



Providing Organic Education Since 1993

OGS Receives Support from The Community Foundation of Western NC for Farmer Programs

PRESS RELEASE

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MEDIA INQUIRIES, CONTACT:

Cameron Farlow, Farmer Programs Coordinator

(828) 338-9465

cameron@organicgrowersschool.org

For Immediate Release

Asheville, NC—Organic Growers School (OGS) is pleased to announce an award of \$30,000 from *The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC)* from their Food & Farming Focus Area. This grant will fund the OGS Farmer Programs from January to June of 2016. The CFWNC goals for their Food & Farming Focus Area grants are 1. To increase economic opportunities for local farmers and food entrepreneurs that supports the sustainability and profitability of WNC farms, and 2. to address food insecurity and facilitate nutrition and healthy eating for all.

The following OGS Farmer Programs will be supported through the CFWNC grant:

1. WNC CRAFT: A farmer-led coalition of year-long learning offers farmers and aspiring farmers peer-to-peer, practical education, cross-pollination, and mentoring. WNC CRAFT has supported more than 625 farmers since 2008 in 16 WNC counties.
2. Organic Farm Finder (Formerly Apprentice Link): Since 2009, this program has matched aspiring farmers with organic farms to provide year-long hands-on training & mentoring.
3. Farm Beginnings® Farmer Training: In 2015, OGS launched a regional chapter of the Farm Beginnings® Collaborative comprehensive farm production and business planning course. 24 farmers from 14 regional farms are engaged in a year-long, comprehensive program unique to the Southeast.
4. Farm Pathways: Access to Land, Livelihood, and Learning, is a whole-farm training and innovative land access program for new and aspiring farmers in WNC. Three partners, SAHC, OGS, and WNC FarmLink, form this solid working partnership, which has created joint programs, shared evaluations and marketing plans, and infrastructure for strategic alignment and ongoing collective impact.
5. Regional Asset Mapping: OGS continues the work, started in 2015, of mapping the skills, programs, and offerings of other agriculture organizations and community stakeholders.
6. Farm Dreams: This entry-level, five-hour exploratory workshop for farm dreamers is a common sense program helping curious farm dreamers discover if sustainable farming is right for them.
7. Regional Training: As the region's only Farm Beginnings® member, OGS is in a solid position to spread this vital farmer training program to other areas in our region.



These Farmer Programs reinforce and are strategically aligned with one another. OGS is poised to make a big difference in the lives of organic farmers by creating a cohesive trajectory for ongoing training and support in our region. The strength of the OGS history, momentum, and vision, puts OGS in a position to contribute significantly to "supporting the revitalization a sustainable local food system in WNC while preserving our mountain farming heritage," the funding mission of the Food & Farming Focus Area of the CFWNC.



Lee Warren, Executive Director of Organic Growers School says, "OGS is a proud and committed ally to our local farmers. In order to rebuild a path towards agriculture in our region, we need to invest in the next generation of farmers. OGS is in a strong position with strong internal capacity, dedicated staff, excellent track record, region-wide support, and demand from our local farmers. We are grateful to The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina for the continued funding that is necessary to support the momentum of farmer support in our region."

The OGS Farmer Programs staff consists of Cameron Farlow, Farmer Programs Coordinator and Nicole DelCogliano, Farmer Programs Associate, who both bring strong leadership, passion, creativity, and determination. Over the course of 2015, the OGS Farmer Programs team has developed strong regional and national connections, conducted in-depth farmer surveys of regional constituents, collated a regional asset map of farmer support services, and developed a year-long, comprehensive, farmer training program to serve the WNC farming community that began in October of 2015.

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Organic Growers School is a 501c3 non-profit with a mission to inspire, educate, and support people to farm, garden, and live organically. www.organicgrowersschool.org

Organic Growers School • PO Box 17804 • Asheville, NC 28816

<http://www.organicgrowersschool.org>

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