

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)  
Final Performance Report**

**Report Date Range:** 9/30/14 – 9/29/16

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**Recipient Organization Name:** Certified Naturally Grown

**Project Title:** Improving the marketing capacity of direct-market producers through training and support for better branding, storytelling, and more effective use of social media.

**Grant Agreement Number:** 14-FMPP-NY-0132

**Year Grant was Awarded:** 2014

**Project City/State:** Brooklyn, NY (office location)

**Total Awarded Budget:** \$59,521

*To follow up on long-term success stories, please contact above representative.*

## **1. Goals/Objectives**

The goal of this project was to increase farmers' capacity to market their farms and farm products effectively through better branding, storytelling, and more effective use of social media.

### **a. Progress made**

- We held two rounds of competitive applications for a free marketing video. A total of 24 farmers applied to receive this service. Professional-quality marketing videos were created for six local food operations. These videos tell the unique stories of each of these producers.
- We held two rounds of competitive applications for free logo design services. A total of 50 farmers applied to receive this service, and in the process, were asked to develop a brand concept. Twenty farms received the logo design service, and now have a professionally designed logo for their farm.
- Those who weren't awarded free logo design services were able to benefit from the application process by being asked to put some thought into how they wanted to define their brand.
- We created a website, [StandOutInYourField.org](http://StandOutInYourField.org), to serve as a platform for
  - Sharing marketing lessons,
  - Profiling exemplary marketing by farmers
  - Receiving applications for the logo and video services,
  - Offering our design services (banners, brochures, business cards, etc.)
- We developed the following marketing lessons and made them available for free on the project website. In addition to the online content, we put the

lessons in a PDF format so they could be downloaded for offline use and sharing.

- Instagram - How and why to use it to tell your farm's story
- Press Release – How and why to write one
- Branding – How to establishing your farm's distinctive brand
- Video Tips – How to use video to tell your farm's story and strengthen your customer base
- Website Design – How to create an affordable easy-to-manage website, and why this is important to do
- We drafted and shared a series of eleven blog posts profiling exemplary marketing by farmers.
- We developed a program to offer graphic design services for farmers who wanted to improve their branding with professionally designed banners, business cards, and brochures. We designed banners and/or cards for about 15 farms.
- These marketing resources – the lessons, shining examples, opportunities to apply for free logo design and marketing videos, and our design services – were promoted via quarterly newsletter to our 6,300 supporters, most of whom are farmers, as well as via social media. More frequent communication was made with the 350 people who specifically requested email updates about marketing for farmers. We also conducted direct telephone outreach to about 300 members over the course of this project.
- To help members strengthen their brand by promoting their certification we created twelve different social media icons, one for each batch of farms first certified during the years from 2003 – 2014, and sent the appropriate badge to a total of 358 farms.
- As of the end of this grant period, a dozen press releases had been written, and we know of two farms that had had their stories published in local papers. Having established a protocol with this grant, we will continue to offer press release writing services to our members free of charge.
- We developed four t-shirt designs – three featuring the variety of fresh produce typically found at farmers markets - and created an account and a store with the on-demand company Spreadshirt to make these shirts publicly available to purchase in a variety of colors and styles. Find the store at <https://shop.spreadshirt.com/cngfarming>

#### b. Impact on community

We have seen an improvement in the marketing capacity of the farmers who received one or more of the services we offered. Those who received a new logo have improved their branding while those who received a video are more powerfully telling their farm's story. Farmers have gained appreciation for the value of submitting a press release to their local papers, and several have “reserved” the service for a spring 2017 release. Farmers are participating in the social media campaigns that we initiated, and adding new ones of their own (see #CNGproud, #CNGgrit and #CNGmatters).

## **2. Overall Impact**

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 1  
As a result of this project CNG was able to hire a design and marketing specialist.
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 1  
We anticipate retaining this employee in her current position.
- iii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 350+  
Just over 350 producers have downloaded one or more of the marketing lessons and/or indicated an interest in receiving direct communications from CNG regarding marketing for farmers (i.e. new lessons, new profiles of farmers demonstrating best marketing practices). Additional farmers who receive our newsletter may also have benefitted from our marketing materials without our having a way to know about it.

The other categories of impact listed on the final report template aren't relevant to this project.

## **3. New Populations**

During this grant period we launched a new project aimed at pairing photographers with farmers, to help improve farmers' ability to tell visually rich stories. As a result we've developed relationships with several photographers who will continue to be a valuable resource to CNG and to some of the farmers in our networks.

## **4. Discuss your community partnerships**

This project was not focused on a specific geographic area. There wasn't a place for community partnerships - in the traditional sense - to carry out the work of this project. However, the photographer-farmer pairings that we are facilitating are an innovative way to leverage the support of individuals within a community to help improve farmers' marketing. We plan to continue facilitating these pairings and promoting the resulting images.

## **5. Contractors**

We relied upon several contractors to conduct the work of this project. In particular, we hired the following:

- Graphic designers to create logos for the 17 farms
- Videographers to create videos for 6 farms
- A marketing expert / website designer to create StandOutInYourField.org and draft the marketing lessons

## **6. Have you publicized any results yet?**

We publicized the results of our work on StandOutInYourField.org, the project's website, as well as via email messages and newsletters, and in-person at conferences. There were over 350 people – mostly farmers – who subscribed for updates on the project's website. In addition, we publicized the results of this project in our quarterly newsletter which reaches 6,500 subscribers.

## 7. Feedback collected

We have collected feedback from those receiving direct services through this grant (logo, video, banner design, and press release), mostly via surveys of recipients, but also via email correspondence in which the recipients volunteered their feedback spontaneously. Below are some typical quotes:

From a logo recipient: *“As soon as we received our logo we began using it, changing everything that carried the old one with it, adding it to other areas. Our logo is our visual definition. It defines us when we're not around to define ourselves, so we put it everywhere we are able ~ labels, signage, social media, pictures, t-shirts, calendars... We made a sign for the T-intersection for our road, and also updated the sign we use for events/farmers markets. We have it as our farm's social media avatars, also. We truly appreciate that we were selected to receive a 2015 logo design. It has been a wonderful addition to our farm business and we love to see it not only at our farm, but around the community, too.”* From another logo recipient: *“The logo has really been a boost for our marketing and visibility in the agricultural community of small scale farming.”* From a press release recipient: *“I really appreciate your commitment and the organization you represent. I feel like I'm not just one small voice anymore. Thanks again and happy farming!”* From a banner design recipient: *“Aly, it turned out really well, have not had a chance to use it yet. I wanted it for our farmers market and some local festivals, I am looking forward to using it next spring.”* From a video recipient: *“I just [previewed] the video Andrew is doing of Dances With Bees. What I saw was just absolutely spectacular as far as I'm concerned... it shows just super great while depicting the Farm to Table value continuum. It really captures my perception and feeling for what I do...throughout.”*

## 8. Budget Summary

- a. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: X (and it was also submitted earlier with our last payment request.)
- b. Did the project generate any income? YES  
A total of \$390 was generated by our design services, and it was used to underwrite the cost of staff time to draft press releases for farmers interested in garnering local media attention.

## 9. Lessons Learned

The timing of outreach to farmers is a significant factor in determining farmers' response to our services, and their ability to participate. Once the growing season begins, it's very difficult to hold their attention for marketing-relating work, since the on-farm production demands will always take priority. The best time to reach out to farmers about most marketing-related tasks is between January and April. This timing made it difficult for some farmers to engage in the logo design work, and in retrospect it would have been

better to have logo designers identified a few months earlier so we could capitalize on the slower season to gain farmers' attention. We found, however, that farmers were quite receptive to our press release services during the growing season.

After the first round of applications for logo design services we discovered that some awardees weren't adequately prepared to work with a logo designer. This resulted in the designer having to develop more drafts than were otherwise necessary. We decided to require applicants to do even more preparation during the application process, before being awarded the service. In particular, they were asked to create a mood board that showed concrete examples of styles and colors they wanted to use for their farm's logo. As a result, they were better able to convey what they wanted, and the designer could more efficiently create a logo that was to their liking.

### **10. Future Work**

We will continue running several of the programs that were started during this performance period.

The design services that we were able to launch with this project will continue, as farmers have found them useful and we're able to cover our staff time while also providing this valuable service at an affordable price.

We also plan to continue writing press releases for our members free of charge, and anticipate that dozens will be created in spring, as we already have a running list of members who are interested in this service once the growing season picks up again. These efforts will generate stories in local papers about farmers and the markets in which they sell, and we hope and expect will direct more traffic to local farmers markets and food producers.

We will continue to use the project website – [StandOutInYourField.org](http://StandOutInYourField.org) – to provide marketing support for farmers. In particular, we'll continue to add Shining Examples of farmers using exemplary marketing practices. We may in the future be able to offer marketing videos to more farmers, in which case we would use this site as a platform for fielding applications and featuring the exemplary videos that we produce.

We will continue to develop our photographers for farmers project, through which we pair farmers with professional photographers. This project is closely related to social media campaign we created, using #CNGgrit to feature the hard work and determination of local farmers.

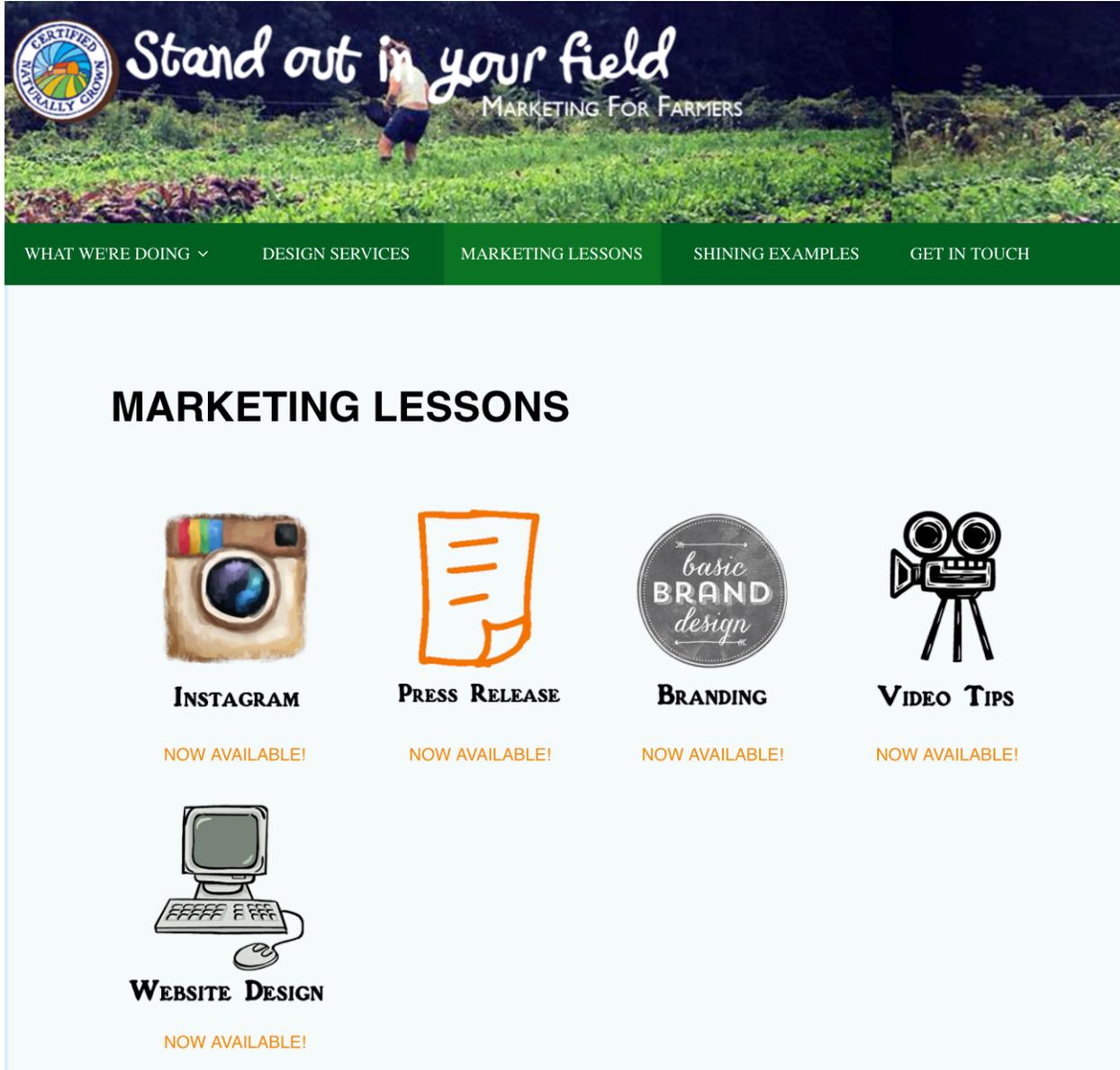
### **Attachments**

Images depicting the work produced during this project, including logos developed, screen shots of marketing lessons, shining examples, and materials promoting our marketing services.

## Attachments

### Resources

Images below of the website, StandOutInYourField.org, with links to marketing lessons.



The image is a screenshot of the website StandOutInYourField.org. At the top, there is a banner with a circular logo on the left that says "CERTIFIED NATURALLY GROWN". The main text in the banner reads "Stand out in your field" in a large, white, cursive font, with "MARKETING FOR FARMERS" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. The background of the banner shows a person working in a field. Below the banner is a green navigation bar with five menu items: "WHAT WE'RE DOING" (with a dropdown arrow), "DESIGN SERVICES", "MARKETING LESSONS" (which is highlighted), "SHINING EXAMPLES", and "GET IN TOUCH".

The main content area is titled "MARKETING LESSONS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below this title are five icons representing different marketing services, each with a title and the text "NOW AVAILABLE!" underneath:

- INSTAGRAM**: Represented by an Instagram camera icon.
- PRESS RELEASE**: Represented by an orange outline icon of a document with three horizontal lines.
- BRANDING**: Represented by a circular logo with the text "basic BRAND design" inside.
- VIDEO TIPS**: Represented by a black and white icon of a video camera on a tripod.
- WEBSITE DESIGN**: Represented by a black and white icon of a computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse.

Images of a couple of our blog posts featuring shining examples of good marketing.

## Telling the Story of Your Team at Moon Dog Farms



Photos of people are naturally very engaging, and the folks at **Moon Dog Farms** know it! Instagram can help you show who is important to you, and in doing so, can help you connect with your followers.

[read more](#)

47 likes

moondogfarms It was so polite for the weather to act like a giant refrigerator for us today. Great day at Coastal Community



posted by **ALY MILLER** / 10cc  
April 02, 2015



COMMENT



SHARE

## Origins Farm: Instagramming the Farming Life



Instagram is quickly becoming the farmer's new favorite tool, connecting them with customers, food-loving strangers, and other like-minded farmers.

[read more](#)



posted by **ALY MILLER** / 10cc  
February 03, 2015



COMMENT



SHARE

# Photographing Your CSA Shares



posted by ALY MILLER / 95cc  
September 20, 2016

Are you sharing photos of your CSA shares every week? It's one of the easiest ways to better educate your CSA members, while effortlessly advertising your CSA. (Photo on right from Tumbleweed Farm @dishingupthedirt)



Here are some tips for capturing the beauty of your produce every week, all season long. Share these photos across all of your social media platforms so that your CSA members and the curious public can find you! Save these photos for later so you can show prospective members what they can look forward to next year.



## Show Your Farm Name and What Week You're On

You've probably been asked a few dozen times how many weeks are left in the CSA. With this simple and elegant trick, everyone will be on the same page.

It's also a good idea to put your farm's name somewhere on the photo. That

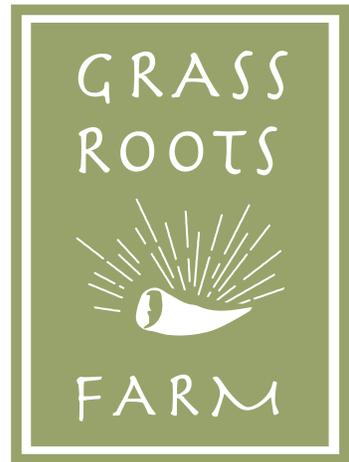
## Early Outreach and Publicity

Below are images of the card (front and back) we used to publicize the project and solicit applications for marketing assistance.



Some of the Logos Developed for Farms







The Silver Maple Farm  
Frankfort, OH



**Nine Mile Farm**



**Nine Mile Farm**



DELMAR, NEW YORK

## Completed Videos

Selection of screenshots from the videos produced during this project

47 Daisies  
Vassalboro, ME





Apple Ridge Farm  
Saylorsburg, PA



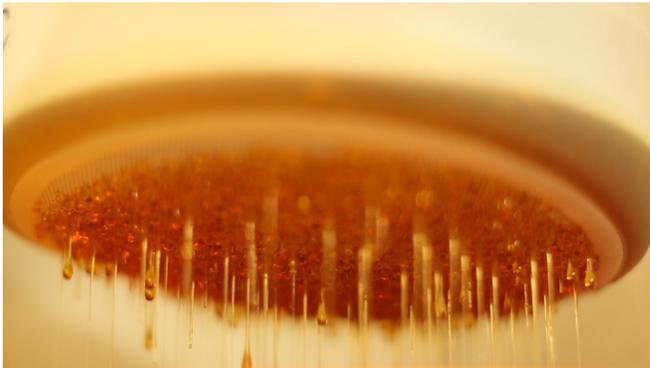
**Working over Thyme Farm  
Brandywine, MD**



**Patchwork Farm  
Copper Hill, VA**



Dances With Bees  
Cornelia, GA



Below are some images of blog posts and a flyer we used to promote our marketing services

## CNG Launches Graphic Design Services

Posted on June 21, 2016



*Strager Creek Heritage Farm at the Merriam Farmer's Market in Merriam, KS*

For years, CNG farmers have been asking us, "*Do you make banners?*" We can tell that it's hard for farmers to find the time to design a banner, and the resources to hire a professional! Finally, last fall we were able to deliver.

With the help of our talented in-house designer, [Aly Miller](#), we are designing customized banners (6'x2') and business cards. We're open to other design projects, too, like postcards and flyers--just let us know!

So far, 5 banners and 3 sets of business cards that CNG has designed are in use at farmer's markets from coast to coast.

We offer several **templates** for both banners and business cards that can be customized to include everything you need: the CNG logo, your farm's logo, your contact info and more! Call or email Aly with the

# The 3-step Path to a Custom Banner or Business Cards

..... brought to you by Certified Naturally Grown

## 1. We design it together

We offer several templates\* for both banners and business cards that can be customized to include everything you need: the CNG logo, your farm's logo, your contact info and more! Call or email Aly with the elements you'd like to include, and we'll send you a draft of what it might look like. When you're ready, place your order in the CNG store. Meanwhile, we'll design the final version and provide a file to you and/or your local printer. A custom design for your banner or business card is just \$30.

\*View templates at [standoutinyourfield.org/design\\_services](http://standoutinyourfield.org/design_services)

## 2. We get it printed

### Banner Options

#### A. Your Local Print Shop (~\$35)

Most print shops typically charge \$30-40 to print a vinyl banner.

#### B. Banners.com (\$30+ shipping)

You can go to their printing services page and select the Large Banner option of 6 ft. x 2 ft. You'll upload your file and the banner will be shipped to you within a week.

C. Have us order the banner for you so that you don't have to upload the files. To help us cover the cost of offering this free service, we ask that you chip in \$10 to the Grow CNG Fund (optional).

### Card Options

#### A. Your Local Print Shop (~\$30 for 100)

We'll send you the file for a double sided business card that your local print shop can use. We use the standard card size of 3.5 in x 2 in.

#### B. Online: Staples.com (starting at \$8.99)

Upload the design file and have the cards sent to you or pick them up at Staples.

#### C. Online: Vistaprint.com (starting at \$18)

Upload the design file and have the cards sent to you.

D. Have us order the cards for you so that you don't have to upload the files. To help us cover the cost of offering this free service, we ask that you chip in \$10 to the Grow CNG Fund (optional).

## 3. You look awesome at the farmer's market

Any questions? Ready to go? Get in touch!  
Please contact:

Aly Miller, Marketing Services Coordinator  
Certified Naturally Grown  
845-687-2058  
[alymiller@naturallygrown.org](mailto:alymiller@naturallygrown.org)

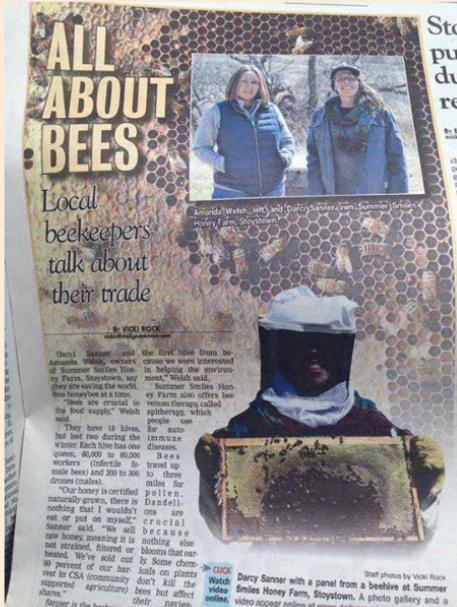


*Stand out in your field.org*  
A project of Certified Naturally Grown



# Press Release Service for CNG Farmers Launched

Posted on August 10, 2016



Earlier this summer, we launched our press release service to help CNG farmers share their stories with the press.

A **press release** is one of the best ways for farmers to share news of their recent certification or upcoming events. Press releases are a "win-win-win" for farmers, CNG, and journalists on the lookout for a good story.

Stories about Certified Naturally Grown farmers are interesting and buzzy, especially now, when so many people are concerned about where their food is coming from and what food labels really mean.

CNG farmers who are interested in this service can email our marketing specialist, Aly Miller, about the story they'd like to tell. This summer, she helped farmers share news of all kinds with the press, covering events like aquaponics workshops and market seasons.

News as straightforward as the beginning of farmers' market seasons, or the fact that you've earned your certification for the sixth year in a row, is newsworthy! The public is eager to know their farmers and local food heroes.

This press release service is one piece of CNG's mission to help small farmers market themselves in an increasingly digital and competitive market space. Other services include banner and business card design, and free-to-download **Marketing Lessons** at our Marketing for Farmers website, [StandOutInYourField.org](http://StandOutInYourField.org).

Email [alymiller@naturallygrown.org](mailto:alymiller@naturallygrown.org) to find out how to take advantage this new service!

# CNG Gets Some Press for Jarhead Farm

Posted on September 29, 2016

Earlier this year, CNG farmer Cliff Porter of Jarhead Farms (right) and our Marketing Services coordinator co-wrote a press release, which was [published on NOW Habersham](#).

This announcement highlights Cliff's till-free farming practices and how he first became interested in farming!

If you're interested in submitting a press release to your local paper, check out our [marketing lesson on Press Releases](#). If you're a CNG farmer who would like assistance in writing a press release, our marketing services coordinator, Aly, is happy to help you out! Write to her at [alymiller@naturallygrown.org](mailto:alymiller@naturallygrown.org).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Person: Cliff Porter, Jarhead Farms 706-244-4105 (cell)  
August 5, 2016

## Jarhead Farm Grows Certified Naturally Grown

Toccoa, GA. Jarhead Farm has entered its second year of farming as a Certified Naturally Grown farm, a certification that helps build the organic movement by including small farms. Jarhead Farm is one of 4 in Stevens County with this designation.

Farm Manager Cliff Porter sought out this national certification to highlight his commitment to promoting clean soil, clean water, and clean food, and to associate with a certification that stays true to the core values of organic farming. He's been sustainably gardening for more than 50 years without chemical herbicides, pesticides or fertilizers--the same principles maintained by the Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) organization of like-minded farmers.



Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) is a certification program for direct market farms using natural practices, and selling in their local communities. The CNG program is the grassroots alternative to certified organic with site visits and inspections by peer farmers.

"I have not used a plow or tiller in the gardens for years," says

# Highlight Hard Work - Use #CNGgrit

Posted on September 28, 2016

CNG has a new initiative that aims to capture the grit, determination, and hard work that's required to succeed at farming. Enough with the pretty landscapes, we want images that depict the real life of a farmer on a daily basis. We'll feature these images on social media with the tag #CNGgrit. Please do the same!



The photos above and below illustrate the kind of images we're going for. These are action shots – farmers at work in the midst of a task, the messier and grittier the better. Heck, they might even be humorous – at least in retrospect!



♥ **lukas.pei**

**cngfarming** Repost from  
**@sweetseasonsfarmvt** Taking it down before  
it's too late! #cnggrit #farming

Glossy farming magazines can make farming look so lovely and easy. Let's fill out the picture a bit, shall we?

Help us tell the story of working farmers and beekeepers. Use the hashtag #CNGgrit whenever you post photos of you and your farm crew hard at work.

We will be looking to share and re-gram your posts!

If you don't use social media, send your photos to [alymiller@naturallygrown.org](mailto:alymiller@naturallygrown.org).

Customers want to connect with the story of their food. Showing images of all the work it takes to produce helps folks appreciate the value of what they're getting from their local CNG farmers!