



ORGANIZING HANDBOOK

HOW TO BRING LOCAL FARMERS
TOGETHER FOR SHARED SUCCESS

WELCOME!

Who we are. The National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) is a network of young farmers and ranchers from across the country who believe there should be fewer obstacles to starting a farm. We envision a country where young people who are willing to work hard, get trained and take on a little risk can support themselves and their families in agriculture. With the average age of America's farmers at 57 years old and a quarter of farmers retiring in the next 20 years, we believe our country's food security depends on it. **That's why we're taking action.** Our coalition fights for policy that supports sustainable and independent farms, organizes local farmer networks, and facilitates farmer-to-farmer learning.

Our beginnings. NYFC was formed by three farmers in the Hudson Valley of New York who realized the challenges that they faced in building their farm businesses (prohibitive land costs, lack of access to capital and credit, high costs of health care, student debt, need for training and relevant research) were not being addressed by organizations or government.

To tackle the challenges they experienced on their farms and to have a voice in next Farm Bill, they formed the National Young Farmers Coalition. The Coalition brought together young farmers organizing around similar needs in Michigan, Washington and Connecticut. Since our formation in 2010, our network has expanded to include tens of thousands of farmers nationwide.



This handbook is about change in your community. NYFC mobilizes young farmers around national policy change, but we realize that many barriers to farming must be tackled at home. This is why we help farmers across the country form NYFC chapters that support local collaborations and advocacy. From starting cooperative buying clubs to organizing equipment shares and letter-writing parties, NYFC chapters are a platform for forging collective success and connectedness.

All NYFC chapters have unique areas of focus driven by local needs, but we are all unified around this mission: Through skill-sharing, advocacy, community-building and collaborative activities, NYFC chapters empower young farmers to find success.

This Organizing Handbook is a step-by-step guide to starting an NYFC chapter. Our goal is to help launch a chapter in every region so that you and other farmers across the country have access to a supportive community of your peers. But to make this happen, we need you!



GRAPHIC BY BLACK SHEEP HEAP

WHAT DOES AN NYFC CHAPTER LOOK LIKE?



An NYFC chapter is run by and for young farmers. It is a collaborative group that works to ensure collective success. Our chapters are:

- Farmer-driven and are comprised primarily (but not exclusively) of farmers and ranchers
- Organized locally to bring farmers together within driving distance of one another for regular communication and collaboration
- Focused on the issues first-career farmers face, but are inclusive of farmers of all ages and expertise
- Run democratically by a team of lead organizers
- Charged with building relationships with local, state and national elected officials who, once aware of the issues young farmers face, are in the position to drive legislative change
- Convened at least four times per year for meetings, social events, farm tours, etc.

Within the umbrella of our collective mission as a national coalition, your chapter has the latitude to define its own goals and structure. Your group will soon evolve to fit the specific needs of its young farmer members.

For example, organic grain in the Hudson Valley of New York has become too expensive for young ranchers. The Hudson Valley Young Farmers Coalition has created a cooperative buying club to enjoy bulk prices and share delivery costs. Thanks to collaboration, organic grain is now affordable for the chapter's members.

In California, NYFC chapter New Farmers of the Central Coast has banded together to organize educational events. Individually, each farmer can't afford a private lesson on beekeeping, soil science, etc. Together, they recruit experts to lead group workshops and organize skill shares among members.

It's tried and true: once you bring farmers together, you'll soon identify your priorities and interests as a coalition. Perhaps you will want to develop a listserv, organize collective buying, establish a food hub, advocate for policy change, throw an annual mixer, or all of the above. See the section "Getting Started" (P. 8) for more ideas.

CHAPTER BENEFITS

A local young farmers chapter is important because it:

- Builds and strengthens community
- Provides opportunities for new friendships and business relationships
- Offers cost-sharing opportunities for seed or equipment, price negotiation, and labor pooling, a.k.a. “crop mobs”
- Creates a venue for continuing education, mentorship, and open dialogue
- Offers young and beginning farmers and ranchers a collective voice in their community
- Provides a platform for advocacy and greater traction with elected officials

Starting an NYFC chapter is a way of gathering strength for the future of farming. It gives you a voice in D.C. as part of a national coalition; and it gives you a voice at your Main Street restaurants, farmers markets, and with your local representatives.

NYFC is a **grassroots coalition**—we depend on our local chapters to lead local organizing efforts and to inform our national priorities. Each chapter has a representative on our Local Leadership Committee which convenes via conference call to help determine our national policy strategy and to share best practices for local organizing. NYFC is not run from a central headquarters in D.C., but from farms and grange halls across the country!

Get Political!

Your chapter can play an important role in NYFC’s policy work. In the Farm Bill process, for example, NYFC chapters met with members of Congress to ask for support for beginning farmer training programs, micro-loan programs, and other supportive policies. NYFC chapters have mobilized farmers to write letters to the FDA to shape food safety regulations and have invited elected officials on farm tours.

On the state level, you can join NYFC in advocating that your state offer:

- Competitive small grants for beginning growers
- Affordable health care for small businesses
- Student loan forgiveness
- The “Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value” in conservation easements to ensure affordable land for farmers.
- Tax incentives for landowners who rent or sell to beginning farmers.

As the next generation of farmers in your region, you have the power to share your story and demand support from your elected officials. As an organized chapter of NYFC, you are the voice of young farmers in your region.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The National Young Farmers Coalition supports practices and policies that will sustain young, independent and prosperous farmers now and in the future. NYFC affiliate chapters stand by a shared set of guiding principles that inform our work.

As a community of farmers and consumers, we support:

- Independent family farms: For the future resiliency and viability of our food system, and for healthy rural communities, it is critical that we continue fostering an independent network of family farms throughout the nation.
- Sustainable farming practices: Farmers are some of the best land stewards there are. We encourage farming practices that sustain healthy soil, water and air, and that will protect our climate for the next generation.
- Affordable land for farmers: Farmers must have access to high-quality, affordable farmland. While long-term leases remain critical, land ownership allows farmers to make capital improvements and build equity for long-term financial security, as well as offering personal satisfaction.
- Fair labor practices: All farmers should receive a fair wage and proper care when sick or injured. Farming is deeply satisfying and necessary work, and the health and livelihoods of farm workers should not be put in jeopardy.
- Farmer-to-farmer training: Much farming knowledge is passed down or learned through experience. We support an apprenticeship model and believe farmer-to-farmer learning opportunities should be available to young farmers.
- Farmers of every gender, race and sexual orientation: Inclusiveness and diversity among farmers is critical to maintaining a vibrant agricultural sector.
- Cooperation and friendship between all farmers: We support collaboration between all producers regardless of production philosophy or other issues. Farmers of all types and ages are essential to passing down knowledge to the next generation of growers.

GETTING STARTED

There are many ways to go about organizing local farmers to form an NYFC chapter. The following provides details on a few successful strategies that helped other NYFC chapters get started.

The National Young Farmers Coalition is for **young farmers, by young farmers**. Tap into real, on-the-ground young farmer needs—that is the crux of our work.

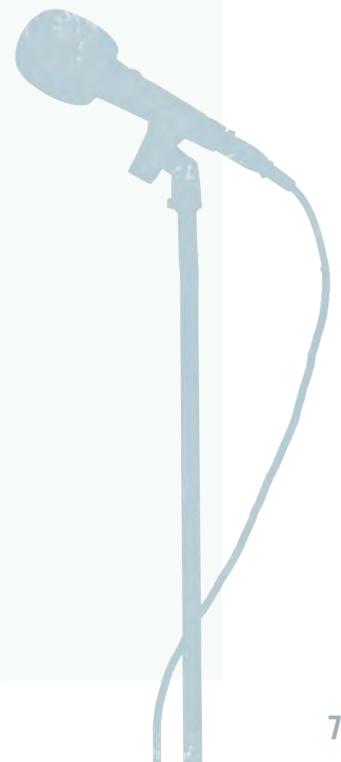
GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

Often chapters form out of informal conversations in which farmers recognize a common challenge or need. Your first step as an organizer will be to reach out to farmers in your region: proposing your idea, brainstorming first steps, and asking them to join your team. Coalition building among local farmer leaders or potential leaders will help everyone involved gain access to more connections, expertise and resources! NYFC can help you find co-organizers through targeted e-mails to our network in your region.

Working in a team will also give you more perspective on local needs, time constraints, etc. For example, we've found planning events in the peak farming season may result in low turnout unless your event fulfills a specific in-season need or your group is well established.

Who should be in your chapter? Your chapter should be primarily composed of farmers in their first 10 years of growing or starting a new farm and can include apprentices and seasoned farmers. Apprentices may come and go from season to season, so try to focus on building a team of farmers likely to stay a while. Farm service providers can be invited to meetings, but chapter leadership should stay in the hands of young farmers.

It's helpful to know what farmer networks are already in existence in order to determine what niche your chapter will fill. Make sure you reach out to existing farmer networks (organic farming associations, for example) to introduce your new chapter. They'll likely be helpful in promoting your first events!



HOST YOUR FIRST MEETING

Preparation. Once you have a team of organizers, it's time to build an agenda for an in-person meeting. What topics do you want to tackle?

Set a time and place. Consider the environment—does it facilitate good conversation without too much noise? Spread the word to those who have already expressed interest and to others who may not know about it yet. You may want to create a farmer survey to distribute at the meeting, too. Make sure your first meeting does not take place during the busiest months of the season.

Materials. Ideas of materials you may need for your meeting:

- Laptop & charger—to record minutes in Google docs or other platform
- Large paper for writing out ideas everyone can see
- Tape (for hanging paper)
- Name tags
- Permanent markers/extra pens
- Projector & cords
- Chapter listserv and NYFC member sign-up sheets
- Participant survey
- Food & water



HOST YOUR FIRST MEETING CONT...

Facilitation. Success is attributed to many things—and well-facilitated meetings are a big part of it. A good facilitator:

- Communicates clearly
- Is organized and prompt
- Creates a safe space for participants to share ideas
- Remains attentive to the quality of the conversation and works to keep it positive and on-track
- Ensures everyone's voice is heard
- Is an active listener
- Respects other peoples' time and the time allotted for the meeting
- Helps move the conversation forward
- Mediates among participants who have differing ideas, keeping the conversation constructive
- Synthesizes group discussion
- Clearly communicates logistics
- Remains open to constructive feedback from the group

For more information on facilitating, see <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/RoleofAFacilitator.htm>

Meeting. Start by introducing yourselves—even if most of you know each other already, there may be a few new faces in the room. Aim to start the meeting on time. Ask someone to take minutes. Consider a chapter name. Make sure everyone's voice is heard and that the conversation moves forward. Don't forget to pass out a sign-in sheet to collect emails for a listserv and survey if you've got one.

Formulate a vision, goals & objectives. NYFC chapters are united by a common mission: Through skill-sharing, advocacy, community-building and collaborative activities, NYFC chapters empower young farmers to find success.



HOST YOUR FIRST MEETING CONT...

It is also important that each chapter determine its own vision within that mission. A vision statement helps align group activities and provides direction as you move forward. Following is a checklist to help you establish your vision. As a group:

- What needs drew you together to form an NYFC chapter?
- What do you hope to accomplish as a group?
- Where do you see your chapter in one year? Five years?
- How do you see your chapter helping to grow a healthier food system?

Lay out specific goals in writing. Consider goals for the short-term, such as the next growing season, and the long-term, such as a few years down the road. Brainstorm your objectives for reaching those goals: what steps do you need to take to achieve them?

Note: Formulating a vision and creating goals and objectives are critical steps to forming a well-functioning chapter, but don't get dragged down by the details.

The important thing is to find ways to help young farmers be successful, period.

Divvy out tasks. Ask volunteers to take charge of particular tasks, focusing on what they have time to accomplish. The listserv and the next meeting are both good places to share progress.

Wrap-up. By the end of the meeting you should have:

- A chapter name
- Vision statement in formation
- Goals & plans to move toward them
- A listserv for participants to stay in touch
- A meeting time & place for the next meeting. Remember, meetings can happen at a member's farm, brewery or before a potluck event. Be creative!
- Specific tasks delegated to volunteers



BUILD A STRUCTURE

An organizational structure may arise naturally from your group, or may take some thought. Either way, deciding how you want information to flow, tasks to be delegated and work to be completed will increase the groove and efficiency of your chapter.

Exactly how organized you want to be is up to you, but as an NYFC chapter we ask that you maintain a core leadership of at least three people who are members of NYFC (P. 15). Following are some ideas for organization:

- **Steering Committee:** Typically the group of people who formed the chapter and who guide it through the first months; the steering committee may dissolve after a more appropriate organizational structure has been set in place.
- **Leadership Committee & Task Forces:** Your chapter may wish to form a leadership committee that oversees chapter actions. The committee, with input from chapter members, may wish to establish sub-committees or task forces to take on specific actions. Be sure to keep all members involved and engaged.
- **Nonhierarchical Structure:** In this structure, there is no central leadership team—members share organizing tasks and different people lead meetings and events. This structure often arises naturally, but if it does not it may be best to build in more structure.

Chapters are inclusive communities where anyone interested in supporting young and beginning farmers can help make a difference. We encourage you and your chapter to foster this ethos of inclusivity, as well.





MAKE IT OFFICIAL!

Affiliation is the process of legally becoming part of the NYFC family. By signing our “Memorandum of Understanding” document, or MOU, your group will be an official part of our national coalition!

BENEFITS OF AFFILIATION

Formalizing your affiliation with NYFC will provide your local chapter with many perks.

For affiliate chapters, NYFC will:

- Coordinate national campaigns/projects
- Invite your chapter to be represented on our Local Leadership Committee which helps develop our national policy platform and facilitates best practice sharing among chapters (See below for details)
- Provide webspace or link to chapter’s website on youngfarmers.org
- Promote your chapter’s activities via our social media and newsletter
- Use targeted emails to find organizers and encourage event turnout
- Provide resources for organizing including tabling materials, membership benefits, and event support
- Provide event insurance for events co-sponsored by NYFC

BENEFITS OF AFFILIATION

What we ask of you:

- Select three lead organizers: Each chapter must have a minimum of three lead organizers; each organizer must be a member of NYFC
- Be farmer-driven: Chapter must be farmer-driven, agree with NYFC's guiding principles and promote national policy platform (as applicable to chapter region)
- Hold mutual objectives: Host programs that further our mutual objectives and send NYFC updates and photographs from the events. This helps us promote your work as well as that of NYFC as a whole
- Select a Local Leadership Committee Representative: Pick one representative from your group to participate in the NYFC Local Leadership Committee
- Select a NYFC Liaison: Pick one representative from your group to act as main liaison with NYFC (can be same as above)
- Share information: We encourage you to share your members' contact information with us so we can keep everyone in your chapter up to date on national news and activities



Remember, signing an MOU is a statement of solidarity: it's a formal way of saying your chapter's work is aligned with that of NYFC but it is not legally binding in any other way.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (LLC)

The LLC is comprised of one representative from each NYFC chapter, the NYFC Director, Staff and Advisory Council president. The LLC meets quarterly via conference call. The purpose of this group is for all parties to provide recommendations for our national policy platform, national actions and to share tips for successful organizing. This is an opportunity for affiliates to help set the direction of the organization and to have your voice as a regional chapter heard on the national level.

MEMBERSHIP & DUES

When to Affiliate? Once you've gathered your group together, it's time to talk affiliation! Bring it up at a full group meeting, organizers' meeting or event— it's up to you. Explain NYFC and our mission and what it means to be an affiliate. The official MOU is at the end of this handbook (see appendix.)

If everyone's on board, all you need is for three lead organizers to sign the MOU document and become NYFC members (youngfarmers.org/join). Scan or mail us the MOU at PO Box 292 Tivoli, NY 12534 and you're official! If you have any questions, send us an email at organizing@youngfarmers.org. We're here to help you through the process.

NYFC is a member-driven coalition, and membership dues are the reason we can do the work we do. All funds collected from NYFC members are used for programming, operations, promotion and affiliate chapter support. Encouraging your chapter members to become members of NYFC is a crucial step towards building a strong young farmer movement. However, you are not required to pay group or individual dues aside from the three lead organizers. Your chapter can require separate dues apart from NYFC and you are free to engage in fundraising independent from NYFC.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Tapping into existing farm networks, designing materials and using social media will help make your group visible and active in your community.

BUILD STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Building strategic partnerships can help you realize your chapter's goals and expand your reach. And it's a two way street: collaborating with your chapter provides partner organizations with further outreach opportunities.

The partnerships you develop may be ad hoc for a particular event or formalized over the long-term. Just a few of the many organizations with which you may want to collaborate are: land trusts, Slow Food, restaurants, farmers markets, soil conservation districts, breweries, organic farming associations and so on. Partners can offer funding for events, promote your group to their established networks, or offer services/supplies/event space.

DESIGN A LOGO

This step is optional but fun. Use your logo for publicity, t-shirts, and general name-recognition. This will be particularly helpful if you decide to take on fundraising. Ask around, someone in your chapter is bound to know a graphic designer willing to do pro bono design for a good cause!



TAP NETWORKS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Website. NYFC offers a platform on its website for chapter sites to use. NYFC will also link to external chapter websites. If you choose to build your own site, Wordpress.com is a very user-friendly option, and URLs can be purchased for a starting price of \$18/year (optional). Either way, we recommend establishing a website as they offer great publicity and are crucial for increasing membership. A Facebook page or group can also function as a website!

While chapter autonomy is a priority, some consistency among our chapters will be important to build strength and recognition of our national coalition. A simple way to do this is through website consistency. The following list of items should be followed when setting up a website:

1. Include the NYFC logo on your website. You can also use NYFC logo as your favicon (icon box next to URL in navigation box.)
2. Include a section on website which states: “We (insert chapter name) are an affiliate chapter of the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC). NYFC is a national network of young and sustainable farmers organizing for our collective success: we’re defining the issues that beginning farmers face, fighting for the policy change that we need, and bringing farmers together in person and online to learn, share and build a stronger community. Join the movement at www.youngfarmers.org.”
3. Include, at minimum, the following pages:
 - “About” with Mission, Vision, & Who We Are
 - “Events” kept up-to-date
 - “Contact us” with chapter leader’s contacts
 - Links to social media, or at least to NYFC social media pages if your chapter chooses to not use them.

Social media. What’s better than free, accessible, broad-reaching publicity? Some ways to publicize your chapter, meetings and events are:

- Affiliate with NYFC—among many other great things, this gets you free webspace via our website
- Start a Facebook page
- Post regularly to Facebook and advertise all events there; we also encourage you to link to posts & relevant events from NYFC’s Facebook and website
- Ask members, friends, and partner organizations to share with their networks
- Create a blog
- Tweet

Find someone committed to maintaining these networks. Keeping your blog or website up-to-date is important for building chapter support, credibility and outreach.

Offline networks. Despite what we’re told, most of our lives still occur in the flesh, on the ground, digging in the dirt or at our local café. Chat up your friends, neighbors, market managers, extension agents, bartenders—anyone you think should know about what you’re doing.

TAP NETWORKS & SOCIAL MEDIA (CONT...)

Additional publicity tactics. If you want to amp up your outreach, consider the following:

- Place announcement in local free paper
- Hang flyers around town
- Make t-shirts, stickers, buttons, tote bags to sell
- Promote your event at the farmers market
- Send out postcards to all farms in your region
- Get on the radio
- Participate or host an event at a local college or university
- Collaborate with a local Extension office
- Pitch a story to your regional *Edible Communities* publication
- Invite media to your events: photos of good-looking farmers drinking local brews by a bonfire helps rally community members around local foods!



GROWING YOUR CHAPTER

You may decide you want to grow your chapter, which means finding cash and crew to expand. Funding aids growth, particularly if you want to pay a chapter coordinator for his or her time, host more involved events, or draw in speakers. Following are some tips on fundraising and membership recruitment.

As an NYFC affiliate chapter, you are free to do your own fundraising. There are multiple ways to go about raising money, including grants, sponsorships, donations, and memberships dues.

Grants. Grant opportunities are abundant. Applying for a grant takes time, but if the application is successful, that time will be paid for. Grants are available from many sources, such as the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Farm Aid, and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE).

Sponsorship. Consider local and regional companies from which you could request sponsorship for your chapter or a particular event. These could be agricultural supply stores, breweries, the local Farm Credit agency, or organic seed companies. Agricultural companies are often happy to sponsor an event in exchange for their logo in the event flyer and/or for a few minutes at the mic. We can walk you through the sponsorship process and offer support in initial outreach.

Donations. Private individuals are often looking for ways to support their local food system and giving money to an organized group of young farmers making a difference is a great way to do that. You may choose to solicit donations from community members to help fund your chapter.

If you would like to take donations, but aren't ready or interested in becoming a 501(c)(3), consider Fiscal Sponsorship. Any 501(c)(3), such as a land trust, can serve as your Fiscal Sponsor. Your Fiscal Sponsor will take a cut of your donations in exchange for banking and handling your chapter's paperwork.

Membership dues. Another way to generate revenue is to request annual membership dues from chapter members. Set a fair and reasonable price that members are willing to pay. Use these funds to host events, bring in speakers, or cover classes or field visits.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Finding more farmers. Want to open your chapter to broader membership? Put the word out that your chapter is seeking members who want to help grow the young farmer movement. Advertise this opportunity through your groups' networks, local papers, posters, or young farmer mixers. Have a sign-up sheet at all events and be sure to add these names to your listserv.

Record-keeping. Just as you keep good records on your farm, be sure to practice sound book-keeping for your chapter. Create a member document that marks the dues paid (if applicable), if payment has been received, and date of membership, as well as any other information you deem fit. You'll need a fiscal sponsor in order to keep a chapter bank account. (See P. 19) Make sure to take minutes at meetings and let chapter members know where to find them. Develop a system for managing intake of dues. Decide who in your chapter will manage the funds.

Promoting NYFC membership. We encourage you to promote NYFC membership to your chapter members. NYFC members receive an expanding list of benefits, including discounts on seeds, farming publications, and work wear. Members become part of a nation-wide network of young farmers and ranchers who share resources and take action to change national farm policy. Each member adds to the power of our coalition—the more we are, the stronger our voice will be.” For more information on the benefits of NYFC membership, see “www.youngfarmers.org/become-a-member-of-nyfc/



NYFC'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CASE STUDIES

The following are case studies from a few NYFC chapters around the country. Our coalition of organized, hardy, and motivated young farmers is growing everyday!

MICHIGAN YOUNG FARMERS' COALITION

Stronger together. The Michigan Young Farmers' Coalition started when young farmers in the state realized they were facing similar challenges and organizing could help them overcome these challenges. The founders started a listserv, spread the word about the chapter, and started crop-mobs at one another's farms.

Farmer Retreat. The MYFC has hosted a number of annual farmer retreats in which young farmers, local food system supporters, and representatives from other collaborative organizations gather for a weekend of speakers, workshops, and break-out groups. Beyond networking and problem solving, many tangible outcomes have arisen from the farmer retreat, including an innovative farmer training program.

Building Capacity. MYFC teamed up with a local women's shelter to start a farmer training program at the shelter's gardens. The shelter agreed to hire two seasoned farmers to train a beginning farmer. After the season, the apprentice becomes resident farmer and trains women at the shelter to garden. The food produced is then used in the shelter kitchen, where staff is learning to integrate local foods into meal plans. MYFC is hoping to replicate this capacity-building program in other parts of the state.

Moving forward. Due to the success of the women's shelter apprenticeship program, MYFC is brainstorming ways to generate funds to hire a full-time program coordinator to help move these projects to the next level.

HUDSON VALLEY YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

Idea to reality. The Hudson Valley Young Farmers Coalition (HVFYC) was founded in New York when five young farmers gathered to discuss ways of overcoming steep land costs. Their first thought was to form a local chapter. For this gathering, the farmers hired a facilitator to help guide them through the final stage of forming and traded vegetables for her time.

Farmers coming together. Their strategy was this: bring together other local farm leaders and have them invite farmers from their communities to join the nascent chapter. Since that first gathering the chapter has grown from five to dozens of members, representing farms stretching across the entire region.

First meeting. Excitement filled the air at HVFYC's first meeting. The farmers asked: What do we need and how can this chapter help? Ideas were tossed around and working groups created. While many more ideas were generated than actually took hold—a good sign of excitement!—the most important element of that first meeting was for everyone to realize they're not alone, and the great potential of collaboration.

Second meeting: nitty gritty. The excitement of the first meeting carried folks through the second with a new resolve to pin down crucial details, organize logistics, and get planning. This is when the chapter was named and a cooperative buying program established.



HUDSON VALLEY YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

Engaging political leaders. In August 2012, the HVYFC organized a political forum at which five local and state representatives joined nearly 100 farmers to discuss the needs of young and beginning farmers. Not only did the forum create chapter credibility and unity among diverse local farmer groups, such as the Farm Bureau, a forum sponsor, but also helped motivate Republican representative Chris Gibson to champion beginning farmer causes.

Where they are today. Today the HVYFC is proud of its strong social organizing network. In March 2013, HVYFC members hosted a potluck at a members' farm in New Paltz, NY and invited a speaker from a non-profit loan provider and a guest from the local Extension. Time was made for announcements, but the majority of the night was spent networking, enjoying food and music, and working through questions in an informal, fun atmosphere.

What worked best? HVYFC found it functions best with a democratic organizational structure, where members are free to host an event when the whim strikes. Some growers are finding that regular meetings are more feasible on a hyper-local scale, with other young farmers within decent driving time; the less-frequent, larger-scale meetings or mixers work well on a regional scale.



SPECIAL EVENT PLANNING

Farmers like work, but we also like a good party now and again. Much of what is needed to host a party can be found in the “Getting Started” section (P. 8), such as organizing volunteers and materials, gaining publicity and planning logistics. However, found here are a few more items to consider when planning a larger event, in addition to a party planning checklist.

This section was created in collaboration with NYFC affiliate chapter, the Washington Young Farmers’ Coalition. WAYFC hosts an annual mixer that draws up to 200 guests for a night of pig roasts, cider pressing, food and dance. Whether you’re hosting a party for 20 or 250, good planning will go a long way!



PRE-EVENT PLANNING

Organize & delegate. Gather a volunteer planning team. Assign yourselves roles: for instance, one person reserves the space and band; another wrangles food and beer donations; a third coordinates transportation logistics and publicity. You may have musicians, graphic designers, web site creators, accountants, or brewery reps already in your midst. Find these skills and put them to good use.

Share information. Create a shared folder with event and contact information and delegated tasks. WAYFC finds it useful to use a conference call line when their organizers are spread out across the state. Check out www.freeconferencecall.com.

Choose a date, time and venue. Pick a date when farmers will have time to make it—either before or after the growing season is usually the best. Reserve a location early. Does the venue have parking? Bathrooms? An indoor shelter? Are you allowed to serve alcohol? Grange halls often make great venues. For more things to keep in mind, see the Party Checklist on (P. 27).

Food & music. Do you want to host a potluck or provide food? BYOB or get beer donated? For music, a mix and speakers will do, but live music is so much fun. As with the venue, book early. One year WAYFC paid the band with a CSA share; the band loved it.

Create a survey. As with a chapter meeting, a farmer mixer is a great opportunity to distribute a survey. Either digitally attach one with your invite or print the survey for guests to fill out on party night.

Volunteer crews. Prior to the event, designate crews to help with event set-up, greeting and take-down. If your mixer is drawing in volunteers from across the state, consider finding places for them to stay, particularly if your venue doesn't have camping.

Rideshare. Ask one person—or if you're serving a whole state, perhaps you'll have regional coordinators—to organize a rideshare. This can be done via Facebook, a listserv or through NYFC's online forum (youngfarmers.org/forum)

COVERING COSTS, BUILDING SUPPORT

Donations & sponsorship. If you don't want to cover all your costs, you may seek external support. There are many ways to go about this, starting simply with a donation jar at the door. Want to do more? Solicit specific sponsors for the event (see "Growing your Chapter" section on P. 19). You can establish tiers of sponsorship where different levels might get a sponsor's name on your poster or a table at the event.

In-kind donations. WAYFC has received donations of local vegetables, artisan bread and small batch soda to round out potlucks. Co-ops have donated gift certificates, breweries beer, and national organic food companies have provided "one free item" coupons.

Other donations WAYFC has received include: firewood for spit roasting, market tents, and space in a walk-in cooler to store donations. Once a grange member and former Secretary of State baked salmon and corn on the cob for all 250 WAYFC mixer attendees, then met and served each young farmer at the end of the buffet. You never know who your supporters are and how they want to help: cast a wide net!

Tracking donations. Put one person in charge of donations and sponsorship. Develop a form letter for solicitations, and share with the planning team. Track all sponsorships and donations on a spreadsheet as they come in. Cash checks as you receive them.

INVITE & ADVERTISE

Create an Invite. A well-designed poster is a great promotional tool for your event. Include important details and distribute through your networks. Ask NYFC to send invite to our supporter network in your region. Is there anyone in particular you want to attend? Send them an invite directly.

Set up for RSVPs. This can be done via a Google survey, a separate email account or website. WAYFC asked for RSVPs the first year, and good thing: they never expected over 200 attendees from all across the state!

Event outreach. Connect with your community. In the past, WAYFC printed hundreds of postcards and addressed them to all the farms in Washington State with internships listed on the organic farming website ATTRA. For more on how to get the word out, see the guidelines from the "Outreach" section of this handbook (P. 16).

NIGHT OF THE EVENT

Wrangle team & supplies. Prior to the event, have your team well organized and all the supplies you need assembled. Make sure designated volunteers have picked up any donations. Are volunteers set-up to help direct traffic or resupply the buffet table? Go over the “Party Checklist” on P. 27.

Get the party started! Station a greeter at the door to welcome guests, provide name tags, and collect e-mail information for your and NYFC’s listservs. If you have one, encourage guests to take your survey.

Promote your chapter. Be sure to have time at the mic to introduce yourselves and your chapter. Take advantage of the audience you’ve gathered! Tell them what you’re working on, how they can help and remember to thank your sponsors. Allow your sponsors time to speak, as well.

Enjoy the party. Revel in the evening you’ve put lots of time and energy into helping create. Take pictures, meet new people, dance and eat well. You did it!

KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM

Follow-up. Following the event, send thank-you notes to all sponsors, donors & tabling organizations, and to your volunteer crew for the time and effort they put in. Did you invite media to your event? Follow up with reporters to see about placing articles in the local paper and with the offices of your representatives to thank them for attending. That is a great step to building relationships with decision-makers.

Stay in contact. As soon as you can, add new supporters to your listserv and send any new supporter information to NYFC. Send an e-mail to all the new listserv members to thank them for coming and keep them updated on how to be involved. Create a colorful summary of your event to submit with photos to the NYFC blog.

Plan your next move. Whether it is a planning meeting, workshop, crop-mob, or something we haven’t even thought up yet, use the mixer momentum to your advantage. You now have a crew of excited people with vast networks: how can we all keep growing the movement?

PARTY CHECKLIST

Does the facility have:

- Bathrooms/port-a-potty
- Parking
- Camping
- Adequate shelter in case of weather
- Handicapped accessibility
- Space for band, potluck & seating
- Area for sponsors table(s)
- Electricity
- Sound system
- Running water
- Garbage & recycling
- Compost
- Available kitchen
- Alcohol policy
- Quiet hour
- Kid/dog friendly
- Event insurance



Things you may need to bring:

- Nametags
- Pens
- Clip board
- NYFC member sign-up
- Chapter member sign-up
- Other NYFC reading materials & banner (optional)
- Large paper for idea sharing
- Twine/clothes pins to hang things
- Duct tape (always handy)
- Toilet paper
- Hand towels and/or paper towels
- Tables
- Chairs
- Tablecloths
- Plates/bowls (preferably reusable)
- Utensils (eating and serving)
- Water
- Garbage can & bags
- Recycling
- Compost
- Ambiance i.e. twinkly lights, decorations
- Signs on the road directing toward event
- Market tents
- Volunteers coordinated for set up/clean up/greeters

ENVISIONING A FUTURE WITH FARMERS

Sometimes amidst the daily grind, when there's a late frost or broken fence or a challenging meeting, it can be easy to lose sight of the big picture. Why are we all doing this work in the first place? What inspires us to pour our lives and work into farming?

We all have our personal reasons for farming. As part of the National Young Farmers Coalition, you and your chapter are opening doors for present and future farmers to find success in their businesses. Your chapter provides a critical voice in your community and plays a key part in building a unified movement of young farmers. Together we are working to build a resilient, vibrant and just food system for the future.

There is so much we can do to make farming once again a viable way of life for those with the passion and dedication to pursue it. Working together as a national network of local chapters provides the key to our success!



RESOURCES

National Young Farmers Coalition: www.youngfarmers.org

NYFC Chapter Directory: www.youngfarmers.org/chapter-directory/

Organizing resources:

Oregon State University, "Creating Farmer Networks: A toolkit for promoting vibrant farm communities." <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/36639/pnw638.pdf>

Facilitation <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/RoleofAFacilitator.htm>

Grants:

USDA NIFA grants <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/business.html>

USDA SARE grants <http://www.sare.org/Grants>
www.youngfarmers.org/credit-and-capital/

Fiscal Sponsorship

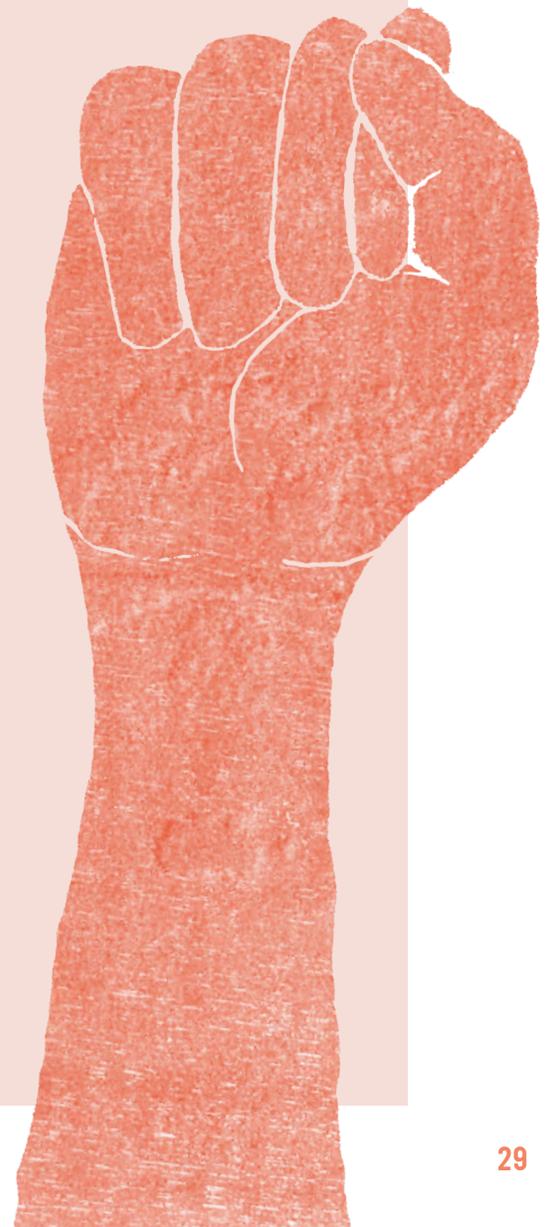
<http://grantspace.org/Tools/Knowledge-Base/Individual-Grantseekers/Fiscal-Sponsorship/fiscal-sponsorship>

www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/resources-topic/fundraising/fiscal-sponsors

Farm listings

ATTRA <https://attra.ncat.org>

Local Harvest www.localharvest.org





NYFC CHAPTER AGREEMENT

NYFC Chapter Agreement with _____

This Chapter Agreement (the “Agreement”) is made this ____ day of _____, 20____, by and between the National Young Farmers Coalition (“NYFC”), a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the state of New York, and _____ (“the Chapter”).

In consideration of the following premises and goals and the promises set forth in this Agreement, the parties agree as follows:

I. Shared Premises and Goals

WHEREAS, America is experiencing a surge of young farmers. These entrepreneurs are creative, resourceful and aim to build farm businesses that protect natural resources and produce healthy food. Despite strong market demand, young farmers face significant challenges as their ambitious businesses meet structural obstacles;

WHEREAS, these obstacles are inspiring a young farmers movement. Groups of new farmers are coming together in diverse ways to cooperate, fight for more supportive policies, and build community;

WHEREAS, there is a need for coordination of these efforts and a nationwide network with the capacity to advocate for the interests of young farmers in federal policy, facilitate the exchange of ideas, and engage in projects with national relevance;

WHEREAS, the purpose of this Agreement is to formalize a working relationship between NYFC and local chapters to better support young and beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States;

WHEREAS, young farmers are best suited to act as advocates on their own behalf and efforts to coordinate national young farmer projects and promote federal policy initiatives for young farmers should be farmer-driven.

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II. Grant of Charter to Chapter.

- A. Affiliation. NYFC hereby grants to the Chapter the non-exclusive right to be known as a chapter of NYFC subject to the terms and condition of this Agreement.
- B. Term and Termination. The Term of this Agreement shall commence on the effective date set forth above and shall continue until revoked or terminated.
- C. Territory. Chapter shall represent NYFC in _____ (region, state, city, the “Territory”), pursuant to and in accordance with NYFC’s mission and purpose. Chapter acknowledges that this designation is non-exclusive in the Territory and that NYFC may, in its discretion, designate other chapters in the Territory or may sponsor or conduct programs, accept members, and perform other activities within the Territory.

III. Obligations of NYFC:

- A. **Develop and maintain priorities and programs** of the national organization and its chapters, with input from those chapters. Such priorities and programs will be recorded and made part of the NYFC Strategic Plan, which will be made available to the National Leadership Committee (described in Section IV of this Agreement).
- B. **Develop a comprehensive policy platform**, which shall promote young and beginning farmers and ranchers; produce reports and press releases on young farmer issues, in partnership with partner organizations and chapters; and develop other tools that help farmers build stronger businesses
- C. **Coordinate national and state campaigns and projects** with chapter groups and promote chapter-led projects through the National Leadership Committee and other forums.
- D. **Develop and maintain YoungFarmers.org** in order to (1) link to Chapter’s website and maintain chapter directory; (2) promote Chapter’s website, projects, and events; (3) provide a central location for chapter resources, including, but not limited to, organizing and communication materials, training materials, Model Chapter Bylaws and related governance policies, contact information, and a current database of NYFC members and supporters.
- E. **Meet with Chapter leaders annually online** or in person to discuss strategic chapter growth and relationship of chapter to national coalition.
- F. **Recognize all chapters in a state** and promote chapter development in farmer-defined growing regions.
- G. **Provide administrative support and operation guidance**, particularly with regard to membership, intellectual property, communications, training, 501(c)(3) compliance, and

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other matters requiring coordination with the national program. NYFC may, to the extent reasonable and practicable, obtain and maintain General Liability Insurance for the Chapter.

III. Obligations of Chapter

A. Governance. The Chapter shall be farmer-driven and have a minimum of three (3) lead organizers, all of whom must be current members of NYFC, in good standing, and two-thirds of whom must be actively farming.

B. Annual Reporting and Updates Chapter agrees to file an annual report with NYFC by November 1. The annual report will include the following information: (1) contact information and farming status of each lead organizer for the following year; (2) Chapter program and event updates (including photos); and (3) all other information as NYFC may reasonably require. Chapter is encouraged to provide notice of upcoming events monthly for the NYFC newsletter and additional updates as appropriate to keep NYFC informed of its activities to further promote and coordinate such activities.

C. Website/Social Media. Chapter must create a webpage and supply NYFC with an active URL and/or Facebook page that can be linked to from YoungFarmers.org. The webpage/social media site shall (1) provide a working link to YoungFarmers.org and (2) state (Chapter name) is a chapter of the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC.)” Chapter may optionally add, “NYFC is a national network of farmers, ranchers, and consumers who support practices and policies that will sustain young, independent, and prosperous farmers now and in the future. Join the movement at youngfarmers.org.”

D. Legal Compliance. Chapter agrees to (1) comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations; (2) maintain at all times all permits, licenses, and other government approvals that may be required in the Territory in connection with the Chapter’s performance under this agreement. Chapter further warrants that it shall make all required filings, such as annual corporate reports and tax filings, which may affect its corporate or tax status. Chapter must forward any adverse notices received from any governmental agency, including but not limited to, the Internal Revenue Service and any state’s Secretary of State.

E. Tax Exempt Activity Limitations. The Chapter shall not endorse any candidates for political office.

F. Activities and Purposes.

1. Endeavor to sponsor and conduct programs and activities that further the Parties’ shared purpose and objectives and ensure all activities adhere to the NYFC Guiding Principles and stated 501(c)(3) purpose. NYFC may send appointed representatives to observe such programs and activities and provide, to the extent possible, materials in support of such programs and activities.

NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

2. Promote the NYFC's policy platform as applicable to the Chapter's territory through coordinated actions, communications, and outreach. It is hereby recognized that the extent of such promotion will be dependent on Chapter resources and capacity.
3. Designate a representative and alternate to participate in the NYFC National Leadership Committee. Chapter shall provide written notification of the Representative's contact information within 30 days of execution of this Agreement and annually on or before November 1. (See section IV).
4. Share contact information of its current members/ participants with NYFC twice per year on or before the National Leadership Committee meeting and help recruit new members and chapter organizers. Chapter shall follow NYFC guidelines regarding membership information, and may not sell, rent, or provide membership information to any third party, without NYFC's prior written consent.
5. Meet with NYFC staff annually to discuss strategic chapter growth and relationship of chapter to national coalition. Lead organizers will also be required to attend periodic trainings on pertinent legal and policy issues relating to chapter governance and operation.
6. Organize locally and support and collaborate with other chapters in Chapter's region.
7. Refrain from becoming a program or project of any organization; Chapter must retain its self-governance but is allowed to affiliate or obtain fiscal sponsorship from any other organization.

IV. NYFC National Leadership Committee

- A. The National Leadership Committee (NLC) shall consist of one representative from each chapter, the NYFC National Field Director and NYFC Board representative.
- B. NYFC shall be provided the name and contact information of Chapter's Representative in accordance with the procedures set forth in III.F.
- C. The Committee will meet at least twice yearly via conference call or in-person meeting organized by NYFC staff. NYFC shall provide reasonable notice of dates and times of such meetings to minimize conflicts and promote broad participation.
- D. NLC members are expected to act in an advisory capacity, providing input and recommendations for the development of the national policy platform, coordinating local efforts in regional and national campaigns, and sharing best practices for organizing.

V. NYFC Membership and Dues

- A. NYFC is partially financed through membership dues. Funds collected will be used for

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program and operational expenses, and promotion and coordination of Chapter programs. Nothing in this provision or in any other provision of this Agreement supersedes or places additional limitations on the rights and duties of NYFC as set forth in the NYFC Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

- B. Chapters may collect dues separate from those required by NYFC. Chapters are encouraged to seek alternative funding and may engage in fundraising activities independent of NYFC. Affiliation with NYFC does not give the Chapter 501(c)(3) status, so donations and gifts given directly to the Chapter should not be considered tax-deductible, unless otherwise advised in writing from NYFC.
- C. Nothing in this Agreement shall be interpreted as NYFC assuming the role of fiscal sponsor for Chapter. If fiscal sponsorship is entered between NYFC and Chapter, there will be a separate contract to create and govern that relationship.

VI. Intellectual Property and Confidential Information.

- A. Limited License. Chapter is hereby granted a limited, revocable, non-exclusive license to use (1) the name “National Young Farmers Coalition,” “NYFC,” logo of NYFC, and other NYFC trademarks or service marks, which NYFC now or future owns and extends to the Chapter under this Agreement (the “NYFC Marks”) and (2) any copyrighted or proprietary information and materials provided by NYFC to Chapter. NYFC retains all interests in its legal name, logo, NYFC Marks, copyrighted material, and all related intellectual property. The Chapter shall not register any trademarks or service marks that contains any part of the NYFC marks or is substantially similar to any of the NYFC Marks.
- B. Use of Intellectual Property is limited to those activities authorized under this Agreement, subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement and any written guidelines contained in the NYFC Style and Communications Guide, the NYFC Guiding Principles, or other document subsequently provided to Chapter by NYFC.
- C. Intellectual Property may be sub-licensed to Chapter if and only if such use is made pursuant to the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable sub-license.
- D. Intellectual Property must be used by Chapter in a professional manner and solely for official Chapter-related purposes. Chapter shall not permit any third party to use the Intellectual Property or sell or trade Intellectual Property without NYFC's express prior written approval. The Intellectual Property may not be used for individual personal or professional gain or other private benefit.
- E. The Intellectual Property may not be used in any manner that, in the sole discretion of NYFC, is in relation to, support for, or endorsement of a political platform, statement, agenda, or candidate without the express prior written approval of NYFC.

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- F. The Intellectual Property may not be used in any manner that, in the sole discretion of NYFC, discredits NYFC or tarnishes its reputation and goodwill; is false or misleading; violates the rights of others; violates any law, regulation or other public policy; or mischaracterizes the relationship between NYFC and Chapter.
- G. Chapter shall only use the Intellectual Property in conjunction with Chapter's own name, acronym, or logo and only to identify the affiliation relationship between NYFC and Chapter.
- H. NYFC's logo may not be revised or altered in any way, and must be displayed in the same form as produced by NYFC. Intellectual Property may not be used in conjunction with any other trademark, service mark, or other mark without the express prior written approval of NYFC.
- I. NYFC reserves the right to prohibit the use of any Intellectual Property, as well as to impose other sanctions, if it determines, in its sole discretion, that Chapter's usage thereof is not in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable license.
- J. All rights of usage of the Intellectual Property by Chapter shall terminate immediately upon the revocation, surrender or other termination of this Agreement. Chapter's obligations to protect the Intellectual Property shall survive the revocation, surrender or other termination of this Agreement.

VII. Relationship of Parties.

- A. The relationship of NYFC and Chapter to each other is that of independent contractors. NYFC and Chapter are not and shall not be considered joint ventures, partners, legal representatives, or agents of each other. Unless expressly agreed to in writing by the parties, neither party is authorized to incur any liability, obligation or expense on behalf of the other, to use the other's monetary credit in conducting any activities under this Agreement, or to represent to any third party that Chapter is an agent of NYFC. Chapter shall include, in all of its offers and contracts, a statement to the effect that Chapter is a legal entity separate and distinct from NYFC and is not entitled to act on behalf of or to bind NYFC, contractually or otherwise.

VIII. Indemnification.

- A. Chapter shall hold harmless NYFC and its officers, directors, employees, members and agents, from and against any and all claims, actions, suits, demands, losses, damages, judgments, settlements, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses), and liabilities of every kind and character whatsoever (a "Claim"), which may arise out of the acts or omissions of Chapter, its officers, directors, members and agents, whether in connection with this Agreement or otherwise. The provisions of this Section

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shall survive any revocation, surrender or other termination of this Agreement.

IX. Review of Agreement

- A. The Parties shall meet within six months of execution of this Agreement in-person or via telephone or other electronic device for the purpose of reviewing the affiliation relationship and the terms of this Agreement in order to ensure the continuance of a positive and sustainable relationship.
- B. This Agreement does constitute the entire agreement between the parties; supersedes and replaces all prior agreements, oral and written, between the parties; and may be amended only by a written instrument clearly setting forth the amendment(s) and executed by both parties.
- C. This Agreement shall be binding on the parties, and on their successors and assigns, without regard to whether it is expressly acknowledged in any instrument or succession or assignment.

X. Termination

- A. Either party may terminate this Affiliation Agreement at any time by providing written notice of its intention to do so. Termination will be effective upon receipt of notice. Except as otherwise stated herein, upon termination of this agreement, neither party shall have further responsibility under this Agreement and the Chapter agrees that it shall: (1) become immediately and completely disaffiliated with NYFC; (2) no longer represent itself as being connected with NYFC; (3) cease all use of the NYFC Marks and copyrighted materials and (4) return all other applicable materials and membership information to NYFC.

XI. Notice

- A. All notices that either party may be required or may desire to serve upon the other in connection with this Agreement shall be in writing and may be served personally, by facsimile, by certified mail, or by electronic mail, with constructive receipt, with the exception of Notice of Termination as set forth in Section X.A. of this Agreement, deemed to have occurred on the date of the mailing, sending or faxing of such notice, to the following addresses:
- B. If to NYFC:
 - ← National Young Farmers Coalition
 - ← PO BOX 1074
 - ← Hudson, NY 12534
 - ← email: info@youngfarmers.org

NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

PO BOX 1074 HUDSON, NY 12534 | 518-643-3564 | YOUNGFARMERS.ORG

C. If to _____ (name of Chapter):
_____ (mailing address,
email)

Signature of Chapter Organizer

Name (printed)

Date

Signature of Chapter Organizer

Name (printed)

Date

Signature of Chapter Organizer

Name (printed)

Date

NYFC

Name (printed)

Date

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