# 2022 Impact Report

**Farmland Protection & Farmland Access**

- 1,169 acres of farmland protected across 12 farms in 2022
- 609 acres of Maine’s best agricultural soils protected
- 833 acres of transitioning farmland remained in farming through 9 links to new farmers

- 382 acres of farmland protected with an Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value, ensuring that resold farm properties will remain accessible to active farmers
- 30+ farmers belonging to farmer-run groups and cooperatives accessed farm real estate through 2 Buy/Protect/Sell projects

**Farm Network**

- 272 easement-protected farms supported by Land Stewards in 2022
- 48 farm businesses supported with workshops, technical assistance, & grants
- 680+ hours of technical assistance delivered to 44 farm businesses
- 16 farms engaging in soil health research & climate-smart farming practices

**Policy & Research**

- $820K in PFAS emergency relief funds delivered to 110+ farms to cover lost income, testing costs, infrastructure adaptations, & farmer wellness
- $309K in business and seed grants awarded to 24 farm businesses to grow their profitability
- $60M in state funding secured through legislative advocacy to support PFAS-impacted farmers & advance research

- 350+ farmers, community members, & businesses mobilized to advocate for Maine farms on bills to ban PFAS spreading, fund PFAS relief, and support balanced solar siting
- 450+ town officials & planning organizations connected with resources to balance solar siting and agriculture in Maine communities
Mobilizing Support for PFAS-Impacted Farmers

In early 2022, the magnitude of the PFAS crisis and its impact on Maine farms began to unfold. As we leapt to action, farmer voices guided us at every turn:

• Our Farm Network team has spent hundreds of hours in discussion with dozens of impacted farmers to find out what they needed for their farms to survive. We have delivered over $820,000 in relief funds to address their immediate needs. Land Stewards have also worked with protected farms to keep easements intact while providing flexibility for impacted farmers needing to pivot.

• Our Farmland Protection & Farmland Access team worked with impacted farmers needing to relocate to help identify suitable farmland, and continues to explore how to apply our farmland protection skills to assist impacted farmers seeking new land.

• Our Policy & Research team worked with dozens of farmers who bravely shared their voices in testimony and mobilized the farming community. Together, we won big victories: the establishment of a $60 million state fund to support farmers impacted by PFAS contamination and to advance PFAS research, and a ban on spreading PFAS-contaminated sludge and compost.

While long-term solutions to the PFAS crisis can seem distant, together with our community of farmers, we are bringing that future closer every day.

Growing Access to Farmland and Farm Infrastructure

Maine Farmland Trust and the Somali Bantu farmers at New Roots Cooperative celebrated the purchase and permanent protection of their 30-acre farm in Lewiston, facilitated by our Farmland Protection & Farmland Access team. Currently a cooperative of 4 farmers, the farm at New Roots will continue to grow, with several additional farmers cultivating crops on the property and working to formally join the cooperative. Through the Farm Network, the New Roots farmers also received a $50,000 implementation grant to more efficiently distribute their produce and received technical assistance to support them in realizing these business goals.

We explored a new dimension of Farmland Protection & Farmland Access by purchasing the former Coastal Blueberry Service building in Union. Through a lease-to-purchase model, we will resell it to the Midcoast Farmers Alliance, which plans to transform it into a shared space for 25+ area farmers to grow their capacity for production and distribution. We are excited to expand access to farmland – and to farm-related real estate that can grow farms’ viability.

Keeping Farmland in Agriculture

Through our Farmland Protection & Farmland Access work, we protected 102 acres at Rivard Farm in Springvale, cementing the legacy of farmer Jerry Rivard who operated the beloved pick-your-own berry farm for more than 70 years. Over the past few years, Rivard received inquiries from solar companies interested in building a solar installation on his fields, and it was very important to him to protect his prime farmland soils with an easement. In response to increasing solar development pressure across the state, this year our Policy & Research team released Balancing Solar Development and Farmland Protection: A Solar Siting Guide for Maine Towns and have shared this resource with 450+ town officials to promote solar development that is sited in ways that minimize impacts to important agricultural resources.