

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Farmer-Owned Project Launches on National Farmers Day with Certified Farmer-Owned Mark

New independent nonprofit introduces a certification that empowers farmer-ownership in the food system and furthering consumer trust in where their food comes from

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — October 12, 2026 — On National Farmers Day, The Farmer-Owned Project today announced its public launch as an independent nonprofit dedicated to advancing farmer ownership in the food system. Alongside the launch, the organization introduced the Certified Farmer-Owned mark, a first of its kind certification that verifies a food business is genuinely owned by farmers.

Shoppers today see words like "farm fresh," "family farm" and "farmer-made" across grocery shelves and online marketplaces. While those claims may describe a product's origins or image, they rarely reveal who owns the business behind it. As brands, processing and distribution have consolidated, farmers often keep a shrinking share of the value their work creates. In 2007, the USDA report the Farmer captures 14.7c for every \$1 spent on food and in 2024 its new report showed 11.8c. The Certified Farmer-Owned mark gives shoppers, retailers and buyers a clear, verifiable way to identify and support businesses where farmers hold ownership while aiming to achieve a more sustainable future for family farm operations.

Businesses that carry the mark are independently verified against ownership standards set by The Farmer-Owned Project. Verification is conducted by an independent third-party auditor, keeping the organization that writes the standards separate from the party that checks compliance. The Farmer-Owned Project is governed by a farmer-majority board, which is currently being seated. Additional board members will include retailers, government officials, and other impactful stakeholders in the food system. An initial cohort of Farms in Certification include [Painterland Sisters](#) (Westfield, PA), [Anthem Oats](#) (Frederick, SD), and [Union Grove Farm](#) (Hillsborough, NC).

Farmer-owned food businesses can officially inquire regarding the certification process at farmerownedproject.org. Retailers, marketplaces and industry partners interested in recognizing the mark can connect with the organization through the same site.

"For years we've watched labels borrow the farmer's image while the farmer gets the smallest piece of the food dollar," said Taylor & Cassandra Sumption, Co-Founders of [Anthem Oats](#) in Frederick, South Dakota and founding farmers of The Farmer-Owned Project. "When we built our own brand from our 5th generation family farm, we took on the risk so we could keep the value on our farm. This mark finally lets people see the difference, and it gives farmers a reason to believe ownership is worth fighting for."

"Farmers feed every one of us, yet they own very little of what happens to their food after it leaves the field," said Tyler Speer, President and Founding Director of The Farmer-Owned Project. "We launched on National Farmers Day because ownership is the most meaningful way to honor farmers. The Certified

Media Contact: Robbie Dye
robbie@farmerownedproject.org
farmerownedproject.org

Farmer-Owned mark is built by farmers and verified independently, so when shoppers see it, they shop with confidence knowing more of their dollars are going to the people who put food on their table."

To learn more, visit farmerownedproject.org or follow @farmerownedproject on social media.

###

About The Farmer-Owned Project

The Farmer-Owned Project is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing farmer ownership in the food system. Governed by a farmer-majority board, the organization sets the standards for the Certified Farmer-Owned mark, which identifies food and agricultural businesses that are owned by farmers and verified by an independent third party. Learn more at farmerownedproject.org.