

Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation
Annual Report 2019

HVADC

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The Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) is the only economic development agency in the Hudson Valley with a specific focus on the viability of the agricultural economy in the region. HVADC's charge is to enhance the agricultural sector in the Hudson Valley by assisting both new and existing agri-businesses, and supporting policies and regulations that recognize and support New York State's agricultural economy. Our services are carefully designed to promote the Hudson Valley as an attractive, viable region for agriculture and to foster growth and development of the agricultural sector through a creative program or marketing, promotion and the provision and coordination of financial and other resources.

Scope of Services

HVADC offers the following services to farms and farm-related/farm dependent businesses:

1. Technical assistance to businesses applying for funding or implementing awards from various public and private sources to include but not limited to: USDA Value Added Grant, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants, SBA, EDA, NYS Consolidated Funding Applications, etc.
2. Business planning services to businesses seeking to diversify production.
3. Business expansion counseling to businesses seeking to add process capacity and expand operations to make room for next generation.
4. New business referrals for site search selection opportunities to locate in the region.
5. Representation and technical support to ensure these business interests are included in NYS Regional Economic Development Councils' plans and implementation.
6. Local farm product sourcing for regional co-packers, value added processors and other regional commercial and institutional buyers.
7. Development and promotion of farm and local business sourcing to support agri/culinary-tourism and educate the community members and markets of the role local sourcing plays in economic development through the Hudson Valley Bounty Program and regional branding.

Operations and Accomplishments

In 2019, HVADC continued and expanded its primary programs: Incubator without Walls (IWW), a program designed to meet a variety of needs of current and potential agri-businesses and Hudson Valley Bounty (HVB), a project that pushes the farm-to-table agenda by encouraging the community to eat and shop local while fostering relationships between consumers, restaurants and farms. HVADC continued its effort the FeedHV program. Now in its second year, this program is designed to address food security in the region. FeedHV reduces hunger and food waste through a network of food donors, volunteers and feeding agencies by facilitating the harvesting, processing and distribution of locally grown or produced agricultural products, shelf-stable food donations and prepared nutritious foods.

Incubator without Walls

Qualified businesses that are admitted into our IWW program can tap into a wide range of services to accelerate their growth and increase their chances of long-term success. These services can include: business and financial planning, value-added infrastructure services, financing and networking. For the year 2019, HVADC estimated that we could assist approximately 30-35 businesses; we were able to successfully achieve our goal. Through IWW, HVADC has been able to assist 32 businesses in 2019. The various types of services we have provided are listed below:

- 11 businesses with general business planning
- 12 businesses with strategic planning for growth/development
- 1 business with project planning
- 1 with strategic marketing assistance
- 4 with legal assistance
- 3 with grant writing assistance

Hudson Valley Bounty

HVB is the region's most comprehensive local farm and food portal. The HVB website showcases a large number of food enterprises, provides refined search capabilities and in-depth details of its participants. The site is searchable by county, with interactive maps pin-pointing each farm or food business included throughout Orange, Sullivan, Ulster, Dutchess, Columbia, Rensselaer and Washington counties. Searches may also be conducted by business categories, with participants grouped according to products such as farms, wineries/vineyards, distilleries, breweries, cideries, specialty producers, farmers markets, food and beverage trails, restaurants, caterers, retail and grocery stores, or distributors/wholesalers.

Participation in HVB is free for farms and food businesses. As the region's go-to-resource for local food and farm offerings, HVB provides participants with exposure on its high-traffic website used by local consumers, tourists, chefs, farmers, wholesalers, and institutional buyers; the opportunity to be featured on HVB social media, email newsletters, and blog; as well as access to HVB curated newsletters containing information on grant and financing opportunities, training workshops, events, and opportunities to promote their business or sell their product.

FeedHV

FeedHV is a regional food rescue and harvesting network dedicated to meeting the needs of neighbors while mitigating the impacts of food waste. The concept evolved out of community dialogues with farmers, volunteers, nonprofit agencies and key stakeholders.

Through our web-based and mobile application powered by ChowMatch, FeedHV links food donors of prepared but unserved food and fresh produce (including farms, restaurants, catering services, grocery stores, hospitals, universities and more) to nonprofit organizations with food assistance programs (such as food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters) through the efforts of a network of volunteers who transport, harvest and process donated food. With this technological solution, FeedHV enhances and streamlines the good work of businesses, agencies, and organizations already doing food recovery work.

Since inception, FeedHV has moved approximately 211,958 pounds of food (equivalent to 170,007 meals) through 1,210 food runs using a volunteer network of nearly 300 people. The network consists of 125 donors and 83 agencies in five counties to date.

HVADC Special Projects

HVADC started a third class for our Accelerator program in October of 2019. The **Food & Farm Funding Accelerator (FFFA)** program supports the creation and growth of robust regional supply chains by providing entrepreneurs with the tools they need to be successful. This program is designed to help farmers and food entrepreneurs develop the necessary skills and materials to scale their business, build sales, and access financing sources. The FFFA is an intensive mentoring and training program for Hudson Valley farmers and food entrepreneurs seeking to scale their business, gain access to capital, and build sales. Over the course of six to eight months, participants will engage in a

series of one-on-one mentoring sessions, group interaction and industry networking events to learn how to talk to investors, discover new market opportunities, and pitch to potential funders in spring 2020.

The following nine businesses are currently participating in the FFFA program:

- ***Ardith Mae Farmstead Goat Cheese*** - Ardith Mae is a small Animal Welfare Approved farmstead goat cheese creamery focusing on raising animals humanely and creating healthy, healing products. The farm is owned and operated by Shereen Alinaghian who has been in business since 2009 primarily selling at the GreenMarkets in NYC, CSAs, The Good Food Farmers Network, restaurants, and a few farm stores. The farm's product line includes goat's milk cheese, cow's milk cheese, mixed milk cheese, pestos, and goat's milk soap.
- ***Great Song Farm*** - Located in Milan, Maggie Thomas and Emily Eder are finishing their first season owning and operating Great Song Farm. They grow a variety of vegetables, flowers, and herbs on 1.5 acres, using organic, regenerative, and biointensive growing practices. They supply a 90 member CSA and a few local restaurants.
- ***Laughing Earth Farm*** - Laughing Earth has been providing vegetables, flowers, and pasture-raised meat to the surrounding community for the last 20+ years, with Zack and Annie Metzger taking over the reins in 2015.
- ***Soulcraft Brewery*** - Led by Jamie Caligure an experienced commercial brewer, Soulcraft is situated on 20 beautiful acres. Soulcraft will be a farm brewery, taproom, market and creative gathering space. Soulcraft collaborates with local farmers, growers and producers to create unique beverages utilizing N.Y. ingredients.
- ***Atina Foods*** is a maker of ayurvedic condiments who processes the products in Kingston and has a home base in Catskill. Atina products are handcrafted by the married team of Carrie and Suresh. Atina Foods works with local farms and other sources for ingredients. Atina Foods adapts traditional South Indian Ayurvedic recipes to make complex, delicious condiments that help balance health and diet. Combining local and global whole fruit, roots, and spices, Atina's ferments and preserves accentuate any meal, even dessert. Since 2015, the couple has focused on direct sales at events and markets and through that experience have learned that their products need more education that can be accessed at regular retail locations.
- ***Prospect Hill Orchards***, owned and operated by the Clarke family, has been farming in Milton since 1817 and Pamela Clarke Torres is the seventh generation to pursue a life on the farm. In 1996, Pamela and her husband Robert returned to the farm and began attending farmers markets. The farm grows a wide variety of fruit and selling at several Greenmarkets in New York City was a natural fit. Over the years Pamela and Robert have added more value-added products by converting a farm out-building to a solar powered bakery with an innovative dried apple production area.
- ***Screamin' Onionz*** - Screamin' Onionz is the pioneer brand of Aha! American Healthy Appetite, the Romano's specialty food company focused on all natural, shelf stable food products. Using sliced N.Y. sourced onions slow cooked in craft sauces, the Romanos have developed a versatile food product that satisfies every diet constraint: plant-based, vegan, vegetarian, Keto, Paleo, Dash, and gluten free. Screamin' Onionz are available in Hudson Valley stores such as Adams Fairacre Farms, regional Tops Friendly Markets and some WholeFoods in the North East.
- ***The Ardent Homesteader*** - After Kristin Nelson fine-tuned a recipe for homemade caramel, it became a signature gift for family and friends. In 2014, with encouragement from other Hudson Valley farmers and food entrepreneurs, Kristin launched The Ardent Homesteader Inc. to produce and market Cara-Sel salted caramel sauce. Cara-Sel is hand-crafted in small batches with just five all-natural ingredients (no preservatives) and is sold wholesale as well as direct to consumers at select festivals and in her online shop.
- ***Vital Eats LLC*** - Vital Eats was established in 2013 by cousins Jude Goldman and Reuben Schwartz who seemed destined to create a brand together since childhood. Both have backgrounds in creative cooking and visual arts, and love to create healthy and beautiful dishes. Vital Eats unveils bold, dynamic flavors through its line of condiments using only plant based ingredients. All products are vegan, vegetarian, gluten free, GMO free, dairy free, and 100% free from any artificial preservatives.

NYS Grown & Certified Producer Grants

To assist farmers achieve NYS Grown & Certified (G&C) status, the Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc. (HMRC&D) and the HVADC are partnering to administer the grant program in the Capital District Region. In 2018 the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets awarded HMRC&D \$500,000 as one of the state's Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) through which food producers may apply to access funding to achieve certification. HMRC&D's REDC coverage includes Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington counties.

In 2019, at the request of and in coordination with HMRCD, HVADC facilitated the review of seventeen (17) Grown and Certified Producer Grant applications. Of those seventeen reviewed, thirteen (13) were approved and forwarded to NYS Ag & Markets for final approval and four (4) were rejected. Total funding awarded by HMRCD for the approved applications is \$424,999.

Compensation Schedule:

There was one employee that made over \$100,000 in 2019.