



WHITE PAPER

# **Successful Transitions: From Apprentice to Farmer**

Recommendations for  
Improving and Enhancing the Chesapeake Region's  
Agricultural Training and Support Programs

By

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A Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	1
Project Organization .....	2
Introduction.....	2
The Survey of Training Program Graduates.....	3
Successful Beginner Farmer Training and Assistance Models .....	5
Lessons Learned and Next Steps .....	8
Conclusion .....	12
Appendix I    New Farmer Survey <i>(see Future Harvest CASA website)</i>	
Appendix II    Detailed Responses to Key Survey Questions <i>(see Future Harvest CASA website)</i>	
Appendix III  Participating Organizations of the Chesapeake Farming Support Network .....	13
Appendix IV  Partial Resource List of National and Regional Farming Training Programs .....	14
Acknowledgments .....	17



## **Executive Summary**

In 2011, Future Harvest, a Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (Future Harvest CASA), applied for and received a grant from North County Preservation (NCP) to understand the challenges faced by recent beginning farmer training graduates and to investigate what best practices from beginner farmer training programs nationally could address them. The ultimate goal is to provide recommended actions for local training programs and organizations to support the successful transition of trainees into independent and profitable agricultural producers.

Future Harvest CASA surveyed graduates in the region- many of whom had trained at the New Farmer Training Program which was initiated by NCP - and used their responses as a starting point to understand what the trainees had liked about their education, what they didn't, and what they needed but didn't get. That data was supplemented with information garnered from a national survey of 1,000 beginning farmers done by the Young Farmers of America.

The responses to the Future Harvest CASA survey were instructive, indicating that the organization and others like it are doing some things very well – teaching soil science and crop rotation, for example – while other components – including marketing, utilizing technology and writing business plans – received short shrift, if they were addressed at all. In addition, the survey confirmed heretofore anecdotal stories about the challenges facing new farmers as they seek access to credit and to land, whether for lease or purchase.

The survey results also provided direction for studying other beginning farmer training programs nationally to consider what elements to recommend for implementation in this region. Ultimately, the areas that received the most focus included:

- Increased collaboration with organizations offering support to new and sustainable farmers
- Land link efforts to assist beginning farmers find farmland to lease or purchase
- A savings match program to incentivize building credit and down payments for land and equipment
- Marketing assistance to help identify new market outlets for beginning farmers
- Mentoring and ongoing support.

Nothing gleaned from the survey or the study of other farmer training programs yielded dramatically new information or methods. What it did do is provide specific guidance on how to augment what Future Harvest CASA and other local organizations are already doing, as well as maximize cooperation among like-minded organizations through sharing scheduling information about upcoming events to avoid overlap and competition; collaborating on course content; specializing content to meet the needs of farmers in different phases of learning, thus achieving greater economies of scale and promoting the kind of collaboration and network for which the new farmers are hungry.

## **Project Organization**

At the outset of the project, Future Harvest CASA retained writer and consultant Lucie Snodgrass as principal investigator and formed an advisory team of experienced local farmer trainers and farming education groups to provide guidance and feedback. The advisory team has been involved at each step of the process, from helping to write the survey and reviewing its responses, to prioritizing beneficial, adoptable best practices from other farmer training models. As a next step, Future Harvest CASA will seek to implement the recommendations in the white paper, by applying for additional funding from supporting organizations.

## **Introduction**

Seventy-five years ago, when farms and farmers were still abundant in Maryland, there was no need for a formal farmer training program. Beginning farmers learned farming the same way that generations before them did: through example and experience – the latter often imposed and without financial remuneration – from father to son, uncle to nephew, brother to brother. Expert advice on a myriad of farm-related subjects was also available for free, usually at the farm down the road or at the local feed mill.

That model of apprentice-based farm education has slowly and almost entirely disappeared from small states like Maryland and Delaware, where it can be far more lucrative to sell the farm than till it. Farms compete with housing developments for land, and the average age of farmers in this region has risen to 58, as fewer families hand their knowledge or their farmland to the next generation with the expectation that they will earn a living from it. Whereas farmland has traditionally been valued longitudinally for its ongoing productivity, recent decades have pegged its value to the absence of cultivation, replacing cornfields with ball fields and dairy barns with Dairy Queens.

Farming in America today is vastly different than it was in 1900, when 41% of the American workforce labored on farms. Today only 1.9% of the workforce is in the highly mechanized business of farming, and while there are far fewer farms, their average size is nearly three times what it was 1900. Today's farms are also astonishingly productive thanks to fertilizer and pesticides; however, they are far less diversified. Whereas a farmer in 1900 typically cultivated an average of five commodities, today that number is around one. That highly industrialized model of farming born of the age of cheap oil and mechanization, has had profound effects on our ability to grow and transport more food – not with uniformly positive implications, especially for the environment.

In the last ten years consumers began to question the viability and sustainability of the highly industrialized model, giving rise to a burgeoning movement of sustainable farmers who are as much, if not more, motivated by environmental concerns and food diversity as they are by mass production. This new generation of (often, but not always) young, generally highly educated women and men is choosing farming not despite their education, but in part because of it. Some of those men and women find their way to Future Harvest CASA and other sustainable agriculture organizations across the country. These new farmers often do not come from a farming background at all, but they are coming to it with a

passion for growing healthy food produced under sustainable conditions, and that zeal is, at least initially, sustaining them through the tough economic startup period that many new farmers endure. As consumer demand burgeons for locally grown, sustainable food, the opportunity exists to build a more diverse and regional model of agriculture with the capability of supplying not just local markets and restaurants, but also institutions like schools and hospitals. However, in order for such regional systems to gain in strength and numbers, organizations like Future Harvest CASA must help give beginning farmers the physical and practical tools necessary to help them succeed in a time when there are still relatively few farmers experienced in diversifying their own farms or direct selling their crops.

Future Harvest CASA is one among several local organizations whose mission includes supporting this new generation of sustainable farmers (see list in Appendix III). Their help is critical not just in educating trainees about the methods and models of sustainable agriculture, but also in teaching them how to find and create new markets for their products so they can transition to economic independence. Recognizing that there were gaps in the tools needed by beginning farmers spurred Future Harvest CASA to undertake the survey in September of 2011.

### **The Survey of Training Program Graduates**

The purpose of the survey (see Appendix I, online at Future Harvest CASA website) was to garner as much information about the training experiences, unmet needs and areas of importance to new farmers in order to better prepare them to transition to independence and to attract additional trainees. The survey set out to find between 10 and 20 farmers with five years or less of farming experience to take the survey. Fifteen beginning farmers mostly from the Chesapeake region agreed to participate in the survey, 10 women and 5 men. Collectively, they represent Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York states.

All of the individuals have undergone some formal training or apprenticeship program, they are all farming for profit, and none of them has more than five years of independent farming experience. The oldest in the cohort was born in 1977 and is 34; the youngest in 1986 and is 25. The duration of training time varies from three months to a year; the average time is six months of training. The size of the farms where they trained ranges from 1.5 acres to 200 acres, with the average size close to six acres, which mimics Calvert's Gift Farm, Future Harvest CASA's main training site, which is owned and run by Jack and Beckie Gurley of Sparks, Maryland.

When asked what were the most valuable skills that the new farmers acquired in their training programs, the answers vary but are specific (see Appendix II, online at Future Harvest CASA website): "growing methods," "the financial information for the farm we worked", "networking with the host and the mentee cohort," "production practices," "growing for markets," and "the importance of high value crops" are all mentioned. When probed about the program's shortcomings, the answers vary there as well, ranging from "difficult to attend classes" to "only on the farm one day a week" to "classes could have been much better and more relevant" to "I would have liked to work more often alongside the other trainees."

If there is no single question on which there is unanimity, there are nonetheless commonalities among some of the answers. Several respondents, for example, want more time with and exposure to colleagues, which also is expressed in the desire for “a more structured follow-up mentoring program.” From telephone and in person conversations with several of the new farmers, Lucie Snodgrass, who headed up the project for Future Harvest CASA, learned that new farmers often feel isolated from other farmers, and don’t have a good network of other new and sustainable farmers, in particular. Their desire for more contact is as practical as it was social: the new farmers still have much to learn and they don’t feel that they have access to all the information they need, the way that farmers even fifty years ago had.

The questions about what beginning farmers felt was most important for a beginning farmer’s success elicit the highest responses (10 each) in the following categories: “business planning and financial management,” “how to source supplies and equipment” and “crop or production scheduling.” Other areas they deem critical (8 each) include “nutrient and soil fertility management,” “successful models for acquiring a new farm,” and “assistance and legal arrangements for land purchases, leases and rentals.”

When assessing their own training programs’ effectiveness, the highest rated area is “sources supplies and equipment (10 responses),” which corresponds to the level of importance the farmers assign it when asked about what new farmers need to know. Other highly rated areas are “crop and production scheduling (8 responses),” “harvest and post-harvest handling (7 responses),” and “pricing,” “variety and breed selection” and “tractor, equipment and infrastructure management (6 responses each),” with most other areas garnering no higher than five “very effective” responses, and many that rated at three or below. No doubt, some of the answers reflect the varying levels of experience among the trainees, two of whom were raised on family farms and presumably have more practical experience than their peers in the survey.

The various training programs fall short in a number of areas, the survey revealed. The areas of greatest omission in the various programs involve practices that the mentoring farmers themselves are likely not as facile in, including “writing a marketing plan,” “assistance and legal arrangements for land purchases, leases and rentals,” “use of technology, “insurance issues and regulations,” “land linking between landowners and land seekers,” “tax planning and preparation,” “risk management,” “access to affordable insurance” and “small grant opportunities.”

As for where the farmers are working, two of the beginning farmers returned to farm their family’s land, while the rest found land to lease, including the 11 new farmers who stayed in the state in which they trained. Not one of the respondents received help from a land link program in their search for arable land, although 12 of the 15 farmers indicate that “a program that identifies land access opportunities for prospective farmers” would have been helpful to them, and 14 of the 15 affirm they would welcome such assistance in the future. Eight of the respondents’ farms are in rural areas; six in suburban areas and one is in an urban area.

Collectively, the cohort is still just eking out an existence, raising crops ranging from asparagus and zucchini to poultry, beef cattle and hay. Virtually all of them direct sell their products, either at farmers

markets, through CSAs or both, and for some, to restaurants. Still, only ten of the farmers say their farm is “covering its own costs,” and eight of the fifteen rely on some outside income – including from spouses or their own off-farm labor – to make ends meet. Not surprisingly then, only four of the fifteen farmers pay themselves a salary, and 14 of the farmers have no fulltime paid employees beyond themselves, with just one farm listing a single fulltime additional employee. Most of the farms, however, do list some seasonal and outside help, whether from a spouse, a paid worker or from volunteers and interns.

When asked what additional skills or components the trainees would have wanted to gain from their respective programs, the respondents are united in wanting more hands-on time with trainers, including having more exposure to different farms and more peers; a longer period of mentoring and formal follow up; on-farm consultations from experienced farmers to help the new farmers take stock of the land they are starting to farm; and even more practical skills, like equipment repair. In keeping with their desire for a community to which they can feel connected and draw upon for help, 12 of the farmers say they would participate in a pooled labor group to support each other with new farming projects like building a hoop house.”

Finally, while making money is obviously on the minds of the new farmers, it doesn’t predominate in importance. While roughly half of them mention wanting to earn more to make the farm truly viable financially, nearly as many list improvements to the farm or their own production methods as talk about income. Environmental sustainability and quality of life matter too, for this new generation of farmers. One farmer best summed up the collective consciousness of the group when he said that he aspired “to make farming a truly sustainable enterprise both financially and in quality of life.”

### **Successful Beginner Farmer Training and Assistance Models**

Well over a hundred training programs exist across the country to serve new farmers in some capacity, and Future Harvest CASA reviewed many of them for best practices. Some of the programs are run through land grant universities’ extension offices, like Cornell, Iowa State, Michigan State and Oregon State universities, and are just a small fraction of what the institutions do. Others are offshoots of land conservations programs, like the Accokeek Foundation, and embrace farmer training as a complementary effort that advances their primary goal of land preservation. Others still are nonprofit organizations founded specifically to promote and advance sustainable and even organic farming; those groups, including Future Harvest CASA and Maine’s Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), have beginner farmer training as central components of their mission.

Within the range of farmer training programs are further distinctions, including organizations that target specific subsets of new farmers such as young farmers, organic farmers, women farmers, minorities, refugees, dairy and beef farmers and, of late in particular, urban farmers. There are also regional training organizations, like the various Collaborative Regional Alliances for Farmer Training (CRAFT) chapters, as well as organizations in large states like New York, California and Michigan that concentrate on their own distinct agricultural regions and climates.

Differing models and emphases also exist among the new farmer training initiatives. Some are structured around the organization's working farms or incubators and education centers, like The Intervale Center in Vermont and Maine's MOFGA, and tend to offer several programs with varying degrees of technical, training and marketing support at reduced rates for the beginning farmers. At MOFGA, for example, trainees can work on the organization's 250-acre demonstration farm while also attending classes in MOFGA's education center. MOFGA even runs a Farmer in Residence Program for individuals wanting to live on and work the farm; they receive two acres to cultivate, as well as a \$3,000 annual stipend; MOFGA even has its own Organic Farmers Loan Fund. Given the spectrum of support that such groups offer, farmers participating within those frameworks are often able to become sellers to food aggregation hubs or CSAs and farmers markets that take advantage of the cumulative array of food grown by a number of farmers, thus making it easier for new farmers to tap into market demand that they would not otherwise be able to meet, including for restaurants and schools, which require greater volume. The disadvantages of such programs can be that the transition to financial independence can be longer and the learning curve steeper once the farmers are required to create their own marketing outlets and purchase or lease their own land and equipment.

The benefits to those holistic models are substantial, however. The Intervale Center in Burlington, Vermont offers three levels of farming programs, all of which are located on its 120-acre campus. Incubator Farms are the first level. They exist for inexperienced farmers who are eligible for a wide range of subsidized assistance from access to land, irrigation, capital, tractors and other equipment and technical services; Enterprise Farms, for those with three years of experience and thus are able to pay more and who require less assistance; and Mentor Farms, for self-sufficient farmers with at least five years' experience at the Intervale and who commit themselves to helping less experienced beginners. The primary benefit to the Mentor Farms is ready access to land in close proximity to a major market. There the farmers have a wide range of outlets for their products, including the Intervale's own Food Hub, CSAs and farmers markets. The California-based Agriculture and Land Based Training Association (ALBA) offers similar levels of support on its 110-acre incubator, with a major emphasis on immigrants and minorities.

Smaller, less comprehensive beginning farmer programs rely more on a decentralized system of partnerships and affiliations to conduct short-term training workshops at multiple locations. Like the regional CRAFT entities, they enlist a network of experienced farmers and educators, some of whom are paid through the organization, while others are not. Some emphasize classroom learning combined with on-farm workshops, while others also offer on-line workshops, shared templates for curriculum, distance learning opportunities, DVDs and other online resources, including manuals that can be purchased and downloaded for varying fees. The benefits to such programs are the lack of farm infrastructure, equipment and staff, all of which require substantial capital. At the same time, they also don't offer the seed to table advantages, including the economies of scale that more inclusive models do.

Not surprisingly, states with large farming sectors tend to offer the most comprehensive services to new farmers, usually in partnership with their land grant universities and extension services. New York State, for example, has multiple farmer training programs, including the Stone Barns Center for Sustainable

Food, an 80 acre four season farm that runs six month apprenticeship programs, and Cornell's Small Farms Program, which partners with Cooperative Extension and is funded largely with federal funding. Iowa State, Michigan State, University of Minnesota, University of Vermont, and University of California are states that all have comprehensive programs that reach into every corner of their states. Some, however, like Cornell, Penn State and the University of Vermont, are more effective, forward looking and inclined toward outside partnerships – including with private nonprofit organizations – than others. On the other hand, the more federal funding they receive – at least currently – the more ability they have to offer free online materials and tuition rebates and scholarships for new farmers who do not have the means to pay for the education and training they receive. Smaller, non-governmental groups are more dependent on membership dues, farm/CSA proceeds, rental fees and tuition costs to fund at least some of their training programs, though virtually all of the entities offer some form of financial assistance to beginning farmers. In turn, groups like Future Harvest CASA and Iowa's Practical Farmers have more freedom to tailor programs to emerging market demands, like organic farming.

While there are substantial differences in approach and scope, virtually all of the beginner farmer training programs offer most or all of the following training components to some degree. For specialty crops, these include:

- Envisioning the farm
- Goal setting
- Farm management
- Production practices
- Nutrient management/Soil science
- Weed and pest management
- Marketing
- Pricing
- Budgeting
- Financial Planning
- Sourcing supplies
- Farm and infrastructure management
- Harvest and post-harvest handling of crops
- Sustainable farming methods

However, just as Future Harvest CASA discovered through its own survey and through a national effort by the National Young Farmers' Coalition, some critical areas of new farmer education are less uniformly dealt with, if at all, such as:

- Writing a business plan
- Animal and livestock husbandry
- Assistance with finding land
- Legal assistance on land and lease negotiations
- Use of technology
- Identifying market options

- Employee management
- Compensation issues and strategies
- Regulations and certifications required
- Insurance
- Financing options
- Managing debt
- Farm safety training
- Record keeping

Some of the omissions reflect a lack of capacity on the part of the organization, while others may say more about the lack of innovation to traditional structures and programs, especially when they rely on federal funding and strictures to run their programs.

Finally, there are new farmer assistance programs whose primary purpose is not necessarily training, but assisting farmers in other valuable ways. Land Link programs such as the one run by New England Land Link and California Land Link dedicate considerable time and resources to matching land seekers with landowners, addressing head on one of the most challenging issues for beginning farmers. Other initiatives like Iowa’s Practical Farmers help new farmers save money by offering matching savings, usually at a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio over a two to three year period. In the Midwest, where cattle are one of the largest upfront expenses, organizations like the Land Stewardship Project in Minnesota lend zero interest money for livestock purchases. Still, other organizations like the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska focus on education and advocacy, aiming not only to educate elected officials and inform farmers about issues that impact them, but also to empower farmers to fight for their share of the resources that are apportioned in federal, state and local budgets.

### **Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

On the basis of the data gleaned from its survey and the study of best training and assistance practices nationally, Future Harvest CASA’s Successful Transitions advisory team met and identified five areas of concentration to strengthen and expand farmer training, education and assistance efforts in the region. They are:

1. **Increased collaboration** between organizations offering support to new and sustainable farmers
2. **Land link efforts** to assist beginning farmers with finding farmland to lease or purchase
3. **A savings match program** to incentivize building credit and down payments for land and equipment
4. **Marketing assistance** to help identify new market outlets for beginning farmers
5. **Mentoring** and ongoing support.

**1. Increased Collaboration** – Among the states in the Chesapeake region, there are numerous entities providing some of the same or complementary services for beginning farmers. Future Harvest CASA is committed to increased coordination and collaboration among the groups in order to eliminate redundancy and competition and provide new opportunities for learning and training. Action to be taken includes:

*Encourage strong collaborative efforts on a region-wide basis to improve the effectiveness of services to new and sustainable farmers*

**Timeline and Status: An initial meeting of agricultural education and support groups took place in December of 2011 with nearly two dozen organizations participating. An initial outcome was to form a listserv called The Chesapeake and Farming Support Network. As its first order of business the group met and identified common goals and concrete action items, including:**

- Increase the number of farmers and the availability of local, sustainably produced food in the Chesapeake region
- Enhance coordination and information sharing among organizations that provide education and technical support to new and transitioning sustainable farmers
- Develop new shared programs and initiatives designed to strengthen new farmer training in the classroom, online and on farms
- Cooperate on a statewide land link program to help farmers gain access to available farm land for lease or purchase; connect land owners seeking to lease or sell their land with interested farmers
- Create new channels of communication among participating organizations, including through the use of online and social media
- Collaborate on and increase the number of farm visits in the region
- Create a mentoring network of experienced farmers to pair with and advise beginning farmers
- Partner on writing and administering grants that support regional farmers and local food systems
- Engage in advocacy work to increase public, political and financial support for and awareness of a regional, sustainable food system.

*Create a centralized calendar to which all organizations have access and can contribute*

**Timeline and Status: A process needs to be implemented to regularly compile events in the region. Future Harvest CASA currently has an online calendar where all organizations can update their events. An updating process should be designed during the winter of 2012.**

**2. Land Link Efforts** - Both Future Harvest CASA's survey and the National Young Farmers' Coalition study highlighted the challenges facing young farmers seeking available, suitable and affordable farmland. In states throughout New England and in California, land link efforts have assisted thousands of sellers and seekers of land to come together in mutually beneficial arrangements. With its own desire to see as much productive agricultural land as possible preserved and as many new farmers choose to stay in the Chesapeake region, Future Harvest CASA will endeavor to play an active and constructive land link role. To that end it will:

*Join with other land link efforts and organizations in Maryland and the region to develop and maintain a comprehensive on-line listing of available farm land*

**Timeline and Status:** The Southern Maryland Development Corporation and Maryland Countryside Alliance both have land link tools in place and are adding human resources and processes to support land matching. Specific details will be worked out in early 2012, including whether or how other organizations can coordinate and contribute to the expansion and maintenance of the land link inventory and how best to include Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture's lease matching efforts, the Eastern Shore's land link efforts, and any initiatives in West Virginia and Northern Virginia as well.

*Work with other organizations and farms to increase the number of sites on which new farmers can apprentice or lease some space*

**Status:** Future Harvest CASA has expanded the number of sites available for interns to work on, including adding Flying Plow Farm in Harford County and Summer Creek Farm in Frederick County. Accokeek Farm's apprenticeship program is one of the oldest farm training programs in the region. Efforts are underway to identify even more areas for new farmers to work or lease land, including through organizations like Maryland Agricultural Resources Council (MARC), located on land owned by Baltimore County, or Genesee Valley in Northern Baltimore County that could serve as an incubator farm.

**3. Savings Match Program** – Future Harvest CASA, recognizing how difficult it is for new and young farmers to build credit and save money for equipment and land rental or purchase, is committed to encouraging its trainees to save money and:

*Evaluate the feasibility of a matching program. An example would be a two year, 2:1 saving match program, whereby approved beginning farmers must save \$100 each month, which will be matched with \$200 from a fund financed by participating support organizations such as financial institutions, philanthropic organizations, and others. This program would total \$7200 in savings at the end of the two years.*

**Timeline and Status:** Future Harvest CASA will solicit partners during the first quarter of 2012 to assess the feasibility of a pilot program for a small number of new farmers, probably no more than half a dozen.

**4. Marketing Assistance** - Beginning farmers, in order to successfully transition to financial independence, must have opportunities to earn enough income from marketing what they grow. While the responsibility ultimately lies with each farmer, opportunities like food aggregation centers and cooperative CSAs can increase market outlets for new farmers, especially those only producing small quantities and limited varieties of food in their first years. Future Harvest CASA will continue to explore possibilities for new market outlets for its trainees and:

*Research the possibility of a centrally located food hub or aggregation center in partnership with other organizations*

**Timeline and status:** In the summer of 2011, Future Harvest CASA gathered interested entities in the local food supply chain to discuss the regional needs for food aggregation and transportation. The group visited and looked carefully at the Charlottesville Food Hub and its finances and concluded that that model had yet to achieve financial self-sufficiency. It developed a survey of existing transportation routes with the goal of identifying opportunities to leverage backhauling and capacity filling opportunities. Because food hubs can create new markets for beginning farmers, Future Harvest CASA will continue to foster transparency, conversation and provide any support it can, to enhance the logistics of local fresh food supply to the region's markets. Its 2012 Conference is centered on the theme: **Farm to Institution: Making Local Food Economies a Reality.**

*Work to pass legislation that is favorable for local farmers seeking to sell their food to state-run or funded entities*

**Timeline and Status:** Future Harvest CASA created an advocacy committee in 2011 and has reached out to members of the General Assembly in Maryland to craft legislation that would set aspirational purchasing goals for Maryland's public school systems and other publically funded institutions. Its goal for the 2012 Session is to see the Jane Lawton Farm to School Act revised to include such aspirational percentages, perhaps in graduated steps. Beginning in 2012 and beyond, Future Harvest CASA also hopes to educate and cultivate a cadre of legislators supportive of more ambitious local farming bills.

*Consider other marketing tools to assist new and beginning farmers, including an expanded publication similar to "Amazing Grazing" on the availability of other local foods*

#### **Timeline and Status: Ongoing**

**5. Ongoing Mentoring and Support** - Several of the national farmer assistance programs, especially in the Midwest, have ongoing mentoring programs that match experienced farmers with beginning farmers and sometimes continue for several years. Some of the mentors are paid while others aren't, but all of the mentors act as advisors and consultants to the neophytes, assisting them with soil analysis, crop and seed selection, infrastructure issues, etc. Future Harvest CASA and other local organizations have had limited success in finding such mentors, apart from a small handful in the Baltimore region. Moving forward, it will:

*Recruit mentors across the state with the help of other organizations, including the Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia and Virginia Departments of Agriculture, the Farm Bureaus and Organic Growers Associations for those areas, and through professional associations like the Cattlemen, etc.*

**Timeline and Status:** In 2012, Future Harvest CASA will work with Maryland Agricultural Resource Council (MARC), Southern Maryland Development Corporation and others, to find mentoring farmers for graduates of local training programs who intend to stay in Maryland or the Chesapeake region and are interested in mentoring support. Future Harvest CASA will look at whether the model for the Maryland Grazers' Network can be adapted to other agricultural production types.

*Provide listserv opportunities through the topics of interest groups or other existing virtual networks for new trainees and transitioning farmers throughout the region to build a resource and support network*

**Timeline and Status: Graduates of the Beginner Farmer Training Program constitute a core peer support group that can be built upon for new and young farmers entering programs across the region to call upon for specific support. Responsibility for maintaining the list ideally will fall to one of the young farmers, but in the absence of that, the Program Director of Future Harvest CASA's Beginner Farmer Training Program continues to maintain the contact lists and provides regular networking opportunities.**

## **Conclusion**

Future Harvest CASA and other organizations working to train and support new farmers are – individually and collectively – helping to cultivate the next generation of sustainable rural, suburban and urban farmers. While a significant amount of cooperation already occurs among the organizations, beginning in 2012 the organizations have pledged to work much more closely to increase services, support and funds for beginning farmers in the region through all phases of the transition from apprentice to farmer: from identifying markets and products, to learning production methods, creating the business framework, identifying capital requirements, land and labor needs, and implementing a continually refined farm enterprise plan. The ultimate goal, in turn, is to increase in the number of new farmers and the amounts and varieties of sustainable food they produce in the Chesapeake region; more farmland being spared from development and being used, instead, to cultivate sustainable food; the expansion of current retail and wholesale market opportunities for the new farmers; and a more cohesive and enduring network of support for these entrepreneurs, drawing upon an older generation's knowledge and assisting them as they successfully transition to financial sustainability.

**APPENDIX III**

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS OF  
THE CHESAPEAKE FARMING SUPPORT NETWORK**

Accokeek Foundation

Future Harvest, a Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture

Eco City Farms

Real Food Farm

Maryland Agricultural Resource Council (MARC)

Rural Coalition

Arcadia Food

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Southern Maryland Development Corporation

Southern Maryland Land Link

Civic Works

Five Seeds Farm

CRAFT

Land Link Montgomery

Calvert's Gift Farm

One Straw Farm

Crossroads Market

## APPENDIX IV

### PARTIAL RESOURCE LIST OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL FARMING TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Farm School: [http://www.farmschool.org/prog\\_practicalfarm.html](http://www.farmschool.org/prog_practicalfarm.html)

Cornell University's Small Farms Program: <http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu/>

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)  
:<http://www.mofga.org/Home/tabid/74/Default.aspx>

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture: <http://www.pasafarming.org/>

University of Vermont Farmer Apprenticeship Program: <http://learn.uvm.edu/sustainability/farmer-apprentice-program/>

The New England Small Farm Institute: [http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for\\_new\\_farmers/](http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for_new_farmers/)

Northeast Beginning Farmer Project: <http://nebeginningfarmers.org/>

Stone Barns: <http://www.stonebarnscenter.org/about/opportunities/>

Farm School New York City: <http://www.justfood.org/farmschoolnyc>

Tufts University New Entry Sustainable Farming Project:  
<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/training/index.html>

Penn State Extension's Beginning Farmer Course:  
<http://bedford.extension.psu.edu/agriculture/BeginFarmer/FarmCourse%20Info.htm>

University of Vermont's New Farmer Project: <http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/>

Intervale Farms Project:  
[http://www.intervale.org/programs/agricultural\\_development/intervale\\_farms.shtml](http://www.intervale.org/programs/agricultural_development/intervale_farms.shtml)

National Immigrant Farming Initiative: [http://www.immigrantfarming.org/new\\_farmer\\_resources.html](http://www.immigrantfarming.org/new_farmer_resources.html)

North American Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program: <http://www.bdtraining.org/>

Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training: <http://www.craftfarmers.org/>

The Land Connection: [http://www.thelandconnection.org/?page\\_id=74](http://www.thelandconnection.org/?page_id=74)

Practical Farmers of Iowa New Generation: <http://practicalfarmers.org/programs/youth-and-next-generation.html>

Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture: <http://ncta.unl.edu/home>

Foundation for Agricultural and Rural Resources Management Sustainability:  
<http://www.farms.org/educational.html>

Central Illinois Farm Beginnings: <http://www.illinoisfarmbeginnings.org/>

Purdue Small Farm and Sustainable Agriculture Team:  
<http://www.ag.purdue.edu/smallfarms/Pages/default.aspx>

Iowa State Beginning Farmer Center: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc>

Women, Food and Agriculture Network:  
[http://www.wfan.org/Women\\_Food\\_and\\_Agriculture\\_Network\\_Home.html](http://www.wfan.org/Women_Food_and_Agriculture_Network_Home.html)

Kansas City Center for New and Urban Agriculture: <http://www.kccua.org/programs.htm>

Michigan State University Organic Farmer Training Project:  
<http://www.msuorganicfarm.org/content/program-description>

Land Stewardship Farm Beginnings Project: <http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/farmbeg.html>

Jefferson Institute: <http://jeffersoninstitute.org/>

Community CROPS Farm Growing Program: <http://www.communitycrops.org/farm>

Farm Beginnings Nebraska: <http://www.nebusag.org/farmbeginningsnebraska.htm>

The Center for Rural Affairs: [http://www.cfra.org/resources/beginning\\_farmer](http://www.cfra.org/resources/beginning_farmer)

Innovative Farmers of Ohio: <http://www.ifoh.org/>

Rudolph Steiner College: <http://www.steinercollege.edu/?q=node/129>

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services: <http://www.mosesorganic.org/index.html>

School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers: <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/dairysch.html>

NOFA New Jersey: <http://nofanj.org/education.htm>

The Farm School: [http://www.farmschool.org/prog\\_practicalfarm.html](http://www.farmschool.org/prog_practicalfarm.html)

Nuestra Raices: <http://www.nuestras-raices.org/en/nuestras-raices-farm>

Farm Catskills: [http://farmcatskills.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=category.display&category\\_ID=74](http://farmcatskills.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=category.display&category_ID=74)

Southside Community Land Trust: <http://www.southsideclt.org/programs>

NOFA-VT Apprentice and Willing Worker Training Program: <http://nofavt.org/programs/apprentice-farm-worker>

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University New and Beginning Farmer Training Program: <http://www.famu.edu/cesta/main/index.cfm/cooperative-extension-program/agriculture/marketing/new-and-beginning-farmer-training-program/>

The Farm School for Women: <http://www.ncwolan.org/farmschool.html>

The Kerr Center: <http://www.kerrcenter.com/>

Rogue Farm Training Program: <http://www.roguefarmcorps.org/farms-next-internship-program>

Clemson University New and Beginning Farmer Program: [http://www.clemson.edu/public/ciecd/focus\\_areas/agribusiness/programs/newfarmer/about.html](http://www.clemson.edu/public/ciecd/focus_areas/agribusiness/programs/newfarmer/about.html)

Agriculture and Land Based Training Association (ALBA): <http://www.albafarmers.org/index.html>

UC Santa Cruz Program for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems Training Program: <http://casfs.ucsc.edu/apprentice-training>

The Esalen Institute: <http://www.esalen.org/workshops/farmapprentice.html>

New Mexico Farmer-to-Farmer Training Program: <http://afsc.org/program/new-mexico-farmer-farmer-training-program>

Oregon State University Growing Farms Program: <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/growing-farms-workshop-series>

Living Lands Agrarian Network: <http://livinglandsagrariannetwork.org/>

Allegheny Mountain School: <http://alleghenymountainschool.org/>

Soil Born Farms: <http://www.soilborn.org/index.html>

Viva Farms Incubator Project: <http://www.vivafarms.org/>

Center for Integrated Agriculture: <http://www.farmertraining.org/>

Sustainable Connections: <http://sustainableconnections.org/foodfarming/FTBO/index.html>

Northwest Agriculture Business Center: <http://www.agbizcenter.org/node/45>

The Greenbank Farm Agriculture Training Center: <http://www.greenbankfarm.com/>

The Greenhorns: <http://www.thegreenhorns.net/>

Occidental Arts and Ecology College Program: <http://www.oaec.org/>

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Alice Chalmers and Lucie Snodgrass

## NOTES





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