

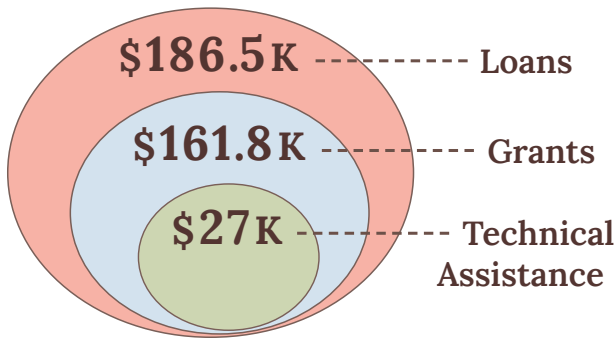


2019-2020 Annual Community Impact Report

Direct Investment & Growth

Berkshire Agricultural Ventures' (BAV) priority areas for support include strategies that promote regenerative agriculture to help keep farm systems healthy and resilient in the face of climate change; improve land access and make farmland affordable for farmers; create season extension greenhouses and cold storage; fund on- and off-farm processing facilities; and support other means to strengthen the viability and sustainability of local farmers.

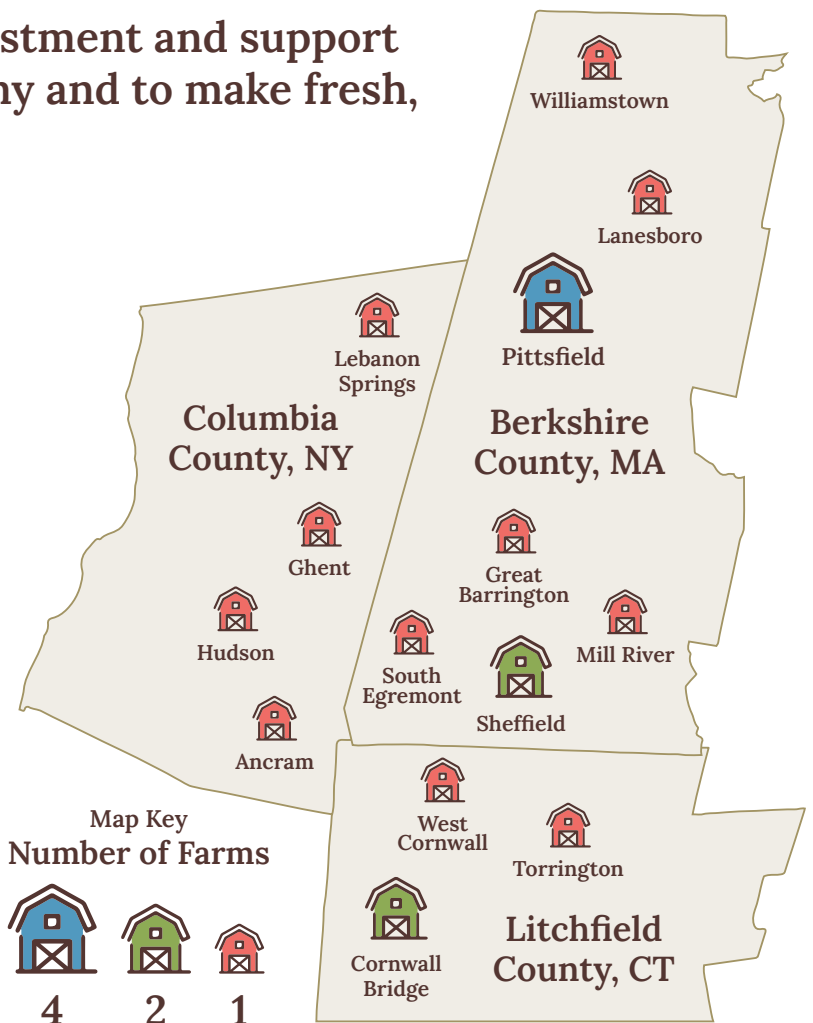
In 2019, BAV provided direct investment and support to grow our region's food economy and to make fresh, healthy food available to all.



\$375.3K Total Invested

19 Farms Supported

1,340 Total Acres



Since inception in 2017, Berkshire Agricultural Ventures

Invested
\$888.1K
Locally

Supported
75
Projects

Impacted
3,928
Acres

Special thanks to our generous donors including: Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Community Foundation of New Jersey, Geoffrey C. Hughes Foundation, Pittsfield Cooperative Bank, The Robert C. and Tina Sohn Foundation, The Thompson Family Foundation, The Whitehead Foundation, anonymous (3), and the numerous individuals who have contributed to us over the past year.

Berkshire Agricultural Ventures in Action

BAV spurs innovation and growth by increasing farm and food business entrepreneurs' access to nimble and flexible financing and technical assistance. From innovative startups to well-established entities, BAV aims both to scale and grow the regional food economy into one that is vital and resilient year-round.

Sweet Brook Farm

Emergency Grant | Williamstown, MA

Days before it was time to tap his maple trees for sap, a fire destroyed Pete Phelps's sugar house—containing much of the equipment needed to extract, process, and package Sweet Brook Farm's delicious maple syrup.

With a grant from BAV, Phelps was able to purchase a new vacuum pump to begin sap collection and save his maple sugaring season.



It was a great achievement for us to have pulled off a season last year, thanks in no small part to the support of Berkshire Agricultural Ventures.

Pete Phelps, Sweet Brook Farm

Thompson-Finch Farm

Matching Grant | Ancram, NY

Thompson-Finch Farm is one of the largest and most well-known certified-organic, pick-your-own strawberry operations in the northeast. In order to preserve the 200 acres of farmland, the Columbia Land Conservancy led a community-wide effort to purchase the farm and lease it back to the farmers.

After the purchase was complete, BAV provided a grant to the operating farmers to support costs incurred in developing the innovative legal ownership/land-use model that both protects the land and maintains its agricultural uses indefinitely.



Community Revolving Fund

Below-market (1-2%) interest loans, regional infrastructure equity investments, and 0% short-term bridge loans.

Resilience Fund for Farmers

Depending on need, 0% forgivable loans or grants to help farmers adapt to the realities of COVID-19.



Berkshire Education & Corrections Aquaponics

Matching Grant | Pittsfield, MA

In alignment with the Berkshire Education & Corrections Aquaponics mission to prepare inmates to re-enter the community through job training, experiential learning, and work ethic development, Deputy Sheriff McGraw is leading a project to install an aquaponics system at the County Jail in Pittsfield. BAV provided the program with a grant to help fund costs associated with the installation.

Aquaponics is...
A controlled-environment agriculture method that raises fish and grows vegetables in a recirculating system.
Aquaponics ecosystems are sustainable, efficient, and highly productive.



QuickBooks Training for Farmers

Technical Assistance

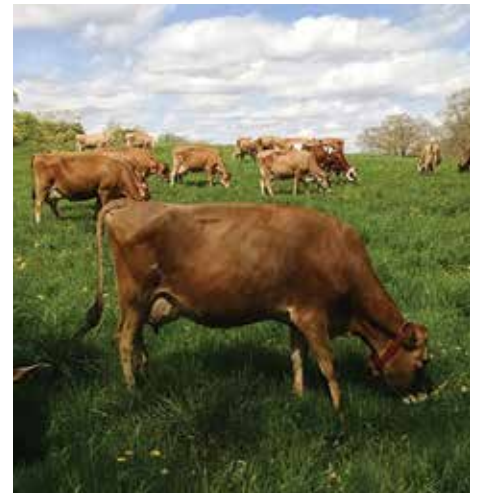
In response to interest in a clear, flexible, and self-sufficient system for tracking farm finances, BAV sponsored a program to provide tailored and individualized QuickBooks training to six local farmers. This 1:1 on-farm training allowed for business owners to learn how to manage their finances and strengthen their business viability. The feedback from the participating farmers was overwhelmingly positive, with most of them reporting increased comfort with their bookkeeping practices.

Calf + Clover Creamery

Loan + Technical Assistance | Cornwall Bridge, CT

Calf + Clover is a grass-based, historic dairy farm located in Cornwall Bridge, CT that produces raw milk, as well as pasture-raised eggs, beef, veal, and vegetables. The farmers rotationally-graze about 40 cows and have a flock of 200 laying hens on 50 acres of perennial pasture.

BAV provided support for the development of the farm's business plan as well as a loan to upgrade a labor-saving pipeline milking system to allow for the production of value-added dairy (yogurt, chocolate milk, ice cream). This support has been provided in partnership with Dirt Capital which has a lease to buy arrangement with the current farmers that also allows the former farm owner to generate retirement income and preserves the farmland.



Matching Grants

One-time grants to meet urgent needs and support high-risk innovations that significantly benefit our community.

Technical Assistance

Customized 1:1, no-cost capacity-building assistance to help strengthen business viability, scale up operations and/or enable new skill acquisition.

The Resilience Fund for Farmers

One of our region's greatest assets is its wealth of local farms and food businesses. COVID-19 has caused this system to be challenged in unimaginable ways.

Our farmers and communities are hurting as markets, restaurants, and other income-generating avenues like farmers markets and CSAs are closed or have limited operations.

Thanks to a generous challenge grant from a local family foundation, Berkshire Agricultural Ventures has launched the **Resilience Fund for Farmers** to support those who are experiencing business challenges as a result of COVID-19.

Zero-interest, forgivable loans and grants will be provided to help farmers adapt to new realities, overcome significant income challenges, and ensure farms remain viable and sustainable so they continue to meet demand for healthy local foods.

In addition to working with individual farmers, BAV looks to support collaborative strategies that avoid costly duplication of effort among farmers, such as developing coordinated delivery services.

The first grant from this Fund helped Roots Rising to pivot and establish the Berkshire County-wide Virtual Farmers Market, which in its first 8 weeks served 1,400 households, gave \$18,000 to neighbors in need, and generated \$50,000 in sales to support the local food systems.

We are seeking matching funds so that we can secure the financial infrastructure for our farms to survive this crisis. Your contribution will make an enormous difference.



Photo Don Perdue

Help Support the Resilience Fund for Farmers

The challenges facing our farmers from COVID-19 are real and immediate.

Please consider making your tax-deductible gift online today:
berkshireagventures.org

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Berkshire Agricultural Ventures is a 501(c)(3) organization; contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

