



Financing Our Foodshed

August 2019

If you read *Acres* magazine regularly you probably enjoy the regular "View from the Country" column on the masthead page. We like the following quote from this month's column: *"The spirit of innovation speaks loudly to agriculture. It is in the nature of farmers to innovate. It is easier to innovate, however, when the bank account has extra zeros and things are going smoothly. In times of adversity - be they economic, weather-related, or political - it's harder to jumpstart a fresh idea."*

We hope we are becoming known, and will always be known, as an organization that can jumpstart a fresh idea at our farms and food businesses in Virginia. This month we are jumpstarting several ideas with **five** new loans from our 0% SOIL Fund. Yes, we have been busy! You can read about the borrowers below.

With these five loans we have now made a total of \$69,600 in 0% SOIL loans to eleven sustainable farms and food businesses in our local foodshed. Please help us keep the momentum going and consider donating to our fund or renewing your support...

Support Our SOIL Fund!

By participating in this fund you are "investing" by way of a charitable contribution. The contribution goes into our SOIL fund, and Slow Money Virginia takes care of the rest by making 0% loans to farmers who are in need of capital and are dedicated to using resilient, eco-friendly practices that produce healthy, nutritious food for our local communities.

While charitable contributions may not traditionally be considered "investments" per se, we're confident your contribution to our SOIL fund will produce valuable returns in the form of healthier soil and nutritious food for our communities in Virginia. PLUS, as a revolving loan fund your contribution will continue to give for years on-end as loans are repaid back into the fund.

This is a grassroots effort! We hope as many people as possible will support our mission. **Any size charitable contribution** you can make to our SOIL revolving loan fund goes a long way toward helping us help the local foodshed with its financial needs.

Please Donate!

Muhammad Family Farm

Muhammad Family Farm is located in Southampton County near the towns of Branchville and Boykins. The farm is owned by Shelton and Adriene Muhammad, where they live with their four boys. They will actually be using their Slow Money loan from our Tidewater fund for an off-farm project. They are opening a farm market in the town of Boykins as a hub for growers all around the region to connect with local residents who want to live better. As Shelton describes it, the market will "provide convenience to community members who normally have to travel 30 minutes away to buy something as simple as an onion or tomato." Their SOIL loan from our Tidewater fund will help them purchase much needed equipment to get the market open this fall.



Shelton Muhammad and his son Yusuf from Muhammad Family Farm

Heart & Bones Hollow

[Heart and Bones Hollow](#) is located in Fluvanna County on property owned by Karen Mann and Mary Beth Fannon, otherwise know as "Heart" & "Bones." The 25-acre farm has been in operation since 2015 and is a regular participant in weekly farmers markets in Scottsville and Charlottesville. As a [Certified Naturally Grown \(CNG\)](#) farm, they grow a variety of seasonal vegetables using regenerative practices that focus on building up organic matter and improving the soil through mulching, cover cropping, and crop rotation. They also raise heritage breed pigs in the woods and recently planted a blueberry orchard. With their SOIL loan from our Central Virginia fund they will purchase a wood chipper to mulch downed trees on the property. The wood chips will serve as animal bedding and provide mulch for their vegetable production.



Bones Fannon & Karen Mann from Heart & Bones Hollow

Panda Homestead

[Panda Homestead](#) is located near the town of Franklin in Southampton County. The property is owned by husband-and-wife team Arcel and Paula Dullas and consists of 10 total acres. They started the business in 2018 after relocating from Norfolk. It currently focuses on growing produce - including a UPick blueberry patch - raising livestock, which they sell at a Hampton Roads farmers market, and inviting visitors to stay on the property at their guest house to learn about sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency. Their goal is to empower families to become self-sufficient through sustainable farming. With their SOIL loan from our Tidewater fund they are building a fence around the livestock portion of their property to ensure better safety for the animals and visitors.



The Dullas family from Panda Homestead

Althea Bread

[Althea Bread](#) is an emerging Charlottesville-based business owned by Andrew and Susan Bayker. They started the business in 2018, and recently completed the 16-week Entrepreneur Workshop at the [Community Investment Collaborative \(CIC\)](#) in Charlottesville. The name "Althea" means wholesome and healing and to that end they use whole grains and stone mill much of the flour they use. They have also shown a commitment to local grain farmers by sourcing when they can from local organic grain growers such as Greater Richmond Grains in Powhatan and Grapewood Farm in Montross. With their SOIL loan from our Central Virginia fund they will purchase two new stone mills to help them boost production... and hopefully sales!



Andrew and Susan Bayker from Althea Bread

delli Carpini Farm

[delli Carpini Farm](#) is a diversified produce farm located near the Beaverdam district northwest of Richmond, about 30 miles from downtown. The farm is owned by Dominic Carpini. He grows a wide variety of legumes, leafy greens, root vegetables, and fruiting crops, specializing in hard to find GMO-free, open-pollinated heirlooms from all over the world. Dominic strives to follow all the rules of an organic farm (although it's not certified) and aspires to a closed system with minimal external inputs. The farm does not use any chemical fertilizer, pesticide, herbicide, or fungicide. delli Carpini sells at nearby farmers markets and to several restaurants in Richmond. They are most excited about their recent addition to the line-up for [Fall Line Farms](#), a very successful online farmers market in the Richmond regions. With its SOIL loan from our Central Virginia fund, delli Carpini Farm will purchase a new tractor as well as some parts and attachments.

As always, we'll keep you posted on the progress of all these farms on our [website](#), [Facebook page](#), and [Instagram account](#) .



Dominic Carpini from delli Carpini Farm

With the eleven loans we've made this year it's safe to say Nature Capital is constantly at work in the Virginia foodshed. Back in June we made a 0% loan to [River Oak Farm](#) to help them activate a walk-in freezer/cooler. Pictured below is working being done earlier this month.



Help To The Shelf

Slow Money Virginia will provide the \$1,000 first place prize money for this local food business pitch competition in Richmond organized by [Real Local RVA](#), [Hatch Kitchen RVA](#), and [The Apple Cart](#). The preliminary round will take place at Real Local RVA's October meeting on Oct. 7 at 10:30am. At the preliminary round, 15 local products will be narrowed down to five finalists for the Oct. 15 pitch competition.

[More Info on Help to the Shelf Event](#)



Always Accepting Farmer Loan Applications!

The mission of Slow Money Central Virginia is to support the financial needs of farmers and food entrepreneurs in our region. Our inaugural program called **SOIL (Slow Opportunities for Investing Locally)** is a 0% revolving loan program. We accept applications on a rolling basis. We can't stress enough that no request is too small, as we want to be a friendly source of capital to help farm businesses grow in a way that's best for them.

[Slow Money Borrower Information Form](#)



Other Events & Opportunities

Farm To Table Celebration

September 15, 2019
AMI Farm at Augusta Health



[Allegheny Mountain Institute](#) invites you to support its mission of cultivating healthier communities through food and education with a delicious Farm to Table dining experience! Tour the farm that feeds Augusta Health's patients and community, meet the AMI team, and raise a glass to healthier food systems. Then enjoy a one-of-a-kind farm fresh and local meal prepared by our Cornucopia sponsor, Chefs Mike Lund and James Harris of Lundch. The fun begins at 4:00 PM, and all proceeds raised benefit Allegheny Mountain Institute's Farm and Food Fellowship and community programming in Highland and Augusta counties, VA.

[Event Details](#)

Save The Dates:

It's never too early to plan and you don't want to miss these two great annual conferences:

[Virginia Farmers Market Association](#)
[November 13-15, 2019](#)
[Staunton, VA](#)

[Virginia Association for Biological Farming](#)
[January 11-13, 2020](#)
[Roanoke, VA](#)

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