



The Dickinson College Farm
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

“To inspire responsible land stewardship through the study of the earth’s natural processes and demonstrate the science, practice and culture of sustainable food production.”



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The staff at the College Farm invite you to review some of our accomplishments over the 2025 calendar year.



Thank You

As the 2025 farming season ends, we are eager to share highlights from the past year. We remain grateful for the abundance of people that lend their passion and expertise toward the overall success of the College Farm program. Students, faculty, staff, administrators, campus partners, customers and community members all contribute to the College Farm in ways that inspire and motivate us. Thank you for your longstanding support!

As you may already know, the majority of the College Farm Team is made up of Dickinson students who lend their time, enthusiasm, and hard work to farm fields, the biogas project, outreach programs and community relations. Our student workers far outnumber the farm's full-time staff, four apprentices and part-time administrative assistant yet together as a team, we achieve ambitious goals. We look forward to sharing some of our accomplishments with you. Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

Farm Production Highlights

Vegetable growing on the College Farm was largely a success in 2025. As a team, we fielded the typical challenges of vegetable farming with skill and enjoyed an impressive harvest of 78 different crops.

Of the 78 crops, several key crops saw increased productivity over the previous year's harvest. Of the twenty-six crops reported in our production highlights, thirteen surpassed our three-year average of production efficiency (yield per planting unit). Seven of the remaining crops did not have sufficient data to compare.

Among the most notable achievements this year was the remodel of three of our high tunnel greenhouse structures through a generous benefactor. With the help of some local professionals, we stripped structures down to the bones, rebuilt the end walls, upgraded the electric service, upgraded the irrigation, added some ventilation features and most importantly, upgraded the automation. These improvements will hopefully translate to longer growing seasons, more efficient operations, and better crops. The additional automation will certainly

lessen staff time managing the houses.

2025 was also marked by major improvements to our plasticulture. While we have some serious reservations about using plastic mulch, it does an incredible job managing weeds, conserving water, and building our soil. Perhaps most importantly, we see significant yield increases with plastic as well. After some initial complications, we have become proficient at using the plastic layer we acquired in 2024. While attending an auction this Fall, we purchased two other tractor implements that will greatly facilitate our plasticulture: a used cultivator that will enable us to do a better job keeping our plastic pathways clean and a plastic lifter that will make end of season clean up a lot easier.

Finally, despite a coordinated effort to manage our stored and fresh inventory tightly for accurate sales, we inevitably end up with some surplus to share. As of reporting, we have donated just over 10,000 pounds of produce this year to area non-profits—most notably the Gleaning Project of South-Central PA and Carlisle's Project Share.



2025 was an excellent reminder that our most important “crops” are not necessarily “food staples” but the young folks we continue to teach and mentor. In 2025, twenty-three Dickinson students rolled up their sleeves to pitch in in every aspect of the College Farm. They sowed seeds in the dark of last winter; planted and pulled weeds in the heat of summer; and harvested crops on frosty fall mornings. They learned new skills and contributed their unique talents to all the other projects throughout the year.

This year's apprentice crew was stellar in every regard as individuals, but more importantly, they worked incredibly well together and ascended to become leaders among the students quickly. They each dedicated portions of the work week to their specific area of focus on the farm, but otherwise, they worked alongside the student workers to handle the daily labor load.



of the season, students also experienced regular cow moves and fence maintenance tasks. The animals and pastures were one highlight of a focused tour for Professor Douglas's Agroecology class tour in the fall.

Beef sales this year were our strongest ever. Demand from Dining Services continues to grow thanks to interest from Chef Ashlee Telep and a supportive pricing approach from

LIVESTOCK

2025 was our first full season without sheep or chickens on the farm. Reducing our animal program to only beef cattle greatly simplified our responsibilities and workload. Apprentice Nate Bredin bonded well with the cattle and helped to raise a fine batch of animals.

Throughout the course

2025 YIELD HIGHLIGHTS		
CROP	HARVESTED	UNIT
BASIL	1,156	BUNCHES
BROCCOLI	1,479	LBS
BUTTERNUT SQUASH	2,222	EACH
CABBAGE	1,309	HEADS
CARROT	5,170	LBS
CAULIFLOWER	3,476	HEADS
CHERRY TOMATOES	2,817	PINTS
CUCUMBERS	3,141	LBS
GARLIC	20,013	HEADS
GREEN BEANS	250	LBS
HERBS	2,677	BUNCHES
KALE	2,058	BUNCHES
LETTUCE MIX	838	LBS
ONIONS	6,164	EACH
PEPPERS, GREEN BELL	1,404	EACH
PEPPERS, HOT	2,009	PINTS
PEPPERS, SWEET ITALIAN	716	EACH
POTATOES	6,788	LBS
SPINACH	467	LBS
STRAWBERRIES	2,386	PINTS
SUMMER SQUASH	1,698	LBS
SWEET CORN	5,321	EARS
SWEET POTATOES	8,138	LBS
TOMATOES	12,707	LBS
ZUCCHINI	1,851	LBS

Director Mike Alampi. Farm burgers were a featured menu item throughout the fall semester, as well as spicy Asian noodles with farm beef. We grilled and served several hundred sausages, burgers and hot dogs at the annual German Club Oktoberfest at The Trellis. The on-farm store, Farm Works and Devil's Den have both become reliable outlets for reaching retail customers, in addition to online sales through our Square website and the CSA program. In the Fall we donated about 100 lbs. of beef liver to Project SHARE.

Altogether these outlets resulted in nearly empty beef freezers at the farm for the first time in many years. One challenge we are currently facing is the very high price of replacement calves due to a national shortage of beef animals. This has forced us to raise our beef prices and make careful choices about timing and numbers of new animals brought to the farm.

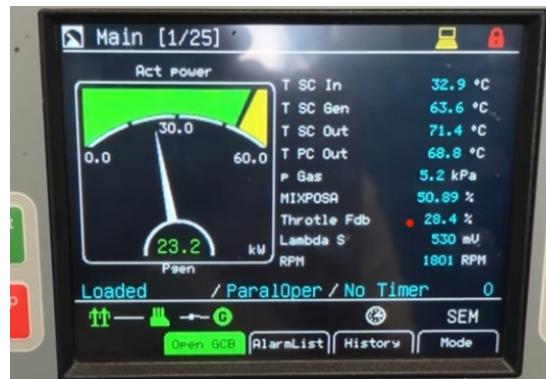
Waste-to-Energy Biogester

After over a year of navigating technical and administrative hurdles with the power company, we are thrilled to report that the biogester is now fully online. As of October, we are converting our biogas into renewable electricity that powers the project site and feeds excess energy into the utility grid. We've been working the kinks out of 24/7 mechanical operations, but so far things are going well. Students and apprentices are helping with digester and energy system management in addition to the considerable labor of food waste handling. We are collaborating with Ecological Labs, an advanced microbiology firm, to test custom blends of organisms for improving waste to energy conversion as a data-based case study.

The biogester project continues to be a productive generator of outreach and intrigue from visitors. We led numerous tours including current students, alumni, farmers, school groups, and agriculture agencies. Off campus we had the opportunity to be "featured" speakers at a Penn State digester day, Sustainable Energy Fund annual conference and two energy events sponsored by the PA Department of Agriculture. The project was also featured in an international green futures podcast with Tyler Steeves and on Fox 43 news out of York, PA. This spring, Matt collaborated with students, Professor Kent Barrett (Theater and Dance) and local non-profit Valley Traction to record "Life Waste: A Biogas Musical". The collection of 14 original songs is now freely available on YouTube, featuring images from the farm and campus. To listen, search YouTube for "Valley Traction Life Waste".

This image of the power output gauge shows the real-time power output of our biogas engine to the electrical grid. Currently we're converting enough energy to support about 12 homes, with more to come in the near future.

[Fox 43: Biogas-Dickinson College Organic Farm](#)



Research & Partnerships

RESEARCH

This fall, the College Farm ended a three-year study in collaboration with the Capital Resource Conservation & Development, as well as Cornell University and Penn State soil testing services to measure soil carbon and evaluate the impact of soil conservation techniques on soil carbon levels. In October, the farm also hosted a daylong workshop focused on the results of the study. Study outcomes will evaluate whether adding soil conservation techniques can generate enough carbon credits for farmers to consider taking the extra steps required to measure and sell their carbon credits.

The College Farm continues to participate in the statewide soil health benchmark study, a citizen-science research project led by PASA Farming. The College Farm is one of fifty farms across the Commonwealth and Tristate Region participating in this long-term project aimed at tracking soil management practices relative to soil health over time.

PARTNERSHIPS

Over the summer, the farm led half-day educational programs for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Teacher Training Program and Penn State University Conservation Educators with specific focus on organic vegetable production, natural resource management, and biogas operations. The College Farm also hosted peer institutions for visits to learn about the evolution of our educational production farm model. The farm receives many inquiries from other institutions for insight and guidance to support efforts at establishing similar programs or initiatives on their campuses.

This fall, the Center for Dairy Excellence held a Biogester Owner Forum at the College Farm. This daylong event featured a tour of the farm's biogas operation, as well as strategic discussions about concerns and issues in the industry.



Academic Collaborations

COURSEWORK

During the 2025 Spring semester, the farm supported the academic priorities, learning objectives, and outcomes of several courses, impacting close to two hundred students.

These courses included:

- Asuncion Arnedo (SPAN): *Food, Fun and Recreation in Spanish Cultures*
- Emily Pawley (HIST): *Food and American Environment*
- Wade Mansell (INBM): *Consumer Behavior*
- Nikki Tynan (ECON): *Environmental Economics*
- Emily Brown (PSYCH): *Research Methods in Comparative Psychology*
- Dana Somers (BIO): *Introduction to Molecules, Genes and Cells*
- Rachel Eng (ART): *Wheelwork Ceramics*
- Jenn Halpin (FDST): *Introduction to Sustainable Food Production Systems*
- Matt Steiman (ENST): *Sustainable Waste Management*

Both Matt Steiman and Jenn Halpin taught courses in the spring; ENST 305 Sustainable Waste Management and FDST 250 Introduction to Sustainable Food Production Systems as part of the Green Cuisine Mosaic. Both courses heavily used the farm as a resource and class venue.

At the start of the fall semester, the New Faculty Orientation program brought fifteen faculty members to the College Farm as part of an experiential session to learn about campus sustainability and the ways that faculty can and have utilized the College Farm to meet course goals and research. During the 2025 Fall semester, the College Farm supported lab and



course objectives for a wide range of classes, impacting close to three hundred students. These included:

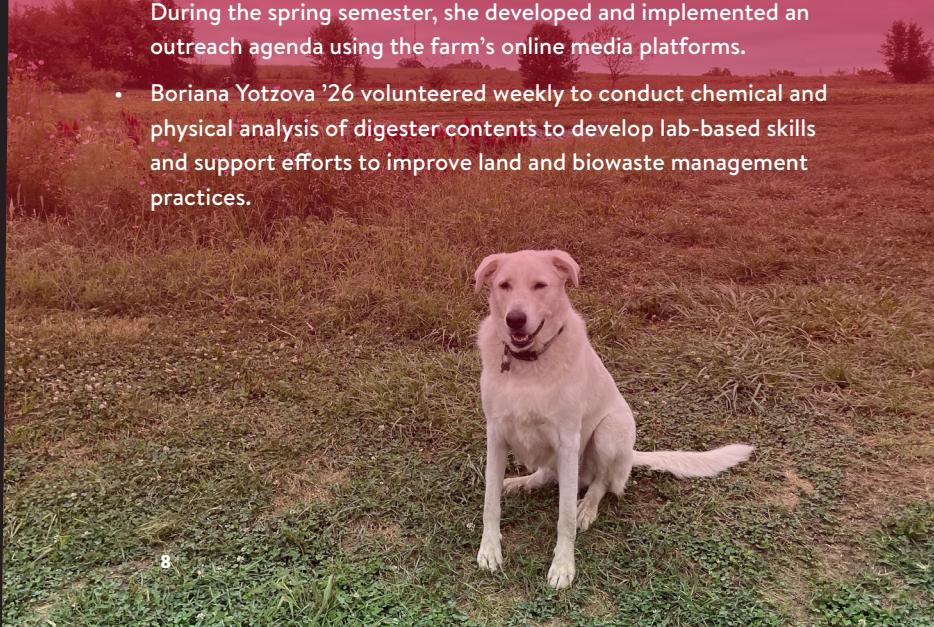
- Maggie Douglas (Envi Sci): *Agroecology*
- Sarah Sterner (Envi Sci): *Vegetation Monitoring*
- Wande Benka-Coker (Envi Sci): *Environmental Health*
- Andrew Dufton (Arch): *Archeological Methods*
- Heather Bedi (Envi Sci): *Environmental Connections*
- Erin Crawley-Woods (Dance): *FYS*
- Helene Lee (Soc): *Global Inequality*
- Kristen Olson (Art): *Wheelwork Ceramics*
- Mitch Shiles (Art): *Art and Sustainability*
- Adrienne Su (Creative Writing): *Creative Non-Fiction: Writing About Food*
- Wande Benka-Coker (Envi Sci): *First Year Seminar*
- Heather Bedi (Envi Sci): *Environmental Connections*

In addition to Dickinson courses, the College Farm also served as an academic resource for students in Jeff Niemitz's Hydrogeology class at Messiah University, as well as an academic internship site for a York College student.

Research & Internships

Faculty have been instrumental in integrating student research at the College Farm. We look forward to actively working with additional faculty members to develop and support new farm-based research projects. Examples of research conducted in 2025 include:

- Occupational Exposures in Farmworkers on a College Farm: Airborne Pollutants, Heat, and Cardiopulmonary Health, *Wande Benka-Coker and Lila Brown (ENST '26)*
- Ammonia Air Quality and Cow Behavior in Naturally Ventilated Barns, *Wande Benka-Coker and Max Carfey (ENST '26)*
- Wasted Potential: A Biogas Documentary, *Wande Benka-Coker, Matt Steiman, and Beatrix Bond (ENST '27)*
- Relationship Between Weed Seeds and Ground Beetles at the Dickinson College Farm, *Maggie Douglas and Makayla McCloskey (ENST '26)*
- Bee Assemblage Across Urban and Rural Pollinator Gardens, *Maggie Douglas and Liv Kacar (ENST '26)*
- Eliette Whitaker '27 completed a Biogas Education & Outreach Internship as part of the Food Studies Certificate requirement. During the spring semester, she developed and implemented an outreach agenda using the farm's online media platforms.
- Boriana Yotzova '26 volunteered weekly to conduct chemical and physical analysis of digester contents to develop lab-based skills and support efforts to improve land and biowaste management practices.



Education & Outreach

CAMPUS PROGRAMMING

The College Farm continues to serve as a venue for student-focused events, impacting a significant percentage of the Dickinson student body. Flagship events like Harvest Fest and collaborative undertakings like Oktoberfest and farm pizza events each attract campus crowds numbering well over three hundred. In addition to these high-volume events, the College Farm continues to work in partnership with and support programming efforts for campus departments and groups like the Center for Spirituality and Social Justice and “Faith on the Farm”, Student Life and Pre-Orientation groups, the East Asian Studies department, Asbell Center, the Library, Mermaid Society, Greek Life, WDCV, the Career Center and alumni career panels, as well as Athletics.

This fall, the farm launched ‘around the globe’ cooking classes with language, culture, and regional studies departments with the goal of bringing curriculum to life while highlighting farm-to-table cooking right in the Stern Kitchen. Faculty from language departments have taken advantage of this supportive out-of-class learning opportunity and we hope to grow participation in 2026.

The College Farm’s new Waste Warrior initiative worked closely with Dining Services and its Catering Department to develop strategies to minimize waste at large campus-based food events. With support from faculty, staff, and student volunteers, Waste Warriors oversaw waste stations at events like MLB Day, Charter Day, the Dining Service’s October Fest, the Employee Tailgate, and the Homecoming Weekend Lunch. We are grateful for volunteers who have rolled up their sleeves to help. As a result of this effort, Waste Warriors diverted thousands of pounds of food scraps, compostable platewear and utensils to the College Farm Biogas project, converting “waste” to “electricity.”



The College Farm has secured funding for Waste Warrior student positions starting in the 2026 spring semester. Farm staff look forward to expanding the impact of Waste Warriors on campus and working with college partners to adopt zero-waste policies for future events.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

This summer was a season for experimentation at the College Farm as it implemented programming designed to foster community connections, as well as new sources of revenue. In May, the College Farm launched a monthly Farm-to-Table Music Series with funds awarded by the Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation as part of a regional tourism initiative. Monthly concerts featuring regional musical talent were paired with farm-fresh meals prepared and served by farm staff and students. This agrotourism initiative not only aimed to cultivate connection to the land, but it was also 100% zero waste and powered by renewable energy. Over 450 tickets sold over the course of the four-month concert series with just over 110 attendees per event.

The farm opened a u-pick patch of organic strawberries and was delighted by the volume of customers attracted to the farm for this specialty crop. Over the course of three weeks, more than eight hundred quarts of strawberries were picked from the farm's u-pick patch. Based on the successes in 2025, the farm plans to expand its u-pick strawberry patch in 2026. In addition to u-pick strawberries, Crew Leader, Kelsey Horowitz planted a u-pick cut flower patch.

Both u-pick enterprises were set up in conjunction with an on-site farmstand that carried fresh produce, frozen meat, canned goods, and more. Sales at the farmstand and u-pick patches remained strong throughout the fall, and we have been pleasantly surprised by the foot traffic. Looking ahead to 2026, our plan is to shift away from selling at Farmers on the Square, where the College Farm has been a vendor for fifteen years, and improve upon our on-farm markets that not only generate revenue but also work to build community and connection to the land.

The farm continued efforts in 2025 to provide Carlisle residents with an option to send food scraps to the farm biodigester project. Each week, farm staff provided receptacles at Farmers on the Square for community collection. Over the course of the 2025 market season, we collected over 5,000 pounds of food waste. This initiative will continue at FOTS next year.

In addition to requests from higher ed institutions to visit the College Farm and learn about our program and practices, this year the farm also hosted groups and organizations like USDA, St. Patrick's School Eighth Grade Class, the Catholic Worker, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies for educational tours. The farm also hosted public tours in early November in conjunction with Homecoming Weekend. Over 350 people came out for the event.



Farm Initiatives

FARM WORKS

Farm Works Kitchen Manager, Joe Rosas, and our student team continue to exceed expectations. Over the course of the 2025 calendar year, Farm Work sold over 13,000 meals. Students can use meal plan points to purchase lunch, as well as fresh vegetables, canned goods, frozen items, and fermented products. Farm Works is now open Monday through Saturday to accommodate student feedback desiring more food options over the weekend. The Farm Works team is currently developing plans for Sunday store hours and expanding the weekend breakfast/brunch menu.

Supporting the retail side of Farm Works, Cheri Getty, the farm's Packing House Coordinator oversees all the farm's canned goods. Since the start of 2025, Cheri has produced just under one thousand canned goods which can be found on the shelves at Farm Works.

Based on discussions with Financial Operations, the College Farm is managing Farm Works as a separate revenue-generating enterprise. Whereas in the past, the College Farm would supply farm ingredients to use in the meals prepared for Farm Works or canned goods available for sale; the farm is now selling these ingredients to maintain transparent accounting between the two entities. For more information on the store operation, please go to dickinson.edu/farmworks.

F.A.R.M TO BARN LAB

Over the course of 2025, Jenn worked with campus partners, local architects, and the local township to discuss and develop plans for barn renovations at the College Farm. Goals for the barn renovation revolve around the construction of a year-round indoor space to support academic and student needs and interests. Included in the renovation design are low environmental impact technologies for heating and



cooling, the integration of passive solar, and a commitment to maintaining the historical features of the barn. This undertaking will be completely donor funded. Jenn is working with partners at Advancement on donor engagement. We are hopeful that this vision will inspire others to lend their support.

2026–2031 COLLEGE FARM STRATEGIC PLAN

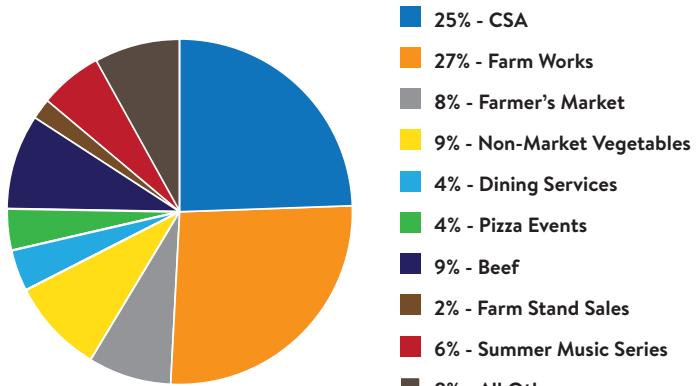
Over the course of the fall semester, the College Farm has worked with campus stakeholders to collect information on farm programs and functions as they relate to the campus and wider community needs and interests. Input from a group of faculty, staff, administrators, and students will guide the farm team in drafting a five-year strategic plan for implementation starting in 2026. We look forward to sharing this plan at the start of the new year.

Farm Financials

YEARLY TOTAL REVENUE	
YEAR	TOTAL REVENUE*
2020	\$160,757
2021	\$172,626
2022*	\$198,993
2023	\$202,448
2024	\$195,756
2025**	\$244,140

*INCLUDES FARM WORKS REVENUE BEGINNING IN 2022

**AS OF NOVEMBER 10, 2025



The College Farm continues to have strong support as evidenced by our stable sales outlets. In 2025, we had over 140 CSA members that enjoyed weekly or bi-weekly shares of our certified-organic produce. The majority of our CSA members represent Dickinson faculty, staff, students, alumni, and retirees. In addition to selling fresh vegetables at Farmers on the Square throughout 2025, a major component of our vegetable production is dedicated to sales to Dickinson Dining Services, supplying the dining hall with certified organic produce and occasional College Farm beef specials. We continue to nurture this partnership and with new leadership in Dining Services have developed a system of pricing that better captures the value of our certified organic crops. Other unique sales outlets include selling seed garlic and bulk vegetables to local farmers, plus facilitating online Farm Works, beef, and compost sales through our Square website here. New sources of revenue for 2025 for the College Farm included our Summer Music Concert Series, u-pick operation, and on-site farmstand. These initiatives were well received, and we look forward to building upon and improving these community connection points in 2026.



COLLEGE FARM STAFF

Jenn Halpin, *Director of the College Farm*

Matt Steiman, *Assistant Director of the College Farm and Energy Projects Manager*

Alex Smith, *Vegetable Production Manager*

Cheri Getty, *Packing House Coordinator*

Sarah Hart, *Program Coordinator*

Joe Rosas, *Farm Works Kitchen Manager*

Kelsey Horowitz, *Crew Leader*

Tina Myers, *Part-Time Administrative Assistant*

We welcome any questions or requests for additional information and encourage you to stay updated on farm events and happenings by following our blog, liking our page on Facebook, or following our Instagram account.

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COLLEGE FARM