



# Feed Fannin News

One Community, One Spirit

Feed Fannin, Inc.

[www.feedfannin.org](http://www.feedfannin.org)

706-946-1001

Fall 2024

## Fundraising Campaign Expands Community Outreach

As part of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Feed Fannin, the homegrown, all-volunteer organization launched an ambitious fundraising campaign in August to expand its community outreach efforts. The money will be used to provide more hams and turkeys than ever to those who are food insecure during the holidays.

Through the generosity of an anonymous friend of Feed Fannin, donations to the Holiday Meals Campaign made between Aug. 15 and Oct. 15 will be matched up to \$20,000. Suffice to say, as this newsletter went to press days before the end of the campaign, we had far surpassed our goal but were still happily accepting donations to help us do more than ever to help bring the warmth, joy and love of sharing a holiday meal to our neighbors in need.

Approximately 90% of Feed Fannin's expenditures are for food, food-related items and the operation of our Ada Street farm. Rising prices strain the limited income of many seniors, single parents

with children, the disabled and infirm who struggle with impossible choices between purchasing food or paying for rent, medicines, gas or utilities. With the help of the money raised through this campaign, we can continue to address their basic need for food.



On the strength of the campaign's success, we have ordered 1,600 hams for the Food Pantry to distribute before Thanksgiving and Christmas – double the number we ordered last year. We have also ordered turkeys for the Good Samaritans' Thanksgiving Meal and for First Fruits, as well as canned hams for those who benefit from Meals on Wheels and Faith Presbyterian Church's outreach program. Many thanks to all who've contributed! ❀

## Ada Street Farm Stays Busy Nearly Year Round



*Chair Ron Ciochon and his dog, Jethro, tend the abundant crops in late summer.*

### Farm/Garden Report

By Kathy Beck, Farm & Facilities Manager and Vice Chair of Ag Education

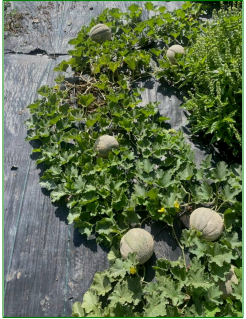
Feed Fannin's 15-year anniversary started with a busy Spring and has not slowed down through the Summer and early Fall. We have had several groups visiting and touring the farm, provided produce for Snack in a Backpack's Summer Meals program, taken part in several small fundraising events, and participated in agriculture events with local students, the July 4<sup>th</sup> Old Timer's Parade and the Fall Arts in the Park. We will stay busy through the remainder of the year with accelerated food outreach programs planned for the holiday season.

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***Farm/Garden Report continued***

**Report from the Garden**

Even though it was a hot, dry summer, our Ada Street Garden was productive. Our first time attempt at growing cantaloupe yielded over 504 lb. of the fruit donated to Fannin County Family Connection (FCFC) Food Pantry. Seeds were saved from two melons last summer and planted through slits in five-ounce silage tarp. Growing on the tarp allowed the soil to warm quickly and kept the moisture level consistent and kept fruit off the soil.



A small green pickleworm did find our melons late season and tunneled into the fruit, accelerating rotting. We lost about 75 melons. It was still a successful venture, and more seeds have been saved from two healthy melons for next year's crop.

In addition to the successful cantaloupe crop, some other highlights include tomatoes - 1,097 lb.; 32 dozen ears of corn at 243 lb.; cucumbers - 521 lb.; pole beans - 201 lb.; okra 152 lb.; squash - 128 lb.; onions - 12 lb.; and peppers - 27 lb., plus basil, parsley and dill.

This is a sample of the produce grown at the Ada Street Farm and the Feed Fannin Research Garden at the FCFC Food Pantry. A total of 3,304 lb. of produce was grown at these two gardens and provided to food pantry clients throughout the summer.

In addition to what we grow, Feed Fannin also purchases supplemental produce for the food pantry from a local farm partner. Purchases through September included 35 weeks of produce purchased from Old Dial Road Farm totaling 2,727 lb. which brings the total produce provided for the food pantry year-to-date to approximately 6,031 lb. Feed Fannin expects to continue produce purchases for the food pantry through December.



***Chair Ron Ciochon (r) accepts delivery of produce from Jeff Morris, owner of Old Dial Farm***

**Partnerships are our Strength**

Feed Fannin continued its third year of partnering with the Snack in a Backpack Summer Meals program to provide 5,317 lb. of fresh produce to families with children during the eight weeks of summer school break. The produce shown here is for one week's delivery.



***Kathy Beck (r) delivers produce to Snack in a Backpack Executive Director Debby Beck (l) and Cooper Boyle (c), a Snack summer intern***

Thanks to our Blue Ridge Food Lion and its produce managers for partnering with us to order and secure the produce Feed Fannin needed to fulfill our commitment to Snack Summer Meals.

**We Love our Volunteers!**

Feed Fannin could not do what we do without our wonderful garden volunteers, and they certainly make my life more fulfilling. Not only are they great physical laborers, but we share each other's joys and lift each other up during times of hardship. I treasure their friendship!

Groundskeepers play an important part in the summer with grass mowing and string trimming every week. This summer, a local high school senior helped with garden mowing and trimming, which was a huge help. Another upcoming Fannin County High School freshman helped us with weeding, harvesting and garden chores.



***Student volunteer Brady Coleman***

We are training the next generation of volunteers! Thank you to these students who took time from their summer break to give us a hand. Students are always welcome at the Farm!

**The Latest B-u-z-z!**

An exciting development at the farm this summer was the addition of a beehive added in July by Dr. Kelly Parrish, a new Feed Fannin friend. The honeybees have adjusted really well and seem to love all the pollinator plants available on the farm. Kelly says the hive is home to about 10,000 bees. We have

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# Local Breweries Help Raise Funds to Benefit Feed Fannin

Feed Fannin branched out a bit this summer with a series of fundraisers at local breweries, making friends and widening the organization’s support base at every stop.

It began when Buck Bald Brewing in Copperhill offered to give Feed Fannin proceeds from the sale of hops plants sold on June 22. Feed Fannin volunteers handed out information and worked the crowd, making sure customers were aware of the organization’s mission to provide food for those in need. As a result, we struck up a relationship with some local motorcycle enthusiasts, and that led to another opportunity.

The Dogwood in Blue Ridge hosts Bike Night on the second Friday of every month and raffles some goodies during the event as well as giving an award to the owner of the most admired bike. Since July, the Dogwood has been donating the proceeds of the raffle to Feed Fannin.



*Feed Fannin Ambassador Mary Kay Britzius (r) with two Feed Fannin supporters who purchased hops plants during the Buck Bald Brewing fundraiser*



*(Above right) Feed Fannin volunteers with members of the Nam Knights of America Motorcycle Club at the Brewstillery*



*(left and above) The Dogwood, where Chair Ron Ciochon, Treasurer Peggy Caldwell, Board Member Andy Livingston and Ambassador Mary Kay Britzius were on hand to give out information and take donations*

Then in August, the friends we had made at the Buck Bald event, the Nam Knights of America Club Appalachian Chapter, held an event at The Brewstillery in Ducktown and donated the proceeds of their raffle and 50/50 drawing to Feed Fannin. The owners of The Brewstillery were impressed with our organization, and we came home that evening with just over \$1,000. Thank you to everyone involved!

## Food Assistance by the Numbers – Our 2024 Impact to Date

Feed Fannin strives to make an impact by providing food — grown by us and our partner gardens, plus items purchased and donated — to families in need of food assistance in our community. As of September 2024, we grew, produced or procured:

**More than 220,557 pounds of staple goods, canned goods, fresh produce, and frozen food items**

**This is the equivalent of 183,767 meals that helped feed the hungry in our community**

**And we also purchased 8,190 dozen eggs and 7,960 gallons of milk**

So far in 2024 Feed Fannin has ordered a total of 8,616 pounds of staples and canned goods from the Chattanooga Food Bank for the Food Pantry and other community partners. This includes providing 120 food boxes to shut-ins at the low-income North Court Apartments and 513 boxes of food staples provided to Meals on Wheels.

# There is Always Something to Do at the Farm!



*Beekeeper Dr. Kelly Parrish at work*



*Garden volunteers  
Virginia Cowden  
and Diane Tortis  
in the cornstalks*



*Priscilla Cashman, Vice Chair of Food Purchases & Programs & Food Pantry Relations, is a faithful garden volunteer.*



*Garden volunteers harvesting sweet potatoes*



There is always something to do at the farm, so if you get bored and want to spend a little time outdoors helping with some chores, don't hesitate to contact Feed Fannin at [feedfannin.org](http://feedfannin.org) or call 706-946-1001. We will return your call!



*(l-r) Virginia Cowden, Diane Tortis, Priscilla Cashman and Jim Hatten at work on the raised beds*

## Farm/Garden Report continued

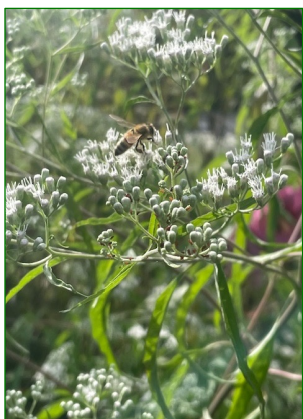


definitely seen an increase in honeybees at the farm since the hive's arrival.

In late August, Feed Fannin hosted students from the Animal Science and Basic Ag classes from Fannin County High School. A total of 34 students with teachers

Rhonda Mathews and Seth Davis came to visit the farm for a tour and close-up view of the hive. Kelly took the hive apart so the students could see the inner working of the hive and gave students a basic introduction to beekeeping.

Following the class on beekeeping, I walked them through the Feed Fannin garden for a tour and identification of the vegetables and pollinator plants and a lesson on how to collect seeds for next year's planting. We discussed some of our planting techniques, and also identified some of the native pollinator plants growing such as Ironweed, Cut-leaf Coneflower, butterfly weed, and boneset, as well as the flowers that have self-seeded in our pollinator garden such as cleome and zinnia.



*Native boneset with honeybee*

Boneset, which can be poisonous if ingested by humans, is a valuable addition to our ecosystem. From late summer through fall, its small fuzzy clusters of white flowers are covered with butterflies, wasps, bees, flies, and beetles. One of our farm goals is to increase the flowering native plants, because we want to continue to increase biodiversity, encourage natural ecosystems and provide food for native wildlife.

## Challenges on the Farm

In addition to the problems with groundhogs and rabbits that many of you have read about for years, deer started jumping the electric fence during late Winter/early Spring 2024 when they discovered our luscious winter rye cover crop. In late August, the deer once again jumped the fence, breaking wires and eating tomatoes. The rabbits and groundhogs basically wiped out our small pumpkin patch.

## A Little Ag Education

Hornworm on a tomato plant is a fairly common experience each summer, especially since we don't use chemicals in the garden. Something new this summer was little white wormy things sprouting out of the hornworm caterpillar (which is green in the photo). These soft white growths are the cocoons of a special parasitoid wasp – a species of braconid wasp. The adult female wasp lays eggs just under the skin of the hornworm. When they're ready to pupate, the braconid wasp larvae chew their way out of the hornworm, and spin silk cocoons on the caterpillar's exoskeleton. The tiny adult wasps emerge from these cocoons a short time later, so the braconids do us a favor and kill the caterpillar by using its body as a hatching ground for their young.



*Hornworm with adult parasitoid wasp and cocoons on tomato plant*

Sometimes when harvesting corn, we discover a few ears that have corn smut, also known as corn truffle or "huitlacoche," which is a fungal disease that only grows on kernels of organic raised corn and looks similar to pebbles with the texture of a mushroom. The outside is bluish grey while the inside is black. It is considered a Latin American delicacy, and while I personally have not eaten it, it is considered safe to eat and is very similar to other varieties of mushroom. I am told by a garden volunteer who does eat it that it has an earthy flavor, combined with the taste of corn. If you add a little garlic and butter, what's not to like?



*Corn smut (huitlacoche)*

The fungus causes metabolic changes in the corn plant, meaning that huitlacoche has very different nutritional properties than corn. It has a lot more

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**Farm/Garden Report continued**

protein and contains lysine, an essential amino acid our bodies can't produce, so we have to get it from food. At the Feed Fannin Farm, we have only found huitlacoche occasionally during high heat and humidity years and more on certain sweet varieties of corn. Of the 33 dozen ears of Silver Queen corn grown this summer, less than a dozen ears containing the fungus were discarded, and 32 dozen healthy ears were harvested.

**Ag Experience Mobile Trailer Visit**

Several Feed Fannin farm volunteers participated in and supported The Fannin County Farm Bureau and Fannin County Young Farmers as they teamed up to sponsor an Ag Educational Mobile Classroom trailer visited by approximately 300 fourth graders in the county over a two-day event held Aug. 19-20. Thank you to the teachers and FFA students and adult

volunteers who helped younger students learn more about agriculture in Georgia and the many opportunities available in the field of agriculture.

In addition, Feed Fannin was one of the sponsors that provided food and volunteers who cooked and served lunch at the Fannin County Young Farmer's Association 2024 Ag Day at the Fannin County Agricultural Facility. Over 200 third graders from local schools, plus parents, leaders, presenters, faculty, administration, and FFA students promoted agriculture with live animals, a beekeeper, equipment and displays.



*Kathy Beck and students in mobile classroom*

**Fall and winter chores at the Farm**

As I write this article and Hurricane Helene brings with it lots of rain, I am watching the leaves begin to drop and know that more work is ahead. Each year at home I leave the leaves in my flower beds to decompose and remove leaves from drives or walks that might become slippery and cause a fall. At the Feed Fannin Farm, where we have two huge willow oaks that drop leaves and prevent drainage on our drive, the leaves are raked or mowed and put into the garden area to decompose and feed the soil. Winter rye will be planted as a cover crop in the open fields to add nutrients to the soil.

The wood on the raised beds in the one-acre Ada Street Garden is deteriorating again, so six galvanized 4' x 8' x 2' raised bed planters have been purchased and assembled. Over the next several weeks, volunteers will help get them located and add fresh soil. The new beds are two feet deep, which will enable planting of deep root plants. These beds should last a long time, so we don't have to keep replacing the wood.

The trees around the allotment raised-bed garden need to be trimmed to allow some additional sunlight and some vines and invasive shrubbery and other trees also need attention. The shingles on the storage shed have deteriorated and blown off in areas, so I recently discovered some extra pieces of tin in the barn that will be used this winter to put a new roof on the shed. The Research Garden at FCFC will be cleaned-up and gravel added to the pathways. 🌸

**Make a Gift to Feed Fannin**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Would you like to receive information about Feed Fannin by email? Y\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_

Amount of gift donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make checks payable to:  
Feed Fannin, Inc.

Mail form and donation to:  
Feed Fannin  
PO Box 1085  
Blue Ridge, GA 30513

**Your gift is greatly appreciated!**

**Our Mission**

Working together to educate and encourage our community towards self-sufficiency while providing food for those in need.