



SOUTHERN PIEDMONT

**CLIMATE-SMART
PROJECT**

led by:



On-Farm Trail Farmer FAQs

Southern Piedmont Climate-Smart Frequently Asked Questions

We are partnering with diverse vegetable farmers to test roller crimping versus plasticulture in vegetable production. We will monitor the greenhouse gas emissions, soil health benefits and economic and social barriers to change over four years across rolled and plastic fields.

This information will provide farmers with a toolkit of techniques to better understand how they can act to better steward their lands and communities while helping us provide recommendations to the USDA on ways to support southern underserved farmers transition to climate-smart agriculture. We have over \$6 million in cash and non-cash incentives for participating farmers.

Southern Piedmont Climate-Smart Diversified Vegetable Program

Who can participate in this project?

Any vegetable farmer (naturally grown/organic or conventional) located in the Southern Piedmont.

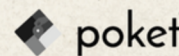
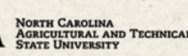
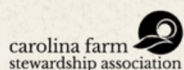
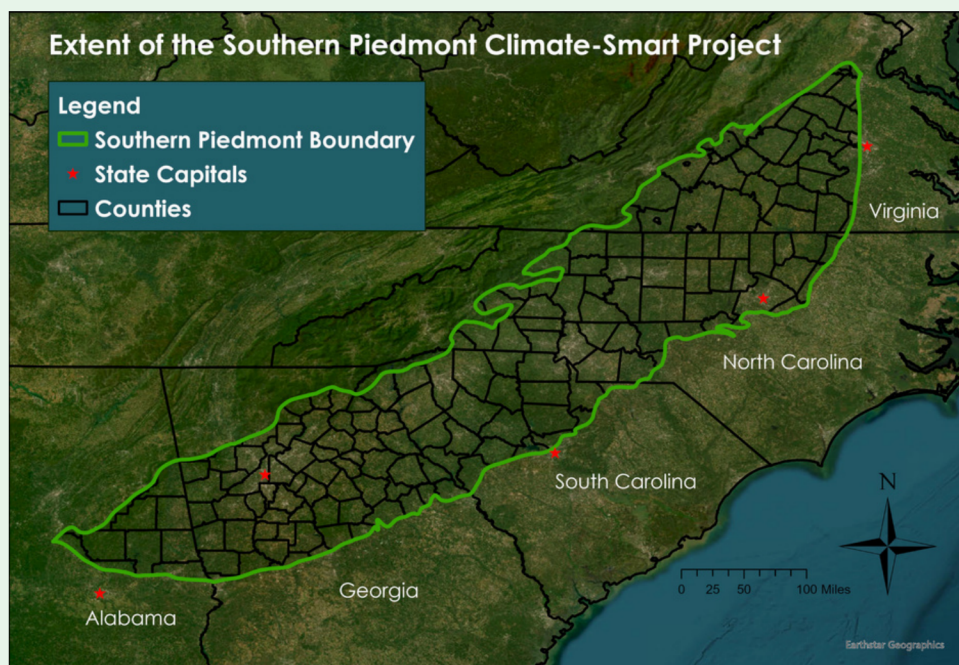
How many farmers will be participating in this project?

We will be enrolling a total of 100 farmers in the project: 50 naturally grown/organic and 50 conventional.

Where is the Southern Piedmont?

The Southern Piedmont is a 64,395 square mile, USDA designated Major Land Resource Area (MRLA 136) that extends through Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. It lies as a plateau between the Appalachian Mountains and the Coastal Plain.

Please see the territory outlined in the map below:





SOUTHERN PIEDMONT

**CLIMATE-SMART
PROJECT** led by:  **RODALE
INSTITUTE.**

On-Farm Trail Farmer FAQs

What is required from farmers who are participating in the program?

- Enroll 1-10 acres that will be dedicated for 4 years
- Farm 1/2 the dedicated acreage using an assigned crop rotation including cover crops and terminate cover crops with a roller crimper and plant into residue. Farm the other 1/2 of the dedicated acreage using an assigned crop rotation including cover crops and use plastic.
- Allow the project team scheduled access to your property for soil sample collection, to check Eddy Covariance Covariance Tower instrumentation, if a tower is located on your property, and for periodic in-person conversations and visits.
- Provide production data based on rolled versus plastic acreage.
- A subset of farmers will participate in annual focus groups.
- Annually complete an app that will take 20 minutes to complete.
- Enter data, photos, and videos to an easy-to-use application on your phone that will also track your incentives earned triggering payment.
- Participate in project-related trainings and field days.
- Assist with moving project-related equipment to your property for use, if needed.

How many acres do I need to participate?

We are asking farmers to enroll 1-10 acres in the project divided into two plots. For example, if you enroll 2 acres into the project, one acre will be rolled and planted into and the other acre will be cut or terminated with herbicide and planted into plasticulture.

Will I receive payment for this work?

- Yes, you will receive cash and non-cash incentives for this work.
- We have budgeted over \$4 million for incentives that cover the following:
 - Vegetable seed up to 10 acres
 - Cover crop seed up to 5 acres
 - Reimbursements for inputs
 - Payment for providing economic data
 - Taking part in focus groups
 - Filling out Farm2Facts
 - Assisting with moving needed equipment to your farm
- We will also provide specific equipment needed for the climate-smart practices you will be utilizing.
- Please see the Southern Piedmont Climate-Smart Diversified Vegetable Program recruitment flier for details on the cash and non-cash incentives.





SOUTHERN PIEDMONT

**CLIMATE-SMART
PROJECT**

led by:



**RODALE
INSTITUTE**

On-Farm Trail Farmer FAQs

What if I don't have the equipment required to plant and terminate the cover crops?

We will provide no-till seed drills, roller crimpers, no-till transplanters, and plastic layers to perform the work on the enrolled acreage.

How long do I need to participate in this project?

To ensure complete data collection and meeting our project objectives, we ask each farmer to participate in the project for 4 years.

Can I keep the proceeds from the acreage enrolled in the project?

Yes, all revenue generated on enrolled acreage is yours.

What is an Eddy Covariance Tower and what is required to have one on my property?

- Eddy Covariance Towers are structures of scaffolding that hold research instrumentation which collect data on greenhouse gas emissions coming from your soil. Our towers will take data on carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ammonia, and weather data such as: precipitation, air temperature, wind speed, soil temperature, etc.
- We are looking for 4 farms (2 naturally grown/organic and 2 conventional) that can enroll at least 4 acres in the project, and those acres are separated by a buffer like a tree line or non-farmed field (1/2 the acres are contiguous on one side of the buffer and the other 1/2 contiguous on the other side of the buffer).

What is Farm2Facts and why is this part of the research program?

- Farm2Facts uses a citizen science approach to research through an inexpensive, easy-to-use data collection application/toolkit. Farm2Facts is currently used to help market managers assess and improve integral dynamics of their markets and has helped over 100 market managers and organizations across the U.S. manage their business more effectively and provide data analysis used in grant writing and reporting.
- F2F creators developed and added ecosystems measures to the tool which can track the climate-smart practices used on a farm and the amount of CS commodities produced and sold by individual farmers at market. To verify and improve the F2F Ecosystems Services Tool and evaluate the degree of climate-smart farm practices occurring on participating farms the farmers participating in the Southern Piedmont Climate-Smart Diversified Vegetable Program will also participate annually in F2F allowing us to calibrate the application against live data.
- We will assess Farm2Facts' ability to influence consumer buy-in to the purchase of value-added, climate-smart commodities by asking market farmers to place the graphic savvy printouts of their operations on their tables at market to advertise, educate, and market, climate-smart commodities. We will perform consumer surveys to assess Farm2Facts as well as other marketing strategies performance in influencing consumer buy-in.





SOUTHERN PIEDMONT

**CLIMATE-SMART
PROJECT**

led by:



**RODALE
INSTITUTE**

On-Farm Trail Farmer FAQs

What is the timeline of the Southern Piedmont Climate-Smart Diversified Vegetable Program?

We will enroll farmers in the project from April 2023 through Fall 2024.

- Summer 2024: We will install instrumentation on 4 designated farms to measure greenhouse gasses. Instruments will remain on the property through Spring 2028.
- Spring-Fall 2024: Farmer field days, webinars, and outreach events for participating farmers about the project, equipment, and data entry.
- Fall 2024: Participants begin providing economic data, photos, and videos to the research team. Data to be provided through Spring 2028.
- Summer 2024: Farmer focus groups will begin and continue annually until 2028.
- Fall 2024: First soil samples taken prior to cover crops. Samples taken annually until 2028.
- Fall 2024: Participating farmers will plant the first year of cover crops on the enrolled acreage. Cover cropping to continue until Fall 2027.
- Spring 2025: Participating farmers will roller crimp 1/2 enrolled acreage of cover crops and plant into the residue and use plasticulture on the other half of enrolled property. This will continue until Spring 2028.
- End of summer/fall 2025-2027 crops harvested- farmers to keep proceeds.
- Project duration 2024-2028: farmer field days and present at regional conferences for education, farmer networking, and community building.

If I fill out the online application of interest, am I automatically enrolled in the program?

No, applications will be reviewed and we will select farms for the project. However, filling out the application will sign you up for the newsletter that will inform you of field days and outreach events where you can learn more about climate-smart farming practices.

**For more information and to
find the application scan here:**



Dr. Kristie Wendelberger
Project Director

kristie.wendelberger@rodaleinstitute.org

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under agreement number NR233A7500046019. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, any reference to specific brands or types of products or services does not constitute or imply an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for those products or services.

