A Letter From The Farm Manager

“Duke has a farm?!” is a question I have heard often, particularly during Freshman Orientation Week. At the signature welcome picnic, a mountain of our multi-colored watermelons greets new families, inviting Duke’s youngest student crop to commune and prepare for four years of growth. Three years into the farm’s life, most first-years arrive aware of the farm, and more each year cite DCF as an influential factor in their decision to apply and enroll. The 2013 picnic marked a turning point for the farm, as exclamations of disbelief were replaced with inquiries about internship applications, workday carpools, and how to buy our produce.

This new awareness is testament to the permanent space and community we’ve created here at Duke. Major infrastructure developments and enthusiastic demand for programming speak for themselves: the farm is here to stay.

The farm arose out of need for alternative spaces and dialogue around food and agriculture, and we continue to fill those gaps. We help students, faculty, and our extended community discover new ways to study, engage, and even socialize. As a student myself, I couldn’t have eaten a meal grown by my peers or joined discussions about food politics in a living-learning laboratory like the farm. I look at the happy faces in this report and smile knowing these opportunities exist for current and future Duke students.

There is still much work to be done, but we take a moment now to thank you, our incredible network of advocates and supporters, without whom this project would not continue to thrive.

Emily Sloss

“Starting Fresh”: Local food writers joined together this year to write a cookbook about Durham’s agricultural evolution from tobacco town to foodie center. DCF along with other local farms will be featured in the book, coming soon. Photo credit: Megapixie
COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

Campus Supported Agriculture
It takes a campus to raise a farm. The Duke community supports our agricultural enterprise by purchasing produce for its dining halls and home kitchens. After a successful summer CSA venture spanning May through August, we launched a fall CSA and delivered weekly produce boxes to offices and dorm rooms across campus. From April through September, we sell produce at Live for Life's on-campus farmers' market. Additionally, students swipe their Food Points to enjoy our produce in campus dining halls, the Marketplace and new Events Pavilion on West Campus.

Around Town
The farm has expanded its business to include local restaurants in the South’s Tastiest Town. Piedmont Restaurant, NOSH and the Refectory earn their farm-to-table reputations by featuring DCF produce grown just miles from their Durham kitchens. Piedmont even featured our produce at its Young Farmer’s Dinner, where DCF staff shared conversation and an elegant meal with enthusiastic locavores.

Taste the rainbow: Summer tomatoes come in an incredible spectrum of colors, from pale yellows to bright purples. Tomato varieties this year included: Sungold, Lolipop, Orange Banana, Eva Purple Ball, Green Zebra, Indigo Rose, Dad’s Sunset, Taxi, Jasper and Black Cherry.
CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

2013 COURSES

Spring Semester

ENV 245: Food & Energy, Dr. Charlotte Clark. “Transportation to DCF”

ENV 806: Program Management, Dr. Dave Hinton. “Edible and Native Landscaping on Campus”


Fall Semester

ENV 245: Sustainability: Theory and Practice, Dr. Charlotte Clark. “Unexpected Edibles”


Student Internships

DCF interns receive a more intensive ag education and leave a lasting footprint on the farm. During the school year, 4 undergraduate and graduate interns labor to keep the farm running from September through May while two students work 20 hours per week May-August for their summer internships. Our workers plant, harvest, and maintain our site, but also host dynamic workshops, write thoughtful blog posts, and design new structures, among other accomplishments. We hope to grow both healthy plants and good people at the farm, and interns are integral parts of both equations.

Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

Students engage with our living-learning laboratory in many ways. Professors teach and break bread with their classes under our new pavilion, while students join community workdays and design memorandums, short documentary films, and field experiments around the farm. Farm staff mentor those completing projects at the undergrad and masters levels; we believe students’ food-related interests, from crop genetics to creative writing, deserve space to grow at Duke. Through interviewing local farmers and food business owners, DCF has identified research gaps in sustainable agriculture. Students and professors now have access to an online database of past, current and potential research projects at Duke around food and agriculture.

“My 2-year assistantship at the Duke Campus Farm has been a vital part of my graduate education at the Nicholas School. It has been a place where I can viscerally experience my natural science course material, creatively solve problems, learn how to grow vegetables and find a few peaceful moments away from a computer screen. The farm has been a home for all of my creative and intellectual energies, from starting DCF’s mushroom log and compost operations to building pilot plots for my masters project about sustainable ag. education.”

- Damon Cory-Watson, MEM ’13

“I hopped onto the wrong freshman orientation bus in fall 2011 and ended up touring the farm. Afterward, I applied to be an intern and the rest is history. Working at the farm has been the best part of my Duke experience. Learning growing techniques, teaching workshops, and facilitating our Alternative Spring Break have all helped me embrace education beyond the classroom. I’ve since developed a passion for field research and the environment. Although I may not pursue a career in farming, the experience and perspective I’ve gained on the farm will strongly impact my future career choices, whatever they may be.”

- Anna Willoughby, Evolutionary Anthropology Major, Class of 2015
ENRICHING STUDENT LIFE

Alternative Spring Break
The farm hosted its second annual Alternative Spring Break, an intensive 3-day program that explored the people, processes, and politics behind “farm-to-fork”. An interdisciplinary group of undergraduate and graduate students spent their days working on farms, meeting local food entrepreneurs, and exploring Durham’s extensive network of community food organizations. Each evening, the students prepared a locally-grown feast for guest experts, who facilitated conversations on topics ranging from genetic modification to food labeling laws and the Farm Bill. In farm fields and crowded kitchens, we watched Duke students grow closer to the Triangle food community and to each other.

Project BUILD
In August, small armies of incoming freshmen arrived at the farm with their Project BUILD leaders. The 64 pre-orientation participants worked in teams of 8 to build permanent beds and harvest summer’s bounty. Duke’s newest students enjoyed the fruits of their labor (see front cover for evidence), leaving watermelons seeds and promises of future return in their wake.

Prepping with Project BUILD:
“During our farm visit, we prepared the soil for new plants just like the Duke community was preparing for a group of new students. Like seeds awaiting cultivation, we arrived with hopes of blossoming into young adults.”
- Kevin Lin, Class of 2017
CACKALACKY CASH CROPS

Monthly Workshop Series
This fall DCF launched its “Cackalacky Cash Crops” workshop series to pay homage to North Carolina’s rich agricultural history. We planted an educational heritage plot including tobacco, cotton, indigo, peanuts and field corn. The workshop series hosts experts from across the state offering participants context for our modern food and textile industries.

Social Context
Our workshop series goes beyond seed and soil science to address the social, political, and economic impacts of cash crop industries. DCF offers a realistic analysis of the relationship status between commodities like cotton and tobacco and their historic legacies: it’s complicated.

Sustaining Ag’s Future with Hints from the Past
Our corn workshop featured Duke Biology professor Mary Eubanks, a corn geneticist who studies native grasses to breed competitive varieties of non-GMO, organic corn which are incredibly drought tolerant and protein dense. Like Eubanks, DCF embraces historical roots to inform and improve our production practices today.

Like most crops, peanuts also come in many shapes and colors that we can’t find in the grocery store. This year we experimented with black, red and the more common brown peanut.
Community Workdays
Volunteers ‘learn by doing’ on Thursday and Sunday afternoons. Student groups, families, and curious citizens logged 2000 sweat- and story-filled hours in our field. These folks - first-time farmers to seasoned greenthumbs - remind us why we are here: to teach, learn, and grow together.

Connecting the farm to K-12 students
The farm built a new partnership with Durham’s Triangle Day School (TDS) thanks to Kate Newman, a 2012 Duke alum-turned-science -teacher. TDS 6th graders now visit once a month to lend their hands and energy to the farm.

Additionally, Farm Fellow Emily McGinty conducted “Virtual Field Trips” with 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classrooms in her native Pittsburgh, PA. More than 300 elementary scientists researched campus farm conundrums and presented their findings during a series of video chats. Farm staff has promised to stay busy implementing the young experts’ advice on good composting, crop rotations, and more.

Shiitake Scavengers: “My 6th graders are so proud of their efforts working on the farm. The partnership between DCF and TDS’s 6th grade has been a formative part of my students’ experience and will impact their food choices for a very long time.” - Kate Newman (T’12)
CEMENTING OUR LEGACY

A Roof Over Our Heads
As summer settled in, piles of blueprints and permits transformed into a community pavilion and much-needed storage shed. Thanks to generous funding from The Duke Endowment and others, the farm now has an outdoor classroom, a social gathering space, and a physical representation of the farm’s permanence at Duke. As summer intern Josh Barfield aptly states, “There are now more places to hang the tools, rest the bodies, and facilitate the conversations that make DCF a hub of agricultural innovation, education, and involvement.”

Interns Put Skills to Work
With a nod to both form and function, our summer student-farmers built new structures to enhance DCF’s humble acre. A central pergola will boast hardy kiwis and muscadine vines in seasons to come, and artistically constructed cedar gates provide a warm welcome into the farm. New benches, permanent pathways and educational demonstration gardens around the perimeter of the field allow visitors to engage with the farm in new ways.

Dancing in the Dark: We celebrated our new pavilion with an old-time Contra Dance, our largest and most lively event to date. More than 150 pairs of feet twirled to live music during what fiddler Mara Shea called “a joyous occasion beneath the stars.”
Supporting the Farm
At year’s end, we are proud to share the farm’s accomplishments because they are a product of your support. Thank you for lending a hand, a skill, or some spare change to the continued growth of our community-supported venture. We welcome financial gifts to the farm at www.sites.duke.edu/farm/giving-opportunities and welcome your time and talents any Thursday or Sunday at community workdays throughout the year.

2013 By the Numbers
Your generous support helps our numbers grow.

5,600 pounds of produce sold
2,000 volunteer hours logged
125 varieties of crops grown
23 summer CSA members
18 fall CSA members
16 educational outreach events hosted
15 Duke class tours
12 K-12 farm visits
9 student internships
8 individual and group student projects
3 years in production
2 full time staff
1 overarching goal: providing sustainable produce and food education to the Duke and Durham communities
THANK YOU...

The Duke Campus Farm thrives on rain and sunshine, on the sweat of interns and volunteers, and on the dedication and work of its many supporters across the University and its Durham community. As 2014 begins, we thank you for everything you’ve done for DCF in 2013.

DUKE CAMPUS FARM STAFF
Emily Sloss, Farm Manager
Emily McGinty, Fellow ’13-’14
Sarah Parsons, Fellow ’12-’13

CAMPUS STAKEHOLDERS
Sustainable Duke
Duke Forest
Office of Executive Vice President
Duke Dining

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Damon Cory-Watson
Steve Kuznetsvtov
Josh Barfield
Henry Frank
Sam Jolly
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North Carolina Humanities Council
Small Town Records
MISSION
The Duke Campus Farm is a production farm and educational facility dedicated to providing the Duke and Durham communities with fresh, sustainable produce by creating a living-learning laboratory around all things food and agriculture.

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