Lowcountry Local First’s Good Farming initiative educates the public on the local food system while training new farmers and food system leaders. The work consists of the Growing New Farmers Program, Eat Local Month, and farm support and consulting.

GROWING NEW FARMERS PROGRAM
6-month Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture Program with both classroom and field training plus workshops, field trips, and optional apprenticeship matching services.

GROWING NEW FARMERS PROGRAM

The goal of the program is to provide practical, introductory production and business training for South Carolina’s next generation of diverse, small-to-mid-sized farmers and community food system leaders.

Offering a Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture through College of Charleston and an optional apprenticeship opportunity with a variety of select Lowcountry-based sustainable agriculture professionals.

EAT LOCAL MONTH
Eat Local Month is our annual effort in April to focus attention on local growers, fishermen and restaurants and includes our annual Chef’s Potluck and Eat Local Challenge.

FARM SUPPORT & CONSULTING
Farmers and agricultural professionals are provided with support, workshops, resources, and a regional listserv through partnerships with local and statewide authorities in agriculture.
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Participants explore their interest in sustainable agriculture as they receive 6 months of experiential, hands-on learning in the field and curriculum-based instruction in a traditional classroom setting. All participants will experience introductory-level training including coursework, field trips, workshops, and regular field days. Qualified applicants are provided the opportunity to be matched with a local farmer or food system leader for an apprenticeship placement to gain hands-on experience relevant to their interests. Participants will receive a minimum of 250 training hours (500+ with apprenticeship) and receive a Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture and Continuing Education Units from the College of Charleston through the JobBridge program.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Maximum class enrollment of 30 participants (18 years of age or older)
- Core concepts covered include:
  - soil health & composting
  - greenhouses and transplanting
  - cover cropping
  - integrated pest & disease management
  - irrigation
  - crop planning and rotation
  - food safety and good agricultural practices (GAP) certification
  - budgeting and record keeping
  - wholesale, CSA direct, and farmers markets
  - cultivation/weed management
  - season extension
  - business planning
  - organic certification
  - livestock
  - post-harvest handling
  - beekeeping

- Minimum weekly time commitment required is 8 hours: one (3-hour) evening class with instruction and discussion + one (4-hour) morning class on the farm working with guided supervision or field trip + 1-hour minimum required reading per week.
- Optional matching with local mentor for paid, hands-on apprenticeship based on interests and availability.
- Field trips to local farms and businesses.
- A program binder and digital access to curriculum, readings and resources.
- Access to Lowcountry Local First's Farm Services.
- One year of Localist membership with Lowcountry Local First.
- Alumni networking events
- Please note: This program does not include housing, food or transportation.

INTERESTED IN APPLYING?

PROGRAM DATES: April 3rd-September 21st (Includes a break in the first two weeks of July).
Monday lectures (5:30pm-8:30pm); Choice of Wednesday or Thursday field days (8:30am-12:30pm)

Applications open in January and close in March 2017

COST: $2,000 program fee.
A $400 deposit is required to secure enrollment. The remaining cost will be paid monthly. Limited, income-based financial aid is available via application.

THE GROWING NEW FARMERS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY:

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