



## August 2021

Greetings, all!

I'm Erica Hellen, the new Director of Operations here at Foodshed Capital. Although I'm new to FoodCap, I've been involved with regenerative agriculture for over a decade. In 2010 I co-founded Free Union Grass Farm, a diversified livestock farm in central Virginia producing pastured meat and eggs. The farm life was deeply meaningful and infinitely Instagram-able, but I kept wondering how I could be doing more to address the massive flaws in our food system.

So I left my farm in good hands to pursue my Masters in Environmental Management at Yale University, diving deep into food justice, climate change policy, soil science, and beyond. What kept ringing true for me is the essential role that regenerative land managers play in mitigating climate change, producing nutrient-dense food, and supporting vital local economies. It is ever clearer to me that **without fixing our food system, there is no fixing climate change.**

At FoodCap, supporting regenerative land managers is at the heart of our work, and it goes beyond just financial support. Yes, we're providing capital, but we're also providing business guidance, marketing insights, and steering farmers toward resources they might not know were available to them. **In short, we're increasing not just operability in the short term, but viability and sustainability in the long run**—and that's work I'm genuinely proud to be a part of. If that resonates with you too, please [consider supporting our work](#).

I hope you'll enjoy the following highlights of recent loans, our expanding team, and some ideas to nourish both body and mind...complete with my enduring affection for food puns (apologies in advance). Here in Charlottesville, **we're feeling grateful for recent rainfall and early figs, and continuing to eat tomatoes like it's our job.** Here's hoping your foodshed is feeding you well wherever you are, and I look forward to connecting with you all more in the days ahead.

Warmly,

*Erica Hellen*  
Director of Operations



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## Capital in the Field

### Our Newest Loan Recipients: Graze Away Farm

We're pleased to highlight husband and wife team **Deon and Amanda Mac de Villiers**, the Rappahannock County-based recipients of FoodCap's most recent low-interest loan. The duo will use the funds to grow their cattle herd, streamline their breeding season, and improve genetics, with the goal of building out a direct-market beef business in 2022.





Over the next month, we'll be helping them get their website up and running. For now, [check out their Instagram](#) for some quality cow content.

## Goings-On



**On the hunt for Covid-safe events?  
Want to support local farmers and enjoy the bounty??**

The perfect solution: Real Local RVA's [farm tour](#), sponsored in part this year by Foodshed Capital. You'll explore [Real Roots Food Systems](#), [Shine Farms](#), and [Hazel Witch Farm](#), three outstanding minority- and BIPOC-owned operations working alongside one another at Charlotte Acres in Mechanicsville, VA.

Learn about diversified veggie production, vermicompost, medicinal herbs, specialty cut flowers, and heirloom seeds—as well as these farmers' efforts to build equitable, sovereign food systems.

Tickets include tours of each operation, plus live music and a local dinner spread prepared by [Leek & Thistle](#). Don't pass up this opportunity to learn

about and support producers right here in your foodshed, especially because ticket prices increase after September 3rd!

[Grab Your Tickets](#)

## News From Our Crew

### Foodshed Capital Welcomes Two New Board Members



**Tracey Wiley** joined us in July and brings nearly three decades of experience in marketing, public relations, nonprofit governance, and minority business development. She also founded and serves as CEO for Rainmaker Industries Group, which works to elevate communities of color and increase access to generational wealth.

As a member of our board, Tracey's expansive insights will help us better tailor the business services we offer to minority- and women-owned farms, as well as thoughtfully shape our governance as we grow. Welcome, Tracey!



**Darrow Isaacman-VanWertz** works as Senior Commercial Loan Officer and Manager at Self-Help Credit Union, a national CDFI that supports wealth-building opportunities for women and people of color. Prior to Self-Help, she worked at Wholesome Wave, which creates programs that enable consumers to make healthier food choices by increasing access to locally-grown foods.

Darrow's experience will be an invaluable addition to our board and loan committee, which will help us streamline our loan process. Welcome, Darrow!

[Meet Our Stellar Board](#)

## Food For Thought

For Your Weekend (or In-Between Chores) Reading List:  
[A Food & Ag Policy Primer](#)



Analysis & Recommendations

## U.S. Policy & Regenerative Agriculture

FORA U.S. Policy Working Group

# 2021

FUNDERS FOR  
REGENERATIVE  
AGRICULTURE

From the Farm Bill and crop insurance reform to climate mitigation and equitable land access, there are a multitude of ideas circulating about how best to build a regenerative food system by leveraging policy.

We really appreciated this recent report by the [FORA Initiative](#), which offers a comprehensive lay of the land of agricultural policy, some thoughtful policy recommendations, and a "who's who" of the most vocal food and ag advocates in the country.

Check out the report [here](#).

## Impact Update



## OUR WORK SINCE 2019:



»» 51+ TOTAL LOANS MADE

»» \$590,300 IN ZERO- AND LOW-INTEREST LOANS

»» 84% OF LOANS TO OPERATIONS OWNED IN PART BY WOMEN OR PEOPLE OF COLOR

Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

When we ask for your support, you may wonder—  
**How are we putting your dollars to work?**

It's simple. Your dollars allow us to provide more loans to more farmers at rates they can actually afford. Your dollars help us provide more customized support. Your dollars help us bridge what can be a very narrow gap for farmers between *"we're stretched so thin"* and *"the sky's the limit!"*

**A regenerative food system needs regenerative farms that can both survive  
*and* thrive.**

Will you help us help them?

**Support Your Farmers**

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