

carolina farm
stewardship association



2024 Impact Report

Letter from Leadership

In the following pages, you'll find snapshots and highlights featuring our initiatives spanning food and farming education, advocacy, and direct services – and their ripple effects across the food system – celebrating a year of work and impact at CFSA.

In 2024, we launched new projects, delivered on ambitious goals, responded to unprecedented natural disaster, built and sustained meaningful partnerships, and more, all in service of our mission to strengthen local, organic food and agriculture in the Carolinas.

Stewardship and collective action for a brighter food system are only possible through the generosity and support of our community of members, donors, and partners. Each contribution helps seed tangible change and fosters hope for a healthier, more sustainable future.

We are deeply grateful for your commitment to this work. Together, we're cultivating a stronger, more vibrant future for our farms, our food, and our communities.

On behalf of our board and staff, thank you.
When we go together, we go far!



Roland McReynolds
Executive Director
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

Mission

The Carolina Farm Stewardship Association advocates, educates, and builds connections to create sustainable food systems in the Carolinas centered on local and organic agriculture.

Vision

A sustainable regional food system that is good for all consumers, farmers, farmworkers, and ecosystems.

2024 Board of Directors

Ebonie Alexander | Durham, NC
Michael Brown | Greenville, SC
Miguel Castillo | Cary, NC
Davon Goodwin | Rockingham, NC
Katherine Lewis | Columbia, SC
Aeriel Miller | Elon, NC
Cecilia Redding | Raleigh, NC
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Keith Sexton | Timberlake, NC
Becca Watson | North Charleston, SC
Andrea White | Greenwood, SC
Tiki Windley | Morrisville, NC



Our Work

Since our founding in 1979, CFSA has worked to unite farmers, consumers, and businesses to build a healthy, just, and sustainable food and farming system while addressing today's pressing challenges – from a loss of farmers and farmland to the need for research and resources tailored to family farms to the ongoing integrity of sustainable agriculture and a regenerative future. We achieve this through our three programmatic pillars: Education, Advocacy, and Farm Services.

EDUCATION

CFSA brings together farmers, researchers, agricultural service providers, buyers, consumers, and advocates through educational events to build networks and strengthen knowledge throughout our food and farming system. Our annual farm tour, agriculture conferences, and workshops provide educational opportunities for thousands of people from across the Carolinas each year.



ADVOCACY

CFSA advocates for food and farm policies that benefit small and mid-scale sustainable and organic farms and strengthen local food systems through grassroots advocacy, lobbying, coalition building, and policy research and analysis.



FARM SERVICES

CFSA provides support to grow and sustain an environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially just food system. We provide direct technical assistance and resources to farmers on organic production and certification, food safety, high tunnel production, conservation planning, disaster recovery, and market access; conduct research to guide organic production best practices; and lead alternative food distribution networks tackling farmer livelihoods and food insecurity.



Growing knowledge, cultivating confidence

CFSA designs and provides educational opportunities for audiences at every step of the food value chain, leveraging on-the-ground partnerships and best practices to connect with farmers, food system stakeholders, and consumers through hands-on, meaningful workshops, events, and training courses. **We equip small-scale farmers with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to thrive and pursue sustainable and organic production practices, convene food systems leaders to build community and collective momentum, and reconnect the general public with the local food and farms abundant in the Carolinas.**



In 2024, CFSA reached over 1,100 farmers through 52 educational workshops, and hundreds more through our three annual signature events. The **Piedmont Farm Tour**, held in partnership with Weaver Street Market, invited the public to visit small-scale farms in the North Carolina Piedmont region, catalyzing local food and agriculture awareness and support through firsthand experience. The **Organic Commodities & Livestock Conference** was held at the University of Mount Olive, where we convened with over 130 commodity and livestock producers, researchers, and extension professionals to demonstrate tools, benefits, and incentives of growing organically at scale. The **Sustainable Agriculture Conference** featured 80 workshops, 62 exhibits, and eight on-farm intensive sessions, allowing our nearly 800 attendees to design personalized educational experiences. Thanks to the generous support of our donors, 25 Dow Scholarships were awarded in 2024, providing beginning and limited-resource farmers free attendance to the Sustainable Agriculture Conference and complimentary CFSA membership, carrying out our mission to advance farmer education from the ground up.

In addition to direct educational programming, CFSA launched a **Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship Program** in 2024 through our role as Carolinas Regional Lead for the 32-partner USDA Southeast Transition to Organic Partnership Program. By coordinating the recruitment, management, compensation, and technical assistance program participation for farmer mentees and mentors, we're prioritizing workforce development for the organic supply chain and building a regional community of practice grounded in organic agriculture.

"I was already taking the right steps, being a good steward of the land and making a conscious effort to grow clean. As I started selling produce at the farmer's markets, I realized I wanted our efforts acknowledged, and certification does that. In addition to telling my customers I was growing good, clean food, I could also show them, with the certification."

-Pamela Bronn, Live Oak Farmstead, Loris, SC
Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship Program Participant



The Sustainable Agriculture Conference

"It's the best weekend of the year with experts in the field of sustainable ag who are so accessible, great local food and drink, workshops for every knowledge level and discipline, and super great networking!"

-2024 Sustainable Agriculture Conference attendee

785

Sustainable Agriculture Conference participants representing 26 US states and 94 counties in the Carolinas.





1,108

Farmers from across the Southeast and beyond reached through educational workshops, training courses, and events.



1,994

Visitors to 29 small-scale farms during the 2024 Piedmont Farm Tour.

“

It's good to see where my food comes from and the amount of work that goes into producing it!

-Piedmont Farm Tour Visitor

”

Catalyzing policy change for farms and food systems

In 2024, CFSA's policy team organized a **year-long advocacy campaign in support of a Farm Bill reauthorization**. Through trips to Washington DC, in-district Congressional events and meetings, and grassroots mobilization of our members, we took action to ensure the needs of Carolina producers were made urgent and unambiguous to their elected officials. Focusing our attention on particular bills, including the Strengthening Local Processing Act, Local Farms and Food Act, Agriculture Resilience Act, and Fresh Produce Procurement Reform Act ensured that our network's voices were heard when and where they were most needed.



Other key policy focus areas in 2024 included coordination of the **Member Advocacy Program**, which provided advocacy training to 24 community leaders from 18 counties in North and South Carolina, a state-level funding lobbying initiative on behalf of disaster-impacted farmers in Western North Carolina, and nine food hub site visits with legislators focused on local food systems work happening through the FarmsSHARE program. Through a strategic lobbying effort, we also saw the **SC Working Agricultural Lands Preservation Bill** through to passage, which creates a permanent working lands conservation fund for farmers within the SC Conservation Bank.



Addressing Barriers to Organic Production

Organic Enforcement Rules Research and Needs Assessment Project

In partnership with the Southeast Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), the policy team published research and accompanying resources to further support the needs of organic and transitional farmers. Specifically, the research identified new regulatory burdens via organic rule enforcement that could further exacerbate barriers to organic transition. A new needs assessment for organic and transitional farmers was developed to identify the specific educational and policy needs facing producers, both short and long-term. The needs assessment identified multiple focus points, specifically the organic regulatory framework challenges, limited market access and fair pricing, and the need for additional resources around organic pest management and soil health best practices.



Partnering for thriving farms and communities

In 2024, CFSA's Farm Services team completed **direct technical assistance with 195 farmers in North and South Carolina**, providing individualized, hands-on guidance on growing in high tunnels, accessing new markets, organic production and certification, food safety, and conservation planning. Through these technical assistance programs, 12 new farms became Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified, and almost 3,000 acres of farmland were transitioned to sustainable and organic production practices. Over 1,100 additional farmers grew knowledge and skills through educational programming.



On the **Lomax Research & Education Farm** in Concord, North Carolina, we conducted on-farm research, hosted six workshops and field days for farmers, and produced 13,073 pounds of produce for donation to regional food banks. Seven Charlotte-area farmers and Farmers in Training program graduates farmed with the support of Lomax Farm infrastructure in 2024.



CFSA also provided leadership and management on the **Southern Piedmont Climate Smart Commodities Project** and Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Reductions and Carbon Sequestration on Southern Piedmont Farms Research Trial, implementing incentive and assistance programs promoting conservation practices on small-scale farms across the region; coordinated curriculum development for grower food safety training courses; and traveled across the country to speak and teach on sustainable agriculture topics.

12

CFSA Food Safety
Technical Assistance
recipient farms
became Good
Agricultural
Practices (GAP)
certified in 2024.



“

Having access to the newest version of the GAP+ Manual and having CFSA’s assistance during the audit allowed our farm to obtain Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification and begin selling to new markets.

”

-2024 Technical Assistance Recipient Farmer

FarmsSHARE & FarmsSHARE Faith Initiative

2024 marked an exceptionally successful year for the **FarmsSHARE** program, an alternative food network project that connects small-scale farmers with North Carolina food hubs and communities in need to strengthen farm market channels and food security at the local level across the state. In 2024, we worked with 18 food hubs to distribute **46,157 food boxes** stocked with fresh produce, meat, and dairy from over 300 farmers, representing \$770,585 distributed directly into local economies to help food systems thrive.

We also launched the new **FarmsSHARE Faith Initiative** of the FarmsSHARE program, which leverages faith community networks to connect those facing food insecurity with the program and its participating farmers. In just a few short months, the FarmsSHARE Faith Initiative has grown to include two church networks, one centralized in Western NC and one centralized in the Sandhills, plus a growing list of nonprofit and church partners.



FarmsSHARE Impact 2020-2024



“

FarmsSHARE has helped us increase our wages directly to our staff because we're able to get retail price for products. That's the true cost of food.

FarmsSHARE is allowing food that's grown locally to really feed local families.

-Participating Farmer

”



When Disaster Strikes: Hurricane Helene Response

Since Hurricane Helene irrevocably changed the landscape of food and agriculture in Western NC in the fall of 2024, CFSA has been working with boots-on-the-ground partners to build and sustain an ongoing, responsive recovery program for farmers in the region.

Our WNC Food System Recovery & Resilience Initiative work focuses on providing resources and services targeting long-term resilience, including the development of relief and food safety resources for small-scale growers, coordination of in-person coalition-building and resource-sharing gatherings, recruitment and training of contractors to provide direct technical assistance to impacted farmers, promotion of available recovery funding programs, and the collaborative design and dissemination of impact assessment, documentation, and disaster preparedness tools in the region.

20,396

views to CFSA
Hurricane Recovery
resource webpage.

13

farmer contractors
recruited to provide
recovery assistance.

3

informational
meetings & listening
sessions held.

9,871

uses of the Helene
Supply Dropoff Points
interactive map.

Stewarding the movement

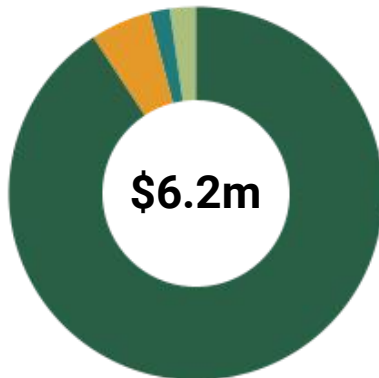
CFSA welcomed **403 new members** to our network in 2024, ending the year with 2,803 total members. We saw a 35% increase in subscribers to our newsletter, and routinely reach over **36,000 community members** through our newsletter and social media platforms.

“CFSA does great work, we’ve had a long-standing relationship with them; their advocacy work is so important to the agriculture industry; we need more folks creating more areas where we can come together and share resources and share ideas and services.”

-CFSA Business Member



Financials



Income: our sources of revenue

91% Grants

5% Gifts & Dues

2% Conferences

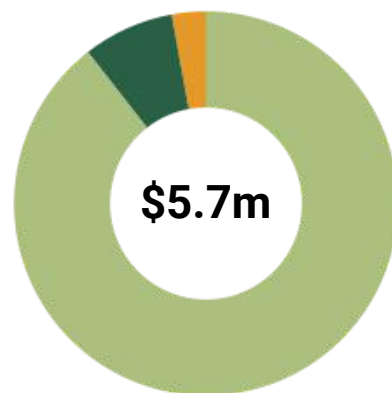
2% Consulting & Misc.

Expenses: how we use our funds

89% Program Services

8% Administration

3% Fundraising



Join Us

Become a CFSA member to connect with a vibrant network of farmers, advocates, consumers, and organizations working together to build a just, healthy, and sustainable food system where small-scale farms thrive.

Support Us

CFSA's work is possible thanks to the ongoing generosity of our network. Set up a monthly donation to sustain and grow our movement.

Stay Connected

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter, receive timely policy action alerts, and follow us on social media to be the first to know about upcoming events, urgent advocacy items, and important announcements.



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CFSA is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all contributions are tax deductible in the United States to the extent permissible by law.

