

Duke Campus Farm

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



A LETTER FROM THE FARM MANAGER

More than most, it's been a season of transition here at the Duke Campus Farm. This time last year, the farm was entering a six-month strategic planning process, building on the work of farm founder Emily Sloss T'10 to grow DCF's mission. I was returning to New York City after farming and teaching at UC Santa Cruz's Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, heading back to a sub-basement cubicle to wrap up a doctorate in English literature and the environmental humanities.

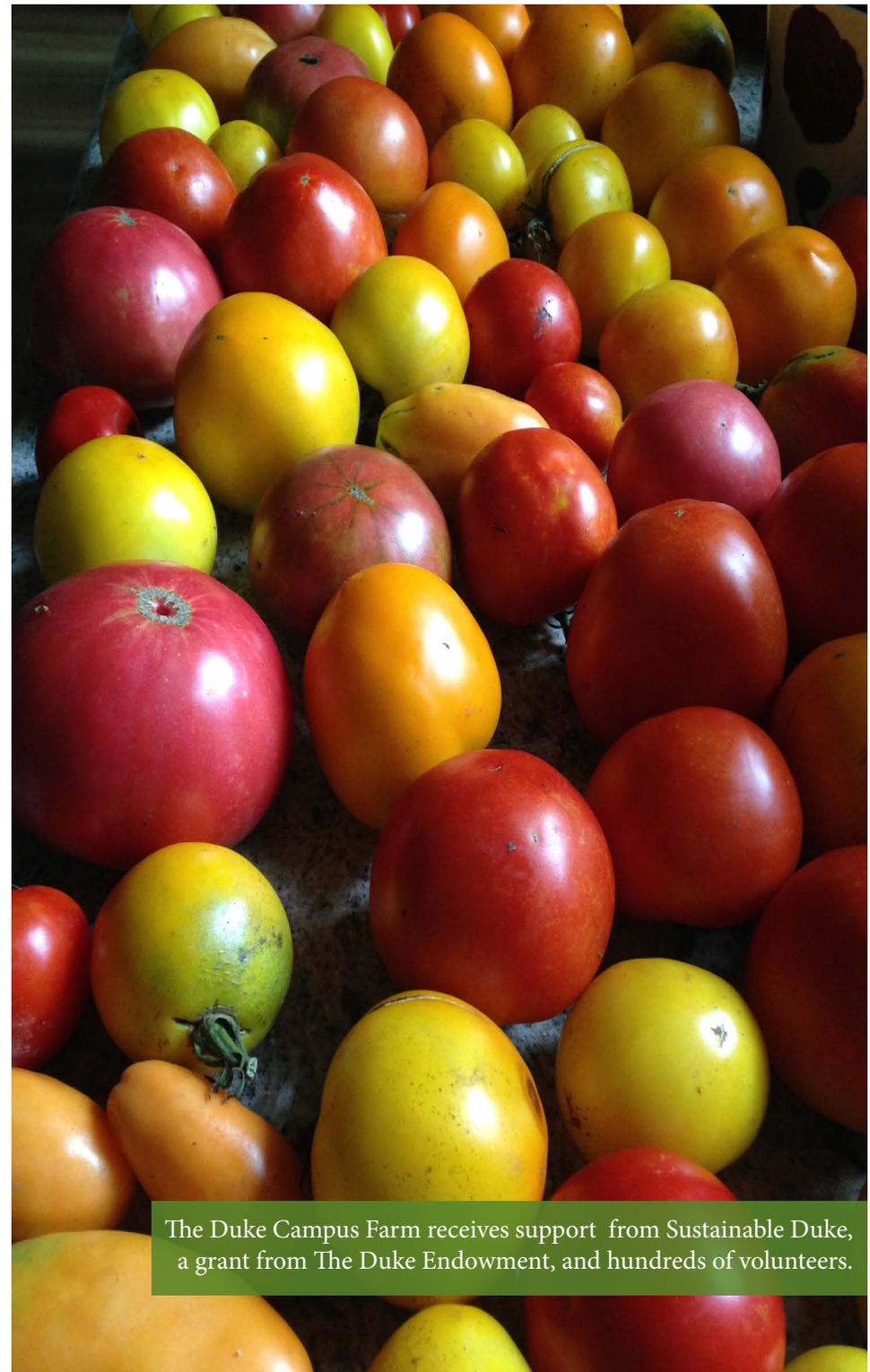
By early summer, I was here learning to read a new landscape - plucking peas, ordering tools, hauling compost and packing coolers. After four seasons of farming, and five years working in and around the campus farm movement, the chance to restore a piece of hard-used farmland; to work with a dynamic and ambitious young program; and to bring land-based learning to a world-class university eager to start rethinking our relationship to food and to the land and people that grow it - for me, these were irresistible opportunities.

It is increasingly clear that, as a culture and as a species, we need to reimagine and rebuild the current food system. This will take critical thinking, bold leadership, honed skills and a nuanced understanding of social, economic and environmental systems. DCF's founding story and the steadily growing demand for its programming show unequivocally that Duke students are clamoring for opportunities to rise to this challenge. With your support, we can continue to answer this call.

Over the past four years, the Farm has found fertile ground in a strong network of advocates and supporters. I feel truly grateful to be joining this community, one that recognizes the power of food to create social cohesion and social change. Wherever I grow food, I find I'm always both teaching and being taught - by farmers, by neighbors, by the land itself. I can't tell you how much I look forward to meeting and growing with you.



Saskia Cornes



The Duke Campus Farm receives support from Sustainable Duke, a grant from The Duke Endowment, and hundreds of volunteers.

As Local as it Gets

Our sustainably-grown produce is available throughout the year, to everyone on campus, at Penn Pavilion. Eaters become stakeholders when they sign up for our Community Supported Agriculture program, sharing in the bounty of summer as well as the leaner days of early spring harvest.

“Participating in the Duke Campus Farm CSA meant getting a whole box of excitement every week this summer. That I got to meet the faculty, staff, and students who had grown the food was icing on the cake. The Farm provides its community the chance to participate in a process that so many take for granted.”

- David Schmidt / Assistant Director - Regional Programming, Duke Alumni Affairs



“What sets DCF apart for me, is not only that they are local, sustainable, organic and affordable, but also the tremendous respect they have for what they grow. 75% of what makes a successful dish are the ingredients themselves, and having the opportunity to go and see what is being harvested on any given day drives inspiration and motivation to teach, learn, and develop new ideas.”

- Eduardo Polit / Executive Chef, Penn Pavilion / Bon Appetit Management Company

The South's Tastiest Town

As farm-to-table becomes almost de rigeur in the Triangle, DCF has strengthened its relationships with local chefs. Our yard-long “Red Noodle” beans inspired NOSH chef Katie Featherstone to preserve a full season's worth (still garnishing NOSH's famous bloody-marys). Edible flowers and dandelion greens were a new part of this year's crop plan at the request of Piedmont Restaurant's Ben Adams. These, alongside our signature beets, were a feature of Piedmont's Vegan Dinner event.

By the Numbers

\$6760 in CSA sales this summer

300 lbs of DCF watermelon eaten by first year students and their families at the Taste of Duke orientation picnic

120 flowering perennials planted to attract beneficial insects

90 lbs of our sweet potatoes served at Penn Pavilion's Thanksgiving Dinner

30+ lbs each week of DCF arugula and kale sold to Duke Dining

19 different tomato varieties planted for our CSA members

6 sweet potato cultivars bred by renowned local farmer Doug Jones and grown by DCF

4 colors of peanuts in our Cackalacky demonstration plot



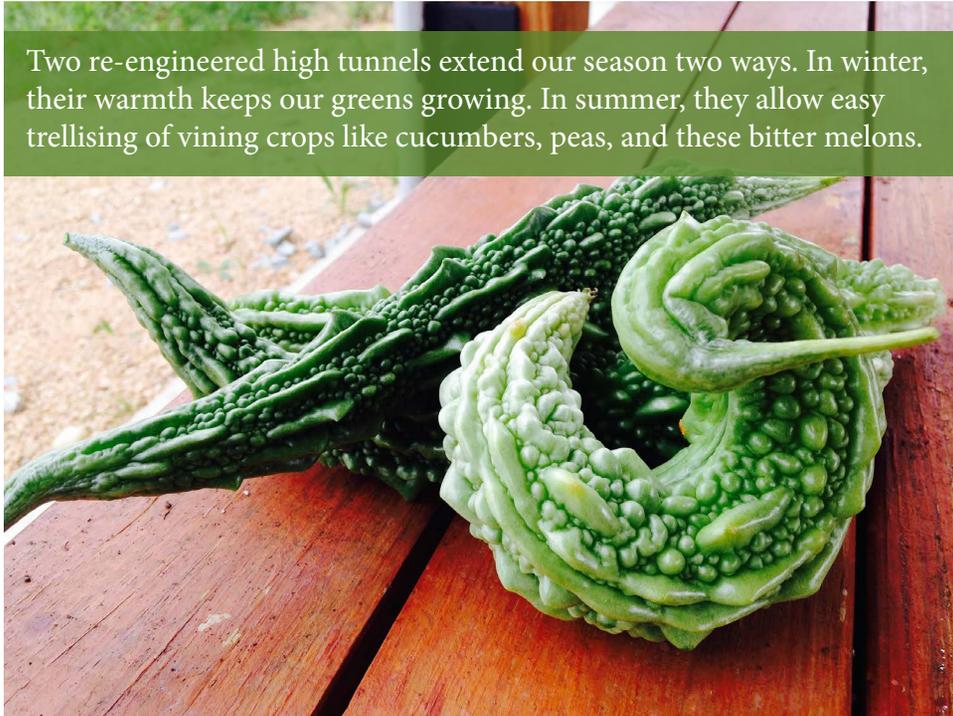
MAKING ROOM TO GROW

Strategic Planning

Having evolved from a student-led organization into a Duke institution over the past three years, DCF took time to reflect on its progress, set priorities and expand its vision. Farm staff, the Board of Advisors, and strategy consultants Set of 1 came together to envision and articulate a five-year strategic plan to fulfill DCF's new mission: "to inspire and empower the Duke community to catalyze food systems change." View the full plan at sites.duke.edu/farm.

Infrastructure Improvements

Our ambitious strategic plan demands a top-notch teaching and production facility. Faced with a hot, dry summer this year, we built more efficient irrigation and refrigeration systems to keep our produce cool (even when we're not). With the help of our neighbors, we turned a garden-shed into a walk-in cooler or "cool bot" that maintains the quality of our vegetables in the hours (not days) between harvest and delivery.



Two re-engineered high tunnels extend our season two ways. In winter, their warmth keeps our greens growing. In summer, they allow easy trellising of vining crops like cucumbers, peas, and these bitter melons.



In 2015, we hope to build these little seedlings a permanent home. A sturdy greenhouse will expand our production capacity and offer an enclosed space to welcome students in cold or wet weather.

FARM TO CAMPUS, CAMPUS TO FARM



“Working with DCF provided me with on-the-ground field experience that dramatically expanded my classroom knowledge. It has been incredibly valuable for me to be able to apply what I’ve learned in the classroom to my work at the Duke Campus Farm, and to take practical knowledge back to my courses. The farm motivates. It opens eyes.”

- Anne Martin, T’ 15

A team of five students from Dr. Charlotte Clark’s “Sustainability Theory and Practice” imagined, researched, interviewed, toured, designed, managed, and dug their way to our newest demonstration plot—a medicinal herb garden.



Semester Long Projects at the Farm

“Effects of Biochar Application on Soil Composition and Plant Growth in North Carolina” by Anne Martin, an Honors Thesis in Biology with Dr. Chantal Reid

“Evaluating Programming at the Duke Campus Farm” by Erika Hansen, for Dr. Liz Shapiro, ENVS 755 Community-Based Environmental Management

“Feasibility Study of Integrating a Community Supported Agriculture Option Into the Duke Undergraduate Meal Plan” by Matt Budofsky, an Honors Thesis in ENVS with Dr. Charlotte Clark

“The Medicinal Herb Garden Project at the Duke Campus Farm” a group project with Dr. Charlotte Clark, ENVS 245 Sustainability in Theory and Practice

“My desire to practically express my learning was perfectly complimented by the opportunity to physically build, breathe, consider, and dabble. The cause and effect of our ideas were visible and had consequences.”

- Bryce McAteer, T’ 17

Course Collaborations

DOCST 167S-01 - *“Politics of Food,”* Professor Charlie Thompson

PUBPOL 304 - *“Economics of the Public Sector,”* Professor Steve Sexton

SPANISH 311 - *“Intensive Summer Spanish: Food Production and Consumption in NC and Peru,”* Professor Melissa Simmermeyer

PE 203 - *“Diet and Nutrition,”* Professor Franca Alphin

PUBPOL 265 - *“Enterprising Leadership,”* Professor Tony Brown

PUBPOL 190 - *“Civic Engagement in Higher Education,”* Professor Eric Mlyn

Intensive monocropping of tobacco and cotton dominated this bioregion, the Piedmont, for over a century. Our growing practices bring diversity back to the agricultural landscape by rebuilding soil ecologies and restoring habitats for snake-eating raptors, essential pollinators, and other animals like this Southern Toad, which feeds on insect pests.



WORKING WITHIN A MOVEMENT

Part of a growing movement of farms at liberal arts campuses across the United States, DCF listened and spoke at three national conferences this year. Our workshop at the Yale Food Systems Symposium packed the house, bringing together academics and practitioners to find innovative ways for campus farms to support rigorous curricular work, and vice-versa.

Getting Subnatural

DCF joined an interdisciplinary team of faculty under the leadership of Professor Thomas Parker for the “Subnature and Culinary Culture” series this fall. A flexible interlocutor, DCF moderated a panel on Food Utopias at the Kenan Institute for Ethics, gave talks at the Franklin Humanities Institute and the Marketplace, and provided “subnatural” foods for four public events.

“Beyond laying the theoretical groundwork, the Farm provided a locus, a spatial there-ness. It offered a constructivist element to the gossamer nature of smoke and subnature, a lab where students could pursue the interest the events developed in a space that made real, tested, and informed the theories and ideas the subnature project had brought to the surface.”

- Professor Thomas Parker, lead convener, SubNature and Culinary Culture / Ass't Professor of Francophone Studies, Vassar College



Artist Jennifer Stratton put DCF at the literal center of the table for the Nordic Food Lab/Five Chefs One Concept Dinner. Foodies lured by the region’s top chefs and visitors from Noma (currently ranked the best restaurant in the world) were surprised to find soil centerpieces and table-top compost collection as part of their dining experience. Diners themselves became part of Stratton’s “Decomposition Dining” project, in tracking the remnants of their meals as they transform back into the soil they came from.



We shared our work with campus farmers from all over the country at the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association conference. Through a tour of our acre, and through a formal presentation, we showcased the opportunities that historic crops, like the cotton pictured above, offer to both establish and problematize students’ sense of place.



“Unlike other areas where the Fuqua Food Forum has engaged with Duke, DCF provides a real-world example of how these activities play out, not just an academic exercise or discussion. It also helps our members really connect with the people working at the base of the agricultural supply chain unlike any other, and appreciate what occurs outside the office.”

- Eric Chapell, Fuqua '15, Co-President, Duke Apiary Club / Founder, Fuqua Food Forum

Student Life Highlights

Alternative Fall and Spring Breaks: DCF partnered with the Kenan Institute for Ethics to take part in its “Food and Faith” AFB. DCF’s own ASB offered perspectives on food justice and food access from community-based organizations as well as Duke faculty.

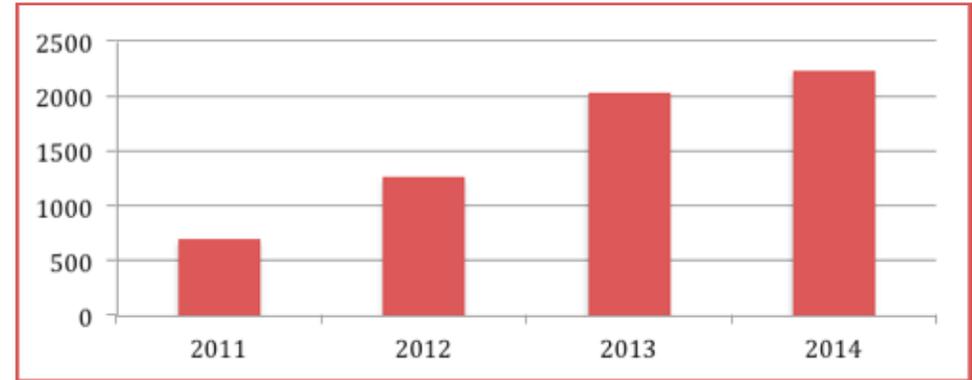
Baldwin Scholars Weekend Workday: Father-daughter pairs planted a season’s worth of potatoes while sharing family food memories.

KVille Campout: The farm offered over forty graduate students a green respite from the KVille hothouse.

Duke Apiary Club: With the support of a grant from Burt’s Bees and local bee guru Donna Devanney, the Duke Apiary Club’s workshop series and monthly tours offer an in-depth look into DCF’s four beehives.

DCF drew well over 1,000 visitors to the farm this year, from KVille campers to the reigning Miss America.

Volunteer Hours Worked at DCF



Participation in the Duke Campus Farm’s open workdays continues to grow. Twice a week, Duke students and staff, visiting scholars, and Durham families come together to learn, grow, work, and taste the harvest.



THANK YOU!

In four years, Duke Campus Farm has grown from an undergraduate seminar paper and a meadow into a cherished place in the intellectual, communal and spiritual lives of an ever-increasing number of Duke students, faculty, and alumni. We are proud to see our numbers grow each season, and thankful to all who have supported us.

We work hard to offer tangible and visible evidence that a restorative relationship to our environment is possible, and to change the conversation around food and food systems. As a young program, we do not have the benefit of an endowment. Your generosity is essential to sustaining our momentum and helping us grow.

Your contributions sow new opportunities for students, for academic integration, and for our future growth. We welcome financial gifts at sites.duke.edu/farm/giving-opportunities/.

By the Numbers

1200 new square feet of growing space added to the farm this season

834 volunteers lent a hand at community work days

200 + dancers enjoyed farm food and fancy footwork at our Spring and Fall Contra Under the Stars

80 CSA shares sold

70 oak saplings grown for Trees Across Durham public schools

65 academics and practitioners who attended conference presentations and workshops led by DCF

56 Project BUILD pre-orientation participants

19 course collaborations

4 years of production and programming at DCF

2 lines of electric fence installed to keep deer away





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Duke Campus Farm Staff

Saskia Cornes, Farm Manager &
Program Coordinator

Emily McGinty, Farm Fellow

Josh Barfield, Site Coordinator

Campus Stakeholders

Sustainable Duke

Duke Forest

Office of the Executive Vice President

Duke Dining

Student Interns

Ivonna Dumanyan

Claire Fox

Sam Jolly

Cole Lutz

Billy Roddy

Simone Serat

Mary Skapek

Nicholas School Assistants

Theo Collins

Greg Cooper

Eleanor Heywood

Board of Advisors

Larry Bohs

Brenda Brodie

Charlotte Clark

Mary Eubanks

Michelle Nowlin

Jedediah Purdy

Charlie Thompson

Daniel Vermeer

Grants

The Duke Endowment

In-Kind

Blue Merle Farm

Brooke Schuman

Carolina Friends School

David and Vickie Davis

Donna Devanney

Doug Jones

Duke Biology Greenhouse

Duke Grounds

Emily Sloss and Lee Miller

Frog Pond Farm

Gretchen and Michael Morrissey

Jenny Stratton

Mark Waller

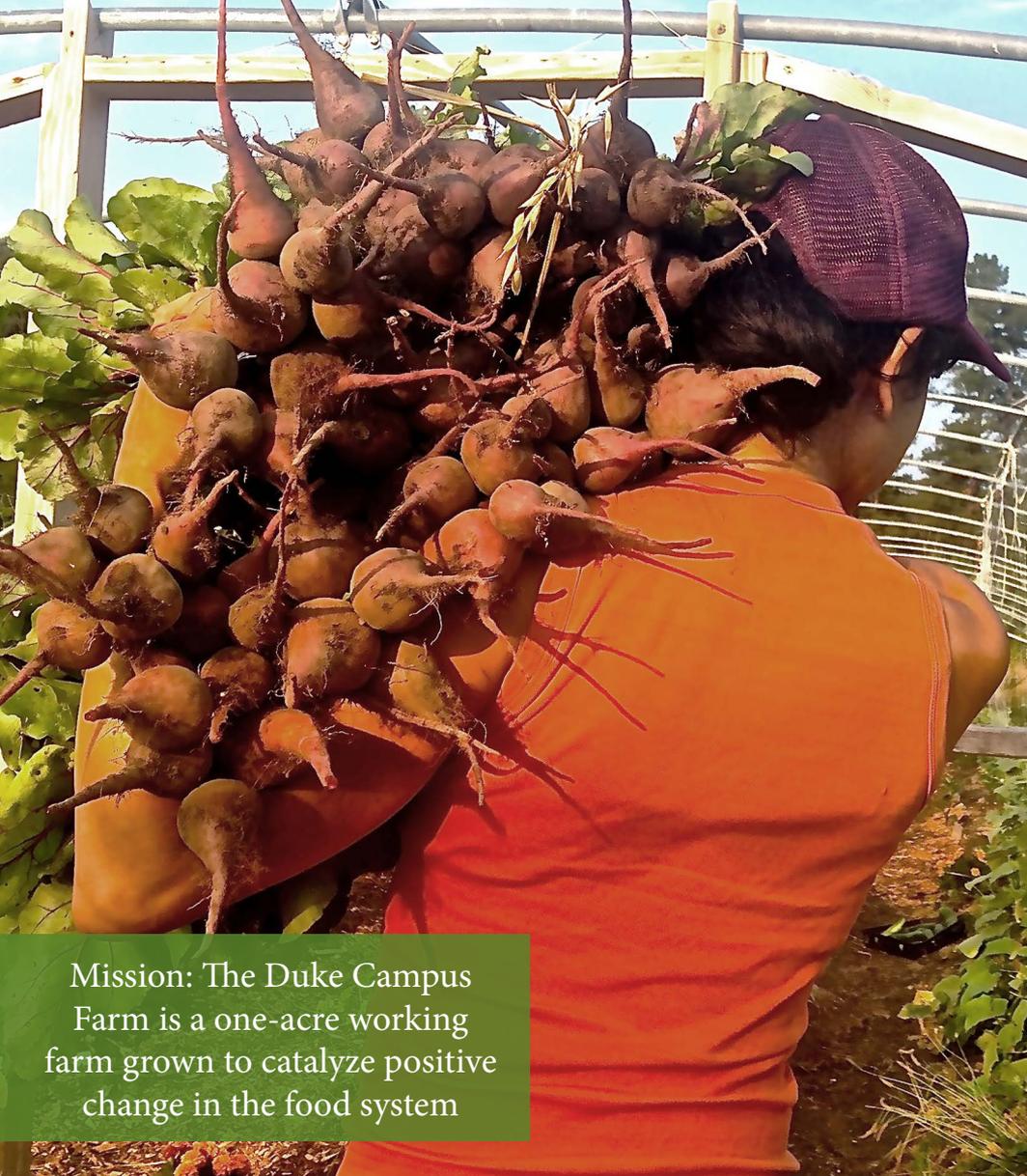
Peter and Martha Klopfer

Richard Copsey

Sarah Van Name

The Brodie Family

Tom Parker



Mission: The Duke Campus Farm is a one-acre working farm grown to catalyze positive change in the food system

Visit Us:

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