

## 2021 Farm Report to the Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative

Dear Friends,

Several years ago I began to consider the eight acres of gardens and orchards at the Scattergood Farm as a canvas on which we paint an ever-changing picture, starting in March when the garlic pokes through and the cover crops break dormancy, and ending in December, by which time we have dug our last root crops and have mown our restored prairie pieces. The size of the canvas ensures that beauty exists somewhere every day, while the expansive timeframe helps us dismiss the weed patches or insect and wind damage, knowing that the piece isn't finished and beauty can yet be revealed. This collaboration of soil, seeds, people, machines, weather, climate, invertebrate life, charismatic critters and the many things unseen and unknown gives us the necessary perspective to show up each day and do our part, which is often simply noticing.

Our students, too, had opportunities to notice:

The Middle School began each day on the Farm (barring lightning and below 0 wind chills), feeding and watering the livestock, helping with special projects, learning about soils in their science curriculum and often practicing morning Collection on the large round hay bales.

And once again, the High School started the year with Farm Term, spending each morning on the farm, taking interdisciplinary classes on Farm Frights; Fences, Boundaries and Borders; and Landscape, Ecology and Design. There were also High School PE classes that featured harvesting in the fall and moving portable sheep fences in the spring, an Intersession class that pruned apples and pears and set up livestock fences, a year-long crew that spent three days each week doing various farm tasks, and the Biology class which researched uncommon fruit and nut trees which we will plant next spring.

The Farm also engaged with the wider community, providing food for Table to Table in Iowa City, local consumers through our Saturday Market, and exchanges with Millet Seed Farm and Sun Dog Farm. We welcomed visitors with Taproot Nature Experience, the Scattergood Summer Camp, Middle School families for a derecho cleanup day, and hosted a field day for Practical Farmers of Iowa. We shared our rotational grazing experiences with Sustainable Iowa Land Trust farmers, seasonal practices with the Ames Catholic Worker's 'Ask A Farmer' series, knowledge of beneficial beetle populations with a graduate student from Montana State University, and our successes and failures of integrating a farm and a school with folks from Friends Meeting School in Ijamsville, MD. We are currently conducting two on-farm field trials for Practical Farmers of Iowa and one for Iowa State University Extension and Horticulture. We have received grants for our work from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, the Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation and a Community Food Grant through the City of West Branch.

This was the work of many people starting with Dana Foster and Jamie Newton who shepherded the Middle School throughout the year; Jenny Beben, Sadie Kirshenmann, Ethan Hueslkamp, Jennie Schmidt, Lars Marroquin-Haslett, Estella Newton and Inikka Dalton who at various times have worked on the Farm; Irving Treadway and Karen Huff, who feed us so well; the Farm Subcommittee of the School Committee which offers support and guidance, and Ken Fawcett who remains a trusted advisor.

As farmers, often overwhelmed by the many required tasks ahead, noticing and appreciating the beauty around us lessens the burden. And recognizing our role in this beauty as both artists and audience brings purpose and joy. I hope you now have a better picture in mind of the artistry of the Scattergood Farm and next year may we enjoy it together, in person.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Quee, Farm Manager