



# YEAR IN REVIEW

The FBEN's 2016 harvest



# Looking Back, Looking Ahead

As we celebrate a year of hard work and look towards another, one theme stands out above the rest: growth! It's true, over the last ten years, our vibrant Network of farm-based educators has grown, and that means the number of families and community members engaged in on-farm learning across the country has expanded as well. That is definitely something to celebrate.

In 2016, we also took a step back to consider a different measure of success: program *depth*. We asked ourselves how we could structure our offerings to provide not only an initial spark of inspiration, but ongoing energy to sustain practitioners in their good work of farm-based education.

Our strategies to bring depth to our activities were many. We piloted a coaching element as part of the ABCs of Farm-Based Education workshops, which deepened practitioners learning. We redesigned our website so that visitors could easily browse our resource library and pull any of its many helpful, free tools to apply to their work. We encouraged thoughtful questioning and reflection alongside peers at all workshops. This focused work strengthened our community of farm-based educators.

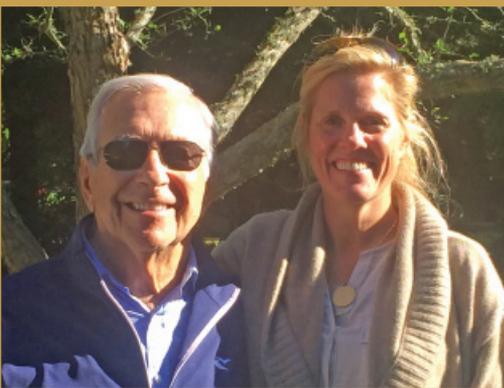
In 2017, we will continue to be guided by the goal of finding depth in our activities. We will energize our Q&As with Network Members through thoughtful questioning and writing. We will build our resource library to make available strong resources from our partners that focus on equity, justice, and food apartheid. We will use webinars and video technology to virtually transport people to each others' sites so we can learn through seeing without having to travel.

While I have served as FBEN Coordinator since 2013, I also wear a hat as a livestock farmer and educator on a diversified farm. Through this role, I try out farm-based activities, observe the education programs of other farms, and delight in imagining all the possibilities when strong farm-to-community partnerships are in place. Seeing the Network through a practitioner's lens reaffirms my belief in its value, and deepens my gratitude for all the Network members who weave the web of FBEN.

Here's to health in the new year  
for you and your farm,



Vera Simon-Nobes



With many thanks and deep appreciation for all of FBEN's generous friends and supporters, especially Sam Feldman and Brooke Redmond for their inspiration and vision.

# Anatomy of the Network

In 2016, the FBEN grew to include 2,748 members, and nearly a thousand new fans joined us on Facebook, bringing our online community to 4,103.

We came face-to-face with 587 individuals through conference workshops, intensive courses, and mini-workshops. Then there were all the phone conversations and email exchanges! Together, we wove the network.

The majority of our members are from the United States, but over the past ten years individuals from the international community have joined as well, representing Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Slovakia, Taiwan, Tasmania, Thailand, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Members are teachers and teaching assistants, farmers, ecologists, research assistants, FoodCorps and AmeriCorps services members, nutritionists, doctors, garden coordinators, and of course urban, suburban, and rural farmers!

In 2015, 49% of our members were in rural areas; 68% operated at a non-profit, and over one third had an annual operating budget under \$50,000.





Farm-based educators tour Duke Farms, Hillsborough Township, NJ

## What is Farm-based Education?

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.

# 2016 Workshops and More

23 New England farmers attend FBEN workshop by Maria Reade (*Someday Farm, East Dorset, VT*) and Misse Axelrod (*The Barn Yard, Roxbury, VT*) at NOFA-VT winter conference, Burlington, VT

“Chesapeake Food, Farms, and Bay” Farm-Based Education Curriculum Project released. Maryland farmer/educator Peggy Eppig hosts the first resource training, Ocean City, MD

21 educators learn at bi-annual ABCs of Farm-Based Education workshop at Shelburne Farms, a 1400-acre farm and educational campus



FBEN launches a new website, adding credibility to the Network (and resources & jobs are easier to find!)

FBEN co-hosts a film screening in Burlington, VT of “Can You Dig This?” about urban gardening in Los Angeles

Shelburne Farms educators teach ABCs of Farm-Based Education at The Farm at Lee Martinez Park in Fort Collins, CO, a new FBEN partner

Maryland Farmer/Educator, Peggy Eppig leads a workshop for teachers in the Port of Baltimore called, “Farm-Based Education and the Global Food System”

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“My experience at the workshop was one of the best and most inspirational times of my life. Thank you for reminding me why I do what I do! The workshop was rejuvenating and powerful at a time I needed it the most.”

— Bri Desfosses, ABCs Alumnae, YMCA of Greater Nashua

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FBEN co-hosts a wool workshop at the Association for Living History and Agricultural Museums Conference, Baton Rouge, LA.

Farm owners from Bananal, a budding farm-based education center in Paraty, Brazil tour farm-based education sites in Vermont

Farm-based education is well represented through a meet-up and workshop at the Northeast Organic Farming Association Summer Conference

18 educators from New Jersey and New York join study tour of Snipes Farm and Education Center, Fernbrook Farms and Environmental Education Center, and Duke Farms.

20 educators attend bi-annual ABCs of Farm-Based Education workshop offered by Shelburne Farms and the FBEN.

AUGUST

FBEN partners with Wisconsin-based farmers and Farm-Based Educators Inspired by Anthroposophy to present at the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference in Madison, WI.

SEPTEMBER

More than 2,000 people attend activities offered by 95 farms during 2nd annual Vermont Open Farm Week, organized with input from FBEN.

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

400 people attend the **6th Farm-Based Education Network Gathering** in Concord, MA. The event was organized by FBEN in partnership with Massachusetts Farm to School, Concord Food Collaborative, The Trustees, and Concord Carlisle Adult and Community Education.



# IN 2016: 6<sup>th</sup> National Farm-Based

Nearly 400 people traveled to Concord, MA November 4-6, 2016 for three days of field trips, workshops, networking and more. Attendees from 24 states and Canada brought with them stories of success from their farms, schools, health care centers, community centers, gardens, and non-profits. At evening events, they networked and engaged with local farms and businesses in the Concord community. Ingredients for conference meals were proudly sourced from over 8 local farms. The FBEN worked closely with local organizers to ensure the event would leave a positive wake in the community. A family workshop track brought kids and parents to the event on Saturday morning for hands on learning with worms, pumpkin pancakes, backyard chickens and pollinators. Teachers from Concord-Carlisle schools and Massachusetts farmers were encouraged to attend the workshops for free. Many local businesses sold or donated food and space for the events, and the staff at Concord Carlisle High School were incredibly gracious in sharing their brand new building.

## What's Next?

A 2018 Gathering is in the works. Want to be involved? Email: [vera@farmbasededucation.org](mailto:vera@farmbasededucation.org)



## FRI., NOVEMBER 4

*Attendees explored topics from the field by meeting the educators at 16 farms in the Greater Boston Area on six field trips.*

- Community Farms from A to Z
- Urban Growing and Education in Boston
- Mission, Drive, and Heart at Four Farm-Based Education Organizations
- Heifer Farm: More Than a Field Trip, a Trip to the Field!
- The Farm School Immersion
- Accessible Farm-Based Education: Welcoming People of All Abilities
- Tour Minuteman National Park with Brian Donahue: Farmers, Soldiers, Pastures and More

# Education Gathering



## SAT., NOVEMBER 5

*Attendees learned during 45 workshops, networking meals, and a keynote address by Vermont's Center for an Agricultural Economy. Sample workshops:*

- Partnerships Rule the Roost: Working Together to Leverage Resources and Meet Your Mission
- Engaging Through Web Presence and Compelling Content
- Farm to School 101
- Journaling on the Farm
- Play-Based Programming on an Urban Farm
- Exploring Biodiversity in a Sugarbush and Beyond

## SUN., NOVEMBER 6

*Farmers, educators, chefs, policy experts, and more gathered for discussion and growth at 17 workshops, including:*

- The Art of Seed Saving
- The Black Clergy Wellness Initiative: Utilizing Agriculture to (Re) Connect the Black Faith-Based Community to Wellness
- Integrating Composting Systems into School and Camp Programs
- Educator Turned Event Planner: How to Plan Events that Fit Your Farm and Achieve Your Goals
- Farming, Teaching, Growing and Harvesting with Teenagers

**Making the event financially accessible was a top priority.**

No scholarship applicant was turned away; 235 of the 400 attendees paid a reduced or zero registration fee.

# FBEN HISTORY

Gathered around a table at Shelburne Farms, 18 people from 11 farms and organizations founded the FBEN in 2006 to support farm-based educators around the world. From the beginning, the FBEN has been the collective work of many dedicated people.

The idea for the association was planted in 2004. While researching her masters thesis, Brooke Redmond visited many farm programs and heard the same thing from educators, board members, and teachers: they needed a way to share ideas and challenges so more farm programs could take root.

That seed of the idea grew in 2005 at The Association of Nature Center Administrators' second Farm Education Symposium in Greenville, DE. Then in May 2006, the group of 18 gathered at Shelburne Farms. Those founding organizations have shepherded the FBEN ever since: The Delaware Nature Center & Coverdale Farm, Drumlin Farm, The FARM Institute, The Farm School, The Farms of the Trustees of Reservations, Hawthorne Valley Farm, Land's Sake, Pony Farm & Horse Power, Shelburne Farms, Spannocchia Foundation, Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture, and Stonewall Farm.

Since 2006, the Farm-Based Education Association has hosted gatherings, developed a website, and offered consulting. Membership has grown to 2,748 people in 2016. Now nested at Shelburne Farms as a network, a team of educators there continues to help the FBEN fulfill its mission of inspiring, nurturing, and promoting farm-based education.



Founding partners were hosts, presenters, and participants at the November Gathering, including (L to R): Patrick Connors, *The Farm School*; Brian Donahue, *Brandeis University*; Grey Lee; Megan Camp, *Shelburne Farms*; Wayne Castonguay, *Three Sisters Garden Project*; Beth Zscha, *The Trustees/Appleton Farms*; Brooke Redmond, *FBEN Founding Director*.

# Teacher-farmer of the decade

**Peggy Eppig** is Director of Middle School Programs (including Natural Resources Education), at the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, where she develops integrated agriculture curriculum for grades 6-12 through undergrad. She also offers professional development opportunities for teachers through the Maryland State Departments of Education and Agriculture, and the Maryland Farm-to-School program. Peggy serves on the national steering committee for the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association.



She earned her doctorate from Antioch University New England in native pollinators and complex agro-systems analysis. Peggy led several FBEN workshops in 2016, and presented twice at the National Gathering in Concord. The FBEN was pleased to award her the Teacher-Farmer of the decade at the Gathering.

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We also honored several educators as **Teacher-Farmers of the Year**.

In addition to doing their on-farm work, they took time away in 2016 to help plan the FBEN Gathering. Recipients included:

- John Belber, *Holly Hill Farm, Cohasset, MA*
- Megan Browning, *Burnt Rock Farm, Huntington, VT*
- Wayne Castonguay, *Three Sisters Garden, Ipswich, MA*
- Lauren Gagliano-Saline, *formerly with Suzie's Farm, San Diego, CA*
- Simca Horwitz, *Massachusetts Farm to School*
- Brian Kuser, *Fernbrook Farms, Chesterfield, NJ*
- Erin Meyer, *Spence Farm Foundation, Evanston, IL*
- Lu Neuse, *Retreat Farm, Brattleboro, VT*
- Tim Reese, *Gale Woods Farm, Minnetrista, MN*
- Jessica Ridgeway, *Farm Discovery at Live Earth, Watsonville, CA*
- Meg Connolly Riley, *Soule Homestead, Middleborough, MA*
- Jennifer Rothman, *formerly with Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture, Pocantico Hills, NY*
- Beth Zschau, *Appleton Farms, a Property of The Trustees, Ipswich, MA*

# Looking Ahead to 2017

The year 2017 will be our 11th year supporting farm-based educators from all backgrounds. The network will continue to partner with several organizations and farmers to offer high quality, hands-on workshops of varying lengths. We recognize that traveling to each other's farms isn't feasible for many, so we will also be populating our free, online resource library with several virtual tours of each other's sites!

## WORKSHOPS

Farm-Based Education: Telling the Story of Food, Land & Farmers  
*February 8, 2017 | North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association | Mystic, CT*

Designing Authentic Experiences and Selling Products on Your Farm  
*February 18, 2017 | NOFA VT Winter Conference | Burlington, VT*

Farm-Based Education Non-Profit Management - Directors' Edition!  
*February 21, 2017 | Havre de Grace, MD*

ABCs of Farm-Based Education at Shelburne Farms  
*March 10-12, 2017 | Shelburne Farms | Shelburne, VT*

The Ins and Outs of a Cow (and other Dairy Education)  
*June 2017 (tentative) | Association for Living History, Farm & Agricultural Museums Conference | Rochester, NY*

ABCs of Farm-Based Education at Shelburne Farms  
*October 2017 | Shelburne Farms | Shelburne, VT*

View a full calendar at [www.farmbasededucation.org](http://www.farmbasededucation.org)



# Looking Ahead to 2017 *continued*



## COMMUNICATIONS

Our monthly newsletters, jobs board, and events calendar will continue in 2017. We will examine the effectiveness of the new website, working with a team of practitioner-advisors to make sure it is as user-friendly. We will expand our “Q&As with Network Members” to learn about our members, and will share this writing far and wide through listservs and blog posts with partner organizations.

## RESEARCH

In response to member requests, we will be looking at the “financials of farm-based ed” in 2017, with an eye towards creating a few open-source budget examples for planning.



## RESOURCES

There’s nothing like seeing another farm classroom to inspire your own work! We will gather several 3-5 minute video tours from FBEN members for our online resource library. Featured sites will include: Life Lab, (*Santa Cruz, CA*), Wolfe’s Neck Farm (*Freeport, ME*), Gale Woods Farm at Three Rivers Park District (*Minnetrista, MN*), and the Children’s Peaceful Garden at Kitchawan Farm (*Ossining, NY*). The FBEN will continue to find and share excellent activities on our website: look for printable plant diagrams from California’s Champions for Change Program, new pollinator resources, and a series of lessons developed by Soul Fire Farm to deepen young people’s understanding of food justice.



## COMMUNITIES OF OF LEARNING, INQUIRY, AND PRACTICE (CLIPS)

Two separate CLIPS will take flight in 2016. In the spring, members will be invited to join a dialogue about tools, activities and strategies to bring horticultural therapy to special needs populations. Beginning in January, the FBEN will partner with Cedar Circle Farm in East Thetford, VT and The Barn Yard in Roxbury, VT to discuss the challenges and successive of farm field trips that take place multiple times per year, and build strong relationships between farmers and specific student groups.

## WEBINARS

How do we talk about raising and eating meat? Benner's Farm, a historic farm and education center in East Setauket, NY will host a webinar about the complexities of raising meat on farm AND teaching people about it! Benner's Farm was the center of a controversy in 2016 when they faced public outrage after sharing that one of their cows would be butchered and used for meat.



A program of Shelburne Farms  
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*COVER: In 2016, Drumlin Farm educators presented a workshop at the FBEN Gathering, hosted a short course about welcoming people of all abilities to the farm, invited attendees to the farm after the event, and helped with fundraising. Thank you, Drumlin Farm!*