

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

LEADING TOGETHER: FIVE YEARS OF THE

NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION



IN 2015 WE CELEBRATED FIVE YEARS OF TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE.



Above: NYFC chapter gatherings in New Mexico and New York. Cover: Derek Emadi, owner of Emadi Acres in Texas, was part of our 2015 young farmer blog series.

Dear Supporter,

NYFC was founded with little more than a big idea: together, young people can change American agriculture. From our start in a farmhouse with a handful of volunteers, we've built an authentic, professional, and powerful coalition. With 30 chapters and the support of more than 100,000 farmers and consumers, we are fighting for affordable land, supportive farm policies, and a chance for the nation's young farmers to succeed.

There are so many people and organizations to thank for NYFC's growth and accomplishments: trusted partners, dedicated foundations, inspired investors, aligned companies, motivated journalists, honest politicians, incredible staff, and thousands of American farmers— young and old.

NYFC is uniquely focused on the power of young people in agriculture. This annual report celebrates the young leaders who are the backbone of all of our accomplishments. They are speaking out, stepping up, and taking action.

As we celebrate these first years of success, we're also aware of the challenges before us. Two-thirds of our farmland will soon need a new farmer to manage it, and there are not enough young farmers in a position to take over. Economic barriers and environmental forces are hitting young farmers especially hard.

The good news is that you're with us. As our team of farmers and consumers grows, so will our power and effectiveness. Thank you for your role in supporting NYFC, and we hope you will stay with us as we create an exciting future for young farmers.

In Solidarity,
Lindsey Lusher Shute
Co-Founder and Executive Director

5 YEARS OF IMPACT

2,000+ MEMBERS

100,000+ GRASSROOTS
BASE

#MorePeopleMoreImpact

3 ISSUE REPORTS

2 GUIDEBOOKS

2 SETS OF CASE STUDIES

7 VIDEOS

#BuildingFarmBusinesses

#HighlightingInnovation

#ChangingPolicy

87 LAND TRUSTS TRAINED ON THE USE

OF WORKING FARM EASEMENTS

#AffordableFarmland

#StructuralChange

20,000+ MICROLOANS HELPED LAUNCH

NEW FARM BUSINESSES IN ALL 50 STATES

#OurFirstCampaign #Winning #USDA

7,179 ATTENDEES AT NYFC TRAININGS

#EducatingYoungFarmers

#UnitingLeaders

1,136 FARMERS & RANCHERS ENGAGED IN

WESTERN WATER EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

#ConservationGeneration

#WaterIsLife

\$3.7 MILLION RAISED

#BigThanks

#MoreDollarsMoreImpact



THERE ARE NOW
30 OFFICIAL
NYFC CHAPTERS
IN 26 STATES

FIRST NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONVERGENCE



In November we hosted our first National Leadership Convergence, an event five years in the making. The Convergence brought together 29 chapter leaders from 25 states for three days of leadership and advocacy training, camaraderie, and momentum-building.

NYFC mobilizes young farmers to affect national policy change, but we realize that many barriers to farming must be tackled at home. That 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.

NYFC acts as a national hub for its chapters, giving members a voice in Washington and providing support and promotion of local efforts. Our first Convergence was a powerful testament to the strength and promise of our growing leadership network.

“We are a small, new organization made up of growers—we don’t have capacity and knowledge about policy, fundraising, or building a media presence. But NYFC has collectively pooled that knowledge. It is really important for us to have NYFC as an ally on the national level.”



— **Jocine Velasco** attended the Convergence on behalf of the chapter she helped found, the Greater New Orleans Growers’ Alliance

UNITING LEADERS

From starting a local chapter to serving on a national advisory board, young farmers across the country are representing themselves in powerful ways. Our members are the heart of our coalition, and supporting their on-the-ground leadership and advocacy is both our purpose and our driving force. Here are a few of their accomplishments in 2015:

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- 1** Chapter leader testified before Congress about the impact her student loan debt has on her ability to farm.
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- 1** Member of our network was appointed to the National Organic Standards Board.
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- 7** Farmers held 19 meetings with Congress and USDA during our October fly-in.
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- 31** Young farmers talked policy during Congressional in-district meetings.
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- 96** Young farmers served as lead organizers for 30 NYFC chapters.
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- 2K+** Farmers wrote letters to their members of Congress demanding student loan forgiveness for farmers.
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STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS



Just six months after launching our 'Farming is Public Service' campaign to address the barrier of student debt, a bipartisan bill was introduced into Congress that would add farming to the list of professions covered by the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. The Young Farmer Success Act has 13 sponsors in the House and the support of more than 100 organizations.

The bill would alleviate a major barrier and make farming a viable career choice for thousands of young Americans. A 2014 NYFC survey found that 30% of respondents were interested in farming but haven't pursued a career in agriculture because their earnings wouldn't cover student loan payments. Fifty-three percent of respondents were farming but had a hard time making their student loan payments.

The introduction of the Young Farmer Success Act is a milestone for NYFC that has raised national awareness about the barriers young farmers face.

"The work that NYFC is doing with student loan forgiveness is essential for the next generation of farmers to be successful. Farming is very capital-intensive, and having student loan forgiveness will make a young farmer's life much easier."



— **Davon Goodwin**, manager of Fussy Gourmet Farms in Raeford, NC

LEADING STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Our goal is to make agriculture a career that is available to all who seek it, no matter their economic background, race or gender. With the support of our local chapters and members across the country, we are currently leading three major campaigns to address land access, water access, and student loans.



LAND ACCESS

"NYFC's Land Access Program is a powerful tool and resource for young farmers who are working diligently to attain access to affordable, secure farmland inside their local communities. The individual support and assistance I've received from this program has greatly impacted my work and efforts in my region."

— **Margaret Schlass** of One Woman Farm in Pennsylvania is rallying her community around the importance of affordable land access for farmers.



WATER ACCESS

"In 2015, we teamed up to produce a report profiling producers across the Colorado River Basin who are conserving resources while enhancing productivity. The report was specifically requested by a U.S. Senate committee for inclusion in the Congressional record. Clearly, working with NYFC has helped us elevate the voices of Western producers in Washington."

— **Dan Keppen**, Executive Director of the Family Farm Alliance

2015 FINANCIALS

* NYFC became an independent 501(c)(3) in 2015. Our expenses and income therefore include money received and spent under our formal fiscal sponsor, the Center for Rural Affairs, and the National Young Farmers Coalition, Inc.

FUNDS RAISED IN 2015*



TOTAL EXPENSES IN 2015*



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Cedar Tree Foundation
 Claneil Fund
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 AgEnhancement
 Flora Family Foundation
 Hope Foundation
 Johnson Ohana
 Charitable Foundation
 Joyce & Irving Goldman
 Foundation
 Leichtag Foundation
 Lillian Goldman
 Charitable Trust
 Lydia Stokes Foundation
 National Sustainable
 Agriculture Coalition
 New Belgium Brewing Co
 New World Foundation
 Organic Valley
 Farmers Advocating for
 Organics Fund
 RSF Social Finance
 Thornburg Foundation
 Walking Stick Family Fund
 Walton Family Foundation
 Woodcock Foundation

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