



Photo courtesy of Nehalem Valley Farm Trust

## A PATH TO CONSERVATION AND FARM VIABILITY: FARMER SERVICES

### YOUNG FARMERS IDENTIFY LAND ACCESS

**AS ONE OF THEIR TOP  
BARRIERS TO ESTABLISHING  
A CAREER IN AGRICULTURE.**

This series of case studies highlights ways in which land trusts can promote and protect farm viability to keep land in production and in the hands of farmers.

NYFC is working with conservation organizations across the country to scale up innovative farmland protection strategies that go beyond protecting farmland from development and aim to keep farmers on the land now and for generations to come.

Community  
EngagementFarmer  
ServicesAgricultural  
EasementsFarmland  
PurchaseFarm Viability  
Program

### PROVIDING FARMER SERVICES

Farmer services are a versatile way for land trusts to engage in farm viability work. This broad category includes strategies ranging from educational programming to alternative finance opportunities. These are efforts that directly support farmers in establishing or maintaining viable farm businesses. Land trusts across the capacity spectrum are finding creative ways to provide these services.

**Education:** Providing workshops and seminars on land trust partnerships, business development, financial planning, succession planning, and understanding resources and grants is a great way to help farmers.

**Equipment Sharing:** Some land trusts have begun offering borrowing opportunities for farm implements. Farmers can borrow equipment such as lime spreaders or mobile chicken processing equipment.

**Incubator Farms:** Land trusts can buy and hold land to run farm incubator programs that help new farmers get started. Farm incubators give young and beginning farmers a chance to grow a business without investing in land or facilities.

**Land Linking:** Land-linking efforts are databases or services that connect land-seeking farmers with land for sale or landowners looking to have their land farmed.

**Financing:** Land trusts with significant financial capacity offer down payment loans and principle loans to beginning farmers. This helps farmers who face challenges qualifying for traditional bank financing access capital.

“We believe that creating economic stability with food and farm projects is as important as getting farmers on the land.”

—Trav Williams, Board Chair

# NEHALEM VALLEY FARM TRUST

- **Farmer Services:** Nehalem Valley Farm Trust (NVFT) partnered with the microfinance company Kiva Microfunds to support economic development of local farm businesses. Kiva is a non-profit organization that facilitates crowd-sourced lending between individuals through an online platform. In 2016, NVFT worked with Kiva to build their first “cohort” of small local businesses. NVFT gathered a group of local farmers and aspiring farmers (five farmers and one food cart), vetted them through local small business development centers, linked them with regional Kiva representatives, and finally helped each run their own Kiva campaign.
- **Results:** NVFT partnered with existing organizations to stimulate \$60,000 in economic activity around local farm businesses. The project helped six food and farm businesses “start up” or expand their operations. Each campaign reached their \$10,000 goal within 15 days (on average) after going live. At the end of the season, NVFT hosted a farm dinner where community members, farmers, and even local Kiva lenders could come together and experience the fruits of their collective labor.
- **Strategy Benefits:** With only volunteer staff, no funding, and no systems in place to receive, give, or track payback of loans, NVFT managed to support farm viability in significant ways. The approach helped them build their reputation with funders and farmers, as well as grow a network of support within local communities.



ABOVE: James Carp partnered with NVFT to run a Kiva campaign, and successfully raised a \$10,000, zero-percent loan to support his new farm business.

## ABOUT NEHALEM VALLEY FARM TRUST

NVFT is a new land trust in a state where farmland trusts are not well known. NVFT aspires to buy and hold fee-title on farms in order to lease small plots to market farmers, as well as merge conservation and land access efforts through a buy-protect-sell program. However, as a new land trust without experience or reputation, NVFT can't compete for state or federal conservation funding. Furthermore, they have few ties to farmers or partners in their community. So NVFT looked for more creative ways to begin helping farmers and to build their capacity.

YEAR FOUNDED  
**2014**

NUMBER OF STAFF  
**ALL VOLUNTEER**

2015 OPERATING BUDGET  
**\$0**

For more information visit [nvft.org](http://nvft.org)



The National Young Farmers Coalition unites young farmers and ranchers to ensure a sustainable future for American agriculture.

[youngfarmers.org](http://youngfarmers.org) ■ 518-643-3564



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