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Five Illinois Farm Organizations Awarded Farm Aid Funds

Farm Aid distributed over $1 million in grants nationally - and $27,000 in Illinois - to farm families, scholarships, and 95 family farm, rural service and urban agriculture organizations

SPRINGFIELD, IL — Five Illinois farm and food organizations received grants from Farm Aid this week. Founded by Willie Nelson, Farm Aid has raised $57 million in 30 years to support programs that build a vibrant, family farm-centered system of agriculture in America.

“Farm Aid started right here in central Illinois at the height of the 80’s farm crisis. This year’s devastating losses from extreme weather, low commodity prices, and a trade war combined to create a new crisis for farmers and Illinois rural communities,” said Liz Moran Stelk, Executive Director of Illinois Stewardship Alliance, one of five Illinois grantees. “Support from Farm Aid will help farmers and eaters educate policymakers on the urgent need to support local food, address the climate crisis, and make a just transition to regenerative agriculture.”

“The Land Connection's Farmer Training Program provides farmers with the skills, tools, support, and guidance to develop and maintain viable farm businesses,” said Cassidy Dellorto-Blackwell, the Farmer Training Program Manager at The Land Connection, another of the five grantees. “Thanks to Farm Aid we will be able to support more farmers, assisting them as they develop and implement strategies for managing all aspects of farm health, from growing techniques to marketing to managing soil health to planning for the future of the farm.”

Illinois grantees include:

- **Illinois Stewardship Alliance**, Springfield: $7,000 grant from Farm Aid to win state legislative priorities in 2020 and expand capacity to engage members, develop leaders, and build a more powerful organization for just and regenerative agriculture.

- **The Land Connection**, Champaign: $5,000 to support the Farmer Training Program, which provides farmers with the support, tools, and network needed to begin farming and increase the longevity and success of their operations.
Angelic Organics Learning Center, Caledonia: $5,000 to support holistic training for beginning farmers, provide opportunities for socially disadvantaged individuals, and develop the next generation of consumers who create demand for sustainable agriculture.

Food Works, Carbondale: $5,000 to increase the viability of beginning, sustainable family farms through value-added enterprises and farmer-to-farmer mentorship.

Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water, Vermont: $5,000 to assist small farmers and rural residents fighting against the siting of factory farms in their communities, while organizing and galvanizing them to campaign for legislative reform.

These awards represent a total of $27,000 towards bolstering family farm agriculture and changing the local food systems in Illinois.

Farm Aid artists and board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, and Dave Matthews host an annual festival to raise funds to support Farm Aid’s work with family farmers and to inspire people to choose family farm food. Farm Aid’s grantmaking is focused on work that enhances the viability of family farm agriculture in the United States. They issue grants to qualifying nonprofit organizations that serve family farmers in one of three funding areas: growing the good food movement, helping farmers thrive, and taking action to change the food and farm system.

“Our goal is to create real change in our farm and food system, from the ground up,” said Farm Aid President Willie Nelson. “Farm Aid grantees strengthen family farmers, they build communities that can support each other in hard times, and they organize people to stand up and challenge corporate power in our food system. These are essential activities that benefit everyone — eaters and farmers.”

For a complete listing of Farm Aid’s 2019 grant recipients, visit www.farmaid.org/2019grants.