FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Virginia Foodshed Capital Certified as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia - May 27, 2020 - Virginia Foodshed Capital, a statewide non-profit supporting local sustainable agriculture, recently earned distinction as a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). It becomes only the second CDFI nationwide solely devoted to food and farming. CDFIs are mission-driven entities providing financial services to economically disadvantaged businesses and individuals within underserved communities. CDFIs provide critically needed financing often unavailable from mainstream financial institutions. In the case of Virginia Foodshed Capital, the critically needed financing supports small/mid-scale farms and food enterprises throughout the state.

Since its founding in 2018, Virginia Foodshed Capital has made 24 microloans to farms and food businesses in Virginia, totaling $180,000. The loans are at 0% interest and have flexible terms to meet the needs of its constituents. “The business of farming is incredibly challenging and unpredictable, so our mission is to support our local food system with as few roadblocks as possible,” said Virginia Foodshed Capital co-founder and executive director, Michael Reilly. “We are particularly dedicated to supporting organic and regenerative practices, as well as farms owned by women, people of color, and new and beginning farmers.”

CDFI certification is issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Community Development Financial Institutions Fund – known as the CDFI Fund. In order to become a certified CDFI, the financial institution must: have a primary mission of promoting community development; provide financial products and services; serve one or more defined low-income target markets; maintain accountability to the community it serves; and be a legal non-governmental entity.

There are more than 1,100 CDFIs nationwide and 19 in Virginia. While several CDFIs around the country support food businesses, Virginia Foodshed Capital joins California FarmLink as the only two CDFIs with a mission solely devoted to local agriculture.

Virginia Foodshed Capital chose to pursue CDFI certification to help build its capacity in delivering financial products to underserved communities in the food and agriculture space. While it has been working on its CDFI certification for the past eight months, the timing is fortuitous. “The pandemic has shown that a strong local food system is critical to community resilience. That’s why we do the work we do,” Reilly said. “Local food safeguards us from interruptions in our long global food supply chains. Pandemics notwithstanding, these interruptions will undoubtedly become more and more common in the years and decades ahead, from climate change alone.”

The organization’s website is: www.foodcap.org.

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