



October 2021



### Fall, at last??

Despite central Virginia's seemingly endless summer, the farmers in our foodshed have bolstered my seasonal spirit, piling thick bunches of kale and stacks of winter squash onto their market tables each week. As we move into this season of gratitude, **I find myself particularly grateful to farmers for producing the foods that signal togetherness and community.**

It's been a busy and rewarding October at Foodshed Capital. High on our list has been fleshing out a series of farmer-focused business workshops (see "Goings On" below for the first one!) to assist farmers with finding grant funds, keeping their books organized, and marketing their products. **Our farmers are smart and savvy producers, but often lack affordable mentorship**, so it's a joy to have achieved the grant funding to provide these workshops completely free of cost.

**We've also been focused on building more racial equity into our work.** Earlier this month, our staff and board gathered in Orange County, VA for a deep dive on racial literacy courtesy of farmer and board member, Michael Carter, Jr. The conversations we had helped us double down on our equity efforts—we have reassessed our loan processes and technical assistance framework to build more transparency and partnership into our procedures. We're proud of our progress, but committed to the ongoing work.

The fall is a special time to reflect on the kind of world we want to see, and if you're

reading this, you already know the value of a truly regenerative, equitable food system. We hope you enjoy the following highlights and that you are inspired by the ways your support facilitates our work. And if you're moved to, [please consider joining our growing number of Perennial Supporters](#).

Warmly,

*Erica Hellen*  
Director of Operations

## Capital in the Field



It's an exciting time for the regional grain economy, and one of our most recent borrowers is at the heart of the effort. [Deep Roots Milling](#) operates out of the historic Woodson's Mill, a water-powered grain mill built in 1790 in Roseland, VA. Millers Charlie Wade, Aaron Grigsby, and Ian Gamble have joined forces to produce high quality flours, cornmeals, rolled oats, grits, and more using **regeneratively-produced and regionally-sourced grains**.

Although the Deep Roots team has a growing demand for their products at local bakeries, restaurants, and farmer's markets, they have lacked the capital to purchase and store larger quantities of their grain supply up front. **Deep Roots' loan funds will give them the cash flow needed to make their operation more efficient, and the flexibility to purchase when farmers have crops available**—particularly vital for growers producing small-scale grains in a changing climate.

Learn more on their [website](#) or follow along on [Instagram](#). They also host volunteer days if you want to see the mill in action!



# NAVIGATING THE **FARM FUNDING** LANDSCAPE



## Free Webinar Series

beginning November 18

Foodshed Capital is excited to announce **the first in our series of free, virtual webinars** hosted in collaboration with Charlottesville's [Community Investment Collaborative](#) and funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Association.

**We know that at any stage, more cash flow can help farmers streamline and scale.** But it can be hard to know where to start in a world of loans, lines of credit, and byzantine grant applications—let alone set aside the time to apply.

So we're teaming up with [FarmRaise](#)—a company that helps farmers identify and apply for multiple grants with one simple application—to co-present a high-level lunchtime overview of the full farm funding landscape. Join us:

**Tuesday, November 18**  
**12:30 pm**

Learn more and get registered below, and feel free to share with the farmers in your network!

[Register](#)

---

**News From Our Crew**



Shawn Pennix of Boone's Farm Stand and [Mourning Dove Farm](#) showing off their young crop of collard greens in Caswell County, North Carolina.

The FoodCap team gathered near the Virginia / North Carolina border last week to meet up with a few members of the [Piedmont Progressive Farmers Group](#), a majority Black-run farmers cooperative working to promote sustainable and diverse farming through education, training, technical assistance, and marketing. Through a partnership with 4P Foods, several of the coop growers have joined forces to provide Elon University with six hundred dozen eggs each week.

Foodshed Capital helped support this effort by purchasing the egg flats and packaging necessary to get the eggs to Elon safely. Sam Crisp, another of the PPFG growers and one of the coop's founding board members, showed us his nearly-completed shed used to store the coop's flats and process the eggs.



Mr. Crisp has also fashioned himself into a sort of "chicken evangelist." Responsible for sourcing many of the coop's pullet hens, he has a charming habit of ordering a few extra and sharing them with folks who may or may not have planned to become chicken farmers :)





When he's not busy tending to his own hens or cultivating new chicken farmers around Caswell County, he's got his hands full putting up high tunnels for **niche African perennial crops** (pictured above getting established in their new home) and building out a climate-controlled hydroponic greenhouse. He believes that **in a changing climate, his hydroponic system will help him create more predictable and manageable growing conditions.**

We're excited to watch PPFG grow and are staying in close contact about ways to support their efforts going forward.

---

## Food For Thought



## "Kernza" & Perennial Polyculture

Have you heard the buzz about Kernza, the grain being developed by a team of scientists at [The Land Institute](#)? Unlike annual crops which must be planted year after year, Kernza is perennial, allowing growers to enjoy repeated harvests from each individual seed. Beyond that, **it should also help store carbon and prevent soil erosion at higher rates than other crops** and integrate well into polycultures, reducing the need for fertilizer.

But will this **human-created solution to human-created problems** (soil degradation, greenhouse gas emissions, etc) generate new and unforeseen challenges? And how do we feel about lab-designed seed, particularly as so many heritage grains are becoming harder to grow and source?

We haven't decided yet, but information is power and we enjoyed [this recent article](#) laying out the progress to date.

---

**Impact Update**



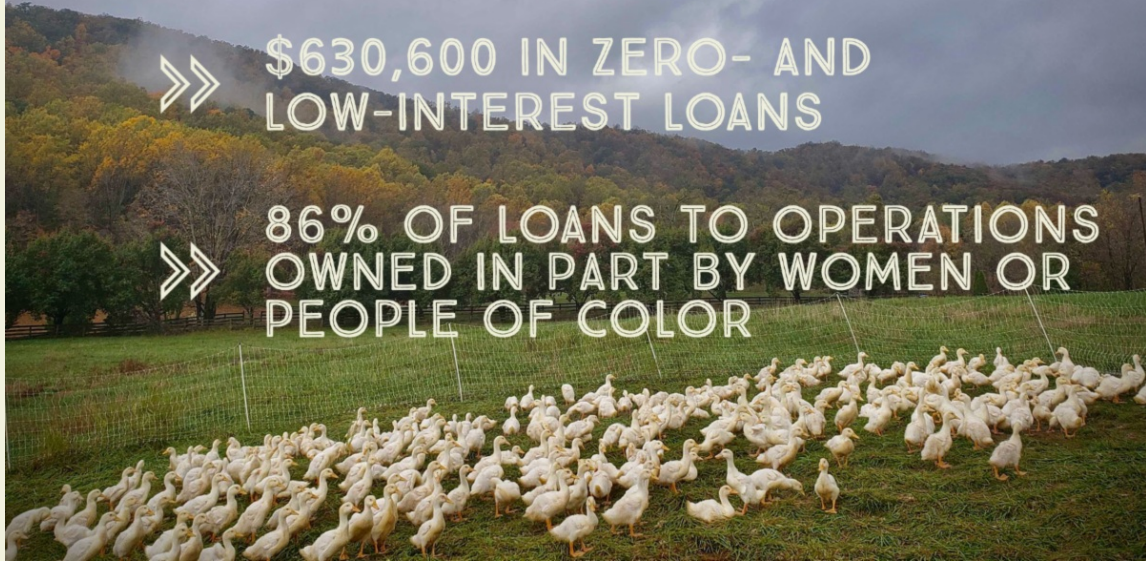


## OUR WORK SINCE 2019:

»» 54 TOTAL LOANS MADE

»» \$630,600 IN ZERO- AND  
LOW-INTEREST LOANS

»» 86% OF LOANS TO OPERATIONS  
OWNED IN PART BY WOMEN OR  
PEOPLE OF COLOR



### Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

Supporting our work ensures farmers of all stripes have a chance to succeed.

You already know that FoodCap operates differently from other lenders. When you support our work, you support increased cash flow for local farmers of color, alongside customized technical assistance so they are equipped with the business skills they need to succeed.

**If you believe in our work, will you chip in a little bit each month?** Whether it's a gift of \$10 or \$100 a month, sustained support allows us to stay focused on understanding and supporting our borrowers—so they can focus on keeping you fed.

[Become a Perennial Supporter](#)

[www.foodcap.org](http://www.foodcap.org) | 434.409.0054 | [info@foodcap.org](mailto:info@foodcap.org)



