



# Annual Report

2018 | LaFarm



## LAFAYETTE COLLEGE Working Farm & COMMUNITY GARDEN



Integrating curriculum and practice in sustainable food and farming since 2009



Assistant Director of Food and Farm  
Lisa Miskelly, harvesting brussel sprouts.  
Photo taken by Simon Curtis-Ginsberg '19  
for student photography project.



## Letter from Lisa

In 2018, LaFarm grew over 6,000 pounds of produce for on- and off-campus farm stands and for campus dining services, began construction on our first-ever protected growing space for season extension, reestablished the on-campus composting program after a two-year hiatus, and transitioned the farm to a new farm manager. In early 2018, we said a fond farewell to our former farm manager who had dedicated five years to growing LaFarm to the vibrant, thriving, mission-driven program that it is today. LaFarm welcomed me as the new “College Farmer” in March 2018 as assistant director of food and farm. I bring with me nine seasons of farming and gardening experience and a passion for student-centered sustainable farming.

2018 was an especially wet rainy season here in eastern Pennsylvania—the second wettest year on record with a total of 66 inches of rainfall, or 20.56 inches of rain above average from January-November. As such, 2018 was one of the most difficult farming years for growers across our region, highlighting the need for innovative farming systems to face the challenges of growing food in an unpredictable climate, and underlining the value of campus farms to educate students about their ecological impact and foster an atmosphere of collaboration, creative thinking, and environmental leadership. While the increased rainfall affected the growing and harvesting of crops at LaFarm, bringing additional fungal and disease pressures and flooding fields, we ended with a successful growing season, harvesting a total of 6,361 pounds of produce and over 150 bouquets of flowers—an 8 percent increase from 2017.

LaFarm would not be possible without the generous support of the Office of Sustainability, LaFarm Faculty Advisory Board, Vegetables in Community staff, faculty, and volunteers, Office of the President and Cabinet, Lafayette Food and Farm Cooperative (LaFFCo), EVST & EVSC programs, Bon Appétit Management Company, Facilities Operations, our community gardeners, and our student farmers. We thank you for your help in bringing our mission to life.

**Lisa Miskelly**  
Assistant Director of Food and Farm

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# Fulfilling our Mission

Integrate curriculum and practice in sustainable food and agriculture for the campus community.

## STAFFING

Paid student staff and Excel interns together worked a total of 800 farming hours, with an additional 512 hours provided by volunteer labor, for a grand total of 1,312 student hours spent at LaFarm during the season. These hours were provided by:

- 15 part-time student farmers
- 1 student community garden manager
- 4 Excel student and alumni interns
- 290 student volunteers

A total of 11 percent of Lafayette’s student population visited LaFarm during the 2018 season for work, volunteering, and events.

## HOSTED

- 682 guests
- 50 events and educational opportunities
  - 26 preschoolers planted 100 feet of beans, spread compost, watered flowers, tasted snap peas right off the vine, and inter-planted buckwheat cover crop into our potato rows for beneficial insect habitat
  - 21 community gardeners, including staff, faculty, students, alumni, and one energetic fraternity of gardening brothers, who fondly referred to their garden plot as “The Homestead”

## VIC PROGRAM

Vegetables in Community is a partnership among Lafayette College, Easton Urban Farm, and Greater Easton Development Partnership, and works to bring fresh produce to residents of the West Ward neighborhood in Easton. VIC continues to be an integral part of LaFarm by providing an opportunity for student researchers to delve into challenging conversations around food access and agency within our community, while gaining firsthand experience in both developing community programming and growing food using small-scale, sustainable practices.

- 1,955 pounds of LaFarm produce was donated to the VIC program
- 294.5 pounds of peas, kale, squash, zucchini, and cucumbers were donated to local food pantries
- 40 percent increase from our produce donations in 2017

The VIC program served nearly 700 community members, providing access to fresh local produce right in their neighborhood.

## Delivery Outlets

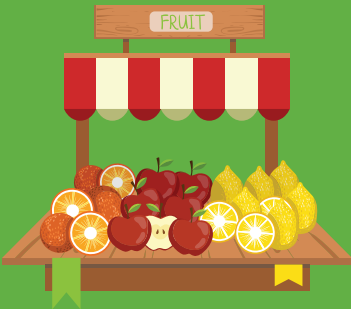
From April through December, student farmers harvested a total of 6,361 pounds of produce and more than 150 bouquets of flowers. We fed our community through:



54 deliveries to Lafayette Dining Services



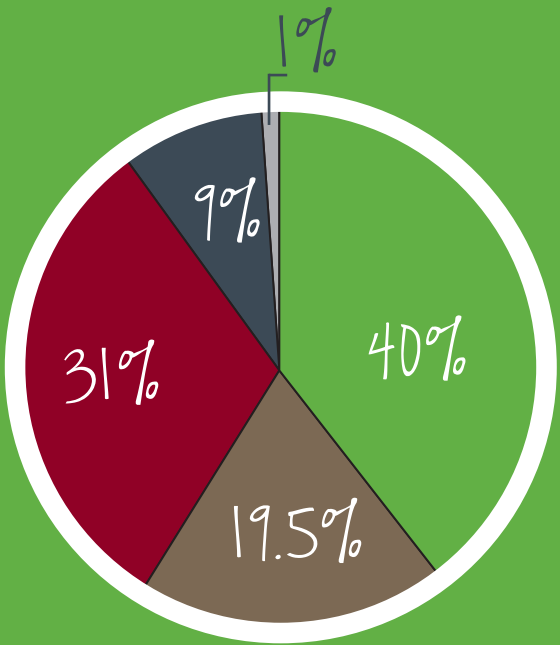
11 Vegetables in Community (VIC) stands in Easton



13 on-campus markets for students, staff, faculty, alumni, and neighbors

## HARVEST

- 6,361 pounds of produce (harvested, washed, and delivered)
- 150 bouquets of flowers
- 1,080 pounds of tomatoes, peppers, garlic, herbs, and onions were processed into value-added sauce and salsa, sold at the College Store and Lower Farinon



## Where our food goes

- Donated to 700 community members via Vegetables in Community, Second Harvest Food Pantry, and Easton Area Neighborhood Center Food Pantry. This is a 40 percent increase in donations from 2017.
- Sold fresh directly to our dining halls
- Processed into tomato sauce and salsa
- Sold through our on-campus market or enjoyed by our student farmers
- Sold off campus



EVST 100 harvests 138 pounds of potatoes



# Events & Activities ..... Curricular

Through campus-wide programming, LaFarm emboldens Lafayette students to ask where their food comes from, and then engage in personal experiences with growing, harvesting, cooking, and eating local food.

## 2018 events at LaFarm included:

- Lafapalooza Volunteer Day
- LaFarm Yoga
- Earth Week's LaFarm-to-Table Dinner
- LaFFCo retreat, farm tour, and dinner at Good Work Farm
- Orientation Leader harvest and meal preparation with Bon Appétit chefs
- LaFarm Work and Welcome as part of Welcome Week for first-year students
- Eat Local Challenge and LaFFCo seed-garlic preparation
- "Sustainability" film screening and panel discussion with four local growers
- EVST/ SC Pumpkin Carving and LaFarm lunch on the Quad

Seven courses incorporated hands-on farm projects into their curriculum, with opportunities to learn about the sustainable food loop firsthand.

- EVST290 Climate Change: The Facts, the Issues, and the Long-Term View—onion planting
- FYS150 A Plastic World—analysis of use of plastics in sustainable agriculture
- FYS059 Feed the World (two sections)—garlic planting
- EVST100 Intro to the Environment (two sections)—potato harvesting
- FYS056 The Worlds in Cookbooks: A Socio-Cultural Approach—LaFarm harvest and meal preparation



Eat Local Challenge with Bon Appétit



Lafapalooza Volunteer Day



Bon Appétit LaFarm beet cupcakes at the EVST/SC Pumpkin Carving



Summer staff harvests garlic.



## Research Projects

Other courses included LaFarm and the Sustainable Food Loop into their curriculum through individual and group student research projects.

- EGRS Capstone looking at the viability of an on-site root cellar and outdoor classroom
- Student photography project on the Farm to Table movement
- BIO223 assesses methods of improving and expanding the campus composting system

## Presentations & Professional Development

LaFarm manager, students, alumni, and LaFFCo club members participate in outreach opportunities to expand their farming knowledge, network with other growers, and connect LaFarm with the broader agricultural community.

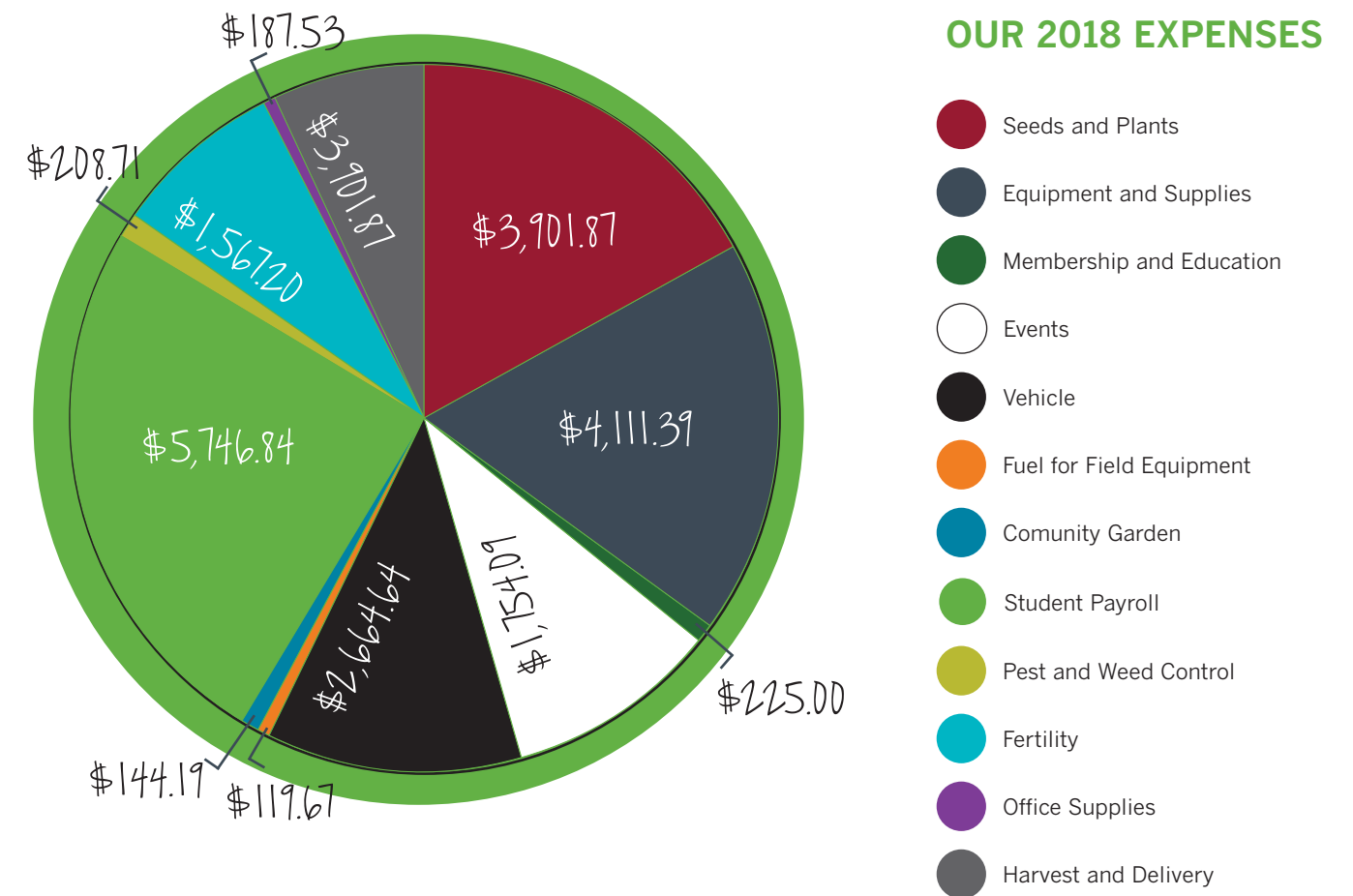
- Presented at Yale Food Symposium—presented “Row By Row: Growing a Resilient, Local Food Loop by Building a Sustainable and Scalable College Farm”
- Experienced Dickinson College Farm PASA field day on Reduced Tillage Vegetable Production co-presented by Rodale Institute
- Visited Ursinus College for its sustainability tour
- Participated in the Advanced Grower Winter Intensive at the Nature Nurture Center in Easton, Pa.
- Attended Rutgers Climate Institute’s Climate Symposium on Food Security
- Joined the Lehigh Valley Food Policy Council Quarterly Meetings

Student-grown flowers on display at our on-campus market



## Investment

We invested over \$35,000 in Capital Improvements in Fall of 2017 for infrastructure projects including the construction of a 10-foot 20-year deer and critter control fence. In 2018, we invested \$1,000 in refining our irrigation system and purchasing new equipment to advance our weed control systems and reduce our tillage.



Brothers from Delta Tau  
Delta help build our first  
hoop house.



# Compost Program

After a nearly two-year hiatus of on-campus composting, as of November 2018 the Earth Tub compost program has been reinstated, reanimating the Sustainable Food Loop, strengthening the connection between LaFarm and Dining Services, and moving the College forward in our goals outlined in the 2018 Climate Action Plan to divert 5 percent of our waste from the landfill by 2020.

The basis of the Sustainable Food Loop is the production of sustainable, nutritious, and student-grown produce at LaFarm, distribution of this produce to Lafayette Dining Services, collection of food waste from dining services to the compost program, and return of decomposed nutrients back to LaFarm.



Elise Hummel '22 and Chris Mumba '20 turn compost during a surprise November snowstorm.

# 2019 Outlook

The work of LaFarm and the Sustainable Food Loop provides us with tangible evidence that a restorative relationship with our food system is possible, practical, and alive at Lafayette College. Join with us in 2019 as we continue to expand our farm footprint, invest in infrastructure projects to increase production efficiency, and allow for an increase in student participation in food and farming.

## IN 2019 WE WILL:

- Complete our hoop house building project to extend our growing season earlier in the spring and later in the fall
- Install on-site storage and cold storage with the addition of a walk-in cooler and farm-supply storage area
- Continue to maintain or increase our overall production, donations to VIC program, and sales to dining services, and boost our on-campus market sales
- Attend the 2019 Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture conference to learn, meet, explore, and grow
- Secure support for our on-site composting system to continue to generate campus-made compost to fuel our SFL
- Increase production to include our new additional acre, focusing on fall production crops, like carrots, beets, winter squash, and sweet potatoes, to provide to dining services when they most need the food
- Partner with the ECORep program to welcome two LaFarm ECOReps who will help plan events to engage and educate the Lafayette community around issues of food and farming
- Welcome two hives of honeybees who will find their new home pollinating LaFarm fields—LaHoney, anyone?
- Partner with faculty across disciplines to welcome students to our dynamic outdoor living laboratory where students engage with soils, microbes, plants, pests, and pollinators to create real-world solutions to the problems we face: growing food sustainably in a changing climate, sequestering carbon through soil building, increasing food access within our community, and developing a food system that serves the needs of all.



Orientation Leaders harvest for their farm-to-table dinner.





LaFFCo volunteers harvest for the VIC Veggie Stand.

## Contact Information and Resources

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**LAFAYETTE**  
♦  
**SUSTAINABILITY**

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