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For Immediate Release

Community Foundation of Western North Carolina Supports Farmer Programs through Organic Growers School

Asheville, NC - Organic Growers School (OGS) is pleased to announce an award of \$25,000, from the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (WNC), which is working to revitalize a sustainable, local food system in WNC. The Community Foundation of WNC, established in 1978, distributed \$18.9 million in 2016 to hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the region and beyond.



At the Community Foundation, food and farming is an area they identified for focused support in WNC, with a goal to increase opportunities for local farmers and food entrepreneurs that support the sustainability and profitability of WNC farms.

“We are honored to receive this important support and partner with the Community Foundation to expand our work with local, organic farmers,” says Lee Warren, the organization’s Executive Director.

The award serves to support the OGS roster of year-round Farmer Programs, which will increase the number of successful beginning and expanding organic farmers in Western NC. These programs directly address the needs of the regional farming community and offer a trajectory of training and support for farmers to grow viable and sustainable businesses.

1. Apprentice Link: A free, online, searchable matching service for farmers and aspiring farmers.

2. WNC Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT): Practical, on-farm training in regional production practices and farmer-to-farmer network.
3. OGS Farm Network: A free online resource for consumers to find sustainably grown local food.
4. WNC Farm Beginnings® Farmer Training: Comprehensive, 180+ hour, year-long program focused on holistic business planning for farmers.
5. Farm Dreams: One-day, entry-level, exploratory workshop for aspiring farmers.
6. Online web resources: Award-winning farmer resource blog, a library, resources, videos, funding sources, etc.
7. Farm Pathways: Leadership and strategic partners with Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy & WNC FarmLink.
8. Regional Partnerships: To strengthen our ability to serve WNC farmers.



These programs offer beginning and expanding farmers the practical skills and knowledge needed through farmer-led, farmer-driven, and strategically aligned support services and as a result, OGS Farmer Programs participants are better prepared to start farming, add or change enterprises on an existing farm, approach creditors for financing, find a successful land match, or delay farming to increase their likelihood of success. In addition, they will be integrated into a network of support, mentoring, & organic production training.

The intention of The Community Foundation of Western NC is to support the revitalization of a sustainable local food system in Western North Carolina while preserving our mountain farm heritage. Continued support of Organic Growers School and other similar place-based non-profits serves to our community and also serves to leverage and bring national funding and recognition to organic food and farming systems in Western NC.

Organic Growers School is the premier provider of practical organic education in the Southern Appalachians. We are building a mutually supportive network of prosperous farmers, productive gardeners and informed consumers engaged in creating healthy communities. Organic Growers School is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization providing organic education since 1993.

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