



FUTURE HARVEST

Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture

IMPACT REPORT 2025

A YEAR IN REVIEW

**FOR THE FARMING COMMUNITY OF
DELAWARE, MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA,
VIRGINIA, AND WASHINGTON, D.C.**



FOR FARMERS. BY FARMERS. WITH FARMERS.

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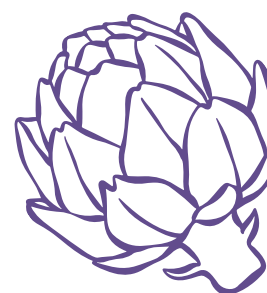
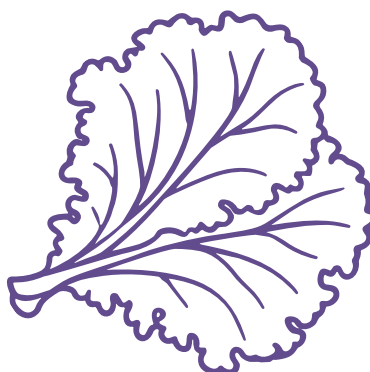
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Note from Our Executive Director



Grace Leatherman

Dear friends,

That is how I always begin this letter, but truly, you are dear friends. Our members, supporters, and partners brought us through a year that was immensely challenging, but ultimately one of the most meaningful we have ever had here at Future Harvest. We cannot thank you enough for your support.

We began 2025 with an inspiring annual conference, held for the first time at the Silver Spring Civic Building. We loved interacting with over 400 of you through a wonderful collection of workshops, speaker sessions, and exhibits. We enjoyed local food served with zero waste, and even a few rounds of Farm Bingo. It was a great start to the year.

Things got challenging almost immediately after the conference. You have already heard from me many times about how we lost \$1.4 million in federal funding, most of which was headed directly to farmers in the form of conservation funding and technical support. Now let me tell you how our community came through for those farmers, sending constant encouragement and doubling individual giving levels. CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, American University, Farmer Mac, The Campbell Foundation, The Clif Family Foundation, The Chesapeake Bay Trust, and the Prince Charitable Trusts stepped up to support program work and capacity building. We did have to change our goals for the year, but by the time December came, we realized that the Future Harvest community had done something amazing.

Despite everything, our education work did not slow down. Future Harvest was honored to provide 44 in-person and online educational events in the Chesapeake region. We reformatted our Beginner Farmer Training Program to emphasize support for farm workers and rolled out a ten part online course, Sustainable Farming Fundamentals. We held field days all over the region, covering everything from irrigation to natural dyes. The Agricultural Leadership Development Initiative provided an opportunity for experienced farmers to gather and learn together. Whether you were curious about agriculture or had been farming for years, there was always something to do and learn through Future Harvest in 2025.

Despite receiving the most devastating cuts, our conservation and research programs, including the Million Acre Challenge, continued to help farmers improve their soil and water. Farmers received over \$200,000 in conservation grants through Future Harvest, and farmer networks met for peer-to-peer soil health education. Future Harvest staff provided soil tests as part of the PASA Soil Health Benchmark Study. Twenty farms were able to hire expert assistance through our Choose Your Own Consultant Program.

Hunger is an ever-increasing concern in our region, and Future Harvest farmers often express their longing to be able to provide all their neighbors with nutritious food. We were so proud to be able to bring back our Feed the Need program, which provided grants to farmers who donated food to their communities. Farmers estimated that they have so far been able to provide over 30,000 pounds of food to local food banks and pantries, impacting over 12,000 people. We were also able to make consumers aware of nutritious food available in their communities through recipe cards and other marketing materials.

As we planned for our 2026 conference, we chose the theme "Pivot, Care, Grow," because that is exactly what our community did in 2025. Uncertainty will still be with us as we move forward, but so will a remarkable coalition of sustainable farmers and food system supporters. Thank you for your friendship, and we are excited to grow into the future!

Grace Leatherman

Executive Director
Future Harvest

The Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture



2025 BY THE NUMBERS



OUR

MISSION AREA

Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, and DC, with special focus on the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

OUR MISSION

To advance agriculture that sustains farmers, communities, and the environment.

OUR VISION

We envision a food system that strengthens farming and the regional food economy; protects our land, water, air and soil; and provides nutritious food that sustains the region's communities.

People served local produce and protein through Feed the Need

12,127

JAN-DEC 2025

JAN-DEC 2025

1701

Participant engagements during field days and speaker series highlighting 34 local farm operations

Attended Future Harvest Conference

485

JAN 2025

FEB-APR 2025

93

Fields from 31 MD farms sampled for PASA Sustainable Agriculture; 20 farms (60 fields) received free tests.

Vouchers awarded to farmers to work 1-on-1 with a consultant of their choice

20

NOV 2025

JAN-DEC 2025

10

Mentor farms worked directly with participants in our Beginner Farmer Training Program

Graduates from our 2025 Beginner Farmer Training Program

10

JAN 2026



FUTURE HARVEST FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

Future Harvest is a membership nonprofit serving sustainable farmers throughout the Chesapeake region. We host a variety of innovative programs to advance agriculture that sustains farmers, communities, and the environment.



BEGINNER FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM (BFTP)

12-month immersive training experience for beginner farmers that combines a comprehensive classroom curriculum with hands-on learning at the region's leading sustainable farms. 10 trainees graduated from a redesigned BFTP in 2025.



FIELD SCHOOL

In partnership with the Chesapeake region's leading farmers, researchers, and technical service providers, the Field School offers farmer-to-farmer education on the latest innovations in sustainable agriculture.



CONFERENCE

Since 1999, Future Harvest has gathered Chesapeake region farmers, agricultural service providers, and foodies each winter for our annual conference. Farmers and supporters who attend our conferences choose from 40+ sessions, farmer-to-farmer roundtables, and clinics.



MILLION ACRE CHALLENGE

The Million Acre Challenge helps Maryland farmers build soil health, increase farm profitability, and improve water quality – while making farms resilient and active in the face of climate change. Our farmer-focused collaborative uses soil health science, economics, education, and incentives to achieve sustainable agriculture.



FEED THE NEED

Supports local farmers with mini-grants, enabling them to supply fresh produce and protein to their communities and combat food insecurity. The program strengthens regional food systems and enhances access to nutritious food for low-income households.



CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN CONSULTANT

Provides farmers with the grants to strengthen their business and address challenges with the support of in-depth consultations with experts



CONFERENCE DATA

The 2025 Future Harvest Conference, “Farming into the Future,” brought together farmers, educators, researchers, and food system leaders from across the Mid-Atlantic for a weekend of learning, collaboration, and community building. Hosted by Future Harvest, the 26th annual gathering opened with a land acknowledgement by Hope Butler and featured a keynote from Renee Catacalos, who encouraged participants to embrace seasonal, local, and accessible food systems.

Boasting a total of 49 sessions, attendees engaged with a diverse lineup of farmers and educators, including Pam Dawling, Ira Wallace, Ellen Polishuk, Laura Beth Resnick, Gale Livingstone, and Emma Jagoz. Together, the conference highlighted the importance of shared knowledge and collective action, supporting farmers at every stage as they work toward a more resilient and equitable agricultural future.

ATTENDEES

485

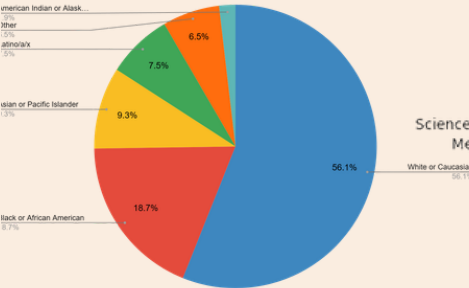
Total Attendees

43

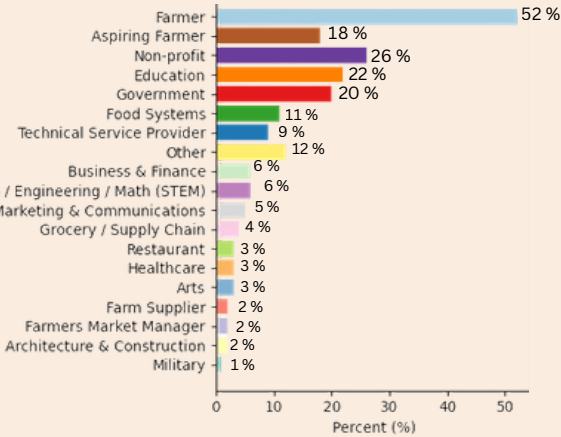
Dedicated Sponsors



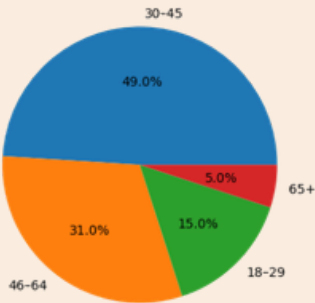
Attendee Demographics



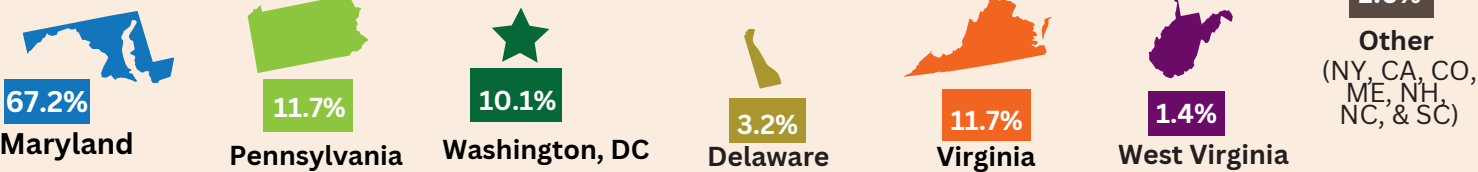
Occupation Breakdown



Age Range Distribution



Geography of attendees



SPOTLIGHT: FEED THE NEED

MINI-GRANTS FOR FARMERS FIGHTING HUNGER IN THEIR COMMUNITIES



Originally launched in 2020, the Feed the Need mini-grant program has returned in 2025, with Future Harvest once again supporting farmers on the front lines of food access. The program offers grants of \$1,000 to \$3,000 to farmers who grow and donate fresh, nutritious food to food assistance providers of their choice.

To address food insecurity through sustainable agriculture, the Feed the Need program connects local farmers with communities in need while strengthening regional food systems.

Key priorities of the program include partnering with local farms to source fresh produce, distributing food to underserved communities through food banks, and providing training and support to participating farmers. The initiative also promotes sustainable farming practices, encourages community involvement through volunteer opportunities, and measures impact to continually adapt and respond to community needs.

By empowering farmers to meet the needs of their communities, Feed the Need builds meaningful connections between agriculture and food access while supporting a more resilient food system.

Funding for the program is made possible through a combination of private contributions and a grant from CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. Thank you!



PARTNER FARMS

- Ad Astra Farms
- Albco Farm
- Amy's Garden
- Asawana Farms
- Bellair Farm
- Cedar Ridge Community Church
- Common Root Farm
- Communitas Farm
- Deep Roots
- Dittmar Family Farms
- EcoCity
- Farm Unity Limited
- Fireside Farm
- Franciscan Monastery Garden Guild
- Freetown Farm
- Freshtable Gardens
- Greenhouse Growing Partners
- Harden Family Farms
- Hillcross Farm
- Love Bug Farm
- MAFRAC
- Moon Valley Farm
- MysticPine Farm LLC
- New Roots
- OlaLekan Farm
- One Straw Farm
- Owl's Nest Farm
- Oxbow Farm
- Radical Roots Farm
- Red Wiggler Care Farm
- Rock Rose Food Justice
- Sandy Spring Gardens
- Sandy's Garden
- Steptoe Farm
- Tallawah Farms
- Three Part Harmony
- Tranquil Islands
- Whitelock Community Farm
- Whitt's Farm, LLC
- Williwaw Farm
- SMADC
- Shlagel Farms LLC
- Spice Creek
- Xceptional Opportunities

30,214 pounds of food were distributed through the Feed the Need program in 2025!





Future Harvest's Feed the Need Program has positively affected our farm by allowing us to expand production with purpose and stability. Knowing there was a committed outlet for our pasture-raised chickens enabled us to plan, raise, and process birds with confidence, while staying true to our values of humane care and high-quality food. The program provided reliable income, supported local agriculture, and allowed our farm to play a direct role in addressing food insecurity in our community, reinforcing our mission to produce healthy food that serves both people and place.

HILLCROSS FARM

SPOTLIGHT: BEGINNER FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM

More than a decade ago, Future Harvest launched its Beginner Farmer Training Program (BFTP), which has **trained and graduated more than 400 new farmers** across the Chesapeake region in sustainable and regenerative practices.

The program has distributed thousands of dollars directly to limited-resource farmers annually in the form of needs-based, **farm start-up mini-grants**. We could not be more proud to contribute to the regional farming economy through the efforts of this program.

Our program redesign stems from an intention to serve a smaller cohort of farmers with an increased depth of service, and also reflects shifts in funding.

The core components of the program include our annual **Conference**, **10-week online classroom series**, and our **Field Days**, which were open to the public, and we will continue to offer scholarships to ensure access for farmers who need this programming.

In order to better serve our more advanced farmers, we expanded our **Choose Your Own Consultant Program** (previously known as Pick-Your-Own Consultant). We provided farmers with 5-10 years of experience with a structured, targeted mentorship in the fall of 2025.

The main audience for the 2025 cohort was people already working or volunteering on farms in the Baltimore/Washington DC Metropolitan area. Because of a smaller class size, Trainees will have access to enhanced technical assistance.

For the first time in the history of the BFTP, Trainees completed and presented their final projects at the 2026 Conference. Projects ranged from formal business plans to deep dives into fiber plant production.



Small Tools & Equipment Field Day at Dreaming Out Loud in D.C

MEET OUR BFTP GRADUATES!



Oscar Ruth trained at Fox Haven Farm in Jefferson, MD. They launched their own successful medicinal herb plant business in the spring and will be continuing to work at Fox Haven in 2026.



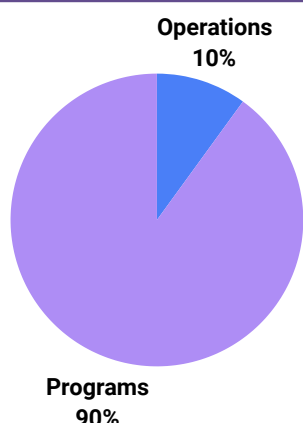
Aya Burt and Lauren Hawkins trained at Oxbow Farm in Parkton, MD. They are launching their own farm, Marpe Community Health, at Oxbow and expanding their growing in 2026.

KEY FINANCIAL INSIGHTS*

Future Harvest has been improving processes and building financial strength for the last three years. Grant terminations were devastating and limited our ability to serve farmers, but our preparations in previous years made us better able to weather the storm. We limited expenses to a bare minimum and quickly sought to diversify income. A significant increase in contribution income, especially end-of-year giving, has given us stability heading into 2026, despite continued national uncertainty.

METRIC	FY 2024	FY 2025	GROWTH (%)
Income	\$1,205,879.15	\$1,514,035.46	+25%
Expenses	\$1,343,258.76	\$1,409,670.05	+5%
Net Income	-\$134,132.40	\$109,367.47	+182%
Assets	\$857,149.00	\$945,334.34	+10%

EXPENSES 2025



In 2025, 90% of our total expenses directly supported programs, reflecting our strong commitment to mission-driven work and community impact. These funds supported services, farmer partnerships, educational programs, and expanded access to regenerative agriculture and local food systems. The remaining 10% supported operations, including essential administrative functions such as financial management, coordination, communications, and organizational infrastructure that keep programs running effectively and responsibly.

*Insights are based on unaudited financials and are for illustrative purposes only. Income includes unrestricted funds for 2026 programming.

STAFF LIST

Grace Leatherman
Executive Director

Deb Dramby
Outreach Director

Alecks Moss
Conference & Communications
Director

Joanna Winkler
Education Director

Laurie Savage
Operations Director

Monica Newman
ALDI Program Director

Lisa Garfield
Research

Amy Mullan
Million Acre Challenge Coordinator

Pete Walton
Technical Assistance Provider



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President
Emeritus



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS FUNDERS



Future Harvest sincerely appreciates our donors, sponsors, and grantors for their contributions in 2025, including those who wish to remain anonymous and those who gave in-kind contributions.

\$49,000 - \$20,000

American University
Alexander and Valery Erkiletian
BlueCross BlueShield
The Campbell Foundation
Carefirst
Chesapeake Bay Trust
The Clif Family Foundation
Farmer Mac
The Prince Charitable Trusts
US Department of Agriculture

\$10,000 - \$5,000

Buczynski Building Resilience Fund
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Susan and Steve Immelt
The Behrens Family Charitable Fund

\$4,999 - \$1,000

Agape Fund
Alice Chalmers
Ann Wearmouth
Chesapeake Farm to Table

\$4,999 - \$1,000

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Pumpkins for Justice DAF
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Shelley Rudick

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SPOTLIGHT: AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



Community Roots Garden in Richmond, VA

The Agriculture Leadership Development Initiative (ALDI) is a transformative program funded by the 2501 grant, dedicated to empowering underserved farmers. Our mission is to provide vital resources and support to those who need it most, fostering a new era of agricultural leadership and innovation.

ALDI is designed to equip underserved farmers with the tools they need to succeed, including grant writing assistance, advocacy training, networking opportunities, leadership development, and community building. By offering these essential services, we aim to bridge the gap in access to resources and create a more equitable agricultural landscape.

Our program not only helps farmers navigate the complexities of modern agriculture but also challenges them to shift the narrative and embrace forward-thinking approaches.

Through ALDI, farmers are encouraged to lead with confidence, advocate for their needs, and build lasting networks that drive collective success.



Orun Field & Family Farm in Brandywine, MD



CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR 2025
GRADUATES:

Edward Hunt
Hunt Farm

Julian Gudger
8 Plates Health &
Wellness Farm

Kendra Ragland
Practical Botanicals

Patrick Carey
Carey Apiary

Pharyn Smith
Euphoria Farm

Richard Senegal
Community Roots
Garden

Shawne Bryant
Church & Garden Farm

Tracey Duval
Alacrity Micro
Urban Farm

MILLION-ACRE CHALLENGE



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure



- Provided technical support, funding, and opportunities for peer-to-peer networking and problem-solving to 24+ farmers participating in four advanced farmer groups
- By the numbers, this resulted in:
 - \$298,395 in direct payments to farmers for conservation practices
 - 3,195.26 pounds of total nitrogen reduced per year
 - 156.61 pounds of total phosphorus reduced per year
 - 593,453.95 pounds of total suspended solids reduced per year
- Held 7 on-farm field days led by farmers who are using innovative approaches to build soil health, often under tricky or less than ideal conditions, including events at Butterbee Farm, UMES Research and Education Farm, and Sassafras Creek Farm



Field Day at Sassafras Creek Farm in St. Mary's County, MD

- Continued ongoing research as a partner on the Pasa Soil Health Benchmark Study, one of the largest and most diverse community soil health research projects in the nation. Collected soil samples and field management records of 31 vegetable, pastured livestock, and row crop farms in Maryland.
- Connected 21 participating farms to advanced cover crop planning and cost share support.



THANK YOU



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1,700+

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Join 5.1K+
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11.5K+

Email Subscribers

We hold deep gratitude for our members, donors, and funders who make Future Harvest's mission a reality. Your support strengthens farming across our region, builds a resilient regional food economy, and expands access to nourishing food for our communities. From all of us at Future Harvest, thank you for helping grow a more vibrant and thriving food system.

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The Beginner Farmer Training Program was my liaison to the wider farming world! As a farmer, it's so easy to pigeonhole yourself into just your land, but getting regular exposure to other farms, farmers, and their unique perspectives helped me internalize that there are no right answers! I've come to see farming as largely a balancing act between you and your crops' needs and wants.

JUNIPER YOUNG, 2025 BFTP GRADUATE