



Annual Report 2023
Rondout Valley Growers Association





2023 Report
Contents

- 1** Letter from the Executive Director
- 2** Our Staff, Board of Directors & Mission
- 3** Numbers at a Glance
- 4** Program Highlights & Growth
- 14** Fundraising & Financials
- 21** Our Members
- 23** Our Sponsors
- 24** Donor Roll



Numbers at a Glance



23
Our Sponsors

4
Program Highlights



24
Donor Roll

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The Rondout Valley is a unique place to live and work, but our farms and community weren't immune to the trials of 2023. A vital measure of success is how obstacles are overcome, and if the lessons learned will lead to future wins. Mother Nature began with a late frost and followed with a cold, wet start to the growing season, causing twice as much work for our growers to produce the same amount of food.

At the RVGA, we have always stepped up to help our agricultural community during rough times, like providing relief during COVID and Hurricane Irene. In 2023, after months of careful planning, we launched our FarmDirect Micro-Grant program. It was perfect timing for farmers struggling to make capital investments – investments that would not have been made due to high inflation or farm budget constraints. We granted \$15,000 to over twenty farms, helping them purchase new greenhouses, acres of fencing, and expensive equipment like barrel washers for vegetables.

TheShareTable, our Farm-to-School program, expanded to five elementary schools in the Rondout Valley, bringing our farm's produce to school cafeterias and teaching our students about the vital role local agriculture plays in our food system and community. In a big leap forward, the RVGA became an authorized vendor of locally grown produce to the Kingston City School District!

While we saw the loss of a beloved community member, Charles Noble, his passing inspired the reintroduction of the RVGA Board of Directors Scholarship for agriculture and local food systems studies, led by his surviving wife, Francesca, and Deborah and Michael Dewan. In 2024 we will award a \$1,000 scholarship and hope to increase that amount in the coming years.

These are just a few of the RVGA's accomplishments in 2023. Please read our full Annual Report to see all we do, working hand in hand with our local farmers.

And remember ... all of this is made possible by YOU. You are the community that comes out to support local farms and the RVGA. You create the future of agriculture in the Rondout Valley by making locally grown food a priority in your lives.

Gratefully,



Matt Igoe, Executive Director

To strengthen
our community
and economy
by supporting
local agriculture.

Our Mission



Staff

Matt Igoe
Executive Director

Amanda Pierce
Program Manager &
Secretary to the Board

Leo Condon
TheShareTable.org
Coordinator

Board of Directors

Nicholas Cipollone
President

Tanya Jurcic
Vice President

Maren Lindstrom
Treasurer

Kahlil Lozoraitis
Director

John Novi
Director

Tara Talaber
Director

Samual Ullman
Director



The RVGA is an invaluable resource for local farmers. They help get our voices out to the community and are always coming up with new and innovative ways to bring local farm products to local consumers.

– Bod Fade, Fiddlehead Farm

Rondout Valley Growers
Association, Inc.

RondoutValleyGrowers.org
Office@RondoutValleyGrowers.org

 [instagram.com/rondout_valley_growers](https://www.instagram.com/rondout_valley_growers)

 [facebook.com/RVGA1](https://www.facebook.com/RVGA1)



numbers at a glance

104
members

60 individual donors

8
sponsors

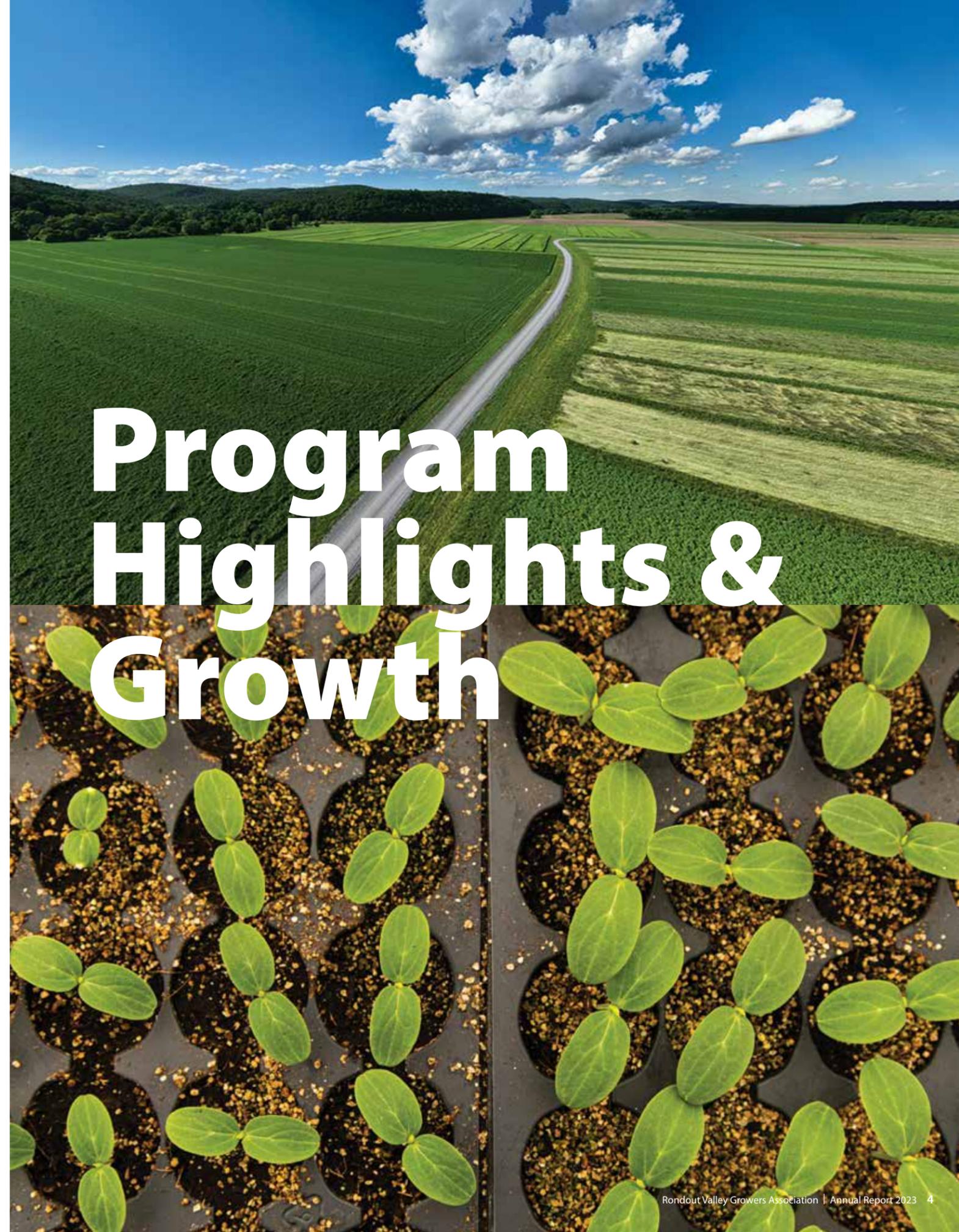
22 FarmDirect Micro-Grants
disbursed in amounts from **\$500-\$1,500**

5 key areas of programming

Regularly reaching **4,200+** people through our newsletters & social media

TheShareTable program
5 schools
and **2,000+** students participated

Food Pantry
39 feeding programs served
129,104 lbs. Donated
22 farms contributed



Program Highlights & Growth

FarmDirect Micro-Grant

Launched in 2023, this program is a collaboration between the Ulster County Office of Economic Development and the Rondout Valley Growers Association, with the mission to strengthen the Ulster County community and economy by supporting local agriculture. The FarmDirect Micro-Grant program is designed to bridge the gap between the cost of necessary investments and what the farmers can afford. No other local organization directs aid to farms at this level.

The award recipients spent most of the funds at local stores or by hiring local craftspeople to complete their projects. We awarded money that helped the farmers with vital purchases/improvements and a majority of that money went directly back into the community ... a true win-win!

We awarded 22 grants to farmers with demonstrated need, in amounts from \$500 to \$1,500 for a total of \$15,000.



The 2023 grants were used in a variety of ways, including:

Fencing for better herd and grazing management

Tools, implements, and machinery to reduce hours of labor and physical tolls

Coolers and cold storage improvements for flower and produce storage

Inverter generator for use at a farmers market to extend the hours and increase sales

Electrical safety upgrades in barns



How do farmers feel about the FarmDirect Micro-Grant program?

"This was a really wonderful boon for our farm. The grant opportunity really did push us to go ahead with the project – without it we likely still would not have this farm improvement. We really appreciate the hard work of the RVGA and how it is supporting the farm community!"

"It was a huge relief to not have to shoulder all the cost of the purchase."

"We would like to thank the RVGA for their help in supporting our local farms in these challenging times."

"We really appreciated the opportunity, your matching funds spurred us to do something we had been talking about for several years."

"We are so appreciative of the financial assistance. The cooler purchase is a huge success for our farm. I could immediately see the benefits. I was able to triple my offerings to my customers within the first couple weeks of the cooler operation and have been able to take on a couple new customers."

"It was great! Super easy application process and motivated us to make a purchase we had been delaying."

"The FarmDirect Micro-Grant is a great success!"



THE SHARE TABLE.ORG
FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM



TheShareTable.org

TheShareTable.Org is an Ulster County, NY based Farm-to-School advocacy, planning, and implementation program designed to teach our kids about local farms and farm-fresh food, enrich students, and create sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships between schools and local farms.

Participating school districts in 2023 were Highland, Ellenville, and Kingston – all Community Eligible Programs (CEP) schools - where free lunch is served to all students. Each school has the opportunity to participate in monthly tastings of locally grown food, agriculture-based educational activities (student farmers market, fall festival), sourcing of locally grown food for school cafeterias, local farm tours, classroom visits with farmers, and school garden support and training.

As TheShareTable coordinator, Leo Condon connects local farmers to the schools and educates students on the importance of locally grown food and the role farms play in our community.

For more information, visit:
TheShareTable.org



Farm-to-Food Pantry

RVGA's Farm-to-Food Pantry program provides logistical and administrative support to the Family of Woodstock and UlsterCorps, who provide farmer-donated produce and goods to 39 local food pantries, shelters, and community meal programs. The amount donated during the pandemic - a time when food insecurity was at its highest - was a 93% increase over pre-pandemic donation levels. We continued with this success in 2023, with a total of 129,104 pounds given. Over the past six years, 853,595 pounds of local farm fresh food were donated!



The collaboration among the Rondout Valley Growers Association, Family of Woodstock, and UlsterCorps offers such rewarding volunteer opportunities while reducing food waste and feeding our neighbors. We are so grateful to be a part of it.

– Beth McLendon Albright, UlsterCorps



39

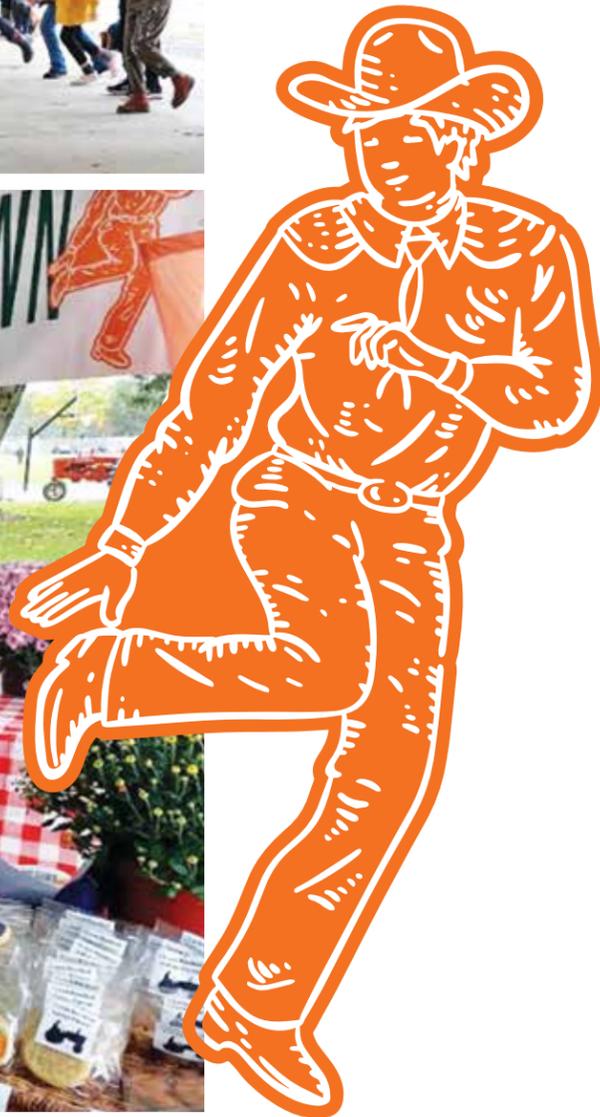
local food pantries,
shelters,
and community
meal programs
farmer-donated
produce and goods



**853,595 lbs.
of local farm
fresh food
were donated**



ANNUAL HARVEST HOEDOWN



Farm-to-Community Outreach

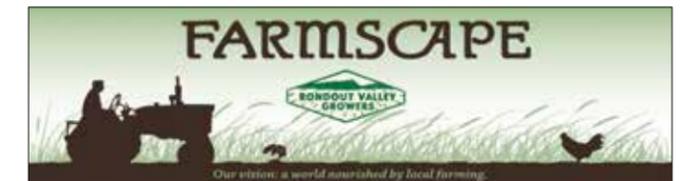
The RVGA connects the community with local farms and our shared agricultural history.

Annual Harvest Hoedown

After a five-year hiatus – with the generous support of our partners at The Hudson Valley Farm Hub, Ulster County, Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Ulster County, Ryan and Ryan Insurance, Countryway Insurance, Arrowood Farms, and Sfoglini Pasta – the RVGA brought back the beloved Harvest Hoedown! The October event drew over 140 loyal supporters despite the pouring rain and unseasonably cold temperatures. We enjoyed locally grown food and craft beverages and celebrated the end of the traditional harvest season.

Farmscape Community Newsletters

Sent monthly, each newsletter contains a variety of agriculture-related content, both informative and fun – ranging from classes to book lists, and everything in between – with a reach of 1,500+



Website

Our website contains a variety of information about our programs and the offerings of our members.

- **Food & Farm Finder:** Lists all RVGA members, is searchable by farm name and keywords, and shows a Google Map for each farm
- **Farm News:** What's happening and where
- **CSA Shares:** Who has them and details for each
- **Farmers Markets:** Find our members
- **Events Calendar:** Ag-related events in the Hudson Valley, both live and online



Social Media

- **Facebook:** We share our members' posts, as well as educational and informative content, with a reach of 1,500+
- **Instagram:** We repost our members' content, as well as educational and informative content, with a reach of 1,200+

Board of Directors Scholarship

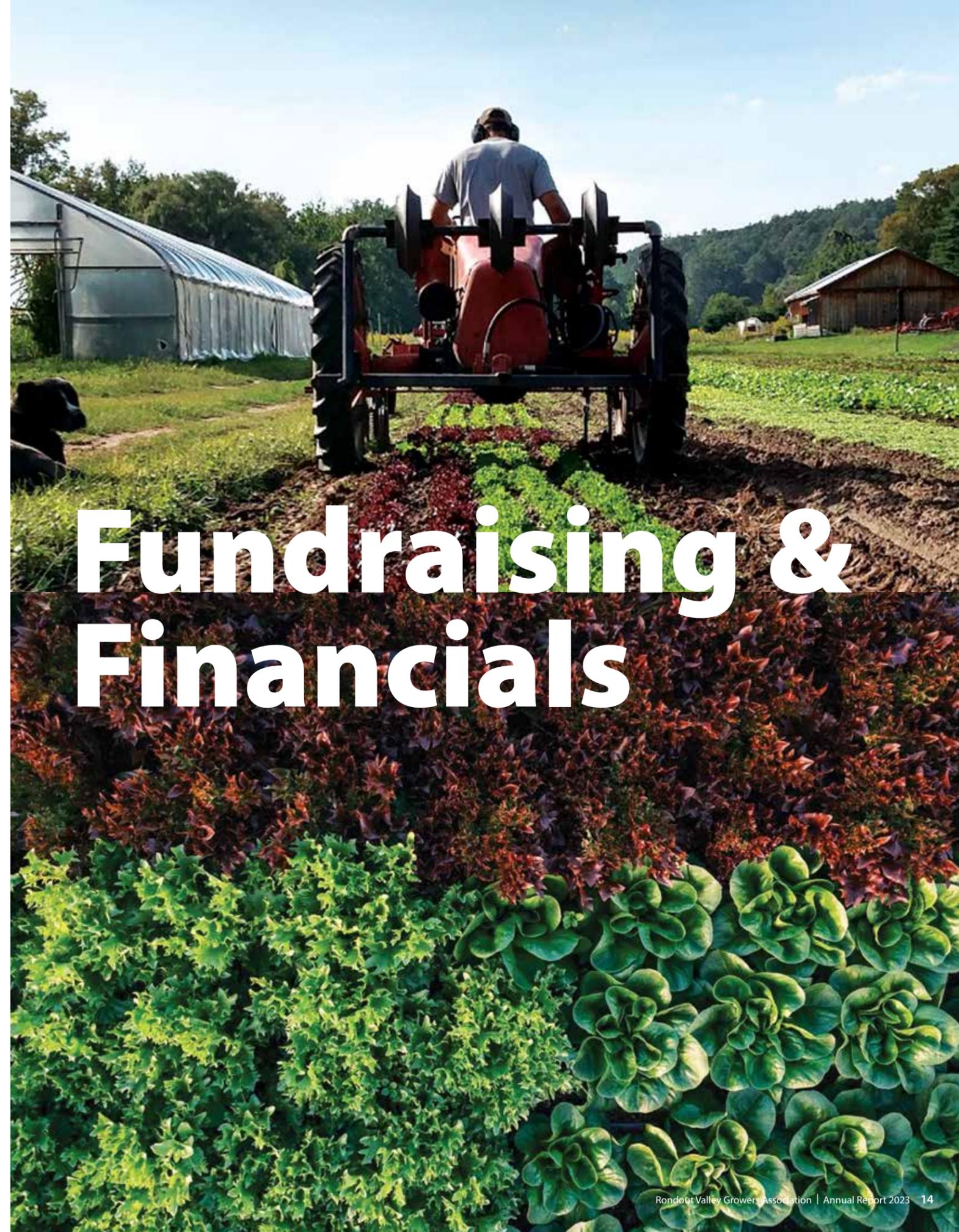
With a generous matching grant from Deborah and Michael Dewan, the RVGA will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior from the Rondout Valley who will attend college to study agriculture and/or local food systems.

This scholarship will help ensure that the Rondout Valley's long tradition of agriculture survives by supporting the farmers of the future.

The 2024 scholarship will be given in honor of Charles Noble, an RVGA board member and farmer who owned Moveable Beast Farm with his wife Francesca. Charles passed away in 2023 but left an enduring legacy of animal and environmental management.



Source: Wallis, Davis. "A Second Career Happily in the Weeds" New York Times. June 20, 2014. Photo Source: Phil Mansfield for The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/21/your-money/a-second-career-happily-in-the-weeds.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare&sgrp=c-cb>



Fundraising & Financials

Fundraising & Financials

2023 Financial Overview

In 2023 the RVGA was supported by

60 individual donors

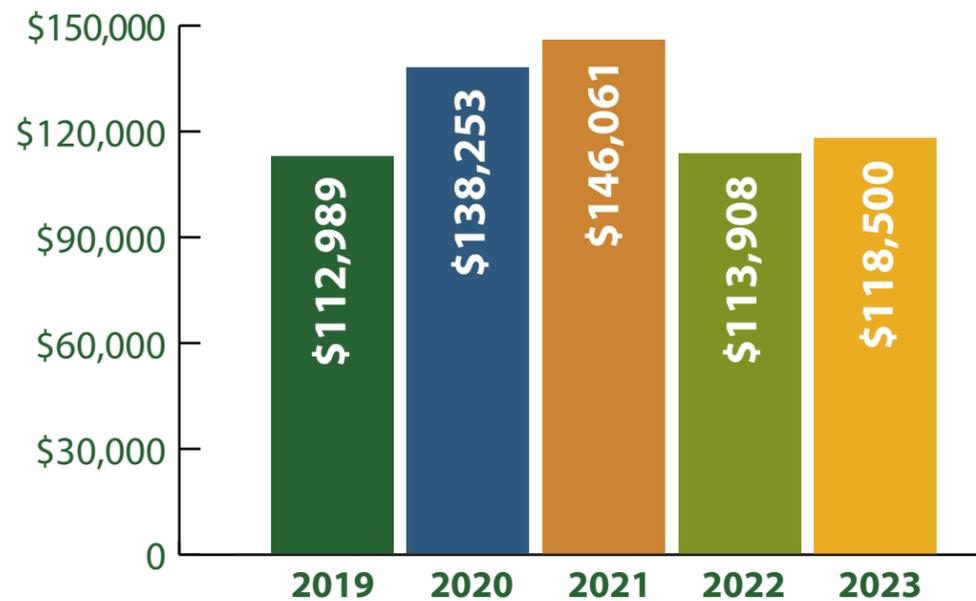
The donor retention rate in 2023 was 33% (the same as in 2022)

Total Revenue: \$118,500

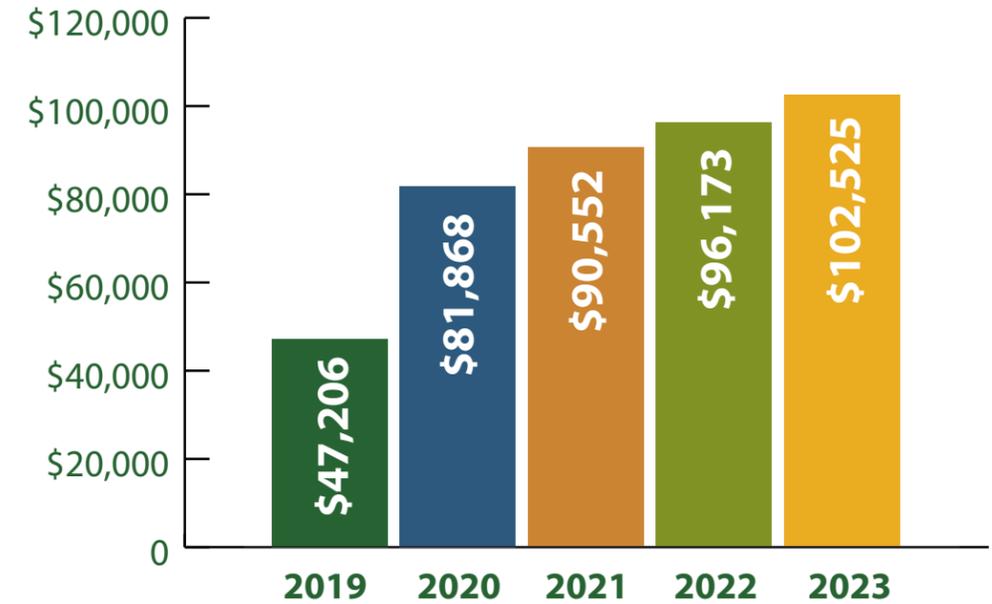
Total Expenses: \$116,300

Net Income: \$2,200

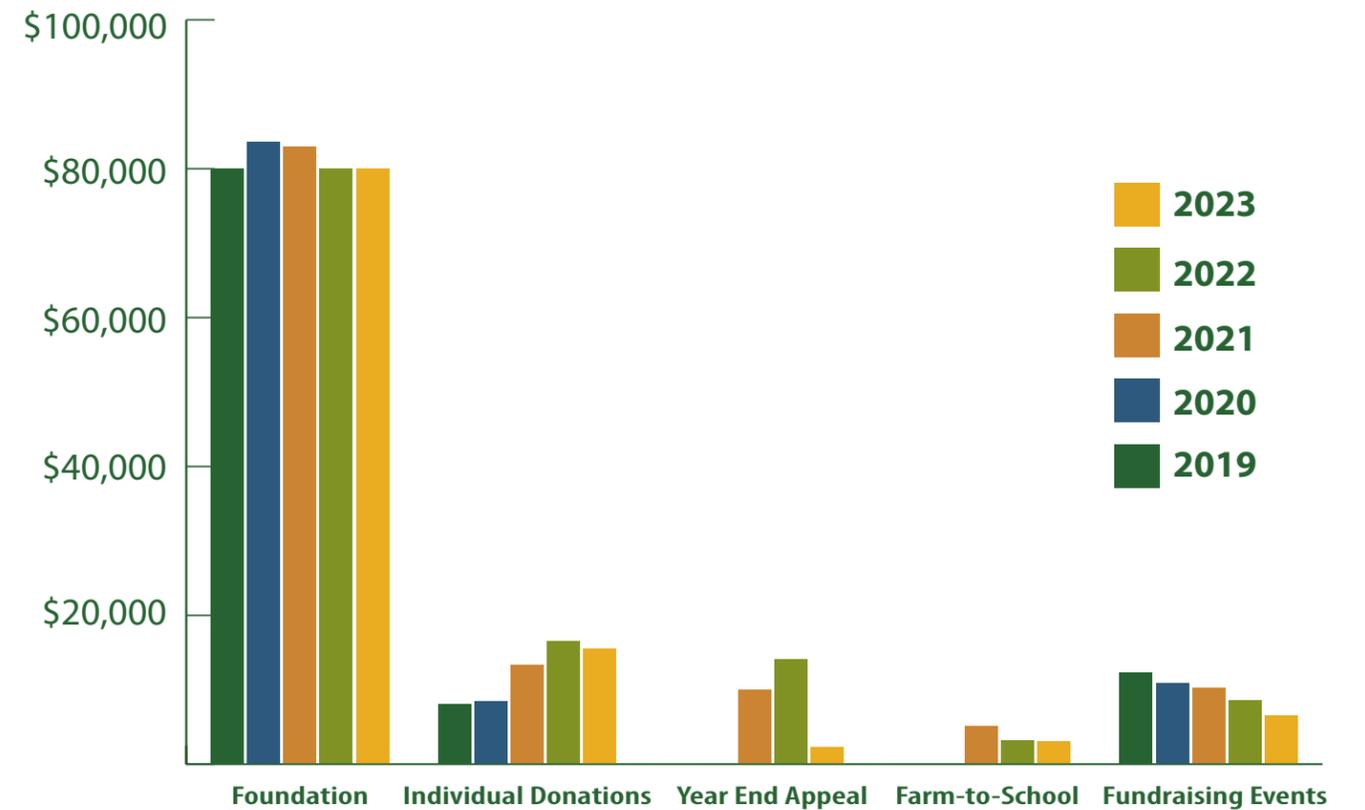
5-Year Revenue Trend / 2019 - 2023



5-Year Expenses Trend / 2019 - 2023



Revenue Sources / 2019 - 2023



Fundraising & Financials

Revenue Highlights

Total 2023 revenues were \$118,500. Philanthropic (foundations and corporate) donations continue to form the base of our income with over \$80,000 received from charitable foundations and corporate giving. Joint sponsorship of the FarmDirect Micro-Grants with Ulster County helped to defray the expense of the Micro-Grant program and we look forward to continuing this relationship in the ensuing years.

Individual donors contributed over \$15,000 to the RVGA in 2023 in a combination of program-specific (restricted), unrestricted, and event-related donations. We raised \$6,500 with the relaunch of the Harvest Hoedown, despite inclement weather. This should prove to be an excellent annual fundraising event – as well as a Farm-to-Community programming event.

The RVGA initiated fundraising for the Board of Directors Scholarship Fund in 2023 for students who will continue their education in agricultural sciences and/or local food systems. We are off to a good start with the funding of this annual scholarship and the first \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded in 2024. We are especially grateful to our individual donors for their generous support of this program.

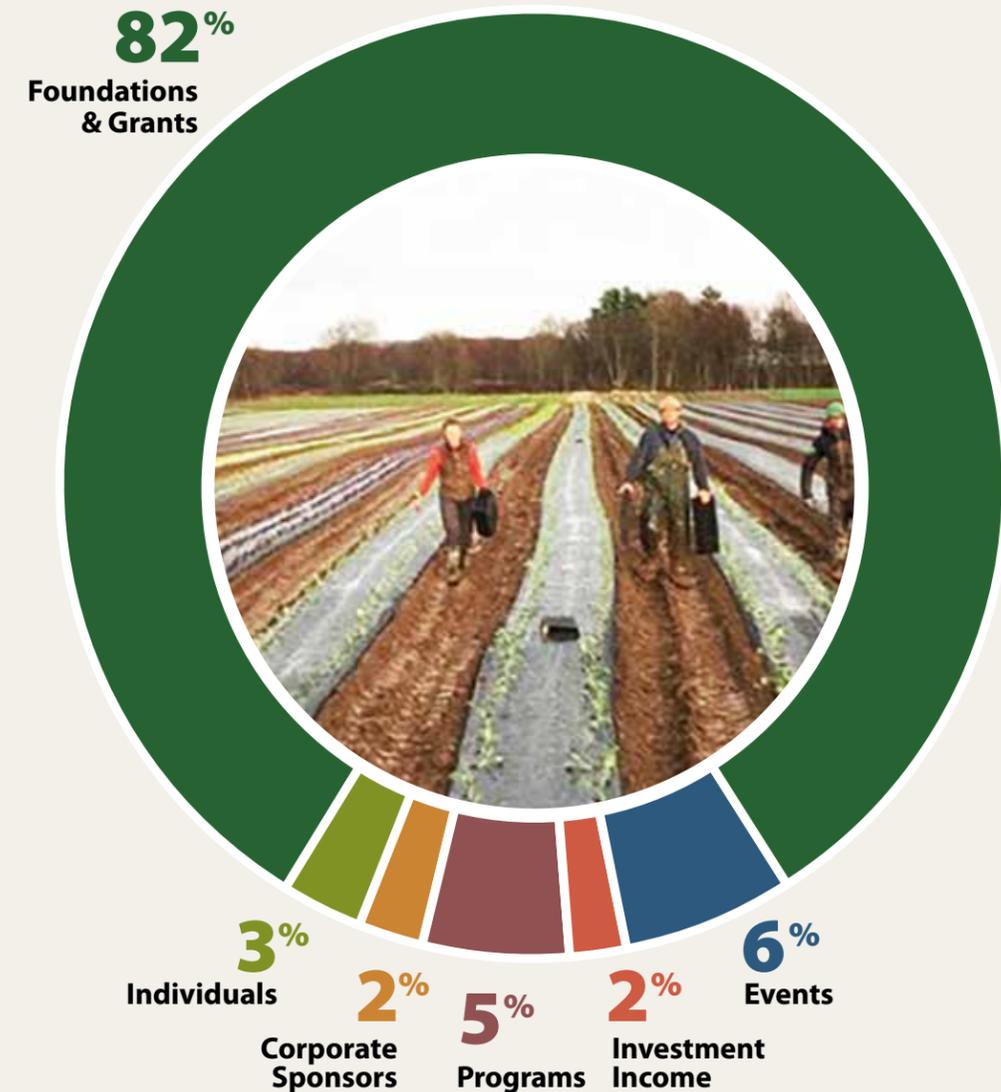
Interest income on cash reserves became a positive income contributor with higher interest rates. The RVGA earned over \$2,000 in interest from its conservative investments in government money market funds and short-term certificate of deposits.



The RVGA is living proof that there is power in numbers, and they have helped unite and give voice to the needs of the multitude of diverse small farms in their constituency. We are, and will continue to be, proud farmer members of the RVGA.

– Barton and Becky Brooks, Catskill Wagyu at Hilltop Farm

Funding Sources for 2023



Fundraising & Financials

Program Spending Highlights

The RVGA continued its trend of excellent expense control, well-targeted program funding, and solid financial results. Most line-item expenses for 2023 were well below budget, running between 50% and 80% of budgeted expenses.

We are well-positioned going into 2024. The RVGA ended 2023 with tight expense management, no debt, a strong cash balance, an interest rate environment that permits us to earn income on our cash, and a refreshed three-year budget that reflects our 2023 results and our 2024 funding goals. Yet we will have to remain diligent and strengthen our fundraising in 2024. The expansion of our programs to include larger farmer grants, an ongoing branding campaign, and a sizable Harvest Hoedown requires a greater base of individual donors, both in numbers and in size of donations. The addition to the payroll of a dedicated TheShareTable.org (Farm-to-School) employee will continue in 2024 and add to running expenses.

In 2023, RVGA maintained a steady flow of income and the same asset base, while expanding our programming, adding 14 new member farmers, and offering stellar support to our member farmers. In 2023, we did not materially increase our donations or grants, yet the RVGA continues to strengthen and grow – slow and steady wins the race!

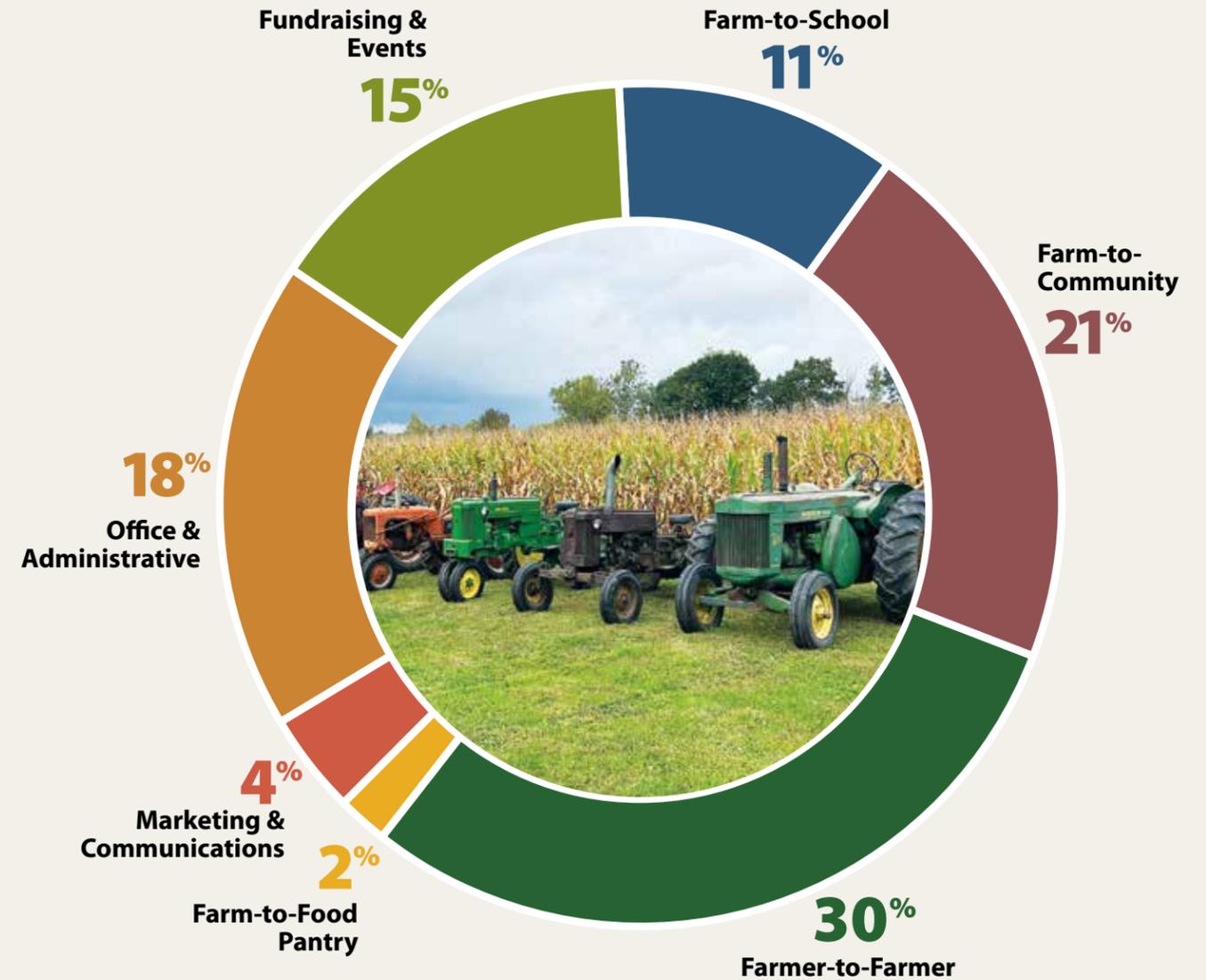
To support the RVGA, please visit RondoutValleyGrowers.org.

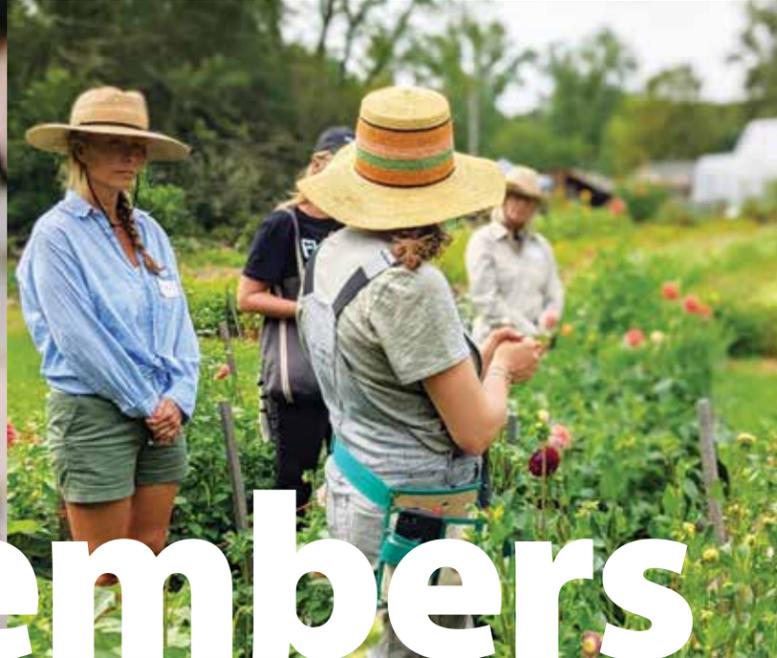


The RVGA is a model for New York agriculture, demonstrating how small family farms can be connected to the communities they serve.

– Jen Metzger, Ulster County Executive

Full Expense Breakdown





Our Members



RVGA's membership of 104 covers a variety of farms and growers, from equestrian to micro-greens. Joining is easy, open to Rondout Valley-local farms/growers, and there are no membership dues, which were eliminated in 2020 due to financial hardships associated with the coronavirus. Join us today! Visit RondoutValleyGrowers.org.

- Accord Cattle Company
- Acorn Hill Farm
- Alewife Farm
- Alma Roots Farm
- Anjes Farm
- Arrowood Farms
- Back Home Farm
- Barthel's Farm Market
- Bell's Christmas Trees
- Berry Nice Farm
- Bonticou Ducks
- Buzzanco's Greenhouses & Farm
- Catskill Native Nursery
- C.E.O. Natural Angus Beef
- Center for Bioregional Living
- Clove Valley Community Farm
- Damn Good Honey Farm
- Davenport Farms
- Deer Creek Collective Herb Farm
- Drumlin Farm
- Duchess Farm Equestrian Center
- Eagle Rock Farms NY
- Eat Flowers Farm
- Ever-Growing Family Farm
- Farmers Table Farm, Rail Trail Cafe
- Farmstock Farm
- Feather Farm
- Fiddlehead Farm
- Flowering Sun Ecology Center
- Foraging & Feasting
- Four Fold Farm
- Four Winds Farm
- Foxmor Farm
- Glenerie Farm
- Gopal Organic Farm
- Grassroots Farm
- Harrington Farms
- Hasbrouck Farms
- Heartbreaker Flower Farm
- Hidden Acre Farm
- High Falls Hemp NY, High Falls Agriculture
- Hilltop Organics
- Hill Top Farm - Catskill Wagyu
- Hollengold Farm
- Homestead Blue Mountain
- Hortus Arboretum and Botanical Gardens
- Hudson Valley Farm Hub
- Hudson Valley Heirloom Farm
- Hudson Valley Organic
- Hudson Valley Seed Co
- Hudson Valley Vertical Farms
- HV HorsePlay / Nichols Field Riding Club
- Kelder's Farm
- Little Egg Farm
- Long Season Farm
- Loosestrife Farm
- Lost Sheep Homestead
- Lyonsville Sugarhouse
- Mahoney Farms
- Mandrea Farm
- Marshall Tree Farm
- Mastwood Farms
- Muddy Farm
- Providence Farm Co.
- Quack'n'Holler Farm LLC / Ashokan Equestrian Center for Children with Autism Inc
- Ravenwood
- Robert O. Davenport & Sons
- Rolling Meadows Stables
- Row by Row Farm
- Rustic Ridge View Farm
- Saunderskill Farm Market
- Sea Change Farm & Flower
- Seed Song Farm & Center
- Sheeley's Farm Stand
- Solid Ground Farm
- Soil & Souls New Paltz LLC
- Sophie's Farm
- South Pine St. City Farm
- Spruce Run & Stony Ridge Farm
- Standing Rock Farm
- Stars of the Meadow
- Stone Ridge Orchard
- Sugarbrook Maple Farm
- Sugarshack Mushrooms
- Sundown Tree Farm
- SustainAbility Farm
- The Bejeweled Roo
- The Three Sisters Farm
- Timberstone Acres
- Thunder View Farms
- Tongore Brook Farm
- Transgenerational Farm
- Treadlight Farm
- Tributary Farm
- Twilight Acres Homegrown
- Twin Spruce Farm
- Veronica's Garden & Stone Ridge Nursery
- Vly Farm
- Westwind Orchard
- Whimsy Flowers Farm
- Wightman Fruit Farm
- Windfall Farms
- Wood Thrush Farm
- Zan & Zoe Farm Co.

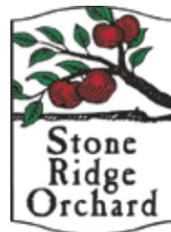


Our Sponsors

Donor Roll



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Ulster County



Kathryn Adorney
Anonymous Donor
Jared Buono
Alex & Elizabeth Cashara
Catskill Native Nursery
Christian Chavez
Mary-Kate Coletta
Robert Clark & Isobel Contento
Sanjay Coutinho
Dennis & Chelsa Crowley
Penny Damaskos
Alli DeBritz
Dennis & Chelsa Crowley
Charitable Fund
Deborah & Michael DeWan
Andrea Ellison
Juliet Falchi
Carol Garfinkel
Judith Gerrard
Lawrence Godfried
Goldie Goldberg

Arlene Gould
Great Hands Hospitality
Katherine Gutman
Maureen Hales
Wes Hannah
Colette Hillman
Hollengold Farm
Janice Iannelli
Matt Igoe
Tanya Jurcic
Gary & Wendy Kaplan
Jean Lerner
Let Lee Charitable Account fund
Maren Lindstrom
Robert Linne
Fay Loomis
Abdiel Lopez-Torres
Lost Sheep Homestead
Steve MacDonald & Priscilla Derven
Dorothea Matthews

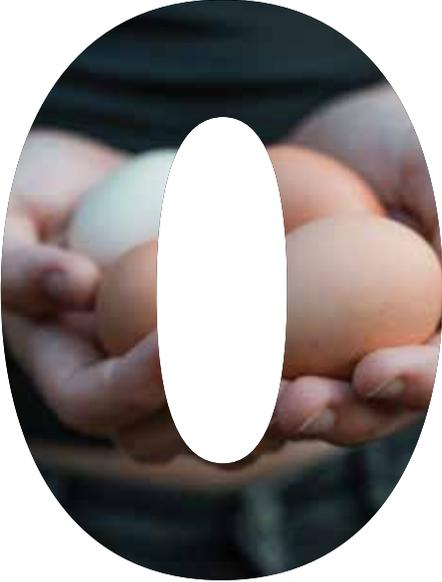
Kelleigh McKenzie
Mary McNamara
Peter & Susan Mobijohn
Carol Monyrlroni
Vincent Napoli
Alexandra Nasar
Lisa Paloympis
Rich Parete
Amanda Pierce
Jackie Proctor
Steven Ramsay
Maria Reidelbach
Neil Rindlaub
Donald Schwab
Sergey Jivetin Design LLC
Matthew & Debra Silverman
Eileen Sweeny
Tara Talaber
Paul & Lauren Tully
Judith Weiss

Thank you to the sponsors who supported our programming in 2023.



Annual Report 2023

Rondout Valley Growers Association



Connect with us!

Visit: RondoutValleyGrowers.org
Email: Office@RondoutValleyGrowers.org

 [instagram.com/rondout_valley_growers](https://www.instagram.com/rondout_valley_growers)
 [facebook.com/RVGA1](https://www.facebook.com/RVGA1)