



# Overview: Impact of 2021 Local Farmer Awards

The Local Farmer Awards, granted to 81 farms in 2021, were more important than ever in a year like no other. Farmers endured not only the pandemic, but also “one of their hardest, wettest, wildest seasons” according to Just Roots Farm. In light of challenges, farmers sought innovative ways to expand offerings, improve the environment for animals and crops, decrease labor on tedious tasks, and diversify their products for market.

## Expand Offerings

The purchase of an egg washer was extolled by more than one farm, including **YundWell Pastured Poultry**, which increased its 500 hens to 1200, boosting production and profits. Like others reaping the benefits of a Paperpot transplanter, **Song Sparrow Farm** doubled its lettuce production and cut labor costs. **M and A Farm** is not alone in lengthening the growing season by starting seedlings earlier in protected spaces such as a caterpillar tunnel or a hoop house. **M & W Farm** purchased new hives and equipment to expand its apiary and take better care of the bees.



Woven Roots Farm

## Improve the environment for animals and crops

To maintain consistent milk quality, **Bree-Z Knoll Farm** acquired fans to provide more comfort and less stress so cows could maintain production during hot and humid weather. **Fern Farm's** new nesting boxes improved the happiness of their hens and the efficiency of their egg collecting and cleaning operation. A walk-behind tractor that is much gentler on the soil, coupled with a tow-behind compost spreader, enabled **Woven Roots Farm** to open up new garden space, compost more beds in less time, and come closer to meeting the community's demand for fresh produce. The use of plastic layer mulch during the growing system meant that **Twenty Acre Farm & Greenhouses** used up to 60% less pesticide and 85% less herbicide, and did far less mid-season weeding. With the incorporation of no-till attachments on a planter, **Bardwell Farm** minimized soil disruption, improved soil quality for planting, and saved a lot of time.

## Decrease labor on tedious tasks

**Roaming Farm** purchased a watering tank, improved the trailer, and increased its capacity to water cows, eliminating extra work and reducing spillage. For **Tree of Life Farm**, a seeder for microgreens transformed “hours of tedium into rhythmic efficiency.” A greenhouse flat filling machine doubled labor efficiency at **Atlas Farm**, producing a more uniformly filled flat that positively impacts plant growth and crop yields. With a new Crop Care sprayer, **Chestnut Mountain Tree Farm** controlled weeds on eight acres of hay land, leading to a significant labor savings in field planting and improved the quality of hay for sale.



Roaming Farm



Atlas Farm



Phoenix Fruit Farm

## Diversify products for market

**Phoenix Fruit Farm** used its salad spinner to wash and pack extended-season greens in a clean, efficient, food-safe way. Several, including **Runnymede Farm**, purchased a machine that turns maple syrup into maple cream, a popular and delicious product, to supplement the maple syrup market. The vacuum sealer acquired by **Hettie Belle Farm** enabled value-added expansion into market products like quiches, meatballs, and chicken liver mousse.

## Vision. Pride. Initiative. Determination.

The many strengths of our region's farmers are reflected in their words of gratitude. Observed one winner: “Sometimes there are pieces of equipment that help you make a radical leap, like that first good tillage tractor or the perfect bed shaper. For **Just Roots** this season, it was the basket weeder.” Others, like **Gould Farm**, were able to take the first step of a larger plan: “The Award helped us leverage other funding sources towards the next two phases of our project.” **M & W Farm** summed up the sentiment of many farms: “The Award pushed us further along than we could have hoped on our own.”

As part of their everyday lives, our region's farmers expect to face challenges with each season. Ideally, the Local Farmer Awards -- generous, timely, and responsive to immediate needs -- will long support farmers' efforts to conquer those challenges and advance, undaunted, beyond them.

The 2021 Awards were brought to you by:

