



APPALACHIAN R&D COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

GROW

CONNECT

PRESERVE

FOSTER





Susan McKinney, Executive Director: *Inspiration from Distant Lands*

On October 24, Appalachian RC&D Council hosted a tour for a study group from the Ukraine for the day. DOBRE (Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency) had been in the States to attend the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) conference in Nashville. They were touring a few areas as they made their way back to Washington D.C., and ultimately back to Ukraine. Their hopes? To take back information and examples of economic and community development ideas that can be incorporated into the now decentralized Ukrainian communities-projects at the local level. Our hopes? To showcase

meaningful examples of local projects that could be achievable in the political and economic landscape the group would return to.

A few of the DOBRE folks were from larger cities, but the majority of the group live in rural areas – something that we at ARCD understand. We toured an educational and manufacturing facility, an environmental project that was a disaster-turned-asset for a downtown area, a year-round farmers market and commercial kitchen, and had lunch at a community café that serves everyone regardless of their ability to pay (where they said they had the best meal they’ve had since being in the U.S.).

With elected officials and department heads from seven Oblasts (regions) comprising the group, discussions revolved around funding sources, community participation, partnership development, rules and regulations, inclusivity, accountability, planning and development, and a myriad of other topics relevant to getting initiatives off the ground and making them sustainable. But it was not all business; good-natured humor and camaraderie developed quickly between the Americans and the Ukrainians, despite any language barriers. But the thing that got me right in my soul was how kind, gracious, and appreciative each of the members of the group were of us – seeing a couple of the group members even brought to tears at the hope of developing what many of us take for granted each day in our communities.

It also allowed me to see the work that we do, along with our many partners and supporters, from the Ukrainian perspective. Access to fresh local food, farmers’ markets, entrepreneurial resources, educational opportunities, outdoor places to gather with friends, conservation of our natural resources...these are the things that drive us at ARCD and to have had the chance to experience it through the eyes of my new Ukrainian friends was the greatest kindness that any of them could have given. I hope that I will see some of these folks again one day. I would love to visit rural Ukraine sometime in the future and find that what we shared that day inspired their work and helped better their communities. Even if I never get to visit Ukraine, I will always be grateful to have had that day with these wonderful people who have most assuredly inspired me!

Rachel Wheeler, Project Director: *Another Year in Farm Fresh Appalachia*



This year marked our second year in Farm Fresh Appalachia programming, and what a year it has been! Organized in 2017, Farm Fresh Appalachia includes a number of non-profit organizations doing grassroots work in agriculture and tourism in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. With support from our partner organizations, communities, farmers market managers, volunteers,

and farmers across the service region, we serve 31 farmers markets, and farmers in 24 communities. Initiatives have included CSA fairs, farm tours, educational opportunities, individual marketing assistance to farmers markets, and large-scale regional promotion campaigns. Our farmers market map and SNAP outreach can be found at visitors’ centers, community hubs, and DHS offices. Thank you for your continued support in helping us to foster growth in the local food system!

Farm Fresh Appalachia: 2019 by the Numbers

- 32** FARMS INVOLVED IN CSA FAIRS AND FARM TOURS
- 400** COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN CSA FAIRS AND FARM TOURS
- 4** SCHOOL SYSTEMS REACHED WITH SNAP OUTREACH
- 957** FAMILIES REACHED THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH SECOND HARVEST
- 18** MARKETS ACCEPTING EBT AND GIVEN OUTREACH SUPPORT
- 31** MARKETS GIVEN DIRECT MARKETING SUPPORT

Lexy Close, Project Director: *Field School Enters a Promising Fifth Year*



Field School started its 5th year of operation on November 7th with 27 new students. This brings us to a total of 160 beginning farmers who have taken classes with our program. I keep expecting that we will run out of beginning farmers to train, but each year we manage to fill the class. This year's students are a diverse and interesting bunch.

While the average age of farmers in Tennessee creeps towards 60, we're averaging 44 years old. Our youngest participant is 13 (attending with his dad) and our oldest is 74 (attending with his adult daughter). 55% are women and 8 are veterans. We have farmers from Washington, Sullivan, Greene, Carter, Unicoi, Hawkins and Claiborne counties this year.

Farm interests run the gamut this year, with cattle and cow/calf operations, hemp, poultry, fiber animals, market gardens, fruit, agritourism, greenhouses, and more. Land ownership varies, with six students who are still looking for farm land. Among the rest, acreage varies from a half-acre market garden to someone with access to 350 acres of family land and just about everything in between. Seven have less than ten acres, six have between eleven and twenty acres, and eight have between twenty-one and one hundred acres.

New this year, the Field School Winter Business Intensive is now accredited by the Tennessee Dept of Agriculture so graduates of the program qualify for education credits toward the 50% Producer Diversification cost-share provided by the TN Agriculture Enhancement Program (TAEP). TAEP awardees can get up to \$15,000 for infrastructure, equipment, and other eligible expenditures.

We are looking forward to working with this year's crop of beginning farmers to help them create solid business plans for their farming endeavors!



Kayla Tucker, Marketing & Communications Director: *Building Community Through, Around, and Because of Local Food*

If you have visited one of our local farmers markets recently, you have likely felt the air of kindness, community, and support that settles in around each booth and permeates the air like the smell of those freshly made donuts we're all willing to wait in line for. This sense of community is present no matter the size or location of the market you frequent. The reason for that is because that feeling of community at a market comes from the relationships that are forged and fostered in those spaces over food and conversation – relationships between grower and consumer, manager and vendor, farmer and farmer, consumer and consumer, and market and community.

It makes sense; food is the thing we have in common with all of our fellow humans – we all have to eat! No matter what differences may be present between us in regards to our politics, our spiritual or nonspiritual beliefs, our tax bracket, our hopes and dreams, or which team we root for on Saturdays, humans have an uncanny ability to connect over food, and allow those differences to fade away. Food affords us the opportunity to press pause. While planning, cooking, or eating a meal, we are no different from our neighbor; we all require nutrition.

This pause can occur over any meal; from ramen eaten in college dorms to holiday buffets with the extended family to shared leftovers between a family of two, we can create community over any food and in any venue. At ARCD, it is our hope to take that foundation of the human experience and build upon it. The reason that feeling of community is palpable at farmers markets is because this shared experience is richer when we know the origin of the food we're purchasing. We might meet the family that grows our food and relies on our purchase of it. We might learn what went into its production. We might learn a new way to prepare it. These things seem small at first thought, but they aren't small at all. When we feel connected to our food, we feel connected to our community.

With this in mind, it stands to reason that by increasing the promotion of, the direct support of, and the access to local food we can strengthen our communities. This is why we do what we do. Thank you for being a part of this work, and thank you for supporting your local food system in whatever way you are able.

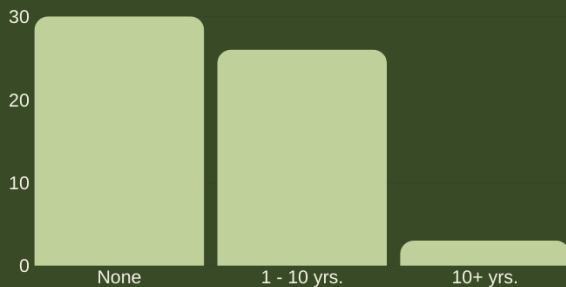
FIELD SCHOOL

QUICK DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER



FARMING EXPERIENCE



17

SELF-IDENTIFIED AS
LIMITED RESOURCE

13

VETERANS OR ACTIVE
DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS

1245

TOTAL ACRES
OWNED OR LEASED

21 - 73

AGE
RANGE

46

AVERAGE
AGE

BUILD IT UP
EAST TN



PARTICIPATING
FAMILIES

31

POUNDS OF FOOD GROWN

13,680

14

WORKSHOPS
DELIVERED

PRODUCE SOLD BY BIU
FAMILIES (GENERATED INCOME)

\$14,529

HEMP WORKSHOP: 300+ ATTENDEES



\$272,094
INVESTED INTO
21 COMMUNITIES
across Tennessee for
**WILDFIRE
PREVENTION
& EDUCATION**



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Farmacy Fit encourages physical activity by incentivizing exercise. Participants walk one mile and are awarded \$3 in tokens that are redeemable at the market. In the first two seasons of Farmacy Fit (2018-2019) local participants walked 2,500 miles in total!

HEALTHY FOODS

Farmacy Fit Tokens may only be used for fresh fruits and vegetables. This ensures that healthy foods are being purchased, and encourages participants to cook dinner at home instead of going out or preparing frozen dinners.



MARKET STIMULUS



In addition to encouraging a healthy lifestyle, Farmacy Fit acts as a stimulus for participating farmers markets. In the first two seasons, \$11,750 was spent on fresh fruits and vegetables. That's \$11,750 that went right to our local growers and producers!

Appalachian RC&D worked with a coalition of community partners to implement the Farmacy Fit Pilot Program with \$10,000 in funding from the Healthy Active Built Environment grant from the Tennessee Department of Health.

FARM FRESH APPALACHIA

FAST FACTS FROM THE 2ND YEAR OF FMPP

6

COUNTY DHS OFFICES

distributing SNAP outreach materials to SNAP-eligible families and individuals.

18

FARMERS MARKETS

that accept SNAP and receive outreach support via Farm Fresh Appalachia.

24

COMMUNITIES

across Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia reached and served by Farm Fresh Appalachia programming.

31

MARKET MANAGERS + VENDORS

educated on direct marketing strategies, social media marketing, and food safety regulations.

32

FARMS

who participated in Farm Tours or CSA fairs.

400

PEOPLE

who gained a deeper understanding of our local food system by visiting farms during Farm Tours or a CSA Fair.



12 teams
59 students
26 volunteers
19 organizations

1 MISSION

Develop knowledgeable skilled and **dedicated** citizens who have an understanding of **natural resources** and are willing and prepared to work towards achieving and maintaining a **balance** between the quality of **life** and the quality of the **environment**.



TN FARM LINK

Connecting farmers who need land to agriculture land-owners.

73 FARM SEEKERS

- **ACTIVE USERS** -

23 LAND LISTINGS

tnfarmlink.org

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



APPALACHIAN sustainable DEVELOPMENT LIVING BETTER. LOCALLY.



UT EXTENSION
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

THANK YOU



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***In Memoriam: Remembering Mr. Paul C. Monk,
Board Member and former Chairman of the Appalachian RC&D Council***

Mr. Monk was the last remaining Charter Member for the Council serving since 1994. Mr. Monk served honorably to the Council, his community, and the region for many years. He served in the role of Vice Chairman two different times and as Chairman for many years. He was well known across the state and was a regular attendee at TN Council Meetings along with his wife of 62 years Helen Monk. He always made time from his duties as Unicoi County Executive for visits to see him and provided much wise counsel to me. His health had prevented his attendance in recent months but he still held a strong interest in the community. He always enjoyed a good laugh whether the joke be on him or especially one of the other County Executives on the Board.

He was good man, a good friend, and will be missed by many.

I was honored to know and work with him.

Roy Settle