

from our executive director what the pandemic taught us

Dear Friends,

What a year. When the pandemic began, we faced a bleak reality: Food insecurity rates quickly increased among already vulnerable groups, and farmers lost opportunities to sell their produce. At the same time, the industrial food system started breaking down - shelves went empty, and large farms had to throw out thousands of pounds of produce and livestock.

But if 2020 showed the weaknesses in our food system, it also showed the power and adaptability of a localized approach. This year proved what we have known all along - that local food systems are more nimble, sustainable, and resilient than their industrial counterparts. Our pandemic response programs will continue for the foreseeable future, and we'll work to harness the energy and the lessons of 2020 to work toward lasting change.

With gratitude,



the new year



The challenge of 2021 will be to harness the energy and the lessons of the past year to make lasting change. 2020 illustrated just how many benefits local food has over industrial food supply chains; demonstrated how inequities will quickly deepen in a damaged system;

and brought the systemic oppression and ongoing struggles of Black and brown farmers to the forefront.

Our 2021 policies and programs will tackle these issues and contribute to an even stronger, more resilient, more equitable local food system.

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2020 annual report at a glance

606%

INCREASE OF TOTAL FRESH
FARMACY SHARES DISTRIBUTED
OVER 2019*

\$693,106

SALES FROM COVID-SAFE
CONTACTLESS MARKET

42

NUMBER OF FARMS & BUSINESSES
SUPPORTED THROUGH MARKET

\$360,875

AMOUNT OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED
THROUGH FRESH FARMACY*

8

NUMBER OF FARMERS
WHO TOOK ADVANTAGE
OF COST SHARE

* REFLECTS ONLY
GRANT-FUNDED SITES, NOT
SELF-FUNDED SITES

farm support

Like other small, independently-owned businesses, small farms bore the brunt of the impact from the pandemic. In 2020, our Grower Services program provided not only the services farms need every year but also pandemic-specific support. We continued to offer financial and one-on-one technical assistance to farms who needed it. We secured funding from the US Department of Agriculture to develop a series of workshops, in partnership with Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension, which translate federal regulations into actionable, achievable steps. Due to COVID, we have transitioned those workshops into on-demand videos.



OUR MISSION: Local Food Hub advances equitable access to fresh food, independent farms, and fairness in farming.

markets



"I can't thank the Local Food Hub enough for responding so quickly and effectively for local, small farmers. They are an invaluable organization, who live by their mission and are willing to do the hard work of helping farmers in real life"

-Market Vendor

In March, as universities and restaurants closed, our partner farms saw their sales quickly plummet. It was clear that the infrastructure that normally connects small farms to the community was crumbling, and something new was needed. So, we built that something new. We launched the first COVID-safe, contactless market in Charlottesville - a market that quickly grew to twice a week, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales. As the first market of this type in the area, we also supported other farmers markets throughout Charlottesville and Virginia as they adapted.

food access

Before the pandemic hit, one in five adults in Charlottesville didn't know where their next meal might come from, and COVID-19 only worsened that situation. We knew immediately that the vulnerable in our community would have more need than ever for nourishing, fresh food. In response, we grew our Fresh Farmacy program sixfold, serving more people, more often, and for longer than ever before. In addition to serving more participants at existing sites, we also expanded to new sites, including two subsidized housing communities in the city. We also partnered with other food access organizations to offer fresh food alongside shelf-stable options.



"I am very grateful for the food that they bring to our home. I have been out of work for a month and a half and this help they give me is very useful for me and my family."

-Fresh Farmacy Participant

community and policy

Significant impact and long-term change is only possible through collaboration. Local Food Hub continued its involvement in numerous community coalitions and steering committees. We led an effort to form the Eastern Food Hub Collaborative, joined with the Charlottesville Food Justice Network to begin a conversation about Black and brown farming, and helped facilitate recommendations to the Governor's Commission to Review Racial Equity in Virginia Law.



TO READ THE FULL
2020 ANNUAL
REPORT
PLEASE VISIT:

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