PICK TOMATOES AND MEET OTHER PEOPLE. SO YOU CAN SHARE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE. I WANT TO START BUILDING THAT COMMUNITY."**

**Tatum Lewis**  
BLACKROOTS FARM | CLARK COUNTY



**"WHAT I'M DOING WITH THE FARM IS STARTING A FLAGSHIP FOR FARMERS OF COLOR. IF THOSE FARMERS NEED RESOURCES, INFORMATION, WANT TO KNOW HOW TO ACCESS GRANTS, WHATEVER... MY GOAL IS HELP THESE FARMERS GET WHAT THEY NEED IN KENTUCKY TO THRIVE."**

**Tonya Smith**  
SMITH FARM | BARREN COUNTY



# KENTUCKY BLACK FARMER'S CONFERENCE



The Kentucky Black Farmers Conference is a multiple-day conference, led by Black farmers, that is focused on organizing, educating, and empowering Kentucky's Black Farmers through providing targeted workshops, networking opportunities, and acting as a conduit to connect Black farmers to Kentucky's many agricultural resource providers.

**1ST CONFERENCE (2021): 56 FARMERS PRESENT**

**2ND CONFERENCE (2022): 130 FARMERS PRESENT**



**From Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin, Food System Equity Organizer:**

The Black Farmer Conference brings together over 40% of Kentucky's Black Farmers to one event. The money raised, the sponsorship, and the overall network of allies and resources is one to be proud of. We intentionally invite resource and technical assistance providers as well as policymakers who have equity and inclusion as a priority in their endeavors. This conference has contributed to supporting the creation of new and beginning farmers, providing resources and support for existing farmers, and providing a platform for watching new farmers expand their operations since the first Black Farmer Conference in 2021.

Each year we focus the conference on a different priority facing Kentucky's Black Farmers. In 2021 we focused on community. We wanted to see one another and really understand our capacity, our leverage, and what is going on across the state. This meeting was hosted in the midst of the initiation of the Kentucky Black Farm Fund and the distribution of CFA's Black Farmer Needs Assessment. In 2022 we focused on Ujaama and Cooperative Economics. We discussed networking, business management, partnership funding, and how to access funding across the state.

# ADMINISTRATION

The administrative team at CFA has been diligently working to support the organization's remarkable growth over the past few years. CFA's primary administrative focus has been on enhancing administrative processes and advancing equity within the organization, achieved through internal equity audits and assessments. These efforts have led to the identification of areas for improvement, resulting in the adaptation of policies and systems accordingly.

CFA has adopted enhanced financial management systems to bolster efficiency and risk mitigation.

Another notable improvement is the expansion of PTO benefits, which now include two organization-wide, weeklong closures. In a testament to our commitment to inclusivity, policies are developed democratically, with continuous feedback actively sought from our dedicated staff.

Looking ahead, CFA has projected a transition to a 32-hour outcomes-based work week by January 2024.

We firmly believe that this shift will contribute to greater staff satisfaction, heightened productivity, and a more structured and accountable work environment.

Furthermore, CFA has embraced a flatter leadership structure within the organization, which has fostered greater collaboration, expedited decision-making, and heightened employee engagement and empowerment. These measures aim to achieve greater efficiency and mitigate risks through improved financial management systems.

Additionally, we've adapted our processes to encourage more collaboration in grant development and project initiation and implementation.

Individual staff members now participate more with grant reporting, grant development, and project initiation, thus lightening the load and allowing our administrative staff to dedicate more of their capacity to broader organizational work.



# PATHWAY TO CHANGE

In 2021, CFA embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning journey, delving deep into organizational capacity assessments and program evaluations. Throughout this transformative process, we actively involved stakeholders, members, and staff. Together, we pinpointed enduring challenges, essential prerequisites, and ambitious five-year objectives that serve as the driving force behind CFA’s **Pathway to Change**.

The following table outlines CFA’s five-year strategic plan:

Who We Are & Where We Are Going	<u>3-5-Year Goals</u> What CFA aims to do over the next 3-5-years to make progress toward our long-term impact	<u>Pre-Conditions</u> The macro-level things that must be in place for CFA’s long-term impact to be true.	<u>Long-Term Impact</u> The conditions we are working to create long-term
Organizer of Farm, Food, Fiber and Energy Network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Create educational campaigns</b> during election cycles, participate in legislative processes, and promote robust voter engagement.</li> <li><b>2. Expand our membership base</b> as the go-to voice for prosperous and resilient agriculture and local food, fiber, and energy systems by both centering equity in our membership engagement practices and including marginalized voices that reflect the diversity of Kentucky’s ag community</li> <li><b>3. Integrate and increase CFA members</b> into positions of leadership within politics, education, and other civic institutions; including CFA’s leader participation in local, state, regional, and national networks</li> <li><b>4. Develop collaborative partnerships</b> through funding CFA projects and programs.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers, agricultural entrepreneurs and CFA members have equitable professional development opportunities that allow them to expand their leadership capacity and technical skills.</li> <li>• CFA has a cohesive, diverse and inclusive membership who is active and possesses a clear understanding of our mission and strategic plan and the role they can play to advance CFA’s agenda.</li> <li>• CFA and its members have strong organizational and political relationships that support and communicate the importance of regenerative farming and local food, fiber and energy systems in Kentucky.</li> <li>• CFA is able to show and communicate measurable impacts on Kentucky’s local food system, health, economy, and community resiliency.</li> <li>• CFA members lead Public recognition of the connectivity of equity, food security and agriculture, and understands their individual roles in it.</li> </ul>	Kentucky has an organized and diverse farm, food, fiber and energy network that effectively influences, creates, and supports equitable political, social, economic, and ecological change.
Supporter of the Kentucky Farm and Local Foods Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Promote innovative models and programs</b> that accelerate development of farming and local food systems.</li> <li><b>2. Increase the interaction</b> between diverse consumers and producers, opening new markets and leading to increased market share of Kentucky agricultural products.</li> <li><b>3. Kentucky farms experience growth</b> in sales.</li> <li><b>4. Influence policy makers, institutions and agencies</b> to support projects focused on farming and local food systems</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farms and local food-related businesses in Kentucky are prosperous and provide viable, equitable, and stable economic opportunities.</li> <li>• Kentucky communities have the built, technical, and social infrastructure, including internet access, necessary to support family farms and local food businesses.</li> <li>• Farmers and food entrepreneurs have access to the financial resources they need to capture promising business opportunities.</li> <li>• Kentucky farmers and food entrepreneurs have the knowledge, skills, and support to produce and market agricultural products.</li> <li>• Policy makers recognize and prioritize agricultural development as essential economic and community development.</li> </ul>	Farms & local food systems are a major driver of equitable economic growth in Kentucky.

# PATHWAY TO CHANGE

Who We Are & Where We Are Going	3-5-Year Goals What CFA aims to do over the next 3-5-years to make progress toward our long-term impact	Pre-Conditions The macro-level things that must be in place for CFA's long-term impact to be true.	Long-Term Impact The conditions we are working to create long-term
Advocate for the Local Food and Agriculture System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CFA pushes for a statewide policy enacted to support the sustainability of <b>direct farm impact food access</b> programs.</li> <li>2. CFA pushes for policies/programs to <b>fill the mid-level gap in small-scale processing capacity</b>.</li> <li>3. CFA helps facilitate the establishment and support of <b>regional food hubs</b> for wholesale, institutional, and retail markets.</li> <li>4. CFA increases support for <b>direct-to-consumer markets</b>, including farmers markets and community markets.</li> <li>5. CFA facilitates education of and support for <b>disadvantaged and beginning farmers</b> to launch a successful enterprise and current farmers to scale up and diversify in order to meet Kentucky's local food and farm product demand.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFA and its partners maintain a focus on the food and farm issues that have the greatest impact on low-income and marginalized communities, and authentically engage with frontline communities to achieve this long-term condition.</li> <li>• CFA has a clear vision for what it means to be a resilient and vibrant community, and advances a policy agenda to support this. Factors include: economy; agriculture; healthcare outcomes; water, air, and soil quality; democracy and community engagement; and more.</li> <li>• Kentucky farmers have the capacity to provide and all Kentucky residents have access to fresh, culturally appropriate, and locally grown foods, as well as to the resources to process, prepare, and preserve these.</li> <li>• Robust infrastructure, networks, and policies exist to support local food and agricultural systems in Kentucky.</li> <li>• General public and policy-makers recognize the need to address weather extremes to ensure food and agriculture security</li> </ul>	Strong local food and agricultural systems are a vital part of resilient and vibrant communities
Promoter of Farm and Food Equity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilize <b>Cultural Competency Frameworks</b> to ensure that the needs of BIPOC farmers are being met within CFA land access programming.</li> <li>2. Deepen the understanding of <b>needs around land access and develop responsive programming</b>.</li> <li>3. <b>Develop innovative models</b> that look to mentor relationships to help farmers to secure resources, land, and stay on the land.</li> <li>4. CFA <b>advocates for local, state, and federal policies</b> that address systemic and historical discrimination of farmers of color and socially disadvantaged growers, including land loss, heirs property issues, to enable producers to access land.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the systemic racial oppression that current food and farming systems were built upon, including acknowledgement of colonization of native land and historic disposition of Black farmers.</li> <li>• Understanding policies, capital and resources related to both farmers who own their land and those that rent.</li> <li>• Producers have equitable access to credit, capital, equipment, and other resources needed in order to raise agricultural products.</li> <li>• Kentuckians have the opportunity to affordably and reliably utilize land for agricultural purposes.</li> <li>• Land use policies and practices are in place that preserve farmland and open spaces for agricultural use by Kentuckians.</li> <li>• Strong exchange between intergenerational and cross-cultural communities centered around farm practices, history of land, etc.</li> </ul>	Kentucky's residents and communities have economic viability and resilience because Kentucky farmers have equitable access to usable, secure land

# CURRENT BOARD AND STAFF

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LaToya Drake (Vice Chair)  
Ashton Potter Wright (Secretary)  
Valerie Horn (Treasurer)  
Kenya Abraham  
Andre Barbour  
Jeong Hyun An/Ann Montgomery  
Kurt Mason  
Angela Hatton-Fields  
Marcus Bernard  
Wayne Riley

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Martin Richards, Executive Director  
Lindsey Windland, Deputy Director of Programming  
Camille Hyberger, Administrative & Resource Manager

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Kris Coomer, Communications Associate

## **FARMERS MARKET SUPPORT PROGRAM**

B McShane, Farmers Market Support Program Manager

## **FARM TO TABLE**

Nia Rivers, Louisville Local Food Partnership Coordinator  
Laurie White, Central Kentucky Local Food Coordinator  
Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin, Food System Equity Organizer  
Jennifer Weeber, Northfork Local Food Coordinator  
Amy Richardson, Eastern Kentucky Food System Resiliency Coordinator

## **FRESH RX FOR MOMS**

Sandra Ballew-Barnes, Fresh RX Coordinator

## **KENTUCKY DOUBLE DOLLARS**

Jamie Fitzwater, Kentucky Double Dollars Director  
Margie Stelzer, Kentucky Double Dollars Administrative Coordinator  
(previously FMSP Senior Associate)

## **POLICY**

Kimmie Ishmael, Policy Campaign Coordinator

# FORMER BOARD AND STAFF



## **BOARD**

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Kristin Smith  
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Sarah Barney  
Nancy Griffin

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Maggie Smith (Director)  
Von Barnes

## **FARM TO TABLE**

Nathan Flynn  
Cathryn Forester  
Debbie Sexton  
Paula Bates

## **FRESH RX FOR MOMS**

Jessica Hodges (Director)

## **KENTUCKY DOUBLE DOLLARS**

Brittany Steffey (Director)

## **POLICY**

Kelsey Voit (Director)

# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Thank you to our funders for supporting farmers and helping to provide access to locally grown food across Kentucky. Without your help, we couldn't be doing the valuable work that we do, positively impacting both individuals and communities within our local food system.

## 2020-2022 Funders

- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Center for Science and the Public Interest (CSPI)
- Central Appalachian Network
- Chorus Foundation
- Education Foundation of America
- Farm Aid
- Food and Farm Communication Fund
- Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky
- Foundation for Appalachian KY
- Kentucky Agriculture Development Fund
- Lyons Brown Foundation
- Marguerite Casey Foundation
- Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
- MolinaCares/Passport
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
- Oxmoor Cemetery Foundation
- Regenerative Agriculture Foundation
- USDA Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS)
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement/ Kentucky State University
- USDA Rural Development- Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI)
- Voice for Healthy Kids
- WellCare

## Pandemic and Social Justice Response Funders

- Appalachian Funders Network/Gates Foundation
- Bluegrass Community Foundation/Appalachia Rises Relief Fund
- Chorus Foundation Response Fund
- Education Foundation of America Response Fund
- Farm Aid Rapid Response Fund
- Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky
- Foundation for Appalachian KY
- Just Transition Fund
- Lee Initiative
- Marguerite Casey Response Fund
- Mary Reynolds Babcock Rapid Response Fund
- MolinaCares/Passport
- WellCare

