



## INAUGURAL PLANTING OF VEGETABLE SYSTEMS TRIAL

In 2016, Rodale Institute initiated the Vegetable Systems Trial (VST), a long-term side-by-side comparison of biologically-based organic and chemically-based conventional vegetable production systems. The goal for this project is to develop economically-viable vegetable production systems which improve soil, plant, human and planetary health through the application of regenerative organic management techniques. Dr. Andrew Smith leads this new trial.

The specific crops grown in the trial include: potato, butternut squash, lettuce, green beans, and sweet corn. The systems are designed to replicate labor intensive production that includes tillage and the use of black plastic

mulch, and lower labor, mechanized production that integrates reduced tillage technology.

The Vegetable Systems Trial is the produce companion to our Farming Systems Trial, started in 1981, which is the longest running side-by-side comparison of organic and conventional grain production in North America. Like the Farming Systems Trial, the Vegetable Systems Trial will compare soil organic matter, yields, economics, weed pressure, environmental impact and nutritional quality between the organic and conventional systems. Insect and disease pressures also will be compared and innovative management practices will be tested to reduce these pressures in related satellite trials.



## ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Sponsored by  RODALE INSTITUTE

In 2016 farmers from across the country came together to launch the Organic Farmers Association (OFA), a new national membership organization to unite organic farmers for a better future. Rodale Institute supports this initiative as fiscal sponsor and partner with OFA's farmer leadership.

The mission of OFA is to provide a strong and unified national voice for domestic certified organic producers.

### OFA will:

- develop and advocate policies that benefit organic farmers
- strengthen and support the capacity of organic farmers and farm organizations
- and support collaboration and leadership among state, regional and national organic farmer organizations.

To join Organic Farmers Association, visit [OrganicFarmersAssociation.org](http://OrganicFarmersAssociation.org). Members receive free issues of our newly relaunched New Farm magazine, free webinars and discounts to workshops and events.

## NEW VISITOR CENTER



In 2016 we unveiled a brand new Visitor Center to enhance education and outreach on the farm. The Visitor Center, generously constructed with funds from The Wyncote Foundation, was created by enclosing a pavilion located next to our Garden Store. The Visitor Center includes a theater screen and sound system, allowing us to showcase educational content, host films and speakers, and to engage the public with the history and mission of Rodale Institute.

## Your 2 Cents Partners with Organic Farming Research Foundation

Your 2 Cents goes bi-coastal! Rodale Institute expanded our Your 2 Cents grantmaking program by partnering with California-based Organic Farming Research Foundation. Companies commit 2 cents per case of their product sold, and Rodale Institute, through OFRF's grantmaking program, helps fund farmers, ranchers and researchers studying the most pressing challenges in organic agriculture. In 2016, this partnership funded projects like soil health for water management, organic fruit and grain production, compost research, and creating climate resilient organic systems.

# RESEARCH



## Crops & Livestock

In 2016 we continued important research to study the beneficial effects of integrating livestock into crop rotations. This has been associated with improvements in soil quality, including enhancement of soil organic matter, soil physical condition, and disease suppression. Incorporation of manure and crop residue inputs sequesters carbon in soils, improves soil function and mitigates erosion. A higher forage rather than grain-based diet is also beneficial for animal health, producing milk and meat with higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids, and for economic security by reducing nutrient input and feed costs.

## Vertical Growing

In response to the rise in soil safety concerns and the need for new technologies for urban agriculture, Rodale Institute created prototypes for easy, inexpensive vertical growing towers for urban agriculture. Guides are available for download at [RodaleInstitute.org](http://RodaleInstitute.org).

## Nutrient Density

In 1942, our founder, J.I. Rodale, wrote on a chalkboard “Healthy Soil= Healthy Food= Healthy People.” We’re still making that connection, between soil health and human health, with our research today. One thing we know is that nutrient densities (concentrations of minerals, vitamins, and proteins) in grains, fruits and vegetables produced in the U.S. have declined in the past 50-70 years. We’re focusing our research on why, and trying to reverse the trend with regenerative organic agriculture practices.

In 2016, we analyzed the nutrients of organic and conventional oats from our Farming Systems Trial. Results from the data collected and analyzed revealed that legume organic oats contained higher concentrations of nitrogen and protein. Additionally, the concentrations of key minerals such as zinc, iron, calcium, potassium, phosphorous, molybdenum, and copper were found to be highest in the organic manure tilled plots.

We will continue to compare organic and conventional nutrient densities in other grains from our Farming Systems Trial and produce in our new Vegetable Systems Trial.

# FARMER TRAINING PROGRAMS

*In 2016, we continued our commitment to farmer training through several innovative programs, including:*

## St. Luke’s Rodale Institute Organic Farm

Our farm-to-hospital model, in partnership with St. Luke’s University Health Network, launched a “Healthy Citizens” program with The Children’s Home of Easton (in Easton, PA) to teach teenagers about organic farming. The teens then created a business to sell fresh, organic produce, and donated produce to other organizations in need. Two teens, Jamon Dabney, 17, and Terry Patterson, 17, launched a weekly mobile farmers market called “Mook & Money’s Edible Plants,” and even sold food to their own cafeteria!



## New Veteran Farmer Training Program

In 2013, Rodale Institute cemented our commitment to training veterans for careers in organic agriculture with the launch of our yearlong Organic Farming Certificate Program in partnership with Delaware Valley University. However, we realized we weren’t meeting the needs of veterans looking for a more flexible, short-term program. So in 2016 we launched the new Veteran Farmer Training program, providing 2-4 month training opportunities for vets in livestock, orchard management, vegetable growing and gardening.

## Agriculture Supported Communities for Fresh Food Access (ASC)

Rodale Institute also continued our ASC farm share, which serves two purposes. The first is to provide affordable organic produce to underserved families in food deserts (who pay week-to-week and use federal food assistance dollars called SNAP benefits). The second is farmer training. Beginning farmers spend 8 months in this intensive, hands-on program learning how to run their own organic vegetable CSA from seed to harvest.

# RESEARCH



## The Birds, Bats & the Bees

In 2016, Rodale Institute continued our commitment to conservation by increasing biodiversity on the farm through a few key projects including:

### • American Kestrels

In partnership with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, we installed new American Kestrel nest boxes at the farm. The American Kestrel, our smallest falcon, is in decline in the Northeast. We're happy to report we were successful in attracting breeding pairs, and the birds are monitored for research.

### • Bat Research

In 2016 our research team began using acoustic monitoring equipment and bat boxes to assess bat populations for a better understanding of how farmers can attract the animals for pest management. Bats, whose populations are being decimated by white-nose syndrome, can provide an economic service to farmers by freeing time and money normally allocated to pest management, while reducing the need for environmental pollutants and supporting ecosystems.

### • Honeybee Conservancy

We continued to pioneer treatment-free beekeeping. Pollinators are vital to agriculture, and we're working to breed healthy bees that can resist colony collapse disorder and varroa mites. Additionally, we worked with Xerces Society to develop a comprehensive pollinator plan for Rodale Institute's farm, which will be implemented in stages, allowing us to be a model for pollinator habitat.

# LOOKING FORWARD

In 2017, Rodale Institute is poised to increase its impact and organic leadership with:



## Industrial Hemp

In 2017, Rodale Institute received one of 16 permits for the inaugural planting of hemp in Pennsylvania in more than 80 years, as part of the PA Department of Agriculture Industrial Hemp Pilot Project. Rodale Institute is conducting a three-year research project focusing on utilizing Industrial Hemp as a cash or cover crop to address weed pest issues and enhance soil health in organic agriculture.

## Fight it With Farming

Get involved! Rodale Institute launched a new campaign in 2017 to help individuals combat some of our most pressing challenges, like climate change and human health, with organic farming! Learn more at [FightItWithFarming.org](http://FightItWithFarming.org).

## Regional Resource Centers

We continue to explore opportunities for regionally based organic resource centers around the United States and abroad to aid farmers interested in transitioning to organic.

# ORGANIC PIONEER AWARDS

*At our 6th annual Organic Pioneer Awards dinner we recognized the following outstanding individuals who have worked for decades to advance the organic industry:*



### Research Scientist

#### DR. WARREN PORTER

Environmental Toxicologist  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

### Farmer

#### DAVID VETTER

Grain Place Foods  
Marquette, Nebraska

### Business

#### DAVID BRONNER

Dr. Bronner's  
Organic body care and food producer

# 2016 FINANCIALS



## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

REVENUE, GAINS, AND SUPPORT	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Totals	
				2016	2015
Grants	\$219,661	-	-	\$219,661	\$190,177
Federal Awards	\$567,077	-	-	\$567,077	\$467,594
Contributions	\$1,143,205	\$316,685	-	\$1,459,890	\$2,002,364
Education and Store	\$193,749	-	-	\$193,749	\$186,073
Farm Sales	\$248,762	-	-	\$248,762	\$259,721
Other	\$151,356	-	-	\$151,356	\$170,355
Interest and Dividend Income	\$164,435	\$96,503	\$9,982	\$270,920	\$283,049
Net Realized and Unrealized Gain (loss) on investments	\$194,400	\$256,775	\$27,588	\$478,763	(\$404,710)
Change in value of beneficial interest in perpetual trust	-	-	(\$202)	(\$202)	(\$31,735)
Transfers					
Endowment spending policy distribution	\$275,947	(\$240,846)	(\$35,101)	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions	\$642,861	(\$642,861)	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL REVENUE, GAINS AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$3,801,453</b>	<b>(\$213,744)</b>	<b>\$2,267</b>	<b>\$3,589,976</b>	<b>\$3,122,888</b>

### EXPENSES

#### PROGRAM SERVICES

Strategic Solutions Team	\$2,438,871	-	-	\$2,438,871	\$2,666,331
Communication	\$734,804	-	-	\$734,804	\$654,796

#### SUPPORTING SERVICES

Management and General	\$461,262	-	-	\$461,262	\$481,281
Development	\$291,790	-	-	\$291,790	\$312,146
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,926,727</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,926,727</b>	<b>\$4,114,554</b>

<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(\$125,274)</b>	<b>(\$213,744)</b>	<b>\$2,267</b>	<b>(\$336,751)</b>	<b>(\$991,666)</b>
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## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2016	2015
Cash	\$614,992	\$724,731
Contributions receivable	\$5,591,000	\$5,593,900
Accounts receivable	\$339,061	\$386,572
Inventory	\$47,922	\$41,283
Prepaid expenses and other assets	\$57,680	\$85,632
Investments	\$10,945,377	\$11,070,529
Note receivable	\$1,030,580	\$1,030,580
Beneficial interest in perpetual trust	\$504,843	\$505,045
Property and equipment, net	\$3,240,466	\$3,214,667
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$22,371,921</b>	<b>\$22,652,939</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	\$80,626	\$90,923
Accrued liabilities	\$83,876	\$75,533
Note payable	\$57,687	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$222,189</b>	<b>\$166,456</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	\$9,856,926	\$9,982,200
Temporarily restricted	\$11,114,528	\$11,328,272
Permanently restricted	\$1,178,278	\$1,176,011
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$22,149,732</b>	<b>\$22,486,483</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$22,371,921</b>	<b>\$22,652,939</b>