



2015 LOOKING BACK
2016 LOOKING AHEAD





December 31, 2015

Aldo Leopold, author, ecologist, forester, and environmentalist once wrote, “That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics.” Over the last year, FBEN members have come together in person and virtually to explore a myriad of strategies that give people from all backgrounds access to soil and an understanding of how ecological communities relate to food and fiber production. Through these farm-based activities, FBEN is helping to cultivate a respect for the land: a land ethic.

2015 was a busy year for the network, comprised of conference presentations, an 8-farm study tour, and numerous skill-building workshops in locations around the U.S. Our membership grew in 2015 by nearly 300 to a high of 2,460 members who come from 48 states and 28 countries. With each additional dot on the map, the collective wisdom of the network grew stronger and the approaches to food and agriculture education grew more diverse.

The coming year is brimming with opportunities for inspiring, nurturing, and promoting farm-based education. The year 2016 marks 10 years since our founding in 2006, and we will be celebrating this milestone with 10 exciting initiatives, outlined in the following pages.

See you in 2016!

Vera Simon-Nobes

TOP: TRACTOR AT STONEWALL FARM, KEENE, NH

MIDDLE: RADISH AT EARTHDANCE FARMS, FERGUSON, MO

BOTTOM: HARVESTING AT POUGHKEEPSIE FARM PROJECT, POUGHKEEPSIE, NY



“Kids that come in here, they’re wired and they’re bouncing off the walls. But as soon as I put some soil in their hands, they just calm down. There’s something very spiritual about touching the soil.”

- Will Allen, Growing Power From Huffington Post, “Meet Will Allen” May 1, 2015.

GROWING POWER
MILWAUKEE, WI



IN SEPTEMBER, THE FBEN STUDY TOUR THROUGH NEW YORK STATE VISITED STONE BARNs CENTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, POCAntICO HILLS, NY

2015: LOOKING BACK

Last year was full of growth and learning for the FBEN. The immersive workshop, the ABCs of Farm-Based Education, was offered three times, twice at Shelburne Farms and once at the The Farm at Lee Martinez Park in Fort Collins, Colorado, in collaboration with an ABCs alum. In August, FBEN member and Mid-Atlantic Farm-Based Education Network Leader Peggy Eppig taught a workshop at the Aldo Leopold Foundation's Inaugural Conference in Baraboo, Wisconsin on farms as optimal classrooms for environmental and conservation education. Her presentation was one of many throughout the year that helped teachers, farmers, organizers, policy makers, FoodCorps members, and many others understand the power of farm-based education.

With schools back in session and harvests in full swing, FBEN hit the road on a study tour through New York State. Attendees visited longtime FBEN members such as Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, Hawthorne Valley Farm, Hilltop Hanover, Green Chimneys and Manhattan Country School, as well as new friends like Common Ground Farm and Muscoot Farm.

Activities continued into the fall, when FBEN member Lauren Gagliano shared some of Suzie's Farm's successes at the the 44th annual North American Association for Environmental Education in San Diego, California. The Mid-Atlantic Farm-Based Education Network hosted a gathering at Fernbrook Farms in New Jersey in November, and FBEN Coordinator Vera Simon-Nobes was one of 450 delegates at Canada's First National School Food Conference, "Changing the Menu," where she shared examples of members' innovative programming and answered questions about connecting consumers and farmers. In November, the FBEN launched a network-wide survey to explore the size and structure of members' farms and organizations, to glean information about the populations served, and to find out where members are turning for professional development beyond the FBEN. The survey yielded valuable information that we will be processing in 2016.

In addition to the formal programs offered, FBEN members shared their expertise through writing for our newsletter and communicating with each other directly. Members sought employees through the FBEN jobs board, and discussed questions about nonprofit board management and equitable registration practices, and asked technical questions about greenhouse construction, food systems curricula for high schoolers, and so much more.



LEFT: CHICKEN CHORES AT HIDDEN VILLA, LOS ALTOS, CA

RIGHT: STRAWBERRY HARVEST AT EARTHDANCE FARMS, FERGUSON, MO



POUGHKEEPSIE FARM PROJECT CREW
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY

Farm-based education is a form of experiential, interdisciplinary education that connects people to the environment, their community, and the role of agriculture in their lives. Farm-based education promotes land stewardship, the value of meaningful work, and supports the local food systems that sustain us. The mission of the Farm-Based Education Network is to inspire, nurture and promote farm-based education.

FBEN HISTORY

Did you know that the FBEN was founded in 2006? Eighteen representatives from eleven farms and organizations met for a lively 2-day meeting at Shelburne Farms in Shelburne, Vermont. The idea for the association had brewed for quite some time. Brooke Redmond, a consultant to farm-based education programs, had visited farm programs in the spring of 2004 while researching her masters thesis. In talking to farm-based educators, board members, and teachers, she realized that everyone had the same idea: to start an organization that would support and nurture farm-based education programs.

That seed of an idea sprouted in 2005 at the The Association of Nature Center Administrators' 2nd Farm Education Symposium in Greenville, Delaware. Then, in May of 2006, the Farm-Based Education Association gathered at Shelburne Farms the first time to discuss how it could support the work of farm-based educators around the world. Representatives from the following farms and organizations played key roles in launching the association and shepherded it as it grew and evolved: The Farms of the Trustees of Reservations, The Delaware Nature Center & Coverdale Farm, Drumlin Farm, The FARM Institute, The Farm School, Land's Sake, Shelburne Farms, Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture, Stonewall Farm, Pony Farm & Horse Power, and the Spannocchia Foundation.

The Farm-Based Education Association hosted gatherings, developed a website, and worked on consulting projects. The membership grew from 3 people in 2007 to 500 in 2010 to 2,460 in 2015. It moved from an association to a network in 2013 and was nested at Shelburne Farms, where a team of educators continues to help the FBEN fulfill its mission of inspiring, nurturing, and promoting farm-based education.



November 2016
Massachusetts



6th Farm-Based Education Conference

THE 6TH NATIONAL FARM-BASED EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Many questions about farm-based education - financial viability, management of staff, and impact of programming, to name a few - are most effectively explored in person. After three years of collaborating on regional gatherings, we are excited to announce the FBEN's 6th National Farm-Based Education Conference coming to the East Coast this fall! We will release details soon, but we promise engrossing workshops, inspiring field trips, passionate attendees, and of course, birthday cake. Join us as we inspire, nurture and promote farm-based education and launch our second successful decade.

MONTHLY COMMUNICATIONS

Our FBEN newsletter is a strong network tool and in 2016 we will publish more frequently. The newsletter will be a platform for highlighting members' work and sharing resources and funding opportunities

AN UPDATED WEBSITE

An updated website will make it easier to find and share photos, resources, and promising practices.

COACHING FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Attendees of the March 2016 course, ABCs of Farm-Based Education at Shelburne Farms will have the opportunity to enroll in a pilot "coaching" program, which will provide them with continued technical assistance after the workshop has concluded.

SPONSORSHIP OF FBEN AMBASSADORS AT NATIONAL CONFERENCES

We will draw on our members' expertise in 2016 to lead workshops at national conferences in their regions. This strategy expands our reach, exposes attendees to program examples, and empowers educators to train others.

BOARD MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

A strong board of directors is essential to nonprofit success. In 2016, FBEN will explore this topic through a virtual Community of Practice.

FARM-BASED EDUCATORS TOUR REPRISE

Last year's tour to eight educational farms in New York State drew 38 attendees. Many more wanted to come along! So in 2016, we will reprise a Farm-Based Educators Tour to meet new friends and strengthen our peer learning community.

IMMERSIVE WORKSHOPS

We're coming to a town near you! We have exciting, action-packed workshops planned for Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Fort Collins, Colorado, and Madison, Wisconsin, to name a few. Stay tuned for details!

SOCIAL MEDIA EXPANSION

The FBEN will use its broad reach to help amplify the work of its members through featuring a #farmbasedEd program each Friday. As each week winds down, we will invite members to celebrate the fresh ideas coming from farms and education sites around the world.

NATIONAL FARMER TRAINING COLLABORATIVE

In 2015, a new nationwide collaboration, "Next Generation Farmers and Ranchers," formed to strengthen existing programs and to develop a toolkit for farms that offer apprenticeships. The FBEN will join this collaborative as an Advisor in 2016, and will contribute relevant materials and resources to the group.



“Our focus is longterm farm-based education that is impactful. Our motive is not just to provide them with a nice day on the farm, it’s to educate. A 7-year-old in our program can tell you more about sustainability and healthy food than most 40-year-olds.”

- Barbara Sarbin, Director of Educational Programs for *Something Good in the World*, Cortlandt Manor, New York



PHOTOS

COVER: LIFE LAB GARDEN
CLASSROOM, SANTA CRUZ, CA

PAGE 7 TOP ROW: (L-R) GROW
SOME GOOD, MAUI, HI; BREAD
AND BUTTER FARM, SHELBURNE,
VT; ELDERFLOWER FARM,
LINCOLNVILLE, ME

MIDDLE: (L-R) ABCS OF FARM-
BASED EDUCATION AT
SHELBURNE FARMS,
SHELBURNE, VT (BOTH PHOTOS);
COMMON GROUND FARM,
BEACON, NY.

BOTTOM: (L-R) EARTHDANCE
FARMS, FERGUSON, MO; ABCS
OF FARM-BASED EDUCATION AT
SHELBURNE FARMS,
SHELBURNE, VT; STONEWALL
FARM, KEENE, NH.

FARM-BASED EDUCATION
CONFERENCE PHOTO: HIDDEN
VILLA, LOS ALTOS, CA

PAGE 10: SHELBURNE FARMS,
SHELBURNE, VT

BACK PAGE: YARN AT
MANHATTAN COUNTRY SCHOOL,
ROXBURY, NY

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Above: Yarn in the weaving studio at Manhattan Country School, Roxbury, NY

Thank you to our founding partners who launched the FBEN in 2006, and to our 2,460 members who weave the strong cloth of our network every day.
We look forward to growing with you.



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Shelburne Farms is the coordinating organization for the FBEN.