

LEAP 2020 REPORT

LEAP



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Covid-19 has turned our world and community upside down and inside out. Covid highlighted fractures in our already broken systems — education, health, food. We responded with love, empathy, and respect. We also responded with division, competition for resources, and apathy for our neighbors. The following excerpt from my March 2020 Op-ed in The Roanoke Times. “A call to f(arms)” captures the essence of 2020.

The small farms that root local food systems are at the forefront of rural economic development, land conservation, and environmental sustainability. Farming is hard in good times. Farmers -- like Cameron Terry with Garden Variety Harvest in Roanoke City, Susanna Thornton with Thornfield Farms in Botetourt County, and Jerry Conner with Four Oaks Farm in Franklin County -- are all shifting their operations, distribution channels, financial plans so that they can continue to feed us. We need to do what we can to keep them farming.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, people are starting to see local farmers as essential. In times of stability, we take the ever-refilling shelves in the supermarket for granted. It's only when those shelves are empty that we stop and think about how fragile the global food system can be. If the fresh food can't travel thousands of miles in refrigerated trucks from California, how will we feed ourselves? Buying local is not a boutique hobby for the few, but a vital need for all. Regardless of global disruptions, we have food in our own community, and it happens to be the healthiest, freshest food available.

It is not time for fear-mongering or alarmism, but rather time to consider how we nourish ourselves and our community. This is a call to f(arms).

As I reflect on 2020, I try to center on hope. On goodwill. On faith in the people who make decisions that impact our ecological, societal, food, and economic systems. Faith that we can step back, think about how we are all connected — land, water, air, people, animals — and that we can work together for the mutual benefit of all and for future generations.

As you can see in the following pages, we are trying. We don't have all the answers. We don't, can't, and won't work alone. Thanks for joining us on our journey — for listening, asking questions, supporting changemakers. We see you and appreciate you.



Maureen McNamara Best

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2020 SNAPSHOT

11,000 + 178 = \$880K

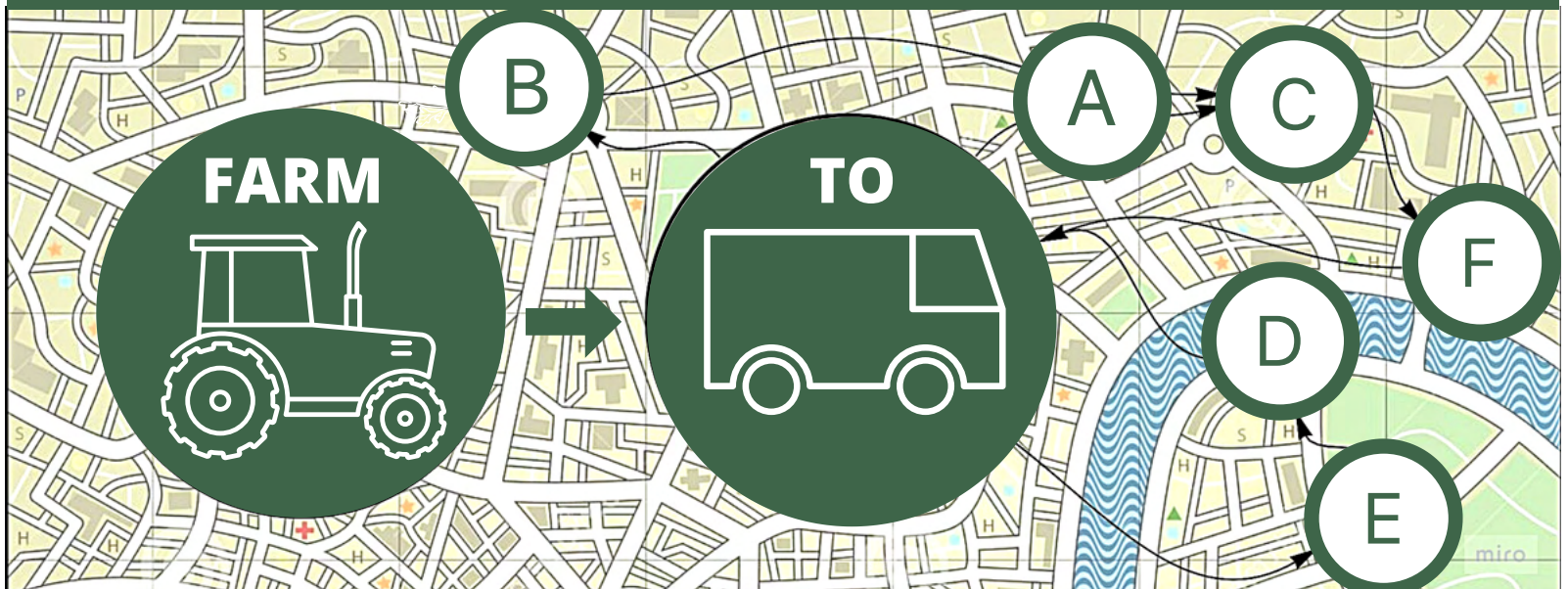
**Roanoke Valley
residents**

**Food
businesses**

**in locally
produced food**



COVID-19 exposed our global food system's fragility and inability to adapt in times of sudden change. LEAP and Roanoke Valley's farmers proved the opposite: regional, small-scale flexibility and community roots make the difference in times of crisis. LEAP pivoted and responded rapidly using our nimble and diverse operations to move nearly \$1 million in food in 2020.



LEAP @ THE LOCAL



8

45

83%

\$1.6M

Community Food Access points across Roanoke City

Roanoke City-based food businesses who participated in our programs

Of surveyed residents reported an increased consumption of healthy food

Food dollars kept in our city, using the 1.8 economic multiplier



LEAP has always been grounded in the work we do in our own communities. Our organization is, above all things, here to serve Roanoke. In 2020, we responded to the pandemic and surging food insecurity quickly and effectively, using our nimble and flexible resources. We set up online markets and curbside delivery, bought and moved local produce bags to food pantries, and matched P-EBT at our markets.

"The produce bags helped my family tremendously because I was able to give them fresh vegetables from places close to us, and they were all so good and such a variety! Our health is better because of the fresh fruits and vegetables."
- Northwest Roanoke resident

OUR LOCAL PROGRAMS

Grandin Farmers Market
West End Farmers Market
LEAP Mobile Market
Farm Share
LEAP Kitchen
Community Produce Packs
LEAP Community Gardens
The Food Hub

LEAP & COVID



Our yellow van delivered 3,500 packs of local produce across the city during the pandemic to food pantries. Our network of team members, farmers, community activists, and funders hustled to get food from the field to the people. Here's a breakdown of LEAP & COVID at the community level.



OUR FARMERS MARKETS

offered people an open, outdoor place to join in community and safely shop for local food.



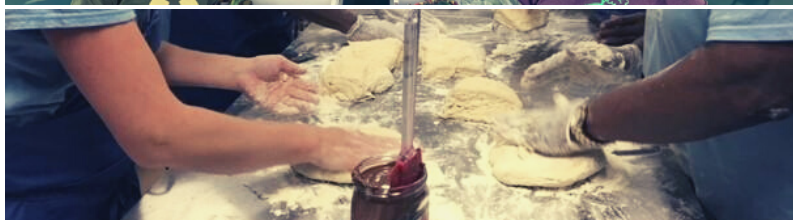
OUR FARM SHARE

helped 230+ families eat local, seasonal food and get to know the farmers.



THE LEAP MOBILE MARKET

spent over 360 hours in communities of need selling fresh, affordable food.



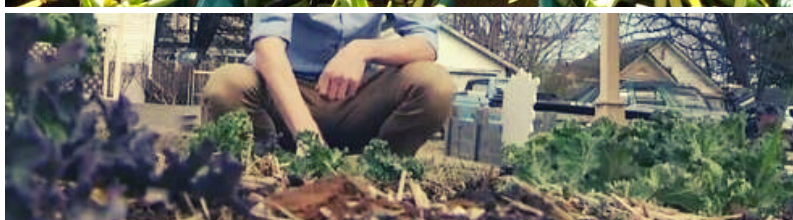
THE LEAP KITCHEN

provided 40 food entrepreneurs with equipment and resources during an economic crisis.



OUR HEALTHY FOOD BUCKS

helped sell \$200K in fresh local food at affordable prices to customers in food insecure areas.



OUR COMMUNITY GARDENS

gave 85 households space, tools, and training to grow their own food.

LEAP IN THE REGION



9

75

56%

\$390K

Counties make up our food system, representing **507,000** people & **4,754** farms

Regional partners taking action on a better future for farming and food access

Increase in number of small farms (1-9 acres) from 2012-2017

In grant funding to support action plans for our regional food system



A food system extends far beyond a single city or county. LEAP has long recognized that, in order to impact change in Roanoke, we must work on the regional scale. In 2020, LEAP received 2 USDA grants to support our regional work: Farm to School & Regional Food System Partnership. We work with government officials, advocates, extension agents, farmers, and food hubs to develop a shared vision.

"LEAP continues to be a leader in the regional food system. We work closely with LEAP to support and sustain farmers, lead a Farm to School initiative, and bring organizations from across the region together to build a better food system. LEAP's leadership and incredible staff take great care in putting the community first and lifting up the often unheard voices."

- Kimberly Butterfield, Virginia Cooperative Extension

OUR REGIONAL WORK

Roanoke Farm to School
Roanoke Valley Regional Food System Partnership
SNAP Incentive programs
Hub-to-Hub distribution
Policy & advocacy
Funding community projects
Food systems planning

LEAP @ THE STATE

19,000

Food insecure individuals able to purchase more fresh, local fruits and vegetables

\$457K

Provided to organizations and community food outlets across the state

82

Partner farmers markets, grocery stores, and farm-direct who partnered with us

24

State and food system leaders working with LEAP for a better food system

LEAP serves as the lead organization for Virginia Fresh Match, a statewide network that funds SNAP incentive programs at community outlets.

"I am amazed. My new customers are up by 50% and half of those are customers with SNAP tokens. I have many older customers using SNAP for the first time who have lost jobs due to COVID. Virginia Fresh Match has been a great service in putting food on their tables!" - Market Vendor, Fredericksburg Farmers Market

SOME OF LEAP'S STATE PARTNERS



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

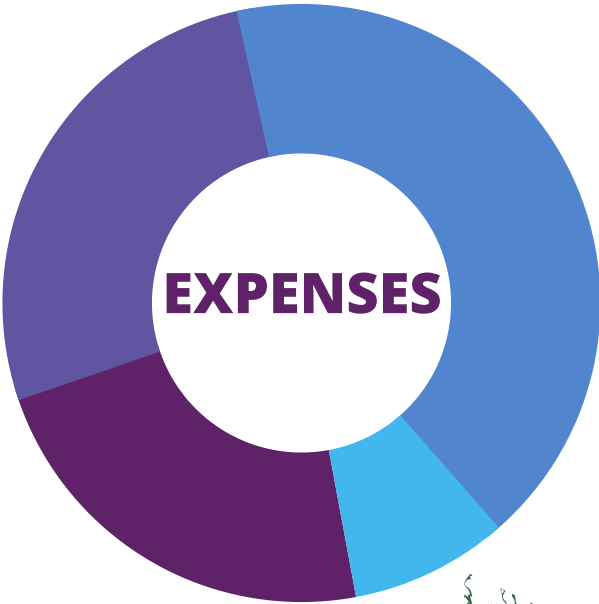
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

It's years like 2020 that really emphasize the importance of keeping our organization healthy. Despite the many hardships that we faced, LEAP relied very little on Covid disaster relief and maintained its stream of earned income.

That steady stream of earned income allowed us to focus on our community work. The majority of our income flowed through our organization and directly into the community, in the form of healthy food and services for people facing food insecurity. Our programs not only survived, they grew to meet the demand.



In 2020, LEAP invested its annual budget in...



People Power 22%

In our team of dedicated local food experts

Food Power 29%

In local food, at fair prices for local farmers

Purchasing Power 40%

In extra dollars for Roanoke Valley residents to spend on fresh, local food

Infrastructure Power 8%

In community spaces, resources for small businesses, and logistics for moving food

\$600K

In funds procured to support local food and food security



170

Local sponsors, grantors & donors



70%

Of our budget spent on community, local food, & longterm change

2020 BOARD & STAFF

Susan Clark
Board President

Maureen Best
Executive Director

Brent Cochran
Board Vice President

Sam Lev
Associate Director

Christy Pugh
Board Treasurer

Sam Hedges
Program Grant Manager

Pat Young
Board Secretary

Connie Smith Kenny
Market Manager

Sam Cannon

Kelly Key
Program Coordinator

Laura Reilly

Christina Nifong

Ned Savage
Community Outreach
Specialist

Cameron Terry

Rebecca Wright

Katie Struble
Mobile Market Manager

Jeremy Butterfield

Frances West
Financial Manager

Mission: To nurture healthy communities and
resilient local food systems.

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