



RAFI-USA

RURAL ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL-USA

2021 ANNUAL REPORT





LEFT: John and Sharman Whymss's farm in Oglethorpe County, GA used their Farmers of Color Network Infrastructure grant to add processing and storage space so the farm could process their vegetables and value-added items more efficiently. The farm grows a variety of produce including cabbage, carrots, collards, lettuce, okra, and tomatoes.

FRONT COVER: Some of the many animals Eliza MacLean raises on her Cane Creek Farm in Snow Camp, North Carolina. Photo: Joe Pellegrino.

DEAR FRIEND OF RAFI-USA,

IN 2021, RAFI-USA continued responding to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout all of our programs. It was certainly a challenging year for farmers with rising input costs, supply chain challenges, and the growing need for local and regional food system infrastructure. Our direct work in support of farmers was carried out through our Farmer Financial Crisis Hotline, Farmers of Color Network, and programs designed to help farmers find new opportunities for direct-to-consumer sales.

Despite these setbacks, we remain committed to challenging the root causes of unjust food systems and consistently seek feedback from farmers we work with regarding what's working, what's needed, and what overall trends they are seeing in agriculture. Equipped with this valuable input, we are able to provide tailored support and connections to resources for farmers at various stages of their farming journeys, and integrate these findings into our policy work. All of our policy advocacy is firmly rooted in our direct experience with farmers.

We hope you will take a few moments to browse our 2021 Annual Report and see the impact our work had on small- to mid-sized farms, rural areas, and faith communities.

To those of you we serve, thank you for your work and for the opportunity to be a part of it.

To those of you who help us serve, thank you for your ongoing generosity. Your support is needed more than ever and we appreciate your commitment.

Best,

Edna Rodriguez

Jerry DeWitt



BY THE NUMBERS

254 Farmers of
Color Network
members

35% of members are
female

23,835 total acres in
production

127 average acres in
production

81% Black, 3.5%
Latinx, 4% Native
American, 3.5%
Multiracial/Bi-racial,
1% Asian

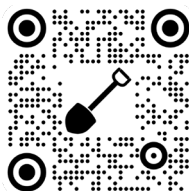
\$376,200 awarded
in funding to 51
farmers in 11 states
and the U.S. Virgin
Islands

35 farmers received
technical assistance

26 site visits by
RAFI-USA staff

3 farm brigades

MEET THE 2021 GRANTEES



JOIN THE FARMERS OF COLOR NETWORK



FARMERS OF COLOR in the U.S. have long been held back by systemic racism. RAFI-USA launched the Farmers of Color Network (FOCN) in 2017 to more intentionally support farmers of color and help build resilience for and among these farmers. Since then, RAFI-USA has re-granted infrastructure funding, hosted webinars, provided technical support, connected farmers with markets, and facilitated farmer connections in the form of farm brigades to help build farm infrastructure. Members of the Farmers of Color Network are

actively producing and located throughout the Southeast U.S., U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Triangle Buyers & Farmers Connect event in July 2021, during which 30 farmers and 22 buyers made connections and exchanged contact information.
- A farmer-led social media workshop in August 2021 featured three farmer presenters who shared how they utilize social media to promote their farm.



Anita and Thomas Roberson grow produce and cut flowers on their Spotsylvania, VA farm.

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

On an early fall day in 2021, several FOCN staff members joined farmers Steve and Elke McCalla at Rocky Ridge Farm in Louisville, NC, along with the McCalla's neighbor and friend Ken Daniel. They gathered for a FOCN Farmer Brigade to assemble a caterpillar tunnel, which provides protection from the elements and aids in extending the growing season.

Both Rocky Ridge and Ken Daniel's Singing Stream Farm were participants in the Wake County CSA, organized by the Come to the Table program (see page 6). The CSA model allows the farmers to receive payment ahead of harvest, which enables farmers to plan ahead, such as constructing this caterpillar tunnel. The McCallas, along with Ken Daniel, have had to scale up their production in the span of a season. According to Steve, "because of the CSA, we basically transitioned a small farm to a medium-sized farm."



- In October 2021, a Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program Webinar covered how to apply and what expenses were allowable with the grant.
- Ongoing technical advice in various areas of agriculture and finance.
- Several farmer brigades were held at Network members' farms to help with large infrastructure projects. (See sidebar to the right.)

The concept of a farmer brigade is born out of a long tradition of rural farmers within close geographic proximity banding together to form labor parties that assisted with projects on each other's farms. The brigades provide an opportunity for many hands to complete larger tasks like seasonal plantings, barn raisings, or other infrastructure projects in a shorter amount of time, while also allowing time and space for relationship building and strategic conversations.

IN 2021, RAFI-USA'S COME TO THE TABLE (CTTT) program continued its focus on empowering faith communities to participate in the creation of a just food system through collaboration, capacity building, and advocacy. The program strengthened its collaboration with RAFI-USA's Farmers of Color Network in a variety of ways and launched several new projects including the Farm & Faith Partnerships Project and the first cohort of the new School for Food Justice, Faith, and Storytelling. CTTT continued to distribute funds through COVID-19 Emergency Hunger Relief Grants.

FORTY-TWO COVID-19 EMERGENCY HUNGER RELIEF mini-grants were distributed in 2021 throughout North

Carolina with support from The Duke Endowment. The funds were used to purchase from local farms, with priority given to members of RAFI-USA's Farmers of Color Network.

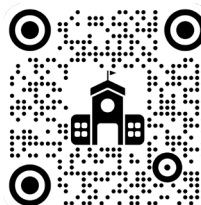
THE FARM & FAITH PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT was rolled out in 2021 with eight churches partnering with three farmers of color to purchase and distribute 100 weekly shares of produce during three seasons of the pilot Wake County CSA. The partnership was beneficial to all involved with individuals accessing local produce through their faith communities and the farmers of color involved were able to secure a stable source of income. Learn more about farmers who participated in the CSA on page 5.

DOWNLOAD THE GUIDEBOOK



"Food, Faith, and Farmers of Color: A Guide for Community Collaboration," a downloadable guidebook, was published in 2021 to help faith communities learn more about how they can partner with farmers of color in their area. This resource shares stories of partnerships between faith communities and farmers of color and provides resources for the creation of new relationships.

SCHOOL FOR FOOD JUSTICE, FAITH, AND STORYTELLING BLOGS



The School for Food Justice, Faith, and Storytelling started early in 2021 and brought together a cohort of 30 faith leaders to focus on food relief ministries and justice work in their communities. Topics included in the seven monthly sessions ranged from discussions on the root causes of hunger and the dominant narratives around why people experience hunger to how story-based strategies can transform the conversation on hunger. The participants expressed their commitment to deepening their understanding of systemic injustices in the food system and how faith communities can respond to these inequities.



BY THE NUMBERS

The “Food, Faith, and Farmers of Color” Guidebook has been downloaded by more than 250 people.

30 faith community leaders participated in The School for Food Justice, Faith, and Storytelling (SFJFS).

80% of surveyed participants reported gaining access to new resources through their involvement with SFJFS.

CTTT distributed 42 \$1,000 COVID-19 Emergency Hunger Relief grants reaching more than 22,000 people in 38 NC counties. 97 percent of mini-grant recipients rated their experience as “very good” or “excellent.”

Elke and Steve McCalla
at the Blessing of the
Land for the 2021 Wake
County CSA.

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2021, SNAP and WIC FMNP recipients redeemed \$113,364 with their benefits and spent an additional \$128,278 with Double Bucks incentives.

Fresh Bucks participants redeemed \$95,703 with SNAP benefits and spent an additional \$45,989 in Fresh Bucks incentives.

RAFI-USA'S EXPANDING FARMERS MARKET ACCESS program bolsters the capacity of area farmers markets to serve as both viable direct-to-consumer market channels for small to mid-scale farmers as well as to serve as community centers that welcome all shoppers. RAFI-USA coordinates several programs that stretch the buying power for farmers market shoppers who benefit from various government supplemental programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children). Both farmers and shoppers win when access to healthy, fresh, locally grown food is expanded.

THE FRESH BUCKS INCENTIVES PROGRAM serves 12 NC farmers markets, matching SNAP/EBT shoppers' purchases dollar-for-dollar, effectively doubling the buying power of food-insecure households. In 2021, the Fresh Bucks program added Authentically Alamance Farmers' Market Network, Lexington Farmers Market, Secotan Farmers Market, and Veggie Van to the program.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Triangle & Rural Farmers Market Double Bucks Incentive Program serves six Triangle-area markets and five rural farmers markets. This incentive program is broader than Fresh Bucks by matching SNAP and WIC FMNP (Farmers Market Nutrition Program) purchases as

well as cash purchases from WIC clients and people living in Section 8 housing. In 2021, The Double Bucks program added Ashe County Farmers Market, Stanly Commons Market, Morganton Farmers Market, Market Square Farmers Market, and Leroy James Farmers Market to the program in 2021.

THE CARRBORO FARMERS' MARKET hosted a successful pilot pop-up Farm to Clinic Market at Piedmont Health Services as well as a local Seniors Center to increase WIC and Senior FMNP check redemption rates. Double Bucks incentives were also offered to customers. More than 50 households and three local farmers attended the pop-up markets. 91% of those attending the pop-up market said they would visit it in the future. 100% said that the Farm to Clinic was helpful for using their WIC FMNP coupons.

RAFI-USA'S ALTERNATIVE LOCAL FOOD MARKETS project works to develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets that make locally produced foods more available and accessible and support farmers and food entrepreneurs of color. Through this program, RAFI-USA provides support and resources to farmers, farmers markets, faith communities, and other food cooperatives that are finding creative ways to increase both farm viability and food access in their communities.

FARMERS OF COLOR NETWORK MEMBERS SUPPLY TRIANGLE MARKETS WITH AFRICAN-DERIVED VEGETABLES

In 2021, with the support of a USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant, RAFI-USA worked with several farmer of color collaboratives, supporting the expansion of local sales and reaching new, untapped markets, as well as bringing specialty crops to market.

One of these collaboratives in Person County, NC delivered over 2,000 lbs of niche African-derived vegetables to five Triangle region grocery stores from September to October 2021. Tom Savage of Allied Organic farm, Michael Graves of Porte'Lu Farms, and Sam Crisp of HTS Farm are all growing various vegetables for this project on their respective farms. The seeds for some of these vegetables were brought to North Carolina by Chijioke Kanu (known as Kaycee), who was born in Nigeria but has been based in Raleigh for the past 20 years. Kaycee and his wife Angela diligently work to save seeds and re-propagate shoots at the end of each season. Shoots are replanted in greenhouses and cared for over the winter months. Kaycee serves as coordinator for the group, helping to manage crop plans, seed saving, and getting the produce to market.

At Tom and Linda Savage's farm in Hurdle Mills, Kaycee is growing waterleaf, Nigerian pumpkin leaves (known as ugu), and special varieties of eggplants and peppers.



Above: Special African-derived variety of eggplant growing at Allied Organic Farm in Hurdle Mills, NC.

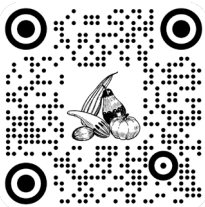
Below: Waterleaf is an important leafy vegetable in Nigerian cooking.

FLAWS IN THE FOOD SYSTEM BLOG SERIES

The blog series, **Flaws in the Food System – 2020 Was Just an Alarm Bell**, lifted up stories of farmers, farmers markets, and other stakeholders who have received direct service support or grant funds from RAfi-USA over the years. We’ve tackled issues like racial discrimination, food insecurity, corporate consolidation, lack of access to credit, and the need for stronger local food systems. These four stories not only illustrate how systemic and institutional inequities affect lives but also how RAfi-USA’s programs are making a difference.

The COVID-19 pandemic unveiled many systemic and institutional inequities in U.S. society — inequities that were always present but spotlighted due to the major disruptions in our lives, businesses, and culture. We were re-confronted with hard truths of who and what is valued by the larger, corporate agricultural system as smaller, local, and regional food systems faced both existing and new threats to their survival.

FLAWS IN THE FOOD SYSTEM



Ryan Pressley (above) and David Pflugfelder (below) shared their stories for the Flaws in the Food System blog series.

DURING ITS 30 YEARS, RAFI-USA has been committed to providing advisory services to farmers in financial crisis. In 2021, we fielded around 40 intensive cases, and the open cases at the end of the year accounted for almost \$10 million of farmland and farm assets at risk. Our casework always seeks to help farmers reach their own goals, and often keeps farmers on their land. As Benny Bunting, Lead Farmer Advocate puts it: “Money will not replace lost land. You can replace a combine or a tractor. You can’t replace land.”

Our 2021 cases covered row crops, specialty crops, livestock, and contract poultry farmers, and focused on issues related to National Appeals Division (NAD) appeals, generational transfers, loan eligibility, civil rights complaints, crop insurance, debt relief, and debt restructuring tied to bankruptcy/pre-bankruptcy.

IN ADDITION TO staffing the Crisis Hotline, RAFI-USA keeps its Farmer Resources webpages up to date with information on credit, grants, and disaster recovery. Ongoing outreach to our extensive list of farmers alerts them to important opportunities and resources.

RAFI-USA continued its work begun in 2020 by participating in a research project aiming to reduce farm loss by researching and testing culturally responsive information and service delivery that addresses

the combined financial, land tenure, and mental health issues faced by farm families in severe financial distress. More than 30 farmers who had previous experiences with severe financial distress were interviewed for this project. This project is a collaborative effort with farmers, North Carolina State University, the Land Loss Prevention Project, NC Agromedicine Institute, and National Center for Appropriate Technology and is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2019- 38640-29878 through the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE).

ALSO IN 2021, RAFI-USA began a farmer advocate training program to increase RAFI-USA’s capacity to provide advocacy services to farmers in need. We recruited two farmers who have previously received farm advocacy services. The advocates completed more than 20 hours of training and contributed to casework development and strategy.

FARMERS: If you are in crisis (or know someone else who is in crisis) and need someone to talk to, please call 866.586.6746. The hotline is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

BY THE NUMBERS

48 calls into the Farmer Hotline or inquiries via our website

87 follow-up calls and emails to farmers

38 intensive farmer cases served

9 female farmers
31 male farmers

37% farmers of color;
63% white farmers

29 active cases at the end of the year, collectively representing \$9,456,000 of assets at risk

3 cases resolved; economic impact of \$1,300,000

2 of the farmers from the 3 resolved cases are still farming

JUST FOODS PROMOTES meaningful standards for organic agriculture and seeks to make fair, sustainable farming a viable choice. Protecting agricultural genetic diversity is also essential to the viability of family farms. Just Foods advocates for funding for classical breeding programs and the support of publicly held seeds and breeds.

RAFI-USA SUPPORTS the activities of the Southern Farmer Seed Cooperative's cutting edge work to increase the availability of regionally-adapted, organic commodity seed in southern U.S. regions so that more small- and mid-sized organic farmers here can gain independence from the corporate system. The co-op is successfully growing out, harvesting, saving back, and selling soybean seed, and the co-op sold all the soybeans it produced in 2021.

In 2021, the co-op also planted and tested 23 inbred varieties of corn in organic conditions. The process of developing new lines takes years and this work continues in 2022.

RAFI-USA IS ALSO involved in the North Carolina Seed Stewards Project, through which we planted North Carolina eco-types of two varieties of wildflower seed from North Carolina Botanical Garden. The NC Seed Stewards Project aims to conserve local seed varieties and production practices, improve biodiversity on farms, and strengthen collective and traditional community organizing models. NC Seed Stewards is a farmer-directed project that addresses the scarcity of North Carolina-ecotype plant seed availability through seed saving and collective learning.

Farmers of Color Network member Kamal Bell of Sankofa Farms prepares a field for wildflower seed planting.



RAFI-USA'S POLICY ADVOCACY

work in 2021 focused on engaging with the Biden administration on issues related to credit, equity, and competition/concentration issues in agriculture. The team submitted five public comments on topics ranging from “Tackling the Climate Crisis” to “Food and Agriculture Supply Chain Resilience.” For the comment on how to implement \$1.5 billion authorized by Congress in December 2020, RAFI-USA was able to generate an additional 100 comments to the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) from farmers, farmers market managers, and food pantry/food ministry staff and volunteers.

IN A SERIES of #TakeActionTuesday Action Alerts, RAFI-USA helped generate nearly 9,000 contacts with legislators on a variety of issues.

IN 2021, building on its historic focus on reforming the contract poultry production system, the Challenging Corporate Power program expanded its scope to include broader issues that enable corporate domination of our food and agriculture system. To that end, the program seeks to dismantle the current exploitative corporate agriculture system while creating viable alternative agriculture economies that are inclusive and equitable for farmers, rural communities, and consumers.

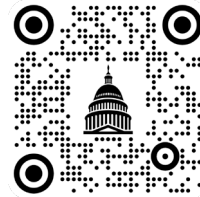
BY THE NUMBERS

3,698 total advocates

1,403 advocates
active in 2021

8,697 legislator
connections

READ OUR PUBLIC COMMENTS



VIRTUAL FARMER FLY-INS

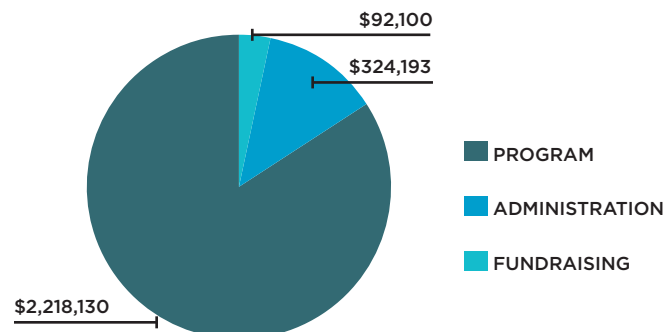
In March 2021, RAFI-USA participated in a virtual farmer fly-in with seven farmers from across the Southeast. Together with the National Family Farm Coalition we met with six congressional offices, including Sen. Raphael G. Warnock's, [D-GA] office, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Rep. David Scott, [D-GA-13], the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

Although the farmers came from a wide variety of farming backgrounds, there was a unified theme: urge the USDA to address serious issues of discrimination and lack of accountability towards farmers, particularly farmers of color. This request for greater accountability also extended to a call to reinstate the intended power of the Packers and Stockyards Act. As a part of the conversations, the farmers shared stories of their difficult, and sometimes devastating, relationships with USDA. Discrimination and lack of accountability within agencies like the Farm Service Agency (FSA) can seem like vague concepts with a hard-to-pinpoint cause. But during the farmer fly-in calls, members of Congress and their staff members were able to put a face to this problem and hear directly how it occurs and what the consequences are for those impacted including loan default, bankruptcy, land loss, or complete inability to access credit that should be available to them.

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021**

	2021			2020
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:				
Private foundations	\$ 757,134	\$ 2,328,320	\$ 3,085,454	\$ 1,786,550
Government grants and contracts	322,095	-	322,095	202,221
Individual contributions	167,869	18,356	186,225	134,416
Member dues	-	167,000	167,000	190,500
Service contracts	-	-	-	33,499
Other income	1,800	-	1,800	3,926
Net investment income	919	-	919	945
SBA Paycheck Protection Program	-	-	-	160,995
	<u>1,249,817</u>	<u>2,513,676</u>	<u>3,763,493</u>	<u>2,513,052</u>
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>1,882,872</u>	<u>(1,882,872)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	<u>3,132,689</u>	<u>630,804</u>	<u>3,763,493</u>	<u>2,513,052</u>
EXPENSES:				
Program services:				
Program services	1,925,696	-	1,925,696	1,477,074
Fiscal sponsorships	292,434	-	292,434	305,802
Total program services	<u>2,218,130</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,218,130</u>	<u>1,782,876</u>
Supporting services:				
Management and general	329,193	-	329,193	493,739
Fundraising	92,100	-	92,100	70,380
Total supporting services	<u>421,293</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>421,293</u>	<u>564,119</u>
TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES	<u>2,639,423</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,639,423</u>	<u>2,346,995</u>
Bad debt expense	<u>1,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>2,640,423</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,640,423</u>	<u>2,346,995</u>
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	<u>492,266</u>	<u>630,804</u>	<u>1,123,070</u>	<u>166,057</u>
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>1,028,798</u>	<u>2,206,904</u>	<u>3,235,702</u>	<u>3,069,645</u>
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 1,521,064</u>	<u>\$ 2,837,708</u>	<u>\$ 4,358,772</u>	<u>\$ 3,235,702</u>

EXPENSES



LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

	2021	2020
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 79,765	\$ 60,753
Accrued wages and benefits	59,717	59,322
Note payable, current portion	9,000	8,730
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	148,482	128,805
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:		
Security deposit	150	150
Note payable, noncurrent portion	91,093	101,116
TOTAL LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	91,243	101,266
TOTAL LIABILITIES	239,725	230,071
NET ASSETS:		
Without donor restrictions	1,521,064	1,028,798
With donor restrictions	2,837,708	2,206,904
TOTAL NET ASSETS	4,358,772	3,235,702
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 4,598,497	\$ 3,465,773

Thank you to our generous financial supporters!

RAFI-USA is able to do the vital work highlighted in this annual report because of the generosity of our supporters. We are grateful to the 300 individuals, businesses and faith communities who gave nearly 700 donations in 2021, as well as the more than 25 foundations and federal agen-

cies that provided grants to RAFI-USA.

We are proud that 24% of our total 2021 budget was spent on grants and awards RAFI-USA regranted to farmers and farmer collectives, faith-based hunger relief programs, and farmers market incentive projects.

RAFI-USA believes in transparency, ethical accounting, and donor stewardship. We are pleased to have earned the 2021 Platinum GuideStar Exchange Seal, the sixth consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, and the top rating from GreatNonprofits.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021

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