



FARM-BASED EDUCATION NETWORK

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

LOOKING BACK

This year focused on gathering virtually; exploring leadership, social change, and the stories of leaders in the field; and offering activities for which we laid the groundwork in 2020. Our virtual gatherings welcomed over 300 people from across the globe, creating space for shared learning and growth while providing valuable social connection. Workshops fell into three categories:

- Building leadership skills through nature connections: we looked at honeybee hives as metaphors for our organizations
- Learning for social justice: deepening our understanding of power, change, justice, and how to support our nervous systems as we moved through stress
- Inspiration gathering: learning about each others' models including current challenges and successes

Throughout the year, members received support outside of workshops. We launched a new initiative where people could sign up to offer or receive peer mentoring, and we acted as matchmakers. We worked with a human resources consultant to produce our first ever compensation analysis and circulated that report. As always, we received questions.

A Sampling of Member Questions...

- What should be on my waiver for family programs related to covid liability?
- I own a farm-based education program, sell dairy and eggs, and teach adult permaculture/ self-reliance classes. I am looking for business planning/ strategy/marketing help.
- How do we get more people to take anti-racism trainings and enter into gatherings like these? How do we align with people who are on the fence or passive to do these exercises and expand their views?
- How do you split summer camp programming from morning to afternoon?
- What example policies do you have for bow hunting as a deer management strategy on the farm?
- I'm seeking guidance on how to create a garden entrepreneurship program for middle schoolers. I would like for them to be able to grow vegetables and herbs that they can package and sell at the adjoining farmers market.

With the new year underway, we plan to continue listening to members and tailoring our activities to their needs. We aim to walk through 2022 with balance: striving to be a nimble network that can respond with resilience to the current context, while staying firm in our mission of nurturing, supporting, and promoting farm-based education.

Here's our Network's 16th year!



Vera Simon-Nobes, Coordinator

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021



FBEN'S SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION



Shelburne Farms



Shelburne Farms is an education nonprofit on a mission to inspire and cultivate learning for a sustainable future. We believe that transformative learning experiences sow the seeds for a thriving and more just world. Our work seeks to create the space, spark the conversations, and share the stories to inspire educators, students, and learners of all ages to build a better future for everyone.

Collaboration, sharing, and network building are at the heart of the farm's work, and are among the reasons why Shelburne Farms is the coordinating organization for the Farm-Based Education Network. The following Shelburne Farms staff – among others – contribute to the FBEN's vitality.

Megan Camp oversees budget, human resources, program, guidance & accountability.

Sue Dixon, Anna Dundas, and Heidi Webb manage development, record keeping, and major gifts.

Brooke Redmond is a Shelburne Farms special gifts officer, and FBEN's founding Executive Director.

Holly Brough, Andrea Estey, Robin Turnau & Sarah Webb make up the Communications Team.

Vera Simon-Nobes leads the FBEN and coordinates network activities.

ABOUT FBEN

Established in 2006, the Farm-Based Education Network is a free member network created to strengthen and support the work of farmers, educators, and community leaders who provide access and experiences to all kinds on working farms. Our mission is to inspire, nurture, and promote farm-based education. The FBEN is a project coordinated by Shelburne Farms and supported by members, advisers, and founding partners. In 2021, we saw:

335

workshop participants

30

guest presenters

COMMUNICATIONS WITH IMPACT

In 2021, our newsletter open rate was 24%. We saw 28,369 unique opens of our emails sent, an increase of over 7,000 from 2020. We saw 994 website visitors per month.

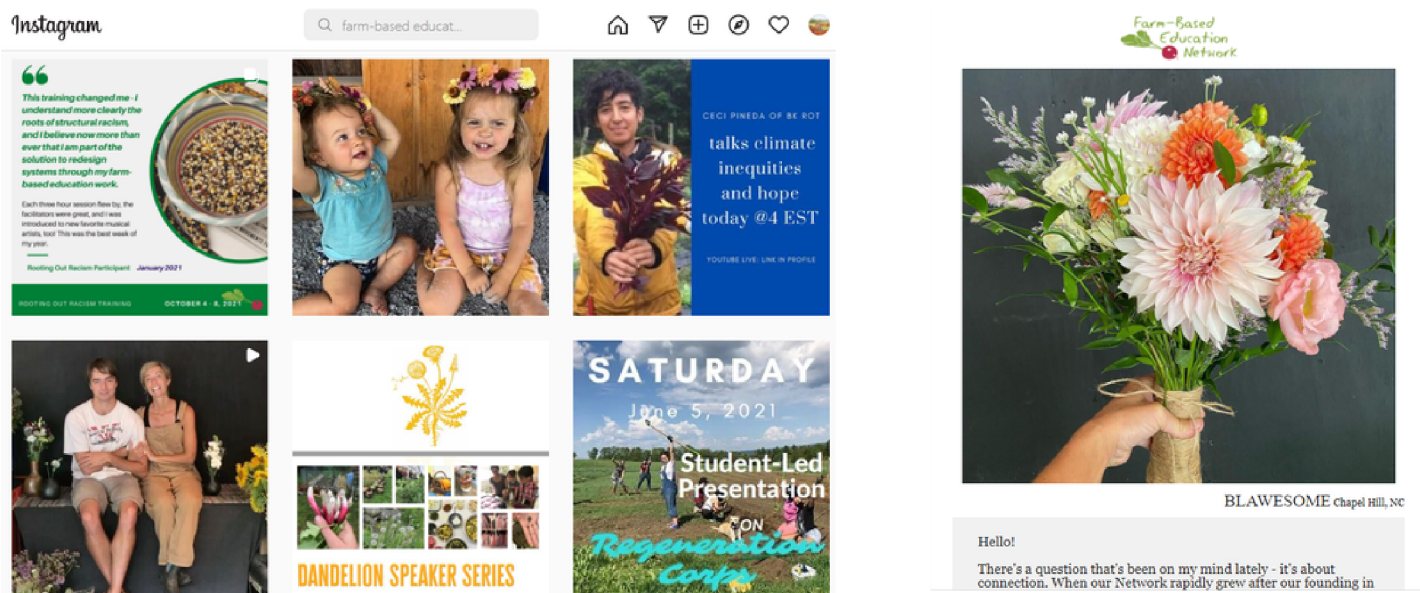
Our 2021 membership grew:



Members came from Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Washington, D.C., Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia. They came from 10 countries outside of the United States: United Kingdom, Taiwan, France, Brazil, Canada, Philippines, Brazil, Vietnam, Israel, and Mauritius.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool: it can inspire and educate, communicate announcements, and celebrate people and their programs. Through social media, we amplify our members' work and help their messages reach a broader network of farm-based educators. While our social media following grew throughout the year, we prioritized live networking through virtual gatherings and check-ins, and we posted less than prior years. We're excited to bring momentum back to this networking tool in 2022!



THANKS, KALI!

In 2020, we had the honor of working with Kali Ransom (she/her) on our social media strategy and delivery. Kali joined us after two years of FoodCorps service in the Springfield Public Schools district. Here at FBEN, she utilized social media to uplift the voices of our members' work and experiences. Throughout her time with us, she actively strived to create a social media presence that accurately reflected the diversity of programs and heritages within the field of farm-based education. She admired and promoted the work of our members into the early part of 2021, when she parted ways with FBEN to work full-time with FoodCorps.

2021 WORKSHOPS

From YouTube-streaming interviews with farm-based education leaders, to hosting Zoom calls, we made the most of a virtual environment.



Rooting Out Racism for Farm-Based and Food System Educators with Service to Justice

January 11-15, March 5-19, and October 4-8, 2021

Farm-Based Education in Every City and Town: 4 Unique Stories

January 13, 2021

Building an Adopt-A-Chick Program with Wright Locke Farm

February 5, 2021

Lessons from the Honeybee on Change, Adaptation, and Storytelling with They Keep Bees

February 10, 17, 24, 2021

Summer Camp Peer Learning with Eden Village Farm, Farm Discovery at Live Earth, Oxbow Farm

February-April 2021

Healing the Roots of Racism in Ourselves with Michael Faithful, Julia Metzger-Traber

March 5, 12, 19, 2021

New!

Worker Justice in the Food System with Vera Chang and Dr. Teresa Mares

April 1, 15, 29, 2021

"I enjoyed the three short sessions, and the opportunity to spend ample time with a consistent breakout group felt conducive to building actual relations, which isn't my typical experience with Zoom classes. I also appreciated all the information about bees. The teachings on pause and resilience were my favorite and felt relevant to my experience."

- WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, FEBRUARY 2021

2021 WORKSHOPS (CONTINUED)

"I took this training earlier this year and had an unbelievably revolutionary experience. It helped me realize how to dream within an anti-racist lens and work to make those dreams into goals, how to work toward having an anti-racist organization, and that anti-racism work is a spiritual journey and not just a workshop (you have to work towards it 24/7).
10 [out of] 10 – I would recommend."

- **TAMARYA SIMS, SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY, ASHEVILLE, NC**

Make a Felted Wool Flower with Shelburne Farms

April 9, 2021

Animal Welfare in Educational Farm Settings with The Lands at Hillside Farm

April 28, 2021

Mindful Movement with Nature with Growing Wild Forest School

May 26, 2021

Regeneration Corps Student Presentation

June 5, 2021

New!

Farm-Based Education After Covid with UVM Extension, Fox Haven Farm & Billings Farm

June 29, 2021

Dandelion Speaker Series with Yellow Farmhouse Education Center

July 12-August 9, 2021

New!

FBEN Community Check-In with Davi Cohen, Battery Conservancy, New York City

September 23, 2021

FBEN Community Check-In with Melisa Oliva, Ananda Gardens, Montpelier, VT

December 1, 2021

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "NEW?"

We're particularly proud of a few activities we piloted in 2021...

1) Affinity spaces in racial justice workshops. In racial justice work, sometimes people of all races should work together, and sometimes it is safer and more beneficial to be separate. [This explains why.](#)

2) Student-led presentation by a high school student working to end climate change & dismantle racism through farm-based education.

3) Interview series with six leaders in the field. In partnership with Yellow Farmhouse Education Center, interviews were streamed on YouTube and focused on leaders' paths into farm-based education.

New!

MEET OUR PRESENTERS

From South Africa to Pennsylvania, we welcomed farm-based educators and leaders from around the world to share their expertise, challenges, proudest moments, wisdom, and technical skills. They asked hard questions, and supported participants' growth with compassion and rigor.



Maebh Aguilar
True Love Seeds,
Philadelphia, PA



Lucie Ashley
Farm Discovery at
Live Earth,
Watsonville, CA



Tiffany Brewer
EarthDance Organic
Farm School,
Ferguson, MO



Asha Carter
Cambium Collective,
Washington, D.C.



Vera Chang
U. of California
Berkeley Department
of Environmental
Science, Policy, &
Management



Joanne Coates-
Hunter
Fox Haven Organic
Farm and Learning
Center, Jefferson, MD



Davi Cohen
The Battery Urban
Farm, New York, NY



Giselle Cuevas
Growing Wild Forest
School, Asheville, NC



Kyla Dixon
Service to Justice,
Washington, D.C.



Richael Faithful
Richael Faithful
Consulting
Washington, D.C.



Nkechi Feaster
Service to Justice,
Washington, D.C.



Erika Gorgenyi
Wright Locke Farm,
Winchester, MA



Gwenyth Harris
Sterling College,
Craftsbury Common,
VT



Phil Haynes
Carversville Farm
Foundation,
Mechanicsville, PA



Lusanda Magwape,
Dream Factory
Foundation, South
Africa / Botswana

PRESENTERS, CONTINUED...



Teresa Mares
UVM Department of
Anthropology,
Burlington, VT



Julia Metzger-Traber
Service to Justice,
Purcellville, VA



Rebecca Mintz
Service to Justice,
Washington, D.C.



Melisa Oliva
Ananda Gardens,
Montpelier, VT



Cat Parrish
Shelburne Farms,
Shelburne, VT



Ceci Pineda
BK Rot,
Brooklyn, NY



Ang Roell
They Keep Bees,
Greenfield, MA



Shea Scribner
Oxbow Farm and
Conservation Center,
Carnation, WA



Christine Scales
Billings Farm and
Museum, Woodstock,
VT



Jennifer Rothman
Yellow Farmhouse
Education Center,
Stonington, CT



Tony Van Winkle
Sterling College,
Craftsbury Common,
VT



Connor Vaughn
Farm School NYC,
New York, NY



Brittney Washington
Service to Justice,
Washington, D.C.



Woody Woodruff
Red Wiggler
Community Farm,
Germantown, MD



Jack Wright
Wright Locke Farm,
Winchester, MA



Andrew Ziv
Eden Village Camp,
Putnam Valley, NY

"It was the first time I have had a Zoom experience that was so potent energetically – I enjoyed actually feeling connected, albeit remotely and digitally, with all of the participants. I look forward to more of that!"

- Workshop Participant

THANK YOU...

WHAT'S NEXT?

We have exciting plans on the horizon for 2022:

- Offer matchmaking between mentors and mentees
- Relaunch in-person gatherings including a learning exchange & residential workshop
- Revamp the website's resource section; track and monitor downloads
- Energize the advisory board
- Continue to survey members on their needs and interests
- Continue professional learning, skill sharing, and networking meetings virtually
- Pursue ambitious fundraising to support the efforts above
- Catalyze sharing on social media



YOUR SUPPORT

Network building is always important, especially this year as many staff on farms continue to experience isolation and continue to adapt their program offerings to meet our rapidly changing world. Our network was a bridge for members between their sites and a broader world. We exchanged information, leaned on each other to gather inspiration, and found our learning edges, so all could be stronger farm-based educators at their respective organizations. On behalf of farm-based educators and everyone impacted by the work of the FBEN, we are deeply grateful our incredible supporters and Shelburne Farms.

Anonymous
Cooper Meadow Fund
Samuel M. Feldman
Lawrence Foglia

BEING HUMAN

By Naima Penniman

I wonder if the sun debates dawn
some mornings
not wanting to rise
out of bed
from under the down-feather horizon

if the sky grows tired
of being everywhere at once
adapting to the mood
swings of the weather

if clouds drift off
trying to hold themselves together
make deals with gravity
to loiter a little longer

I wonder if rain is scared
of falling
if it has trouble
letting go

if snow flakes get sick
of being perfect all the time
each one
trying to be one-of-a-kind

I wonder if stars wish
upon themselves before they die
if they need to teach their young
how to shine

I wonder if shadows long
to just-for-once feel the sun
if they get lost in the shuffle
not knowing where they're from

I wonder if sunrise
and sunset
respect each other
even though they've never met

if volcanoes get stressed
if storms have regrets
if compost believes in life
after death

I wonder if breath ever thinks of suicide
if the wind just wants to sit
still sometimes
and watch the world pass by

if smoke was born
knowing how to rise
if rainbows get shy back stage
not sure if their colors match right

I wonder if lightning sets an alarm clock
to know when to crack
if rivers ever stop
and think of turning back

if streams meet the wrong sea
and their whole lives run off-track
I wonder if the snow
wants to be black

if the soil thinks she's too dark
if butterflies want to cover up their marks
if rocks are self-conscious of their weight
if mountains are insecure of their strength

I wonder if waves get discouraged
crawling up the sand
only to be pulled back again
to where they began

if land feels stepped upon
if sand feels insignificant
if trees need to question their lovers
to know where they stand

if branches waver at the crossroads
unsure of which way to grow
if the leaves understand they're replaceable
and still dance when the wind blows

I wonder
where the moon goes
when she is in hiding
I want to find her there

and watch the ocean
spin from a distance
listen to her
stir in her sleep

effort give way to existence