

NEWS

Contact

Kendrya Close, Executive Director
Foodshed Alliance
Kendrya@FoodshedAlliance.org

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PROJECT GRAINS

Foodshed Alliance Launches The Grains Project to Enhance Sustainable Agriculture in New Jersey Highlands

New Jersey Highlands – As a front-runner in farming and environmental efforts, the Foodshed Alliance is thrilled to introduce our latest endeavor, The Grains Project. Funded by a three-year grant from the New Jersey Highlands Council Sustainable Agriculture Program, our goal is to fortify the local grain economy through sustainable farming methods. We're rallying growers, tapping into our vast network of farmers and agricultural organizations, to ensure this project's success. Through this initiative, we're helping farmers learn about grain crops, ideal production practices, and necessary equipment. Learning opportunities include hands-on experience with various crops and educational events like field days and short courses. At the end of the day, our goal is to have 90% of our farmers sell their grain to market outlets.

To ensure the success of this project, we will recruit growers by engaging in extensive outreach efforts. Leveraging our network of farmers, urban and rural agriculture organizations, and county Boards of Agriculture. We aim to get 85% of participating farmers to grow at least one small grain or specialty grain crop during the course of the project. We will be holding educational events, including a field day on an organic grain farm, and three intensive short courses on grain production taught by experienced organic grain growers, supporting participating farmers.

Farmers that join discover the essentials of grain farming in our region through our comprehensive program. With optimal growth practices, essential equipment, and in-demand seed varieties being the forefront, while developing skills in field assessment, preparation, and equipment handling. They will understand the three major regional wholesale markets – milling, distilling, and malting, and learn the grains and quality parameters preferred by each. We believe in the success of the participants and foresee 90% of the farmers marketing grain successfully.

In a strategic partnership, the Foodshed Alliance will collaborate with River Valley Community Grains, Marksboro Mills and Elizabeth Dyck of OGRIN to develop a comprehensive white paper, curriculum, and training program tailored for farmers interested in cultivating heritage grains. This project will address specific challenges and conditions unique to the NJ Highlands region. We will hold a workshop at Marksboro Mills where River Valley Community grains is building a local grain hub to clean, store, mill, package and sell local grains. This hub, which includes plans for a commercial kitchen and educational facility, is a model that can be replicated throughout the Highlands.

The Foodshed Alliance's Grains Project is set to leave a lasting impact on sustainable agriculture in the New Jersey Highlands, promoting regenerative practices and fostering a resilient local grain economy for years to come.

*The Foodshed Alliance is currently looking for interested farmers and ranchers to join this project. To find out more about the application process, contact Grains Manager **Manish Chand** at Manish@FoodshedAlliance.org.*

For more information on Project Grains, visit foodshedalliance.org/grains/.

To learn more about the work of RVCG, visit rivervalleycommunitygrains.com/.

Find out more about Elizabeth Dyck's work at ogrin.org/.

Discover more information on Marksboro Mills at marksboromills.com