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## Friends of Family Farmers, Oregon Agricultural Trust, and Rogue Farm Corps Team Up to Help Beginning Farmers and Ranchers of All Backgrounds Access Farmland

*A 3-year USDA NIFA grant will help land seekers and land holders transition agricultural land in the Willamette Valley to the next generation of Oregon farmers and ranchers*

A collaborative project of [Friends of Family Farmers](#) (FoFF), [Oregon Agricultural Trust](#) (OAT), and [Rogue Farm Corps](#) (RFC) will develop a network of place-based, regional hubs to support an equitable, intergenerational transfer of farmland to the next generation of farmers and ranchers in Oregon. This project, called *Transitioning Oregon's Farmland: Access, Planning, and Assistance for This Generation and the Next*, is supported by a 3-year, \$743,000 USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grant.

Each regional hub will be served by a Farmland Navigator who will help land seekers and landholders access educational programs, resources, and service providers to find land or hand it off to the next generation. Through this project, beginning farmers and ranchers will also be supported by a statewide network of business planning and land access services facilitated by FoFF and RFC. The project's goal is to help beginning farmers and ranchers establish successful and sustainable farm businesses, prioritizing farmers who are Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC), women, LGBTQIA+, and/or low-income, through a documented, replicable, regional, and community-led model. These are farmers in their first 1 to 10 years of production who operate or are seeking to start a small farm in Oregon.

RFC and FoFF help beginning farmers develop a broad range of skills including financial readiness, business planning, and land access. OAT educates landowners and retirement-age farmers and ranchers about succession planning and working land easements. The organizations also connect land seekers with landowners through a proven, statewide land-linking database and through intergenerational networking events. And they provide one-on-one guidance and technical assistance to both land-seekers and landowners.

The project will support or expand each organization's existing statewide programming and establish Oregon's first regional hub with a Farmland Navigator in Oregon's fertile Willamette Valley (the most agriculturally diverse region in Oregon with some of the most expensive farmland).

"The average age of farmers in Oregon is 60, and nearly two-thirds of our state's farmland is expected to change hands in the next 20 years." said Project Director and Rogue Farm Corps Executive Director, Abigail Singer. "When this land gets put on the open market, it's at risk for development, real estate investment, and being taken out of agriculture. But in this moment of transition we also have an opening to connect retiring farmers with a new, more diverse generation of farmers who are ready to take the reins. This USDA grant will provide much-needed resources to facilitate this intergenerational transition work, at a time when beginning farmers face huge barriers to entry."

## Approach

This collaborative project will employ several strategies to support equitable land access and farmland transition. These include:

- **Farm Launch (RFC):** beginning farmers will receive education, peer-to-peer support, and one-on-one technical assistance in marketing, finance, land access, and business planning
- **Changing Hands Workshops (RFC):** New & retiring farmers will come together for succession and land access training and facilitated intergenerational networking
- **2 Farmland Navigators (FoFF):** Navigators will work 1-on-1 with beginning farmers and ranchers on land access and preparing to run their own operations. One navigator will serve BIPOC farmers and one will establish the regional farmer support hub in the Willamette Valley
- **Farmland Navigator Guidebook (FoFF):** A guide to establishing a regional navigator program will be created for other regions interested in replicating this model.
- **Landholder Education (OAT):** Education and support on succession planning & easements will be offered for landowners and the service providers (accountants, attorneys, etc) that support these complex transactions.

Through this project, RFC, FoFF, and OAT will work closely with members of the Land Connection / Technical Assistance Advisory Council, a working group of the [Oregon Community Food Systems Network](#) (OCFSN), on project design and implementation. Additional working group members include Adelante Mujeres, Black Oregon Land Trust (BOLT), Oregon Climate & Agriculture Network (OrCAN), OSU Small Farms Program, and Gorge Grown. [Insight for Action](#) is serving as the evaluation partner for this work.

## About Friends of Family Farmers

Friends of Family Farmers' (FoFF) mission is "to advance policies and programs that protect, promote and sustain resilient and economically viable community agricultural systems in Oregon." Their vision is a local, diversified, and interconnected agricultural future built by small and mid-size farms where people, animals, communities and ecosystems thrive, and equitable policies improve lives and land for Oregonians. Since its formation in 2005, FoFF has achieved this through a combination of farmer technical assistance programs including Oregon Farm Link and the Oregon Pasture Network; and through civic engagement to represent the voices of diversified, locally focused, ecologically conscious farmers in agricultural policy.

## About Oregon Agricultural Trust

Oregon Agricultural Trust is a statewide agricultural land trust designed to address the interrelated challenges of ag land loss, farm and ranch succession, and access to land for the next generation. Their work includes helping landowners sell working land conservation easements, which remove development rights, keep land available for farming and ranching, give landowners cash to help with the business or succession, and make the land more affordable to future generations.

## About Rogue Farm Corps

Rogue Farm Corps (RFC) was founded in 2004 by a community of southern Oregon farmers who recognized the need for beginning farmer training and held a shared commitment to mentoring the next generation. Since then RFC has grown to serve the entire state and has become a national leader in beginning farmer education. RFC's mission is to train and equip the next generation of farmers and ranchers through hands-on educational programs and the preservation of Oregon's farmland. RFC envisions a world in which land is deeply cared for, power is equitably shared, and farms, ranches, and the people who work them flourish.