



May 2020

Dear Steward of the Farm,

All of us at Shelburne Farms hope you and your loved ones are faring well, and we send our best wishes at this extraordinary time. The pandemic has only deepened our gratitude to you for your annual stewardship support that makes the vision for Shelburne Farms possible.

I am writing to share an update on how we are viewing and adapting to the new world we all find ourselves in and to let you know how you can help the Farm this year.

The pandemic's impact on every organization you care about is unprecedented. At the Farm, it presents one of the greatest financial challenges we have ever faced. Attached to this letter is a summary of our current Covid-19 emergency response plan.

In 1970, we celebrated the first Earth Day two years before Shelburne Farms Resources, Inc. was formed as a nonprofit to address the environmental and social issues at that time. As the pandemic strips everything down to the essentials, the idea behind Shelburne Farms is more important than ever. As regions, neighborhoods, families, and individuals, we may be socially distanced around the world, but we are not alone in our reliance on a healthy living environment and a sense of community, or in our concerns around the social inequities the pandemic is revealing.

Following our strategic priorities, we are working to extend the impact of our education programs online and looking at ways of deepening the inspiration and learning we offer. At the heart of what we do is encouraging new thinking in education and providing people of all ages with opportunities for meaningful learning that will lead to a sustainable future.

In parallel with operating cost reductions, every member of our Board and senior leadership team has joined in seeding an Emergency Resiliency Fund as a critical resource to support the Farm at this time. As you review your philanthropic portfolio and think about ways of providing critical support during this crisis, we hope the Farm will be one of the organizations you will continue to invest in to make a difference in building a better future.

Again, please know how much we appreciate your support and having you as a part of the Shelburne Farms family. We welcome your ideas on how we can be of greatest service during this time. Please call or write anytime!

Sincerely,

Alec Webb
President

**Shelburne Farms
COVID-19 Response
2020 Emergency Planning Summary**

The Farm's planning and revised operating budget is based on the assumption that the Farm won't be returning to "normal" operating conditions this year.

Typically, Shelburne Farms earns two thirds of our annual operating budget (\$11.5M) through program tuition and fees for services and Farm enterprises including the Inn, restaurant, Farm Store, cheese sales, etc. We rely on charitable gifts contributed by foundations and individuals like you for the remaining third. **This crisis will severely impact our earned revenue streams, with a preliminary projected operating shortfall of \$2.3M in 2020.**

We have postponed in person programs, closed buildings and barns to the public, deferred seasonal hiring, instituted "work from home" policies for all non-essential staff, and heightened safety protocols for staff and visitors at the Farm. Year-round staff are being cross-trained to maintain essential functions and employment. We will continue capital improvements and preservation work through special gifts and grants

Farm Store retail operations have pivoted to curbside pickup and local delivery of cheese and farm products. We are also collaborating with local food system partners to strengthen community access to healthy local foods.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of access to beautiful places and our walking trails are open for outdoor enjoyment at appropriate social distances. We have seen a surge of visitors seeking refuge and solace at the Farm.

We are focused on:

- Increasing our online capacity for providing Education for Sustainability professional development for educators nationally and internationally through a new partnership with the University of Vermont.
- Supporting a more equitable and resilient school food system through our VT FEED (Food Education Every Day) project in collaboration with NOFA Vermont and through our participation in the Northeast Farm to School Collaborative.
- Building organizational capacity around diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Deepening local community connections through food production and direct marketing of Farm products, as well as supporting other farm-based education organizations who are experiencing hardship through the Farm-based Education Network.
- Improving stewardship practices for water quality and carbon drawdown.
- Providing access to our walking trails.

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With the future of the Farm at stake, we are making progress toward closing the projected budget gap:

- We will continue to tighten budgets and look for revenue opportunities.
- We are working to meet our annual fundraising goal of \$2,140,000.
- We have received a total of \$723,000 in federal forgivable loans through the Payroll Protection Program. We will continue to pursue government support.
- We are seeking to raise \$1,500,000 or more in special gifts for the Emergency Resiliency Fund. This fund is being launched with 100% support of the Farm's Board of Directors and senior staff who have pledged to give above and beyond other pledges and regular annual commitments. Lead gifts to the Resiliency Fund currently total \$487,000.

We may be able to incrementally add back some layers of activity as conditions improve. For example, we may be able to offer the Farm's free-standing cottages and homes for guests and it may be possible to open the Inn later in the season in a limited way. We are also starting to offer prepared meals for curbside pickup at the Farm Store. The meals feature products from the market garden, dairy, and other nearby farms. If you live nearby, keep an eye out for more information on our website. If you live farther away, remember we are always happy to ship our cheese and maple syrup by mail order.

Despite the uncertain financial picture, this crisis recommits us to our mission to inspire and cultivate learning for a sustainable future and our vision of a healthy and just world rooted in stewardship and community.