Grants Available for Livestock & Poultry Farmers to Improve Animal Welfare or Build Capacity

(Chicago, IL – October 2, 2018) Starting today, farmers who wish to improve the welfare of their farm animals or build capacity of their operations may apply for a Fund-a-Farmer Grant from Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT).

Since 2012, FACT has awarded 119 Fund-a-Farmer Grants totaling $261,000, directly impacting more than 83,000 animals on independent family farms across 31 states. This year over $92,000 will be available, with the grants ranging between $2,500 for individual farmers to $5,000 for joint projects that will benefit multiple farms.

A 2017 survey of past grant recipients found that 91 percent of the projects still are in use, 95 percent had highly improved animal welfare, and 91 percent had improved the farms’ financial sustainability, by improving profits, creating recurring cost savings, and increasing customers.

- Dru Peters and Homer Walden, owners/operators of Sunnyside Farm in Dover, PA reported a profit increase of $40,000 per year due to their FACT-funded project. The farmers received a Fund-a-Farmer Pasture Improvement Grant in 2013 to build mobile houses for their broiler chickens on pasture. “Our ability to replace all of our poultry pens had a profound effect on our farm. The new pens have resulted in fewer losses, increased wellbeing for the poultry, and greater yield of both meat and eggs each year,” said Peters.

- “Our Fund-a-Farmer grant has improved the welfare of our heritage meat chickens by making them safer from predators, safer from exposure to weather and providing more on-pasture feeding options,” said Dede Boise, who owns the Root Down Farm in Pescadero, California, and raises heritage breed broiler chickens, turkeys and hogs. The farm received a $2,500 pasture improvement grant in 2014 to purchase a flatbed trailer to be converted into a mobile chicken coop and a $2,500 grant in 2017 to install a perimeter fence around 8 acres of pasture used to rotate turkeys, broilers and swine. “It has improved our soil and pasture sustainability, and our financial sustainability, by increasing our profits, costs savings and customers.”

- “Our chickens' health and well-being has improved significantly because they now have limitless access to fresh pasture at all times using this system,” said Alex Needham and Alison Parker, owners of the 14-acre Radical Root Farm, where they raise approximately 600 laying hens on restored prairie land and grow over 150 varieties of 45 different kinds of USDA Certified Organic crops on forest preserves in Libertyville, Illinois. The farm invested FACT’s $2,500 grant in a hay wagon for use as a moveable chicken coop. “This new fortress-like structure saves money by protecting the birds from coyote and hawk attacks each year.”

“FACT’s Fund-a-Farmer grants are an excellent example of how working directly with farmers can improve farm animal welfare and farm profitability,” said Larissa McKenna, FACT’s Humane Farming Program Director. “In addition to creating a higher standard of animal care on farms across the country, our Fund-a-Farmer grants also help farmers undertake needed on-farm changes that otherwise would not happen.”

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This year FACT will offer three distinct types of grants focused on: 1) pasture-based farming systems, 2) farm improvements that result in successful animal welfare certification, and 3) capacity building projects for high-welfare farmers. FACT will provide funds to working, independent family farmers located in the continental U.S. who raise pigs, broiler chickens, laying hens, dairy cows, turkeys, beef cattle, sheep and/or goats. One application per farm will be accepted.

**Applications must be submitted online by November 28, 2018. Grants will be awarded in January 2019.**

The **Pasture Improvement Grants** of up to $2,500 are specifically for projects that help farms transition to a pasture-based system, expand the animals’ access to well-managed pasture, and/or improve the quality of pasture. Eligible projects include revamping existing housing to encourage outdoor access; building new housing, such as portable houses for frequent rotation of animals; installing water systems to improve water delivery to animals on pasture; and purchasing and installing fencing to enable safe and effective pasture access and rotational grazing.

The **Animal Welfare Certification Grants** of up to $2,500 are specifically for on-farm improvements that would help farmers to attain animal welfare certification from Animal Welfare Approved by A Greener World, Certified Humane, or the Global Animal Partnership (GAP), specifically steps 4 – 5+. Eligible projects are highly dependent upon the certification requirements but include designing and constructing humane handling systems; purchasing fencing materials; constructing of low stress weaning pens; and building new or repurposing old mobile housing.

New this year, the **Capacity Building Grants** are specifically for high-welfare farmers and ranchers who already hold one of the three certifications above. FACT will fund projects that would help these farmers scale up their operations while maintaining a high level of welfare, as well as funding projects that would enable farmers to improve their bottom lines through improved marketing, distribution, and education efforts. Grants of up to $2,500 are available for individual farmers; grants of up to $5,000 are available for joint projects that would benefit multiple farms.


“As the market for more humane products continues to grow, it’s critical that farmers have access to the resources they need to distinguish themselves from misleading, unverified welfare claims increasingly found in the marketplace” said Kara Shannon, Senior Manager of Farm Animal Welfare at the ASPCA. “The ASPCA is proud to fund the third year of Animal Welfare Certification Grants as well as the new Capacity Building Grants, which will provide much needed support to welfare-certified farmers looking to grow and develop their businesses to reach more conscious consumers.”

FACT will offer an online information session about the grant application process on Wednesday, October 24 from 6pm – 7pm CST. Farmers may register online for this free session at [www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org/webinar](http://www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org/webinar).

For grant application guidelines, eligibility requirements, and to access the online grant applications, please visit [www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org/grants](http://www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org/grants). In addition to awarding grants, FACT also offers free webinars, conference scholarships, and a mentorship program for livestock and poultry farmers who wish to improve the welfare of their farm animals. If you have questions about FACT’s Fund-a-Farmer Grants, please contact Humane Farming Program Director Larissa McKenna at (773) 525-4952 ext. 2 or grants@foodanimalconcerns.org.

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**FACT** is a national non-profit organization that promotes the safe and humane production of meat, milk, and eggs. Learn more at [www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org](http://www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org)