

ANNUAL

IMPACT REPORT



2023

ROCK STEADY FARM

2023

Going into this year, we planned to temporarily scale-down production in order to allow capacity to situate our strategies and programs sustainably for the long haul. To that end, we welcomed fantastic new programs and farm staff; strengthened internal administrative, HR, and fiscal sponsorship systems; utilized a new peer feedback model; expanded accessibility and language justice; and made space for two founding staff members to take paid sabbaticals. We also invested in the future by resting half of our fields in cover crop; built and moved into our new office; invested in a new farm generator to help us through future severe weather events; and planted 115 native pollinator-friendly, edible and medicinal perennial plants including elderberry, aronia (chokeberry), black-eyed susan, anise hyssop, yarrow, echinacea, peonies, milkweed, goldenrod and seven juneberry trees that will sustain year after year.

Our core programs continued to strengthen this year. Pollinate!, our paid apprenticeship program, hosted 4 farmers for 2 two-week cohorts. We held a tractor training retreat in May, welcomed nine youth interns from the North East Community Center throughout the summer, hosted workshops like Co-Op 101, and piloted the HIVE, our new Pollinate! Alumni. We welcomed over 475 community members to the farm through work days, farm tours, and celebrations for Pride and the Autumn Equinox. Overall, through on-farm events, virtual educational workshops, and conferences, we reached over 1,125 community members this year.

We distributed 69% of all food grown - yielding 27,000 total pounds of produce - for Food Access in the Hudson Valley and NYC through longstanding and new community partnerships and networks. Overall, we fed 400 households per week in season, with 8,250 people reached through all our outlets in 2023. Our food access partnerships continue to deepen and expand their reach. We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of individuals and families that are looking to access low or no-cost produce that is high quality, culturally significant, and regularly available. We work thoughtfully with our partners to ensure that our crop plan reflects the foods that are most meaningful to the community. For example, we grew cilantro (2,100 bunches), tomatoes, and hot peppers for our local Latinx neighbors and callaloo and ewedu (400 pounds worth) for the Free People's Market in Mt. Vernon, a community primarily from the African diaspora.

Finally, we continued to deepen and root our advocacy work, both locally and globally. We sent farmers to Oregon, Spain, Washington DC, and a number of online conferences and workshops to speak to other farmers, public officials, and organizers about the importance of our work and mission. Locally, we met with NY Attorney General Letitia James and State Senator Michelle Hinchey at the farm to discuss food access and housing challenges and we joined the Black Farmer Union in advocacy regarding NY State Bond Act spending. Pollinate!, our recent oral-history based short film documenting the experiences of Pollinate! participants resonated with viewers at film screenings locally, in Rome, London, the Appalachian Queer Film Festival and our online screening was viewed across the country.

We couldn't have done any of this with the support and investment of our donor and funder community, and we'll need your support for next year.

***This year, amidst it all, we
found pockets of joy and
tapped into moments of
celebration and playfulness***



27,000 POUNDS OF VEGETABLES DISTRIBUTED FOR FOOD ACCESS IN 2023



Where does our food go?



NYC

- Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
- Brooklyn Community Pride Center
- Black Trans Liberation Kitchen
- Brooklyn Supported Agriculture (BK Packers)
- Pixie Scout
- Free People's Market (Mt. Vernon)

Hudson Valley

- On the Farm
- The Watershed Center
- Ancramdale Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- Pantries:**
- North East Community Center
- DCAP Dover Plains
- Pine Plains Food Locker
- Vines & Branches Amenia



POLLINATE!

POLLINATE! is a paid training program for queer, trans, Black, Indigenous and people of color beginner farmers. This year, we welcomed four farmers to the *Pollinate!* program:



COHORT 1



ALEX & MONIE

COHORT 2



MARLOW & DRE



“There are so many lessons that I am taking from this experience, regarding my own relationship to land, stewardship, discipline, care, as well as what it takes to build a collective land project in terms of interpersonal dynamics, resource and financial management, communal dreaming, organizing and strategizing.” - Dre





A vast & interconnected web of partners supports our work



Strong connections to community remained at the heart of our work this year.

Our programs and work are carried out in collaboration with dozens of partners including food access & CSA partners, other farms and land-based partners, advocacy networks, LGBTQ+ community groups, co-op and technical support partners, neighbors, local businesses, community members, and more.



In May, we invited some food access partners from NYC: Black Trans Liberation Kitchen, Colectivo Intercultural TRANSgrediendo, and FIG NYC to the farm for a weekend of connection, healing, and building power. The magic of the weekend was in the small moments of inspiration and vision, strengthening our Food Access work this season.



Highlights of our advocacy work in 2024 included welcoming NY Attorney General Letitia James and State Senator Michelle Hinchey to the farm to discuss food access, farmer housing, and more. We also joined members of the Black Farmer Union in advocacy regarding NY's Bond Act and participated in a Farm Bill advocacy day in DC this fall.



This year, our community events brought celebration, culture, and connection. We reached over a thousand community members through farm tours, community work days, educational workshops, celebrations for Pride and the Autumn Equinox, and more.



**OUR WORK IS POSSIBLE
THANKS TO YOU: OUR
COMMUNITY OF DONORS**



DONATIONS FOR 2024 WILL SUPPORT:

PROGRAMMING

\$200,000

This covers curriculum development, supplies, and participant costs for all farmer training, workshops, and support offerings including Pollinate!, The HIVE alumni program, tractor training, incubation program planning, other online and in-person educational workshops and community events.

FOOD ACCESS

\$195,000

This covers the cost of growing and distributing high quality, culturally meaningful food to our food access partners in NYC and the Hudson Valley. It also includes the work to deepen and sustain these partnerships through intentional convenings, participant feedback, and day to day logistics.

SUSTAINABILITY

\$183,000

This includes administrative costs including internal planning, facilitation, HR and operational costs, fundraising and fiscal sponsorship, as well as organizational development and investment in long term infrastructure.

ADVOCACY

\$72,000

This includes national and regional food system coalition work, documentary film work, political education via social media and newsletter campaigns, organizing a regional distribution network of QTBIPOC farmers, and hiring an advocacy consultant to help us build long term strategy.



Looking Ahead: 2024 GOALS

SUPPORT FOR QUEER FARMERS



Our training initiatives are designed to address barriers and strengthen pathways for queer, trans, Black, Indigenous, and people of color farmers to thrive. In 2024, we'll significantly expand our training and farmer support programs in order to support farmers at all levels:

Pollinate!, our paid short-term yet highly immersive apprenticeship program will welcome 4 farmers

We plan to hold 2 immersive tractor training retreats and 4 tractor and farm equipment workshops, reaching over 75 farmers

We'll offer transportation, storage, and sales support for new local farms, building and strengthening QTBIPOC foodways

HIVE, our *Pollinate!* Alumni program will provide 1:1 support and customized workshops to 16 farmers

We're quadrupling the number of in-person and online workshops in 2024 (ex: Co-op 202, queer carpentry, electrical)

We'll collaboratively vision, fund, and design a new farm incubation program with long-term partners



FEED OUR COMMUNITIES

Our food access program seeks to address the rising food insecurity in NYC and the Hudson Valley. Within a network of partners, we are building critical foodways by and for local QTBIPOC communities. In 2024, we plan to distribute 32,000 pounds - over 70% of all food grown - for food access.



STEWARD LAND WITH CARE

Heart-based land stewardship, being in reciprocal relationship with the soil, and building resiliency amidst climate change is foundational to our work. In 2024, we will continue to use and teach regenerative, holistic growing and land care practices, and we will plant more perennials to nourish our community, soil, and pollinators for years to come.



BUILD POWER

Through celebratory events, educational workshops, and advocacy work, we will create opportunities for connection, learning, solidarity, and action. We'll continue to tell the stories of QTBIPOC farmers through short films and deepen our advocacy commitments in new and longstanding organizing networks.

Will you support our work in 2024?

Tax deductible contributions are made via our 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor, Good Work Institute.

BY CHECK: make out to Good Work Institute with memo "Rock Steady Farm" and mail to:
Good Work Institute at 65 St James Street, Kingston, NY 12401

ONLINE: make a one time or monthly recurring contribution at: rocksteadyfarm.com/donate

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

WE COULD NOT DO THIS WORK WITHOUT YOU



CHECK OUT OUR SHORT FILMS TO
LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK:



Rock Steady Farm

tinyurl.com/rocksteadyfilm

Pollinate!

tinyurl.com/pollinatefilm2023