



Protecting independent farmers. Building healthy food systems.

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

From the Soil to the Capitol

Prepared July 2026



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Across the country, independent farmers are working to build viable businesses in a food system that too often rewards consolidation instead of resilience. At the same time, more people want to know where their food comes from, how it was produced, and who produced it. Those changes are reshaping agriculture, and they create both opportunities and challenges for independent producers.

For two decades, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) has worked to make sure public policy supports independent farmers, ranchers, and local food systems. Our advocacy is rooted in the practical realities of farming, and we focus on fair markets, scale-appropriate regulation, and expanding access to local food.

Policy change takes time. That's why the Council for Healthy Food Systems (CHFS) was created to complement FARFA's advocacy with education, training, and public engagement. While FARFA works to improve the policies that shape agriculture, CHFS helps farmers succeed within today's system by providing practical education and support. Together, the two organizations are working toward the same goal: a food system that supports farmers, healthy ecosystems, and strong communities.

This year, both organizations continued making progress through policy advocacy, farmer education, and leadership development

In 2025, FARFA secured major victories in Texas by expanding cottage food laws, eliminating duplicative local permits, and moving regenerative agriculture research legislation through the Legislature with strong bipartisan support. We also protected composting through strategic negotiations. At the federal level, FARFA continued building support for the bipartisan PRIME Act and LOCAL Foods Act while advancing a broader policy agenda focused on small-scale processing, soil health, and protections for independent farmers.

CHFS also continued to grow its work, serving more than 400 producers through workshops, training programs, and a 12-week farmer course. The organization also secured USDA funding for a new regulatory help desk that will provide practical assistance to farmers navigating complex regulatory requirements while expanding access to business training and financial education.

Our work starts with farmers and ranchers. Their experience shapes the priorities we pursue, the programs we build, and the way we measure success.

Looking ahead, there is still a great deal of work to do. Independent farmers and ranchers are essential to healthy communities, strong local economies, and a resilient food supply. Their success depends on thoughtful policies, practical education, and people who are willing to invest in the future of agriculture.

Thank you for standing with us as we continue that work.

Judith McGeary

TWO ORGANIZATIONS, ONE SHARED VISION

Food system change is complex. Farmers need practical support today, and they also need policies that create better opportunities for the future. That's why FARFA and the Council for Healthy Food Systems each have a distinct role.

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) works to improve the laws and regulations that affect independent farmers and ranchers. Through advocacy, coalition building, and public engagement, FARFA helps remove unnecessary barriers and create a policy environment where local and regional agriculture can grow.

The Council for Healthy Food Systems (CHFS) focuses on education. Through workshops, conferences, farmer training, and public education, CHFS gives farmers and communities the knowledge and resources they need to navigate today's challenges and build stronger, more resilient agricultural systems.

Although FARFA and CHFS are separate nonprofit organizations, they work hand in hand because lasting change takes more than good policy or good education alone. Progress happens when policy, practical experience, and public understanding all move in the same direction.

Together, their work reinforces itself:



Advocacy informs education



Education strengthens advocacy



Together, they build a stronger, more resilient food system.



THEORY OF CHANGE

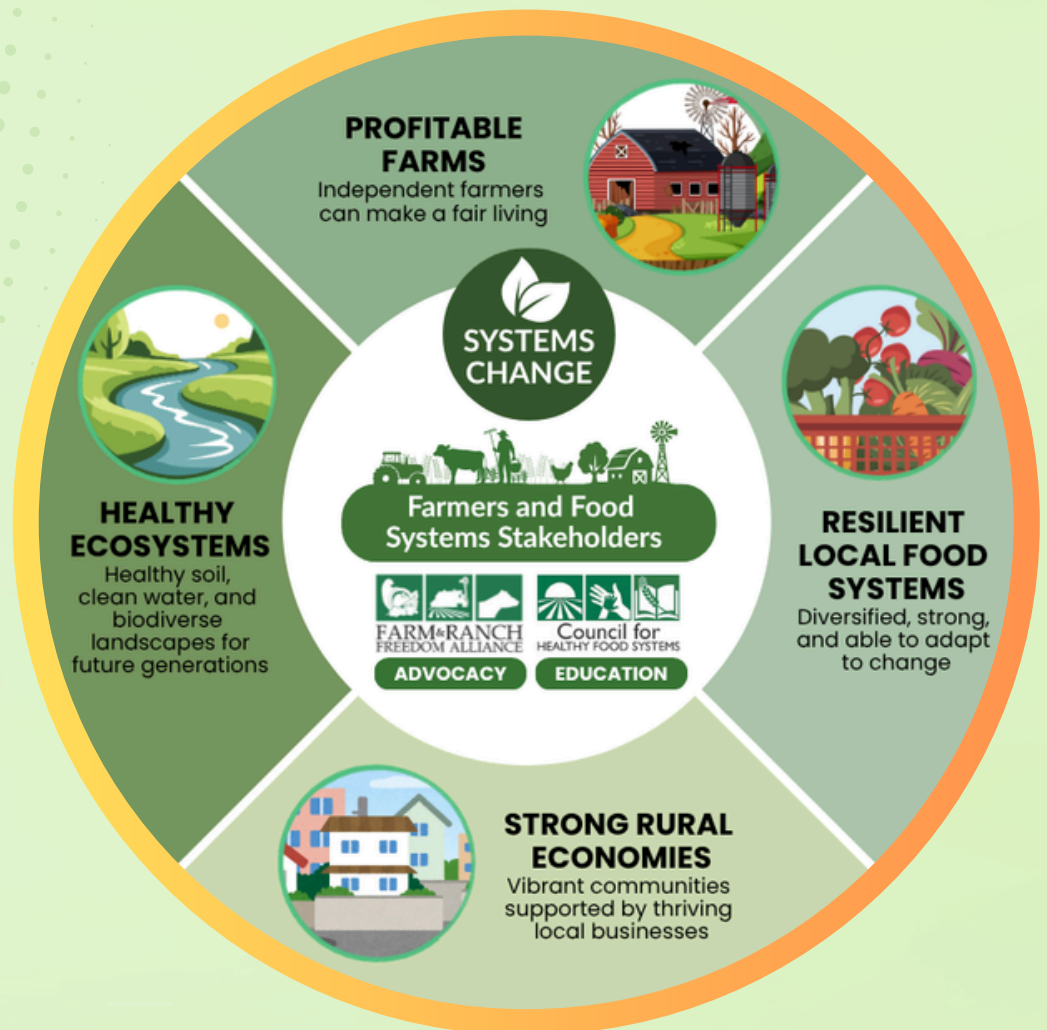
Lasting change in our food system doesn't come from any one solution. It happens when farmers and ranchers have the support they need to build successful businesses, care for the land, and serve their communities.

That's the idea behind our work. Independent producers are not just participants in the food system. They are its foundation. Profitable farms are one measure of success, but they're only the beginning. When independent farmers succeed, they help create resilient local food systems, healthy ecosystems, and strong rural economies.

FARFA and CHFS are uniquely positioned to advance this change by working across two essential levers. FARFA focuses on the external conditions that shape opportunity, advancing policies that expand access to buyers, reduce unnecessary barriers, and protect farmer independence. CHFS focuses on the internal capacity of producers, equipping farmers with the knowledge, skills, and support needed to build resilient, regenerative operations.

Together, advocacy and education reinforce one another. Policy creates opportunities for independent producers, while education helps farmers take advantage of those opportunities.

The result is more profitable farms, resilient local food systems, healthy ecosystems, and strong rural economies. This diagram illustrates how these pieces work together.



FARFA - Advocating for Independent Farmers

01 Our Approach

The Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) advances farmer-led policy solutions that ensure independent producers can thrive. We align regulations with the realities of small and mid-scale agriculture, expand local food access, and challenge corporate concentration—bringing farmer voices directly into policy decisions.

02 What We Focus On

- Scale-appropriate regulation
- Fair and competitive markets
- Local food access
- Federal policy & Farm Bill engagement



03 2025 Highlights

- Expanded cottage food laws, opening new pathways for small producers
- Eliminating duplicative local permits to reduce regulatory barriers
- Advanced regenerative agriculture research with bipartisan support (add bill details if needed)
- Protected on-farm composting through defensive advocacy
- Built momentum for the federal LOCAL Foods Act

04 How We Work

We build coalitions, mobilize farmers, provide research and testimony, and drive public engagement to advance practical, bipartisan solutions.



Impact Snapshot

- Farmers talking with Representatives: **99+**
- Legislative Meetings: **242**
- Co-Sponsored Bills: **7**
- Advocacy Email Opens: **40,000+**

CHFS - Training the Next Generation of Farmers

01 Our Approach

The Council for Healthy Food Systems (CHFS) equips farmers with the skills, knowledge, and support they need to build viable, regenerative operations. We deliver accessible, hands-on education and practical assistance that help producers navigate real-world challenges—from production to business planning to regulatory systems.

02 What We Focus On

- Farmer training and education
- Regenerative agriculture practices
- Business and financial viability
- Practical, farmer-centered technical assistance



03 2025 Highlights

- Served over 350 producers through workshops, webinars, farm tours, and training programs
- Delivered a 12-week hybrid farmer training program combining in-person and virtual learning
- Co-hosted a conference with 500+ attendees, providing valuable education and connection
- Secured USDA funding to launch a regulatory help desk for direct farmer support

04 How We Work

We provide hands-on training, flexible learning models, and direct support to help farmers start, grow, and sustain their operations.



Impact Snapshot

- Farmers trained: **377**
- Workshops & events delivered: **30+**
- Groundwork Program graduates: **13**

SHARED INITIATIVE - Southern Family Farmers & Food Systems Conference

01 **Our Approach**

Co-hosted by the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA), the Council for Healthy Food Systems (CHFS), and the Small Producers Initiative (SPI) at Texas State University, the Southern Family Farmers & Food Systems Conference brings together farmers, ranchers, researchers, educators, and advocates from across Texas and beyond. The conference combines practical education with conversations about the policies shaping agriculture, helping participants learn from one another, build relationships, and strengthen independent farming and ranching.

02 **What It Delivers**

- Hands-on education across production, business, and ecological stewardship
- Policy and advocacy conversations grounded in farmer experience
- Cross-sector connection among producers, researchers, and partners
- A platform for collaboration that strengthens local and regional food systems

03 **2025 Highlights**

- Multi-day conference with workshops, panels, and networking opportunities
- Featured speakers spanning farming, policy, research, and food systems leadership
- Strong participation from producers, agencies, and partner organizations
- Expanded connection between on-the-ground practice and policy

Impact Snapshot

- ATTENDEES: **515**
- SPEAKERS: **103**
- SESSIONS: **56**
- EXHIBITORS: **53**



SOUTHERN
FAMILY FARMERS
and Food Systems
CONFERENCE

Join your fellow gardeners, farmers & local food advocates for 2 days of learning, sharing knowledge & exploring useful resources.

500⁺ Attendees

50⁺ Sessions

80⁺ Speakers

50⁺ Exhibitors

August 3-4, 2026
San Marcos, TX

WWW.SOUTHERNFAMILYFARMERSCONFERENCE.ORG

The poster features a stylized illustration of a farm scene with a tractor, cows, chickens, and trees. A QR code is located in the bottom left corner.



Stories from the Field

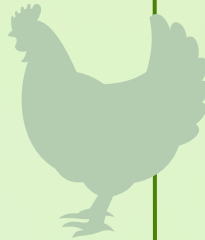


Matt Barattino, FARFA

Building a Farm From Scratch

FARFA gave Wild Texan Farm the information and confidence to legally process poultry on the farm, making it possible to keep costs down, maintain high standards, and build a successful business from the ground up. As first-generation farmers, they say knowing FARFA is advocating for small farms has been invaluable as they've grown.

"Without FARFA, it would have been much harder for us to get established and stay in business during these early years." – Matt



Bob and Darlene, FARFA

Keeping the Family Farm

For nearly two decades, FARFA has helped this third-generation dairy navigate regulations, expand direct-to-consumer sales, and overcome barriers to marketing raw milk. They credit FARFA's advocacy and practical guidance with helping keep their family farm viable through some of its toughest years.



"FARFA was, and continues to be, the small dairy farmer's saving grace." – Darlene

Octavio Garzo, CHFS

Seeing What's Possible

Through CHFS's Groundwork program and on-farm learning opportunities, Octavio gained the confidence to pursue regenerative farming and connect with a community of farmers who continue to support one another. Seeing successful operations firsthand helped him realize that regenerative practices could work on his own South Texas farm.

"Seeing other people implementing regenerative farming changed the way I looked at it." – Octavio



Amenta, CHFS

Strengthening a Regenerative Farm

Amenta turned to CHFS's Groundwork program to build on the experience she already had as a regenerative flower and herb farmer. The comprehensive training provided practical tools to strengthen both her farming practices and her business.

"The courses are very comprehensive... I learned something about every part of farming." – Amenta



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FARFA



CHFS

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2025

	As of Dec 31, 2025	As of Dec 31, 2024 (PY)	Total
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Bank Accounts			
1000 Buckholts State Bank Checking Account	182,580.82	109,660.17	
EA Payments Received	-417.82	-1,402.37	
Total Bank Accounts	182,163.00	108,257.80	
Accounts Receivable			
1020 Accounts Receivable	45,562.66	29,328.70	
Total Accounts Receivable	45,562.66	29,328.70	
Other Current Assets			
1105 Treasury Direct Holdings			
1110 Savings Bonds I Series	43,440.00		
1115 TBills	129,508.79	69,432.26	
Total 1105 Treasury Direct Holdings	172,948.79	69,432.26	
Total Other Current Assets	172,948.79	69,432.26	
Total Current Assets	400,674.45	207,018.76	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$400,674.45	\$207,018.76	
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Credit Cards			
2100 Credit Card	122.59	577.48	
Total Credit Cards	122.59	577.48	
Other Current Liabilities			
2300 Payroll Liabilities	-17,428.65	-862.21	
Total Other Current Liabilities	-17,428.65	-862.21	
Total Current Liabilities	-17,306.06	-284.73	
Total Liabilities	-17,306.06	-284.73	
Equity			
3000 Opening Balance Equity	132,748.60	118,748.60	
3001 Lawsuit Fund (Restricted)	10,085.00	10,085.00	
3010 Retained Earnings	78,469.89	30,655.82	
Net Income	196,677.02	47,814.07	
Total Equity	417,980.51	207,303.49	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$400,674.45	\$207,018.76	

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2025

	As of Dec 31, 2025	As of Dec 31, 2024 (PY)	Total
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Bank Accounts			
1000 Buckholts State Bank Checking Account	126,093.64	105,011.88	
Total Bank Accounts	126,093.64	105,011.88	
Other Current Assets			
1105 Treasury Direct Holdings			
1110 Savings Bond, I Series	10,000.00		
1115 TBills	124,463.84		
Total 1105 Treasury Direct Holdings	134,463.84		
Payroll Refunds	0.01	0.01	
QuickBooks Tax Holding Account	4,059.90		
Total Other Current Assets	138,523.75	0.01	
Total Current Assets	264,617.39	105,011.89	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$264,617.39	\$105,011.89	
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Credit Cards			
2100 Credit Card	0.00	6,687.68	
Total Credit Cards	0.00	6,687.68	
Other Current Liabilities			
2300 Payroll Liabilities	168.05		
2310 Federal Taxes	3,831.93	0.00	
2330 State Taxes	692.56	632.64	
Total 2300 Payroll Liabilities	4,692.54	632.64	
Total Other Current Liabilities	4,692.54	632.64	
Total Current Liabilities	4,692.54	7,320.32	
Total Liabilities	4,692.54	7,320.32	
Equity			
3000 Opening Balance Equity	68,998.89	68,998.89	
3001 Butler Scholarship Fund (Restricted)	485.00	485.00	
3010 Net Assets	28,207.68	-9,074.57	
Net Revenue	162,233.28	37,282.25	
Total Equity	259,924.85	97,691.57	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$264,617.39	\$105,011.89	

We operate with a lean structure, ensuring resources are deployed strategically to maximize impact.

Our work is sustained by a strong grassroots funding base that reflects broad, ongoing support for independent farmers and resilient food systems.

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP: BOARD

FARFA

RICK WELLS

Board President
Wells Hospitality Group
Waterboy Farms



TOM HENSLEE

Back to Earth Farms



DOUG HAVEMANN
Mesquite Field Farm



DANIEL GARCIA-PRATS
Finca Tres Robles



JEFF BEDNAR
Profound Foods



IVY WALLS
Ivy Leaf Farms
Fresh Houwse Grocery



JUSTIN TRAMMELL
Tir Bluen Farm
Ranchers Storefront



AMY MILLIRON
Founder, Fearless Farmers



MEGAN NEUBAUER
Pure Land Farm



KELLY ADAMS

CHFS Board President

WES ADAMS

CHFS Board Treasurer
Adams Blackland Prairie Farm



TERESA DAVENPORT

Former Comms,
CHFS/FARFA



HALLIE CASEY
The Common Market



CHAZ DAUGHTRY
Sweetwater Farms HTX



CHFS

THOMAS LOCKE
Bois d'Arc Meat Co.



GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP: STAFF



JUDITH McGEARY
FARFA and CHFS
Founder & Executive Director
Attorney, activist, and sustainable farmer.



PAUL FIGUEROA
FARFA Senior Policy
Associate



SHANNA CREW
Program Director, CHFS



**JESSICA
MOEDER**
FARFA and CHFS
Grant & Donor Manager



**JESSICA
TOMKO**
CHFS Grants &
Services Intake
Coordinator



**MARIA
WHITWORTH**
FARFA and CHFS
Director of
Communications



**KATHRYN
VANDERBURG**
CHFS Help Desk Manager



What's Next in Policy

After years of successful state-level reforms, **FARFA is turning to the next generation of policy solutions.** In Texas, we will work to expand markets for local food, strengthen cottage food laws, support farm-to-school programs, advance regenerative agricultural research, and protect the land and water farmers depend on. Federally, we will continue fighting for meat processing reform, stronger conservation programs, practical responses to livestock disease, and policies that support independent producers.

Building a Stronger Region

The future of agriculture extends beyond state borders. **FARFA is expanding its advocacy across Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and neighboring states,** building partnerships that strengthen the voice of independent farmers and ranchers. Together, we can tackle shared challenges like water scarcity, pests, and market access with solutions that work across the region.

Helping Farmers Thrive

CHFS is expanding the ways we serve farmers. This fall, we will launch an enhanced Groundwork Farmer Training Program with a stronger curriculum and more hands-on learning. We are also adding Farm Financial Basics workshops, one-on-one mentorship opportunities, and a new Texas Farmer Help Desk to connect producers with trusted answers, practical resources, and personalized support when they need it most.

Help Support Citizen Lobbying Days in D.C. and the Texas State Capitol

Your donation and membership also help us support countless activities and initiatives involved in advocating for local farms and our food.

FarmandRanchFreedom.org/donate

Support the Farmers Feeding Our Communities

Your donation helps connect Texas farmers, ranchers, and food producers with critical resources, education, and support services that strengthen local agriculture and resilient food systems.

HealthyFoodSystems.org/donate

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ADVOCATE
ATTEND EVENTS**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT**

