

Coastal Roots Farm Evaluation Plan

DRAFT: July 31, 2015

OVERVIEW

Coastal Roots Farm (the Farm) envisions a world in which people in every community come together to grow and share healthy food, care for the land, help their neighbors, and strengthen the connections they have with each other. Its mission is to seed, grow and share: seed new ideas around sustainable farming and Jewish life; grow healthy food; and share the harvest with the local community.

The Farm is an ambitious undertaking that has already received significant attention and enthusiastic interest in its activities. As a new organization, its program design is still in development, with active projects in various stages of piloting. The innovative and emergent nature of the Farm's projects provides a unique opportunity to use evaluation in the process of testing, adjusting and learning from its many experiments. The evaluation proposed in this document is intended to provide the Farm with information that will help it continue to refine its strategies through regular feedback loops, as well as generate evidence to demonstrate both local and far-reaching impacts.

This evaluation plan outlines six key questions that address the intended outcomes in the Farm's Theory of Change (Appendix A). It also provides an initial set of indicators to measure progress toward these outcomes, as well as proposed methods for measurement (Appendix B).

The primary audiences for this evaluation will be the Farm's staff and Board of Directors, as well as its current and potential funders. In addition, Jewish innovators, the Jewish community more broadly and those interested in the power of community farming will likely be avid consumers of aspects of the Farm's evaluations over time.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS, OUTCOMES & INDICATORS

The Farm's evaluation will examine the following questions:

1. How and to what extent has the Farm succeeded in using Farm-based activities to build a vibrant center for Jewish agriculture-related education and integration, as well as for Jewish engagement in local and regional community life?
2. How and to what extent has the Farm provided culturally-appropriate education to youth and adult learners about gardening, nutrition, local food systems, food preparation and safety, and economically and agriculturally sustainable farming practices?
3. How effectively has the Farm produced and distributed nutritional, safe and locally grown food to the community, especially to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity?¹
4. How and to what extent has the Farm improved the practices of experienced farmers and gardeners, and provided technical and professional educational opportunities to beginning farmers in sustainable farming practices and social enterprise-supported farm management?
5. In what ways is the Farm developing into an innovative learning organization that is contributing to learnings in the fields of community farming, Jewish community farming and school-based farm education?
6. How and to what extent is the Farm sustained by a diverse mix of revenue streams including philanthropic support, donations and social enterprise-earned income?

¹ Food insecurity means that little or no food is available in the home and individuals do not always know the source of their next meal.

The table in Appendix B contains a set of outcomes (from the Theory of Change), indicators and potential data collection methods for addressing each evaluation question. Details about each of the proposed data collection methods are provided in the following section of this plan.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

We believe it will be important to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to inform this evaluation to give breadth and depth to the outcomes and indicators. The descriptions that follow specify data collection elements that we believe may be core to your evaluation efforts. While we have provided measurement options that cover the full range of the Farm's intended outcomes, you may choose to measure only a sub-set in the first one to three years. This would allow you to develop evaluation processes and capacities in an incremental way.

Farm Participant Tracking Data

Data about who is participating in Farm activities, over time, will be an essential source of information about the Farm's reach. We suggest collecting the following kinds of information from participants in some or all of the farm's organized program activities:

- Name
- Year of birth
- County of residence
- Religious affiliation, if any
- Zip code (as a proxy for income)
- Name of activity
- Whether this was the first time coming to the Farm
- Any other demographic information of interest to the Farm
- Email address (optional)

Ideally, the Farm will adopt some form of electronic sign-in process for its activities, whether that is advance registration online or a brief sign-in process at program entry (i.e., using an iPad or similar device). We would recommend that providing demographic information be a prerequisite to participation to increase the likelihood of thorough and consistent data collection. Also, the registration or sign-in process needs to be as quick and easy as possible. It will also be desirable to establish a unique identifier for each participant, based on the information they provide (e.g., middle initial, date of birth), to enable tracking of individuals over time and to minimize duplicate counts.

Participant tracking data will enable the Farm to compare the numbers and diversity of Farm program participants from year to year. In turn, this information will help the Farm determine the relative popularity of its various programs and identify which are best at reaching its target constituencies.

Farm Activity Data

At regular intervals, and at the least annually, we recommend that Farm staff members record and report the following types of information about the activities happening on the Farm:

- The activities and programs held at the Farm, including for each: name, date, duration, purpose or type of activity, and other characteristics of interest, such as participants' reasons for attending, and whether or not they attended as individuals, with friends or family, or with an organizational group.

- The types of P-16 educational programs designed by the Farm and implemented off-site and the numbers and age groups of students served
- The quantity, safety, nutritional values and types of Farm-grown food
- The mechanisms by which food grown on the Farm is distributed, whether via on- or off-site farmers' markets or by pick-up and delivery by distribution partners
- Reported levels of food insecurity and estimates of the number of food-insecure people who benefit from Farm-produced food
- The nature and number of Farm-designed curricula about technical approaches, nutrition and food preparation, food justice, sustainable gardening and other educational programs
- The number and sources of requests for the Farm's technical assistance, recipient lists for these, other "lessons learned," or both
- The amount and type of Farm revenue (e.g., individual donors, foundation grants, tuition, sales, social enterprise-earned income)

All of the above data may then be analyzed by Farm staff or an external evaluator to assess the degree to which the Farm is achieving the outcomes corresponding to each type of data.

Farm Participant Surveys

To evaluate specific program impacts, as well as the Farm's longer-term outcomes, we suggest the survey types and frequencies below. For some outcomes, it may also be important to conduct focus group discussions, interviews or other qualitative methods (discussed in subsequent sections).

Program Participation Surveys

To evaluate several of the Farm's intended short-term outcomes, such as "knowledge about food justice," "awareness of the connection between Judaism and agriculture" and "knowledge about sustainable farming and gardening," it will be sufficient to have individuals complete simple, multiple choice-style surveys that permit comparisons between their knowledge and awareness of these topics before and after they complete specific Farm activities.² These surveys can be done in either a pre-post format or post-then format (see box on the following page for survey design options).

Surveys of Recurrent or Ongoing Farm Participants

In evaluating the Farm's longer-term outcomes, many of which involve changes in behavior or values (as opposed to changes in attitudes, knowledge or awareness), we suggest the Farm collect contact information for and administer surveys to the following:

- Participants in "ongoing" (time- and labor-intensive) programs, such as apprenticeship trainings
- Individuals who participate in at least four Farm activities or programs in the span of one year

² For nutrition-related programming, you may wish to use one of the many available, validated research tools to assess the degree to which visitors expect their food consumption to change following participation in nutrition or cooking classes. See e.g., the [National Cancer Institute's Automated Self-administered 24-hour Recall survey](#) (ASA24™). Please bear in mind that the most accurate assessment instruments often require third-party expertise to interpret. Simpler assessments will likely be sufficient for the Farm's purposes. For example, you could add a single survey item with two questions like, "How many servings of vegetables have you consumed in the past 24 hours? How many do you expect to consume in the next 24 hours?"

Recurrent participants will not only be more likely to respond to follow-up surveys; they will reduce data “noise” by eliminating those short-term, or one- or two-time visitors whose behavior change would be difficult to attribute clearly to the Farm’s activities. We would expect to see the greatest degree of behavior or values change among recurrent participants, so it will be more feasible to draw causal inferences about the relationship between Farm programming and those changes.³

For long term or high-intensity programs such as an apprenticeship, we suggest a pre-post survey design. For recurrent participants in individual events, a post-then survey format sent to participants at the end of the year would likely be more feasible and appropriate (see box on survey design options).

SURVEY DESIGN OPTIONS

A **pre-post survey** format involves two separate questionnaires. Participants complete one questionnaire prior to the intervention and then are asked similar questions after the event to assess changes in areas that the event seeks to bring about.

A **post-then survey** involves asking participants retrospectively to recall how they would have answered each question prior to an intervention (in this case, before coming to Farm programs) and then after the experience. For example, a post-then survey item might appear as follows:

Please indicate which of the following practices you used to grow vegetables prior to the Farm training. Now, six months after the training, which practices do you use regularly?

While less strictly valid than a matched-case pre-post-intervention study, the post-then methodology provides reliable results and can be particularly useful when it is not feasible to administer both a pre- and a post-survey.

Different survey content would be required to understand different long-term Farm outcomes. For instance, there would be a set of survey questions for values and behaviors related to actual food-related activities (e.g., choices regarding food purchasing or consumption, gardening, farming), and another set related to either “social connectedness,” “civic engagement” or both.⁴ Surveys could potentially be customized to Farm participants based on their activities on the Farm.

These surveys would consist primarily of closed-ended quantitative questions but could also include a handful of open-ended questions for respondents to elaborate on their answers or to provide examples. If the survey is repeated at future points in time with the same individuals, responses could be compared to track changes over time and assess longitudinal change.

³ While you may decide at some point to create a quasi-experimental evaluation design to compare change among groups of people who do and do not participate in high-intensity programming, we would recommend a less onerous method at this early stage in the Farm’s development.

⁴ For the two long-term values-change outcomes regarding social connectedness and civic engagement, we suggest conducting a post-then survey at two-year intervals, but no more frequently, to ensure the Farm’s evaluation of these outcomes is sustainable over time. For changes in participants’ sense of social connectedness, we would recommend adapting one of many available scales (e.g., Lee, R. M., & Robbins S. B. (1995), “Measuring belongingness: The social connectedness and the social assurance scales,” *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 42 (2), 232-241). See also: <https://core.human.cornell.edu/resources/measures/socialconnectedness.cfm>. For changes in levels of civic engagement, see for example Doolittle, A. & Faul, A.C. “[Civic Engagement Scale: A Validation Study](#),” *Sage Open*, July 2013.

Interviews

Key Informant Interviews

To assess the Farm’s long-term outcomes around being a valued community resource and informing the work of other community farms, we recommend conducting key informant interviews with one or more of the following groups:

- Coastal Roots Farm staff
- Local community leaders, Jewish and otherwise
- Community farming leaders, Jewish and otherwise
- Key partners

Key informant interviews are qualitative, in-depth interviews that rely on a list of questions or issues to be discussed. They are often loosely structured, resembling a conversation between acquaintances to allow for a free flow of ideas.

We suggest conducting interviews with local community leaders and community farming leaders on at least a bi-annual basis and then comparing results over time. We recommend selecting 10–25 people on the basis of their first-hand knowledge about the Farm’s reputation, either in Coastal North County or among Community Farms in the US, Israel or both. Interviewers would probe for interviewees’ interpretations or perceptions of the links between the Farm’s activities and qualities like “livability” or its influence on farm-based community design or specific farming approaches.

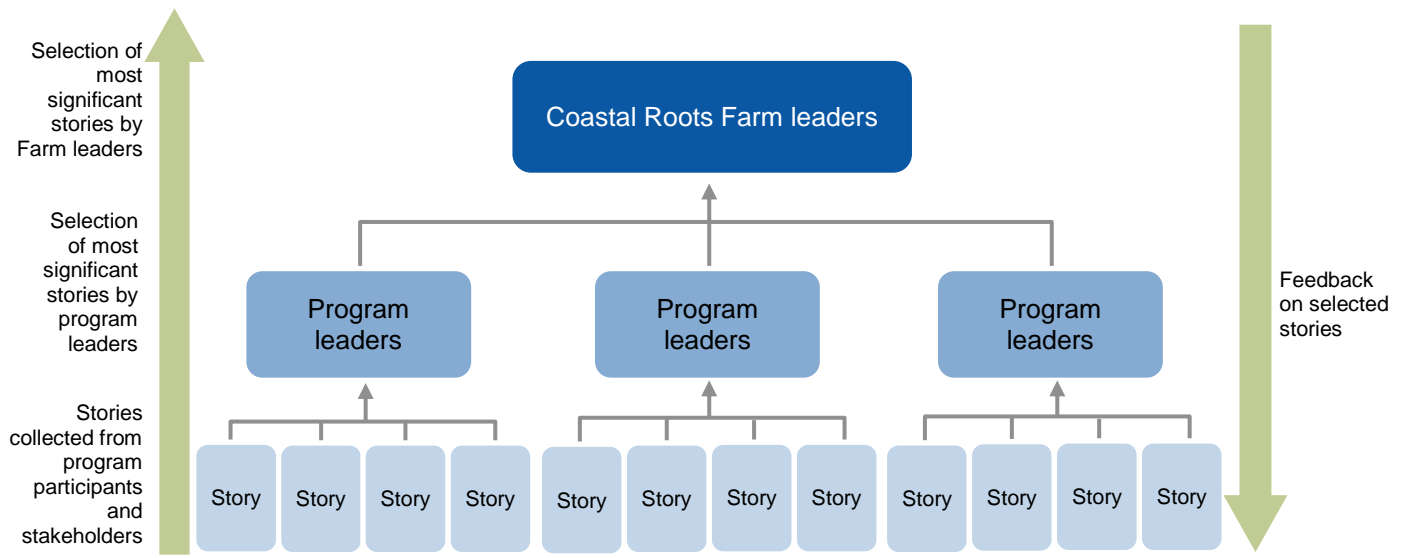
We also believe it will be important to interview the Farm’s key partners, such as food banks or others who help to distribute food; teachers, administrators or others in the P–16 educational system; and any other individuals with whom the Farm partners to provide programming. Such interviews would be conducted on an annual basis and gather input on the relationships between the Farm and the community via process-related questions, perceived benefits or challenges in the relationships, and both intended and unintended outcomes.

Most Significant Change Interviews

Whether or not one has accomplished intangible and long-term change goals like “leadership,” “confidence” and “empowerment,” or improvements in attitudes and beliefs can be challenging to determine. Thus, another interview-based method the Farm may wish to consider is called “Most Significant Change” (MSC). This technique is participatory in nature (involving participants as co-collectors of data), and is particularly useful for assessing hard-to-measure qualitative changes.

The MSC technique involves collecting stories of change that program participants provide to one another, and then systematically analyzing them for their significance. Designated participant-collectors record stories by their peers about “the most significant change” they have experienced as a result of the program. The stories are filtered up through the organization and a selection of these stories is interpreted and filtered back down to participants for their approval and additional feedback (see Exhibit 1 on the following page).

Exhibit 1 Collecting Stories Using the MSC Technique⁵



The full MSC process has several distinct steps, including story discussion meetings and documentation of links between stories and the Farm’s theory of change, so it can be fairly time-consuming. However, its value lies in its combination of powerful narratives and a rigorous, multi-level selection, interpretation and analysis process.⁶ We would advise the MSC method over general participant observation for qualitative data collection because its steps are clearly delineated, its process has been rigorously validated in a wide array of settings, and it can be replicated with consistency over time, which allows for longitudinal comparisons.

Should the Farm be interested in using this method, we would recommend an initial MSC training for staff and a selection of participants to collect stories. You may also find it helpful to engage an experienced MSC facilitator for story analysis meetings. However, the bulk of data collection and analysis labor can be carried out by Farm staff and participants without the need for much external party assistance.

Focus Groups

While surveys of recurrent or ongoing participants in Farm programming will provide a solid base of information, there may be specific issues into which you would like to delve more deeply. For example, surveys may reveal that participant “learnings” in a program are uneven in ways the survey results do not make clear. Say a program on nutritional meal preparation consistently results in participants reporting they effectively learned about the dangers of over-cooking vegetables, but those same participants also indicate they are unlikely to change their cooking behavior. Or, perhaps the Farm is seeing many first-time visitors but very few who return. In cases like these, holding focus group discussions may help illuminate reasons behind such results.

Focus groups are carefully planned group discussions in a comfortable environment, designed to elicit participant perceptions of a defined issue. Typically they involve 7–10 people, a skilled facilitator, and either a note-taker or a recording device to document the discussion. While a single group discussion may produce interesting findings, it is usually more valuable to repeat the same process with at least three groups of individuals who are relatively similar to one another in relevant ways.

⁵ Diagram adapted from Davies, R., & Dart, J. (2005). “Figure 2: Flow of stories and feedback in MSC,” *The ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) Technique*. Retrieved from <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf> (29).

⁶ For a detailed description of the method, see the original 2005 MSC manual by Rick Davies and Jess Dart, cited above.

For recurrent and ongoing Farm program participants, we recommend focus groups over key informant interviews because group discussions would be considerably more cost-efficient and will generate equally—if not more—reliable data for the kinds of questions you would like to address (e.g., why participants are involved, what motivates them, etc.).

The results of focus groups are often most useful when they are led by a skilled facilitator and systematically analyzed by a trained qualitative researcher. Thus, if the Farm determines that they would like to incorporate this method into an evaluation, we recommend discussions be designed, facilitated and analyzed by individuals with significant experience in focus groups, whether they are internal to the Farm’s staff or external researchers.

OTHER EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following issues will be useful to consider in developing the scale and scope of the Farm’s evaluation efforts.

Making Choices About What to Evaluate

The following question can help guide choices about what to evaluate: “Is the benefit of knowing worth the cost of asking?” Cost, here, is not just monetary, but can also include the cost of time and the cost of goodwill among the people who would participate in an evaluation. With this in mind, while it may be attractive to collect information on every Farm activity, we suggest the Farm collect in-depth information about specific program’s effectiveness. For others, such as family events, it may be sufficient to simply track the overall number of attendees.

In addition, we suggest the Farm more deeply investigate participants’ experiences of pilot projects, particularly those that are more intensive, such as the apprenticeship program. Here, questions would be related to implementation (e.g., how effective were the teaching methods used, which elements worked well, what would participants change about the program) as well as program outcomes.

Evaluation research on pilot projects can be especially helpful in making decisions about whether or not to continue or expand a program, and if so, whether and how to adapt it. Designing specific research protocols and questions for this purpose should take into account the degree to which a program’s outcomes align with those described in the Farm’s theory of change.

Developing Template Survey Questions

To facilitate the evaluation process, we suggest creating sets of survey questions to assess each type of outcome (e.g., knowledge about sustainable farming), as well as demographic questions. These questions could then be combined, as needed, to create evaluation surveys for specific programs. This way, the same questions would be used to assess outcomes for different types of programs, ensuring comparability across surveys. It would also make it easier to create individualized program evaluation surveys, starting from the question templates and then adding any additional items, if needed.

Baseline Data & Benchmarks

The first year in which the Farm collects tracking and other information for evaluation purposes will serve to create baselines for future data’s comparison. Comparisons over time will help the Farm to determine whether its programs are achieving intended outcomes.

For some outcomes, you will establish benchmarks that you hope to achieve over time. For example, you may want to set production or distribution goals for your outcome related to supplying food to food insecure community members or particular revenue goals to help you assess whether the Farm is meeting its objective to

be financially sustainable. You may be in a position to set benchmarks for some outcomes now. For others—especially where your programming decisions are still in flux—it may make more sense to wait to review the baseline information, which can help inform more realistic benchmarks for the future.

Internal vs. External: Who Does What?

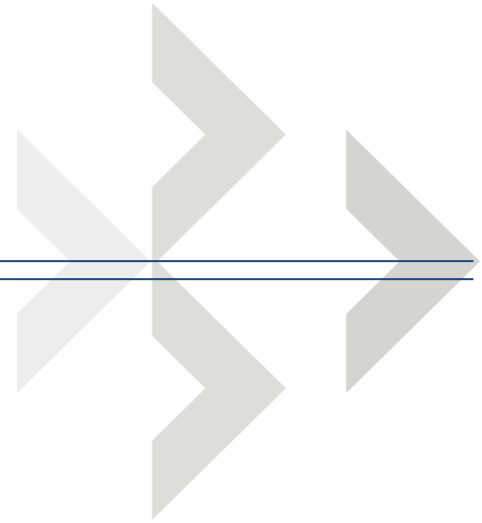
We recommend that the Farm engage external assistance initially to develop evaluation instruments and methods (e.g., survey and interview protocols). These tools and methods should be reviewed and refined after a period of pilot-testing. Internal data collection processes (e.g., participation and activity tracking procedures) may be set up by Farm staff with some advice from the external evaluator to ensure alignment of internal and external evaluation procedures.

Ultimately, much of the data described in this plan can be collected internally in an ongoing way. However, other data (e.g., key informant interviews with community leaders, focus groups) may be best collected by an external party. Analysis and reporting can be carried out by a mix of internal and external evaluators—for instance, tracking data may be analyzed and reported upon internally, while analysis and reporting of more in-depth surveys and interviews will have more credibility for external audiences if conducted by a third-party evaluator. At this stage, the Farm should, at a minimum, determine how often (or at what intervals) external analysis should be conducted.

Reporting

We recommend that the Farm analyze and report on collected data annually, at least for the first three years. We further suggest that you set up dashboards to assess tracking data on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Engaging an evaluator to provide technical assistance in how to interpret and report on findings at shorter-term intervals may be especially valuable in your first year or two of operations when real-time feedback loops will be most essential for assessing whether or not to continue certain programs, and for making mid-course adaptations.

Finally, we also recommend that, whenever you engage a third-party evaluator, you contract for post-evaluation reporting and discussions with funders and other stakeholders. We have found that discussing research findings and their implications greatly increases the likelihood that stakeholders will support and implement lessons learned in the evaluation.



Coastal Roots Farm Theory of Change

July 31, 2015

*Prepared for Coastal Roots Farm
Prepared by Informing Change*

Vision & Mission of Coastal Roots Farm

Vision

Coastal Roots Farm envisions a world in which every community comes together to grow and share healthy food, care for the land, help their neighbors, and strengthen the connections they have with each other.

Mission

At Coastal Roots Farm, we seed, we grow, and we share. We seed new ideas around sustainable farming and Jewish life; we grow healthy food; and we share the harvest with our local community.

Assumptions

Question – What are the values and rationale for the approach that undergirds the organization’s work? What things need to be in place for the organization to be able to continue its work?

- Teaching people about sustainable farming and gardening will lead to more people supporting these practices—via consumer choices—and adopting sustainable practices in their own homes, gardens, businesses, farms and other institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, etc.).
- Sustainability refers both to farming practices that protect the environment, public health, human communities and animal welfare,* and to healthy economic practices like diverse revenue streams that sustain nonprofit organizations (e.g., philanthropic support, donations, income earned through social enterprise).
- Many residents of Coastal North County have limited access to healthy, locally grown food due to barriers of income, transportation, physical disability, language and other factors.
- Several civic and nonprofit organizations located close to or on the same property as Coastal Roots Farm share common interests with the Farm and are likely partners or collaborators in Farm-related projects.
- Organizing Jewish community activities around food and farming will provide meaningful opportunities for Jews and other North County community members to gather and appreciate Jewish culture and heritage. This will, in turn, increase a sense of community in North County, generally, and a sense of Jewish community and identity, specifically.
- A community farm that emphasizes Jewish values of social justice, sustainability and education will be attractive to a wide range of donors.

* Adapted from definition at <http://www.sustainabletable.org/246/sustainable-agriculture-the-basics>

Context

Environmental Context Question – What events or conditions external to the organization influence the work?

- North County is “a community where existing levels of Jewish engagement are low; where wealth, leisure and geographical distance contribute to isolation of individuals from each other; and where there are no critical needs to draw people together in a ‘natural’ way.”**
- There are at least 90,000 Jews in North County, but in 2003, only 29–38% of them viewed “being part of the Jewish community” as “important.”†
- Most available Jewish programming is dispersed throughout the county, synagogue-based or both. As of 2003, affiliation rates in synagogues ranged from 20–30% in North County, and synagogues were struggling to stay relevant. Recent research shows improvement—with programs such as the Jewish Film Festival, Jewish Book Fair and Shalom Baby—but many challenges remain the same.†
- North County residents express strong interest in environmental and social programs. Focus group respondents in research conducted for the Leichtag Foundation in 2012 and 2014 raised the topic of food repeatedly. Communal farming, cooking and healthy eating are important values and activities.†
- An estimated 14% of San Diego County households were “food insecure” in 2012, which amounts to more than 421,500 people, nearly 80,000 of whom live in North County.**

* The Leichtag Family Foundation. (2011). *Visions of Jewish North County*. The Center for Leadership Initiatives: Glick, Beth and Gordis, Yonatan.

† The Leichtag Family Foundation. (2014). *Jewish Life in Coastal North County, San Diego: Focus Group Executive Summary*. ChangeCraft. For more information, please see full report.

** UCLA, California Health Interview Survey, 2012. This figure is comparable to the federal average of 14.3% of American households that were food insecure at least some of the time in 2013 (USDA Economic Research Report no. ERR-173, Sept. 2014).

Context

Organizational Context Question – What conditions in the program or organization itself influence the work?

- Coastal Roots Farm is a new organization that has applied for its own 501(c)(3) tax status. Its program design is still in development, and its active programs can be considered pilots, still undergoing testing and adjustment. The emergent nature of Farm projects heightens the importance of looking for and assessing opportunities for programming, social enterprise, marketing and partnerships.
- The Leichtag Foundation launched the Farm on its recently acquired property. The Foundation has other projects—undergoing physical, commercial and programmatic development—that are, or will be, integrated with and complementary to the Farm.
- The Foundation intends to spin off the Farm as a separate nonprofit organization with its own independent brand.
- The Foundation is keenly interested in both Community Farms and Jewish Community Farms as tools for community building and education and would like to see more community and philanthropic support for them. The Foundation’s investment in Coastal Roots Farm will inform its work to build greater understanding and support for both Community Farms and Jewish Community Farms.
- Programs and educational activities at Coastal Roots Farm are inspired by ancient Jewish agricultural traditions that encourage environmental stewardship and connect people to community, food, the land and social justice.
- Coastal Roots Farm engages in partnerships for more effective program results and to create intentional ripple effects.
- The Farm engages in social enterprise practices in support of its self-sustainability and educational goals.

Context (continued)

Organizational Context Question – What conditions in the program or organization itself influence the work?

Programs at Coastal Roots Farm demonstrate the following values, rooted in ancient Jewish traditions, because the Farm team believes these values are relevant to everyone and to the challenges our communities face today.

We nourish everyone here.

Drawing upon Jewish agricultural tradition, we believe that a farm should feed anyone who is hungry and provide sustenance to outsiders. We want to provide the opportunity for all to harvest food, connect to the natural world and discover a place of belonging.

Sustainability is a way of life for us.

We believe in working in harmony with the earth and connecting to nature. We are not just farmers—we are stewards of the land, improving the environment through healthy farming practices, and we must do all that we can to leave the earth in a better place than we found it.

A strong, connected community is critical to positive change.

When a community shares goals around healthy food, caring for the land and helping people in need, it can make a real difference in people's lives—and create change on a greater scale than any of us can do on our own.

We are committed to creative and innovative thinking.

Because we seek out and develop beneficial farming practices, we constantly challenge our own thinking, take risks, learn from our mistakes, and improve our approach.

Sharing ideas helps everyone grow.

Whether you are an experienced farmer, an elementary school child, a home gardener, an excited funder, or a curious neighbor, we all have something to learn from one another, and we value any opportunity to exchange and share ideas for building a healthier world for us all.

We celebrate the diversity of our community.

A Community Farm has a unique opportunity to bring people together, no matter their background. We celebrate all of our neighbors, and everyone benefits from diverse points of view.

Time is needed for rest and reflection.

There is wisdom in withdrawing—for ourselves, our animals, and our harvest—whether it is resting on the seventh day or allowing for the restoration of the farmland every seventh year.

Purpose Statement

Question – What is the overall purpose of the organization?

The purpose of Coastal Roots Farm is to support local farming and sustainable community development, be a center for Jewish life and create a more just and connected community.

Ultimate Impact

Question – In the long term, how will the world look when the organization has achieved its purpose?

North County has an active, vibrant Jewish community that is aware of and appreciates its Jewish agricultural traditions. North County residents are environmentally healthy, support sustainable farming practices and understand where their food comes from. The E-3 Cluster neighborhood is a national model for intergenerational environmental education, economically sustainable community agriculture and community development. Farmers, Community Farms and Jewish Community Farms are recognized and supported for their role in building vibrant, healthy, engaged communities.

Opportunities, Problems & Needs Addressed

Question: What specific conditions does the organization hope to change? What conditions provide unique opportunities?

- Jewish residents of North County need an increased number and variety of meaningful ways—beyond traditional ones—to engage in the Jewish community and in Jewish life.
- To ensure an environmentally healthy community in the future, children, youth and adults need experiential activities that help them to build knowledge, understanding and positive behaviors around healthy eating and environmental stewardship.
- Residents of urban and densely populated areas have increasingly few opportunities to experience community-oriented agriculture.
- There are few places to study community farming as a career path generally and few demonstration sites for best practices of community farming with a focus on social impact through a Jewish lens.
- Residents of North County exhibit a desire to connect more to the land, understand how their food is grown and produced, and participate in the process of food production.
- An estimated 14% of San Diego County households were “food insecure” in 2012 (meaning little or no food is available in their homes and they do not always know the source of their next meal). This amounts to more than 421,500 people, nearly 80,000 of whom live in North County.*
- There is an insufficient supply of sustainable, accessible and locally farmed produce to meet growing demand (sales of organic foods are growing by 10–20% each year in the United States. More than 10% of fruits and vegetables sold are now organic).
- Coastal Roots Farm provides an excellent opportunity for educating Jewish philanthropies and communal organizations about the potential for using farm-based activities to develop vibrant Jewish communities.
- Coastal Roots Farm is a platform for raising awareness among funders and others about the role of community farming in addressing critical social, health and environmental issues.

* UCLA, California Health Interview Survey, 2012. This figure is comparable to the federal average of 14.3% of American households that were food insecure at least some of the time in 2013 (USDA Economic Research Report no. ERR-173, Sept. 2014).

Target Constituencies

Question – Whom does the organization intend to affect with its strategies?

- General population of Coastal North County, including young people
- Jewish residents of North County
- P–16 students from area schools, colleges and universities
- Local residents needing food assistance
- Farmers and potential farmers (e.g., volunteers, student interns, apprentices)
- Beginning and experienced gardeners and landscapers
- Colleagues at other Community Farms, in particular at Jewish Community Farms
- Colleagues in Israel doing similar work
- Supporters, advocates and funders of Community Farms (e.g., horticulturalists, foodies, others who love plants and food)

Strategy 1: Build a vibrant center for Jewish community life using Farm-based activities.

Question – What is the plan of action to produce the desired outcomes (strategy)? What specific activities will be pursued to implement the strategy (tactics)?

Examples of Possible Tactics

- Family and broader public programming (e.g., Jewish holiday events, Farm tours, workshops linking Jewish values with Farm activities)
- Volunteer or paid internship program(s) – work on Coastal Roots Farm for both service and learning
- Intergenerational programs
- Youth programs (e.g. Jewish farm camp, early childhood education)
- Efforts that connect people with local Jewish organizations
- Leadership development opportunities for talented individuals who will lead and sustain the Jewish community and general community farming fields
- Programs that facilitate ties between Israel and local residents

Strategy 2: Educate interested individuals about sustainable farming, gardening and local food systems.

Question – What is the plan of action to produce the desired outcomes (strategy)? What specific activities will be pursued to implement the strategy (tactics)?

Examples of Possible Tactics

- School and youth group field trips to Coastal Roots Farm
- Children's gardening, in and out of school contexts
- Youth day camp on the Farm
- Farm-based curricula for teachers, youth leaders and P-16 students
- Basic and advanced gardening classes
- Nutrition and cooking classes
- "Farm without fences" program to take educational activities into communities
- Therapeutic and vocational training programs for underserved groups, e.g., veterans, ex-offenders, school dropouts, people with disabilities
- Educational opportunities for businesses interested in healthy food, social enterprise or environmental stewardship
- Year-round Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program to help support the Farm, increase engagement and improve local food system
- Retail/teaching plant nursery (highlighting role of social enterprise in both agricultural and economic sustainability)

Strategy 3: Provide technical and professional education to support beginning farmers and improve environmental practices of experienced farmers and gardeners.

Question – What is the plan of action to produce the desired outcomes (strategy)? What specific activities will be pursued to implement the strategy (tactics)?

Examples of Possible Tactics

- Farmer training programs and professional career development for community farmers and those interested in using social enterprise to help sustain community farms
- State-certified farm apprenticeship program
- New Farmer incubation and support for new farmers with job placement
- Vocational opportunities in horticulture
- Advanced horticulture and landscaping workshops for backyard gardeners
- Train the Trainer workshops
- Innovation seminars in agriculture, environmental sustainability and agricultural social enterprise
- University service-learning coursework (e.g., public health, agriculture), internships, and academic research projects
- Capacity building to support other community and educational farming programs (e.g. Encinitas Unified School District Farm)
- Partnerships to amplify the Farm's educational work, workforce development, social enterprise and network development (e.g., with UC Extension program)
- Build the Farm into a hub of technical expertise for economically sustainable agriculture
- Publications, podcasts and videos to share knowledge
- Sale of seeds, plants and other gardening items to support the Farm and other local growers
- Sharing lessons learned about farm-based social enterprise

Strategy 4: Produce healthy, sustainably grown food and make it accessible to the community.

Question – What is the plan of action to produce the desired outcomes (strategy)? What specific activities will be pursued to implement the strategy (tactics)?

Examples of Possible Tactics

- Grow and harvest healthy produce in an economically sustainable manner for sale and donation
- Offer volunteer harvesting days and gleaning days (engaging community members and volunteers)
- Partner with area food banks and other organizations to distribute food (e.g., hospitals, schools)
- Partner with organizations serving communities in need to hold on-site community and educational events using farm-grown food
- Make Farm produce accessible in multiple locations in the community through social enterprises (e.g., sales at farmers' markets, food truck, mobile food stands)
- Include low-cost or no-cost options for participation in the Farm's CSA and Farm stand food distribution program
- Offer Farm-to-table meals
- Use Farm produce in value-add post-harvest products (e.g., jams)
- Farm stand and "U-Pick" gardens for education, sales and community engagement

Strategy 5: Contribute to broader and deeper understanding of how a Community Farm is a tool for community building

Question – What is the plan of action to produce the desired outcomes (strategy)? What specific activities will be pursued to implement the strategy (tactics)?

Examples of Possible Tactics

- Leverage what happens on Coastal Roots Farm to inform and support other Community Farms (e.g., developing demonstration projects to pilot and share social enterprise-supported community farming practices)
- Document Farm practices and lessons learned (e.g., operating procedures, farm lab and social enterprise management, implementation plans, curricula, evaluations) to share with other Community Farms
- Participate in communications and networking activities that facilitate shared learning among Community Farms
- Bring together leaders of the Community Farming movement for shared learning and problem solving
- Educate community leaders and funders about Community Farms as a tool for community building
- Support the Leichtag Foundation's work as a thought leader about the role of community farms in the sustainable farming movement, in sustainable community development and in Jewish community building

Short-Term Outcomes

Question – What measureable change is expected in the short-term?

Timeframe: Two years

- A growing number of Coastal North County residents participate regularly in Farm activities; these participants represent diverse ages and demographic characteristics
- Participants in Farm programs have:
 - Greater awareness of the connection between Judaism and agriculture and greater appreciation of Jewish culture and traditions
 - Increased knowledge about economically and environmentally sustainable farming and gardening, nutrition, food safety and preparation, local food systems, and food justice
 - Increased awareness of, and tools to improve their health behaviors, especially growing and eating fresh local produce
 - Increased access to knowledge and materials that support more local and organic food production and sustainable landscaping
- Jewish participants in Farm programs have gained deeper connections to their own Jewish identity, to one another, to other Jewish community organizations, and to the North County Jewish community as a whole
- Coastal Roots Farm is producing healthy food needed by food insecure community members and distributing it to this population regularly and effectively through local partners
- Participants in relevant programs are prepared to engage in social enterprise-supported farm management
- The Farm has documented and shared curricula and other lessons learned about Farm programming, diverse revenue streams, evaluation, and community and school-based farming best practices

Long-Term Outcomes

Question – What measureable change is expected in the long-term?

Timeframe: 5 years

- Coastal Roots Farm is a widely used and valued community resource, with the reputation of having enhanced the “livability” of Coastal North County
- There is a greater sense of Jewish community in North County, and the Farm is central to this improvement
- Community residents, gardeners and farmers practice sustainable, environmentally sound practices (e.g., composting, water conservation, organic fertilizers and pest controls) learned through Farm programs
- Participants apply principles of food justice in their decision making
- Participants have higher levels of civic and community engagement
- The Farm consistently supplies healthy, locally grown food to organizations serving low income community members
- The Farm is an active part of the region’s pre-kindergarten to college educational pipeline
- The Farm is learning from other Community Farms, and informing their work by testing innovative agricultural, economic and environmental practices, and these practices are replicated or adapted elsewhere
- More Farm program participants are pursuing farm-related professions, employment and research (e.g., gardening, horticulture, agriculture)
- Apprentices are going into careers in community agriculture and community farming, and staying connected to Coastal Roots Farm
- A sustainable mix of funders and individual donors provide support for The Farm, and The Farm is generating a portion of its revenues through social enterprise

Coastal Roots Farm Theory of Change Overview

PURPOSE: The purpose of Coastal Roots Farm is to support local farming and sustainable community development, be a center for Jewish life, and create a more just and connected community.

NEEDS & OPPOR'TIES

- Jewish residents need more meaningful ways to engage in Jewish life
- Need for experiential activities to build knowledge and positive behaviors around environmental stewardship
- Few opportunities to experience community-oriented agriculture or study Jewish and community farming as career path
- Desire to understand how food is produced and participate in growing it
- 14% of San Diego County residents face food insecurity
- Demand for sustainable, environmentally sound and locally-farmed produce
- Spaces are available on the Leichtag Foundation property to demonstrate innovative farming practices
- The Farm can educate Jewish philanthropies and organizations

STRATEGIES

- Build a vibrant center for Jewish community life using Farm-based activities
- Educate interested individuals about economically and agriculturally sustainable farming, gardening and local food systems
- Provide technical and professional education to support beginning farmers and improve environmental practices of experienced farmers and gardeners
- Produce healthy, sustainably grown food, and make it accessible to the community
- Contribute to broader and deeper understanding of how a Community Farm is a tool for community building
- Support the Farm through diverse revenue stream including social enterprise

TARGET GROUPS

- General population of Coastal North County
- P-16 students from area schools
- Jewish residents of North County
- Local residents needing food assistance
- Farmers and potential farmers
- Beginning and experienced gardeners and landscapers
- Colleagues at other Community Farms, in particular at Jewish Community Farms
- Colleagues in Israel doing similar work
- Supporters, advocates and funders of Community Farms

2 YEAR OUTCOMES

- Growing number of residents participate in Farm activities across ages and demographics
- Participants in Farm programs have:
 - Greater awareness of connection between Judaism and agriculture
 - Increased knowledge about sustainable farming, nutrition, gardening, food prep and safety, local food systems, and food justice
 - Increased awareness of and tools to improve health especially growing and eating local produce
 - Increased access to resources supporting local, organic food production; sustainable landscaping
- Jewish participants gain deeper connections to identity, one another and to Jewish community
- The Farm is producing healthy food for community members, especially those who are food insecure
- Relevant program participants are prepared to engage in social enterprise-supported farm management
- The Farm has documented and shared curricula and lessons learned re: Farm programming, diverse revenue streams, evaluation and farming best practices

5 YEAR OUTCOMES

- The Farm is a widely used and valued community resource
- Greater sense of Jewish community due to the Farm
- Farmers, gardeners and community residents utilize sustainable farming and gardening and environmentally sound methods learned at the Farm
- Participants apply principles of food justice in decision-making
- Participants have higher levels of civic engagement
- The Farm supplies healthy food to food insecure community members
- The Farm is an active part of the P-16 educational pipeline
- The Farm is learning from and informing the work of other Community Farms
- More individuals participating in food-system-related professional activities
- Apprentices have more careers in community agriculture, farming, and alumni are staying connected to Farm
- Sustainable mix of enterprise, funders and individual donors provide support

ULTIMATE IMPACT: North County has an active, vibrant Jewish community that is aware of and appreciates its Jewish agricultural traditions. North County residents are environmentally healthy, support sustainable farming practices, and understand where their food comes from. The E-3 Cluster neighborhood is a national model for intergenerational environmental education, economically sustainable community agriculture, and community development. Community Farms and Jewish Community Farms are recognized and supported for their role in building vibrant, healthy, engaged communities.

Outcomes, Indicators & Methods

The following table shares a set of outcomes, indicators and potential data collection methods for addressing each evaluation question. We have also noted some questions that will need to be answered in the process of clarifying this evaluation plan.

1. How and to what extent has the Farm succeeded in using Farm-based activities to build a vibrant center for Jewish agriculture-related education and integration, as well as for Jewish engagement in local and regional community life?

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
Short-term: A growing number of Coastal North County residents participate regularly in Farm activities; these participants represent diverse ages and demographic characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of Coastal North County residents participating in Farm Activities • Increase in diversity of people who participate at the Farm (e.g., age, Jewish background, other demographic characteristics of interest) • Increase in number of participants who indicate they are returning visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm participant tracking data, recorded in Excel, Salesforce or other software
Long-term: The Farm is a widely used and valued community resource, with the reputation of having enhanced the “livability” of Coastal North County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of respondents who have heard of the Farm and who identify it as having had positive effects on Coastal North County livability • Indications from participants that they come to the Farm in order to meet other community members or participate in group events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informant interviews with community leaders • Focus group discussions with participants
Short-term: Participants in Farm programs have greater awareness of the connection between Judaism and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of participants to correctly identify and explain the connection between Judaism and agriculture (e.g., that Judaism is a farming-based religion; the significance of certain holidays vis-à-vis agriculture; the connections between Jewish traditions and social justice and land stewardship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program participation surveys
Long-term: There is a greater sense of Jewish community in Coastal North County, and the Farm is central to this improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in sense of Jewish community in Coastal North County among participants • Increase in respondents identifying the Farm as responsible for this greater sense of community • Increase in number of young Jewish adult participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informant interviews with community leaders • Survey of, or focus groups with, recurrent or ongoing program participants
Short-term: Participants in Farm programs have increased knowledge about food justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents can identify at least three signs that a food system is just and fair (e.g., a just and fair food system ensures that food is locally produced, healthy, high quality and affordable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program participation surveys
Long-term: Participants apply principles of food justice in their decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents describe themselves as having made more frequent choices to favor food sources on the basis of food justice principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of recurrent or ongoing program participants

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Short-term: Jewish participants in Farm programs have gained deeper connections to one another, to other Jewish community organizations and to the Coastal North County Jewish community as a whole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased scores on “social connectedness” assessment (e.g., Likert Scale responses to statements like “I feel connected to the Jewish community,” “I feel a sense of belonging among my Jewish peers,” “I relate well to others in the Jewish community”) Qualitative data that documents participants’ sense of Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of, or focus groups with, recurrent or ongoing program participants
<p>Long-term: Participants have higher levels of civic and community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased scores on “civic engagement” assessment (e.g., Likert Scale responses to statements like: “I believe I should make a difference in my community,” “I believe that it is important to volunteer,” “I am involved in structured volunteer position(s) in my community,” “I contribute to charitable organizations within my community”) Qualitative data that indicates participants feel more actively engaged in their communities, or more concerned with food and social justice issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of, or focus groups with, recurrent or ongoing program participants

2. How and to what extent has the Farm provided culturally-appropriate education to youth and adult learners about gardening, nutrition, local food systems, food preparation and safety, and economically and agriculturally sustainable farming practices?

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Short-term: Community participants in Farm programs have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge about sustainable farming, nutrition, gardening, food preparation and safety, and local food systems Increased awareness of, and tools to improve, health, especially growing and eating fresh, local produce Increased access to knowledge and materials that support more local and organic food production and sustainable landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants can identify at least three elements of a sustainable food system and at least three practices that support it (e.g., Food systems that support sustainable ecosystems 1) eliminate pesticides, genetically modified organisms, and other contaminants that disrupt environmental and human health; 2) improve biodiversity and protect soil, seeds, plants, animals, water, air and food; 3) recycle and utilize waste as a resource) Participants can describe one or more practices that increase the safety or nutritional value of food (related to gardening or food preparation) Participants list a new recipe, or fresh food with which they were previously unfamiliar, and indicate strong intention to use or consume it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program participation surveys Focus groups to gain deeper insight into participants’ practices

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Long-term: Participants utilize sustainable farming and gardening methods, as well as environmentally sound practices (e.g., composting, water conservation, organic fertilizers and pest controls) learned through Farm programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants describe themselves as having consistently incorporated into their lives at least one new environmental sustainability practice • There is an increase in local, organic food production, and in the number of farms and gardens in North County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of, or focus groups with, recurrent or ongoing program participants
<p>Long-term: The Farm is an active part of the region’s P–16 educational pipeline (pre-kindergarten to college)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the Farm’s involvement in the region’s P–16 educational pipeline • Documentation of existing Farm programs that involve area schools, universities, etc. • The addition of new educational majors, minors, or certificate programs in sustainable agriculture (or related topics) at local community colleges, colleges and universities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm activity data • Interviews with Farm staff, • Survey of leaders at area educational institutions

3. How effectively has the Farm produced and distributed nutritional, safe and locally grown food to the community, especially to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity?

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Short-term: The Farm is producing healthy food and distributing it to community members, especially those who are food insecure, regularly and effectively through local partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount and type of food produced on the Farm (using standardized measures such as “bunches” or pounds) • Number of program partners for food distribution and populations they each serve • Amount of food distributed to each partner • Partner satisfaction with types and amounts of food the Farm distributes through them • Farm satisfaction with distribution partners • Ratio of food sold to food donated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm activity data • Surveys or interviews with Farm staff and distribution partners

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Long-term: The Farm consistently supplies healthy, locally grown food to the community and through organizations serving food insecure families and individuals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as short-term indicators, and... • Farm team indicates satisfaction that the ratio of food sold to food donated is aligned with Farm values and theory of change • Recipients and purchasers of Farm-produced food: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceive themselves to have improved health • Indicate their eating habits have improved • Indicate satisfaction with types and amounts of food the Farm makes available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm activity data • Internal farm discussions • Surveys, focus groups or MSC interviews with recipients and purchasers of Farm-produced food

4. How and to what extent has the Farm improved the practices of experienced farmers and gardeners, and provided technical and professional educational opportunities to beginning farmers in sustainable farming practices and social enterprise-supported farm management?

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Short-term: Farmers and gardeners utilize sustainable farming and gardening methods, as well as environmentally sound practices (e.g., composting, water conservation), learned through Farm programs</p> <p><i>Intentionally duplicates long term outcome above for Q2 because of different constituency.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants demonstrate through stories, exams, other methods, or some combination thereof, that they have acquired knowledge about these methods and can successfully implement them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm-administered exams • Survey of, or focus groups with, recurrent or ongoing program participants • MSC interviews
<p>Short-term: The Farm provides a comprehensive range of resources to farmers and gardeners who participate in its programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence and extent of lending “libraries” for tools, seeds and other resources that grow over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm activity data
<p>Short-term: Relevant program participants are prepared to engage in social enterprise-supported farm management for sustainable, environmentally sound and local farming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant program participants demonstrate the ability to complete a business plan that includes elements to generate revenue from social enterprise • Relevant program participants demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to practice sustainable, environmentally sound and local farming skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm-administered learning exercises

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Long-term: More Farm program participants are pursuing farm-related professions, employment and research (e.g., gardening, horticulture, agriculture)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number (over initial baseline) of Farm program participants (e.g., apprentices and participants in other longer-term programs) report themselves engaged in farm-related professions, employment, graduate education, research, or other relevant activities • Farm program participants trace their farming or agricultural-related professional activities to their participation in Farm programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys of long-term program participants at regular intervals following program completion • MSC interviews with participants who have completed Farm programs
<p>Long-term: Apprentices are going into careers in community agriculture and community farming, and staying connected to Coastal Roots Farm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase over time in number of Farm apprentices who report careers in community agriculture or community farming • Apprenticeship alumni are staying connected to Coastal Roots Farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys of Farm apprentices and apprenticeship alumni

5. In what ways is the Farm developing into an innovative learning organization that is contributing to learnings in the fields of community farming, Jewish community farming, and school-based farm education?

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Short-term: The Farm has documented and shared curricula and other lessons learned about Farm programming, diverse revenue streams, evaluation and community and school-based farming best practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence (Y/N), quantity and type of documented curricula and lessons learned • Evidence that curricula and lessons learned have been shared, with general information about recipients • Evidence that social enterprise is integrated into Farm operations and contributing to the Farm's educational goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm activity data
<p>Long-term: The Farm is learning from other Community Farms and informing their work by testing innovative agricultural, economic and environmental practices, and their models are replicated or adapted elsewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from the Farm that they have learned from the work of other Community Farms • Evidence from the Farm about practices they have tested along with the results of testing and lessons learned • Evidence from other Community Farms that indicates they have adopted one or more elements of the Farm's programs or approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm activity data • Key informant interviews with Coastal Roots Farm, Community Farms, Jewish Community Farms, and relevant school-based farming education leaders

6. How and to what extent is the Farm sustained by a diverse mix of revenue streams including philanthropic support, donations and social enterprise-earned income?

Outcome	Indicators	Methods
<p>Long-term: A sustainable mix of earned income from social enterprise, funders and other donors provide support for the Farm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amounts and sources of financial support for the Farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm financial reports