

2022 Annual Report

Soil Health Academy



Many thanks to August and Katelyn Horstman for providing our cover photo for this year's annual report. The stunning, bucolic image was taken earlier this year at their regenerative farm near Owensville, Missouri. August has attended two SHA schools and here's what he had to say about the impact of those experiences on his farm and his family's future.

"In October 2019, I attended my first Soil Health Academy. The information taught helped take our regenerative farm to the next level. It was at that school that I decided to pursue the direct farm-to-table side of the business. In June of this year, I became self-employed and I'm now living the dream.

"To celebrate, I decided to attend the SHA school in Waverly, Kansas this past August. It was mind blowing how much more information is now available. Understanding Ag and the Soil Health Academy are at the forefront of the regenerative movement and the amount of knowledge and passion the instructors have, has greatly helped our farm business succeed."

- August Horstmann, Horstmann Cattle Company

Table of Contents

Letter from Soil Health Academy President Dawn Breitzkreutz.....	1
Soil Health Academy Numbers at a Glance.....	3
Questions and answers with SHA's co-founder Gabe Brown	6
Survey of SHA graduates.....	9
Application Narratives Underscore Need and Impact of SHA Scholarship Program	13
SHA's 'Buy Regen Foods' Showcases Graduate Families and Products	16
U.S. Army Captain Trailblazes SHA's "Battlefields to Fertile Fields" Program.....	19
My Regenerative Journey with Battlefields to Fertile Fields.....	20
Destination Regeneration: Wells Fargo Provides Funding for Docuseries Pilot	23
A Look Ahead.....	25
Man's Best (Working) Friend	28
Notes From an SHA Scholarship Recipients	27
SHA's Board of Directors	31

Soil Health Academy's Mission

The Soil Health Academy mission is to teach and assist farmers and ranchers in applying time-tested, ecological principles and biomimicry to regenerate our living and life-giving soil. In restoring the health of our soil's ecosystem, we will restore the health of our bodies, our farms, our communities, and our planet.



Letter from the President

Dear Soil Health Academy friends and graduates:

Since its first school five years ago, SHA has been at the forefront of providing practical, on-farm education and support to producers so they can grow healthier soil, profits, food and futures. Transitioning from chemical- and tillage-dependent conventional farming requires farmers and ranchers to possess a significantly higher level of understanding of soil health-improving regenerative farming principles—so knowledge, observation, understanding and problem-solving skills are key to the successful application of regenerative agricultural systems.

SHA's schools have a proven track record of helping producers achieve those key objectives.



We know that because, for the fourth consecutive year, we conducted the annual SHA graduate impact survey to help us assess the bottom-line impact of our schools and to help us identify areas of improvement in our current and future program offerings. I'm happy to say the results of this year's report, which also follow, are as encouraging and impactful as previous years.

This past year saw a return to normal operations for SHA's on-farm schools and workshops—and we delivered eight, three-day schools and two, one-day specialty workshops, which were attended by more than 425 individuals. And thanks to our donors, we were able to award more than 275 scholarships to attend those schools and workshops.

In the pages that follow, you'll find feature articles highlighting some of our major 2022 projects and accomplishments, including the "Shop Regen Foods Farm Family Spotlight" web feature, our new "Battlefields to Fertile Fields" military veterans' regenerative ag program and the filming of the pilot episode for the "Destination Regeneration" docuseries. In addition, SHA co-founder Gabe Brown helped us look back on SHA's first five years of operation and shared his vision for the next five years and beyond.

Thanks to SHA's team and supporters

I'm especially grateful to treasurer Kimberly Barmann and operations manager Dawn Striegel for their on-going support and assistance in helping SHA stay true to our mission and in delivering quality regenerative agricultural education through our schools and support programs.

Thanks also to Understanding Ag's world-class cadre of instructors for their work in delivering practical and profitable regenerative ag education and understanding to farmers and ranchers throughout the country and beyond. Their practical expertise is the reason SHA's schools and workshops remain the world's best.

And I'm especially thankful for the organizations and individuals who recognize the on- and off-farm benefits of improving the health and function of our living and life-giving soil and who support SHA's mission through their generous contributions. Donations from General Mills, Wells Fargo Foundation, the Tundra Glacier Fund, the Tides Foundation, The Delores Barr Weaver Fund and others, along with numerous individual donors have buoyed our scholarship programs and provided much needed support for our day-to-day, non-profit operational activities.



Throughout 2022, SHA's partnership with Understanding Ag's world-class teaching cadre delivered practical and profitable regenerative agricultural education to an expanding base of farmers, ranchers and policy makers-- both in-person and remotely.

In the first five years of operation, producer interest in regenerative agriculture has grown considerably, as has the community of generous individuals, corporations and NGOs who continue to partner with SHA to expand and accelerate our education and farmer-support operations.

In the months and years ahead, we look forward to developing new learning opportunities and expanding SHA school and scholarship programs, as well as expanding our efforts to reach consumers, educators and policy makers through additional outreach and educational platforms in the near- and mid-term—all of which we believe will help drive consumer awareness of, interest in, and demand for regeneratively grown products.

I hope you'll take a few minutes to review the entire report. When you do, I think you'll be as proud of this year's accomplishments as we are. As always, thank you for your continued partnership as we begin the next five years of helping others restore the health of our soil, our bodies, our farms, our communities and our planet.

Sincerely,

Dawn R. Breitkreutz

Dawn Breitkreutz, President
Soil Health Academy





SOIL HEALTH ACADEMY 2022 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE



10

Number of 2022
Soil Health Academy
Schools & Workshops



435

Number of Attendees



297

Total Soil Health Academy
Scholarships Awarded



\$221k

Funded Scholarships



46k

Soil Health Academy
Website Users



14k

Number of Soil Health Academy
YouTube Video Views



110k

Total Facebook Reach





SHA's Five Years of Growing Hope in Healthy Soil

Questions and answers with SHA's co-founder Gabe Brown

It started with a vision to share the hope in healthy soil. On August 22, 2017, the Soil Health Academy (SHA) kicked off its first, three-day, regenerative farming school at soil health pioneer Gabe Brown's ranch near Bismarck, North Dakota.

Founded by Ray Archuleta, David Brandt, Gabe Brown, and Allen Williams, Ph.D., SHA's world-renowned instructors have conducted scores of three-day schools and specialty workshops across the country, teaching thousands of farmers, ranchers and educators from around the globe the transformative power of soil health-improving regenerative agriculture.

To highlight this milestone, we asked co-founder Gabe Brown to share some of his thoughts about the organization's mission, development, growth and changes as it enters the second half of its first decade in operation.

Q: When you and your co-founders came up with the idea of creating the Soil Health Academy, what did you see as the most pressing need(s) to create such an organization

A: As farmers ourselves, we saw that the lack of education as to how ecosystems function was the main reason farmers were not using regenerative practices. One cannot implement what one does not know.

Q: What were your primary goals in creating SHA? What did you want to achieve?

A: Our primary goal was, and still is today, to simply educate anyone and everyone who will listen as to how the six principles of soil health and the three rules of adaptive stewardship drive the four ecosystem processes (the 6-3-4). We understood that once an individual was educated to those, they would prosper.

Q: You and your colleagues are on the road most of the year and have a lot of other "irons in the fire," yet you continue to teach at SHA's schools. Why?

A: As farmers and ranchers ourselves, we have seen firsthand how the implementation of the 6-3-4 has positively affected our lives. Nothing brings us more joy than does teaching others how they too can enjoy those benefits.

Q: In the five years since it was created, how well has SHA done in achieving those goals?

A: We have touched thousands of lives but there are tens of thousands more to touch. The work of SHA is just beginning.

Q: In the five years since it was created, what has changed, either within the organization or among the audience you serve?

A: The first few academies were primarily attended by older, white males, me included. Today, it is just the opposite. Our Academies see a mix of women, young adults, members of our First Nations and many other minorities. It is not at all uncommon for old white males to make up but a small fraction of the attendees at any given Academy.



SHA's first graduate class, August 22, 2017

The Soil Health Academy's four co-founders, David Brandt, Gabe Brown, Allen Williams and Ray Archuleta (pictured here in the front row) are marking SHA's fifth anniversary by holding a three-day regenerative farming/ranching school at the very place where the first school was conducted in 2017—the Brown Ranch near Bismarck, ND. Since its inception, SHA has trained thousands of farmers and ranchers how to build healthier soils, farms, food and futures.

Q: Describe the role of donors in helping SHA carry on and/or expand its mission.

A: I think the importance of the role of our donors is answered by who is now attending the Academies. The donors allow many individuals, including those who are from traditionally underserved groups, to take part.

Q: What are you most proud of in SHA's five-years of operation?

A: I am most proud of the fact that the Soil Health Academy is so inclusive. We encourage anyone and everyone to attend and take part.

Q: What are your aspirations for SHA's next five years?

A: I would like to see considerable expansion in the number of Academies held and the specific areas that are covered in the courses. For example, I see that there would be academies for female and minority landowners, academies for indigenous peoples, academies for gardeners, academies for consumers, the possibilities are endless.

Q: Anything else you'd like to add?

A: I encourage everyone to either attend a Soil Health Academy or help someone else to do so. Everyone can help regenerate the world!









SHA conducts fourth-consecutive graduate impact survey

For the fourth consecutive year, a comprehensive survey of the Soil Health Academy (SHA) graduates was conducted to help the SHA board of directors and faculty further assess the on-the-ground impacts for its graduates transitioning from tillage and chemical-dependent conventional agricultural and grazing practices, to soil health-focused regenerative agricultural practices. By tracking graduate responses over time, SHA's board can more fully determine the on-the-ground impacts of its schools in the operations of its graduates.

In addition, the surveys provide a direct feedback method for SHA graduates to direct curriculum improvement and to pinpoint topics and potential program offerings that would help its current and future graduates more successfully implement regenerative agricultural practices in their respective operations.

Participation overview

More than 130 graduates completed this year's survey, resulting in a margin of error of 8% for the poll. Of the respondents, about half attended an SHA school less than a year ago and only 10% of respondents reported experiencing one or more agronomic problems that they were not able to overcome and/or had a detrimental impact on their respective operations.

The breakdown of acres farmed using regenerative practices were fairly evenly distributed among the regeneratively farmed acre grouping (1-10; 11-50; 51-100; 101-250; 251-500; 500-1000; 1001+) with the largest respondent group representing farmers using regenerative ag practices on more than 1001 acres (23%). Those farming 1-10 acres represented 16% of the respondents.

What we learned

To the opened-end question regarding suggestions for potential programs and services SHA could offer to further advance the regenerative agriculture journey of our attendees, we received 130 amazingly thoughtful and insightful responses, for which we are incredibly grateful. These responses provided a range of suggestions and topics for future webinars, field days, summits, marketing, networking and other educational and support opportunities.

The SHA board will reference these comments in the coming weeks and months to inform its strategic planning and curriculum development.

Responding to the question: "Would you like to see an SHA focused school on any of the following topics? (check all that apply)," the responses were as follows...

Grazing – **58%**

Nutrient management – **58%**

Enterprise stacking – **51%**

Direct marketing – **47%**

Cropping – **43%**

Gardening – **36%**

Other – **14%**

SHA Graduate Impact Survey

On-the-ground impacts experienced

Regarding the observed and measurable impacts regenerative agricultural principles had in their operations to date, this year's survey revealed that more than half of the graduate respondents reported experiencing positive resource and economic gains while transitioning from conventional agricultural practices to regenerative agricultural practices (see infographics below/throughout).

These findings are consistent with previous years' surveys and provide additional evidence that the practical regenerative education provided through SHA's schools is both effective and impactful on individual farms and ranches and translate into significantly improved biodiversity and ecosystem health on the broader landscape. Further, a full quarter of the respondents reported attending a second SHA school in 2022, providing further evidence of the value of SHA's curriculum and support community.

Important note regarding benefits reported

As in previous years, this year's survey results reflected a significant correlation between the duration of practice implementation and resulting benefits. However, because more than half of this year's graduate impact survey respondents attended their first SHA school in 2022, the total impact reported in the following infographics is more weighted heavily to respondents who have yet to implement regenerative farming/ranching practices.

While many graduates experience some degree of financial, input and resource improvements early in their respective regenerative journeys, this year's survey, like previous years' surveys, confirms that those benefits are more widespread and pronounced the longer these regenerative agricultural principles are applied in their respective operations.

HALF REPORT HIGHER PROFITS

COMPARED TO MY OPERATION BEFORE IMPLEMENTING REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRINCIPLES, MY PER-ACRE NET PROFITS IN 2022 WERE:



TWO-THIRDS REPORT LOWER SYNTHETIC FERTILIZER USE

SINCE I BEGAN IMPLEMENTING REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRINCIPLES IN MY OPERATION, MY USE OF SYNTHETIC (CHEMICAL) FERTILIZERS HAS:



A QUARTER REPORT LOWER PESTICIDE USE BY 30%

SINCE I BEGAN IMPLEMENTING REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRINCIPLES IN MY OPERATION MY USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES HAS:



ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF REPORT INCREASED WATER INFILTRATION

SINCE I BEGAN IMPLEMENTING REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRINCIPLES IN MY OPERATION WATER INFILTRATION IN MY SOIL HAS:





“Without the scholarship opportunity I would not have been able to attend a SHA. It was an awesome opportunity that made me question the way I run my operation. It also gave me a wealth of knowledge that I will be able to bring back and share with the students in my classroom.”

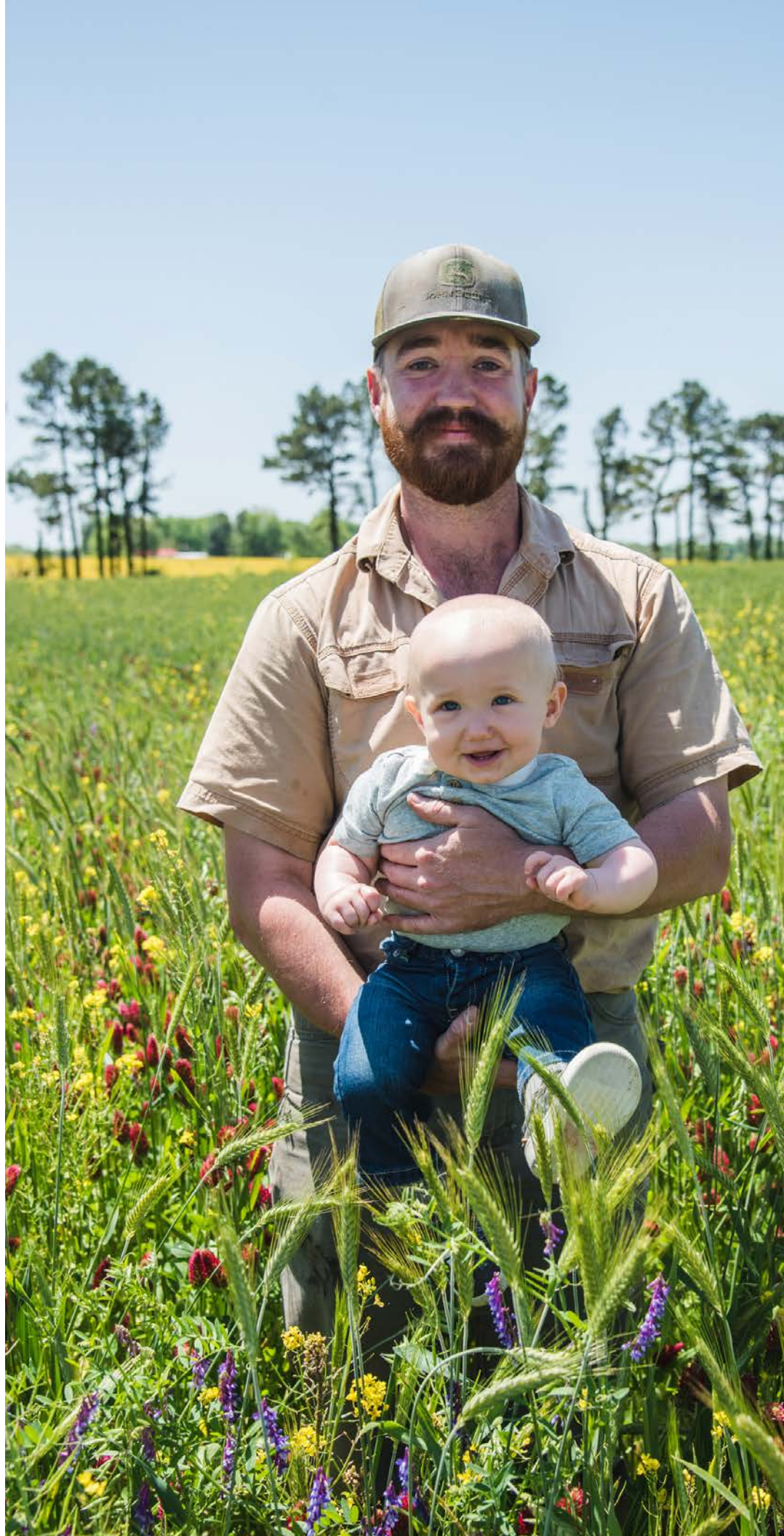
— James Matthew Craighead
Clay County H.S. Agriculture Teacher

Matthew Craighead's daughter, Ember, (pictured here) is one of her father's best regenerative farming helpers.



“I have been questioned by many friends about the new practices we are trying. My hope is to encourage others to try these as well. But first we have to learn from others and become comfortable with new practices. I would like to be a leader in regenerative ag for my community.”

— Derek Giffin
Union City, TN



***Derek Giffin, holding his son
Everett in a field of cover crops.***



Application Narratives Underscore Need and Impact of SHA Scholarship Program

By SHA President, Dawn Breitreutz

One of the most humbling and inspirational aspects of my role as SHA president is working with my fellow board members to review SHA school scholarship applications. Last year, we received over 350 scholarship applications and thanks to the generosity of our donors, we were able to fund 277 scholarships for a total of \$221,000.

As part of the application process, we ask applicants to explain to us their vision of regenerative agriculture, why it is important, and how we can contribute to that vision. We also ask them what financial impact a scholarship would have in their ability to attend.

The resulting narratives provide remarkable insights into the lives, goals, and aspirations of each of the applicants. As I read these narratives, I am inspired by the spirit and tenacity of the applicants who are seeking to grow healthier soils, farms, food, and futures. Their stories and dreams are why I, and my fellow SHA partners, are so dedicated to our mission.

Usually, the scholarship applications submitted are seen only by the SHA board, but I believe sharing some of the narratives that accompany the applications will help you better understand how your support is having an impact in the lives and futures of our next generation of regenerative farmers and ranchers. Having obtained permission to publish from the applicants featured, following are two examples that underscore why and how SHA's scholarship programs are so vital—and how your support of the scholarship program empowers the regenerative journeys of so many.

Derek Giffin, Union City, Tennessee

Not all applicants are new to their regenerative agriculture journeys. Derek Giffin, along with his dad, cousin, and wife, farm near Union City, Tennessee. They previously adopted no-till, cover crops, and livestock into their operation and this year, included planting row crops into green cover crops and then terminating the covers by rolling them down. New practices in any agriculture community cause talk in surrounding areas, which can provide regenerative educational opportunities for those who are willing to share what they've learned with their fellow farmers and ranchers. As Derek wrote in his application, "I have been questioned by many friends about the new practices we are trying. My hope is to encourage others to try these as well. But first we have to learn from others and become comfortable with new practices. I would like to be a leader in regenerative ag for my community."

One of the most touching changes I see in those who adopt regenerative agriculture is the realization that a person feels obligated to share and help others on their journeys. That is why I chose to become a board member for SHA—it is a significant way for me to help.

The desire to improve the financial health of family farms is a significant driver for those wanting to transition from conventional to regenerative agriculture. "The input prices are out of our control but with regenerative practices, I believe we will have the ability to reduce our dependence on synthetic fertilizers and chemicals," Derek wrote.

When farmers learn why and how the soil is being depleted with conventional farming and ranching practices, we soon realize the imperative to start healing the land for our future generations. In conclusion, Derek writes, "Our most important goal is to create a farming operation that my children are excited to come back to," he wrote.

Need and Impact of SHA Scholarship Program (continued)

“We hope to give them the opportunity to live and work in a place that is healthy, financially sound, and that they understand the environmental impact of what we do. We hope to give them the tools they need to create a life they love, and we know regenerative agriculture will play a major part in the generational aspect of our farming operation.”

Josh Swope, Needmore, Pennsylvania

Part of my personal journey on the path to regeneration involves my faith. I was aware of the Bible stories of the Garden of Eden, but until I became a farmer and partner with Grant on Stoney Creek Farm I never truly tried to imagine what that garden must have looked like. Now, as I observe all the changes on our farm, I can only imagine a glimpse of that perfect garden.

Josh Swope, of Needmore, Pennsylvania, wrote a very poignant paragraph in his scholarship application regarding this topic. Josh is a dairy farmer who had to quit college to keep the farm going and he lives on land that has been owned by his family since the 1700's. Here's how Josh described his vision of regeneration: “I believe that we were created to tend a garden and the earth was our gift. However, from one generation to the next we've selfishly depreciated what God intended for us to build on. Now, modern man has arrogantly sought to conquer and manipulate our ecosystem for pride and power. I believe that regenerative agriculture is one component of a larger whole that wakes humanity up and restores what's good, true, and honorable. If we show that we can heal the planet and provide wholesome food more abundantly, and provide clean air, clean water, and restore unimaginable diversity of species, then maybe we have a shot at healing all the wounds of civilization. To put it simply, I love the world our creator made, and I see His hand everywhere.”

Saving lives, farms and futures

Josh puts into words so eloquently what I, too, feel deep in my soul when he writes, “I feel to my core that this is what I was put on this planet to do, my calling. This is the right way and the only way forward and I'll fight for it until the earth regenerates my flesh.”

I have had the privilege of attending quite a few three-day academies, and I cannot adequately express how moved I have been by the gratitude of scholarship recipients. I have been told that these classes have saved their lives and their farms, and they wouldn't have been able to attend without scholarship funding. Josh Swope wrote, “The price (for the SHA) is a very big obstacle and I'll have to ring some blood from a turnip, but I plan on coming if there's a space available.”

So, from the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of the board of directors, I humbly thank you all for your generous donations. As you can tell from just these two examples, your donations are making a real and lasting positive impact on the land and in the lives and futures of many farmers and ranchers who are successfully putting regenerative principles into practice—thanks to you.

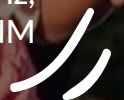




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After seeing the results of several years of no-till and cover crops on my land, now my custom-hire farmer is asking me questions about no-till and cover crops and soil health. He is slowly becoming a believer. This is how change will happen, by example.”

— Jovani Armendariz,
McAlister, NM



SHA's 'Buy Regen Foods' Showcases Graduate Families and Products

New this year is the "Farm Family Spotlight" promotional feature on the "Shop Regen Foods" section of SHA's website, highlighting the farm families of SHA graduates who market their regeneratively grown foods.

The objective of this web feature is to introduce these farm family graduates to our website visitors, drive more traffic to our graduates' sites and to help other SHA graduates discover the direct-to-consumer marketing techniques used by these featured graduates.



The "Farm Family Spotlight" features a full family photo with the graphic on our [homepage](#) and a link to the [subpage](#). The subpage contains additional images and a brief overview of the farming operation, its regenerative products and provides a direct link to the featured farm's website. The feature concludes with a testimonial quote from the family's SHA graduate, describing the impact of his/her regenerative education on the farming operation.

Below are the first four families featured.



From left to right, Gary, Karen, Katlyn, Taylor and Daniel Scalf. Daniel is in 10th grade and living at home; Katlyn attends ECU in Greenville, NC; and recently engaged Taylor is nurse in Raleigh NC.




Meet Keegan and Callie Knobloch (with son, Cort).



Dan and Hattie Sanderson (center) with their son Trent, his wife Libby and their children Owen, Jack and Lane (at right); and daughter Rosie, her husband Corey and their children Violet and Calvin (at left).



Holly and John Arbuckle, Singing Pastures Farm, Midcoast, Maine.



“Thank you very much for your scholarship to attend the Soil Health Academy. The 3-days spent in Uniontown, Alabama were both thought-provoking and inspirational! It proved that Organic Regenerative Agriculture was not just possible but scalable and replicable. I left with implementation strategies and redesigned my entire grazing system to improve the health and well-being of my multispecies herd while also improving my bottom line. Please continue to support this organization as I would not have been able to attend without the financial assistance.”

—Donna Isaacs
Eros, LA







U.S. Army Captain Trailblazes SHA's "Battlefields to Fertile Fields" Program

It started with a thank you note to each of the Soil Health Academy's instructors from U.S. Army Captain Gil De Leon, a 17-year veteran who served multiple tours as a combat arms officer in Afghanistan and Iraq with the 82nd Airborne Division and Security Force Assistance Brigade.

Moved by the heartfelt gesture, SHA followed up with Gil and crafted a story about his desire to become a regenerative farmer upon his transition from active to reserve duty. After the story was published, SHA's board of directors, instructors, and network of regenerative farmer/ranchers recognized the need and opportunity to educate and empower military veterans to find rewarding second careers as regenerative farmers and ranchers. Shortly thereafter, with Gil's assistance, SHA created "Battlefields to Fertile Fields" (BF2FF).



The BF2FF program's purpose is to provide learning and training opportunities for active-duty veterans transitioning out of service, as well as previously discharged veterans who have a desire to enter the field of regenerative agriculture—with the goal of preparing these veterans to own and operate their own regenerative agricultural operations.

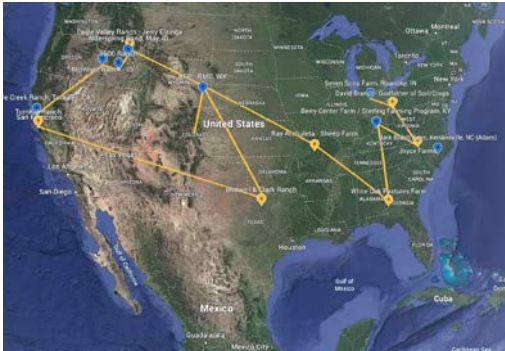
"It was Gil's commitment, can-do spirit, tenacity and vision that prompted SHA to create a program that will help military veterans prepare for a second-chapter of service in regenerative agriculture," said SHA President Dawn Breitreutz, herself a U.S. Air Force veteran. "Gil was the trail-blazing, first veteran to participate in the program and his perseverance was admirable."

During the coming year, Breitreutz said SHA will also be learning from and working with other veterans' organizations to explore and develop Battlefields to Fertile Fields to best meet the needs of U.S. military veterans.

"We're grateful for all the people, host farms, and organizations who are working collaboratively with us to develop a program that offers such hope and opportunity for regenerative agriculture and our military veterans," she said.

A Regenerative Journey with Battlefields to Fertile Fields

Capt. Gil De Leon's regenerative learning journey began at Seven Sons Farm, which is owned and operated by the Hitzfield family. Brothers Blake and Blaine Hitzfield provided Gil with their insights regarding the basics of managing a successful regenerative farming business. As Blaine so artfully explained to Gil, "Healthy soil is a self-managing system. A business is not."



At the heart of the Seven Sons business model is the philosophy that healthy soil is a self-managing system if appropriately managed with rest, animal impact and diversity. Gil's work there included executing daily livestock chores, assisting with maintenance and packaging grass-fed meats, eggs, and merchandising—and even included an invitation to participate in their weekly battle rhythm events/meetings, which provided important insight into how

Seven Sons successfully directs, manages, sustains, and leads their regenerative operations—all of which is based on the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) business model guides.

The road to healthy soil

Throughout his 11-farm, 14,000-mile regenerative learning journey, Gil says he realized that each farm/ranch he visited was managed and operated differently—and that there is no one "best" answer or approach when it comes to success. He observed that at the heart of every operation, no matter the type or location, was the recognition that microbial life plays a significant role in the food web and in nutrient cycling. "As Will Harris from White Oaks Pasture in Bluffton, Georgia, says, 'Healthy soil and the land above it is teeming with life,'" Gil recounted.

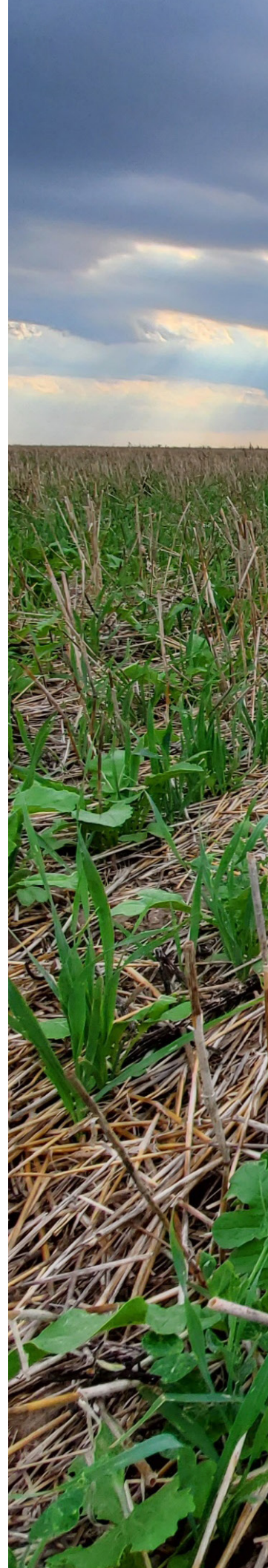
Gil says he learned that managing by stacking several protein species regeneratively is not just science but it's also an art, with Will constantly emphasizing that although science plays a role, good regenerative management is "art and observation combined," which facilitates decision-making for regenerative management—in contrast to conventional prescriptive management.

This art and science, combined with changing how we see things, can ignite the microbial life in the soil—a theme that was echoed throughout Gil's three-month trek by regenerative farming pioneers David Brandt in Ohio, Adam Grady at Dark Branch Farm in North Carolina, Ray Archuleta in Missouri, and the managers at Birdwell and Clark Ranch in Texas, and the Ted Turner Ranches—plus Brad McIntire, Annalyn Lavey and Jerry Elzinga.

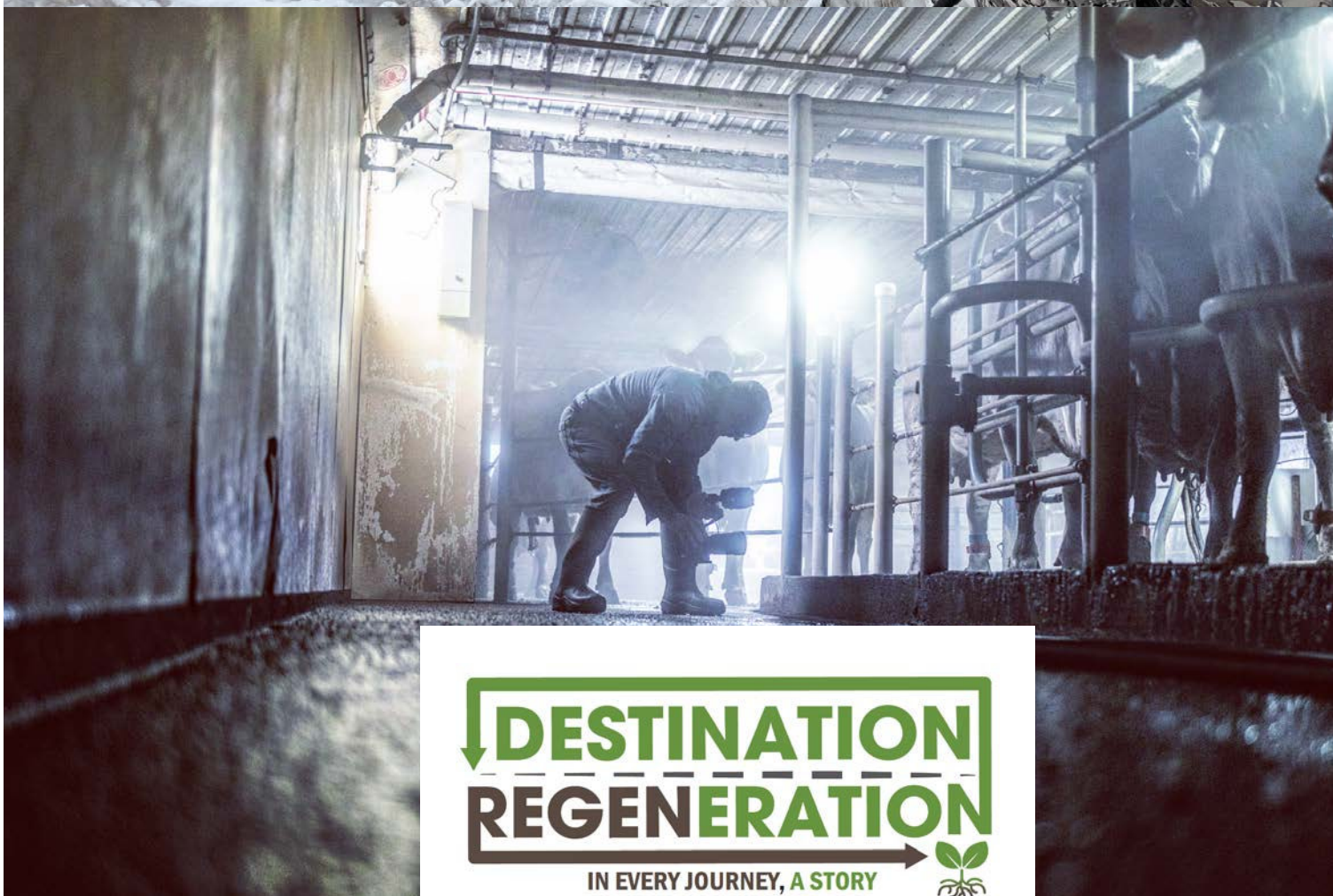
Each farm or ranch visit began with Gil rolling up up sleeves, driving tractors, mending fences, welding, repairing water troughs and vehicles, and moving and feeding livestock—all of which he describes as "enjoyable and therapeutic parts of the journey."

By listening to podcasts and viewing webinars and YouTube videos during his long drives from one destination to the next, Gil was able to enhance his regenerative education along the way. Coupled with check-in calls from board members of the Soil Health Academy and Allen Williams, Ph.D., his learning experience was as comprehensive as it was unique.

In 2023 SHA will further develop and refine its BF2FF program to help ensure farming success for other veterans as they begin their respective regenerative farming/ranching operations.







**DESTINATION
REGENERATION**
IN EVERY JOURNEY, A STORY



Destination Regeneration: Wells Fargo Provides Funding for Docuseries Pilot

In last year's annual report, the Soil Health Academy outlined several organizational goals for 2022, including "Seeking funding to develop a new Soil Health Academy broadcast video documentary series to educate consumers, policy makers and others on the importance of healthy soils, healthy plants, healthy animals, healthy people and a healthy climate."

Thanks to a recent grant from Wells Fargo Foundation, SHA is working with the Emmy-nominated production team of Joe Dickie, Forrest Fox, Lynn Betts and Ron Nichols to produce a pilot episode/prototype for the proposed series titled Destination Regeneration.

Destination Regeneration will feature compelling human interest stories of producers and their families (many of whom are SHA graduates) on their respective journeys of regeneration. Along the way, viewers will be introduced to local communities, restaurateurs, health experts and others who are all interconnected with the soil health and the regenerative farming movement.

Nichols, who is serving as SHA's executive producer for the pilot episode, said the purpose of the series is to highlight the wide-ranging benefits and opportunities regenerative agriculture offers through the compelling stories of the farm families who are growing regeneratively. It will also examine the real-life challenges producers face as they transition from conventional to regenerative farming practices.

"Several feature-length, 'one-and-done' documentaries have been made on the subject of soil health and regenerative agriculture, but we believe Destination Regeneration has the potential to explore a much broader range of important health, nutrition, biodiversity, community and lifestyle issues connected to the way we grow our food," Nichols said. "Through a non-scripted, documentary-style approach, we believe we can attract many viewers who might not otherwise be attracted to the subject of soil health and regenerative agriculture—and keep them tuning back in to follow the farm families and their stories, episode after episode."

Nichols said Destination Regeneration's pilot episode is designed to give programming directors at streaming platforms and broadcast outlets a glimpse of the docuseries' entertainment value, setting the stage for the potential funding of a 10-episode series season. "Our objective is to tell stories about people, food and hope first—and then through each story, connect the soil-health dots for the viewing audience," he said.

Though created as a "sample" episode/prototype for pitching the series to major streaming services, the pilot episode will also serve as a "stand-alone" educational piece, providing inspiration and insight into the regenerative agriculture movement and, by association, highlight SHA's role in advancing that cause through its schools and programs.

You can follow the Destination Regeneration production team's travels and get behind-the-scene sneak peeks into the making of the pilot on Facebook (Destination Regeneration), Twitter (@DestNRegen), TikTok and Instagram (@destinationregeneration).

Destination Regeneration's pilot is expected to be released in the early spring of 2023.



SHA graduate Roy Thompson and his wife, Meredith, of Akaska, South Dakota share their remarkable story of health and farming regeneration with the production team of Destination Regeneration for the series' pilot episode.



”

My journey in the last few years through agriculture has been a healing and empowering one that I cannot only feed my family with, but also serve my community, and be a good steward of the land. I have always dreamed of farming, and I know now that this is not just where I need to be but also where I truly want to be. I want to ensure my crops and animals are healthy and well nourished and healthy soil is the first link to both. By learning how to responsibly, and sustainably farm I will be able to make a positive impact on my little piece of the earth, I can then lead by doing, and finally share with others how they can also make a difference.”

— Shanah LeFeat
Salem, AL

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A Look Ahead

The past year featured a return-to-normal operations for SHA, which allowed us to conduct eight, three-day schools and two specialty workshops. As in 2021, our primary objective was providing the educational foundation for the landscape-scale expansion of regenerative agriculture to help ensure our food security, increase the nutrient density of our food, make our farms and ranches more resilient to climate change and restore the carbon cycle.

Reviewing the SHA Graduate Impact Survey responses, and hearing back from countless SHA graduates, we see clear evidence that we're seeing continued success in achieving that objective. We are sincerely grateful to the businesses, foundations, organizations and individuals who have supported and enabled that effort.

In closing out our annual report, we value the opportunity to look ahead, to establish goals and objectives that will further SHA's mission, which will ultimately regenerate our soil, food, farms, ranches and futures.

As the SHA board considered the needs, opportunities and organizational goals in the year ahead, we also looked back to see how effective we've been in reaching the goals established in previous years. In short, we have a better-than 90 percent success rate in meeting our previous goals. With that in mind, we approached this year's "A Look Ahead" with a robust, but achievable goal-setting philosophy. Following are our primary goals and objectives for 2023 (and possibly beyond).

Goals 2023

#1 Provide educational and technical assistance to help conventional agriculture farmers and ranchers convert an additional 10 million acres of farmland and rangeland to regenerative agriculture.

Like last year, SHA's goal for 2023 is to help farmers and ranchers convert 10 million acres of conventionally farmed land to regeneratively farmed and/or ranched land. Achieving this ambitious goal will help grow the total number of farmland and rangeland acres affected by our combined education efforts to more than 50 million.

#2 Refine and expand the "Battlefields to Fertile Fields" veterans' transition program.

As you read in this report's Battlefields to Fertile Fields article, SHA has begun developing the BF2FF program to provide learning and training opportunities for active-duty veterans transitioning out of service, as well as previously discharged veterans who have a desire to enter the field of regenerative agriculture—with the goal of preparing these veterans to own and operate their own regenerative agricultural operations.

To provide foundational regenerative education, the program will also award veterans with scholarships to SHA's world-renowned, three-day on-farm schools. The program's learning content will be adapted as needed to comply with respective service branch transitioning programs (including the DoD SkillBridge Program), and the individual training needs of discharged veterans—all of which will help participants prepare for successful careers in regenerative farming, ranching or associated fields. SHA has developed a web page that provides additional details on veteran' regenerative training options and opportunities.

SHA has set a 2023 Skillbridge fundraising goal of \$125,000, the funding for which will provide support for one to three veterans, as well as cover the associated program development, administrative and coordination costs.

#3 Increase educational opportunities for historically disadvantaged and underserved tribes, groups and individuals.

Another important SHA 2022 goal was to significantly increase the number of scholarships offered to historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers. Thanks to the generous support of General Mills, Wells Fargo Foundation, the Tundra Glacier Fund, the Tides Foundation, the Sarah and Daniel Rueven Foundation and numerous individual donors, SHA achieved that goal, awarding \$225,000 in scholarships to 83 historically underrepresented individuals, 25 U.S. military veterans and 143 women in 2022. To offer even more opportunities for these groups, SHA has set a fundraising goal of \$300,000 for 2023.

Goals 2023 (continued)

#4 Expand SHA's NextGen|Regen program and create Regenerative Ag Educators' and Regen Ag Leaders' programs

SHA believes it is especially important to introduce future farmers to new ideas, principles and practices BEFORE more conventional farming methods become personalized and entrenched in their respective farming operations. In other words, engaging, educating and motivating young or soon-to-be farmers can disrupt the supply chain of "conventional agriculturalists" who rely on practices that focus on tillage and synthetic inputs rather than regenerative agricultural practices like no-till, cover crops and diverse species and rotations. Consequently, SHA seeks to expand its NextGen|Regen program to include Regenerative Ag Educators' and Regen Ag Leaders' programs to offer scholarships and other regenerative educational support to qualifying educators and future regenerative ag leaders.

SHA has set a 2023 fundraising goal of \$125,000 the funding for which will provide support for approximately 30 veterans, as well as cover the associated program development, administrative and coordination costs.

#5 Showcase "Destination Regeneration" docuseries pilot and secure funding for 10-episode season for streaming/broadcasting.

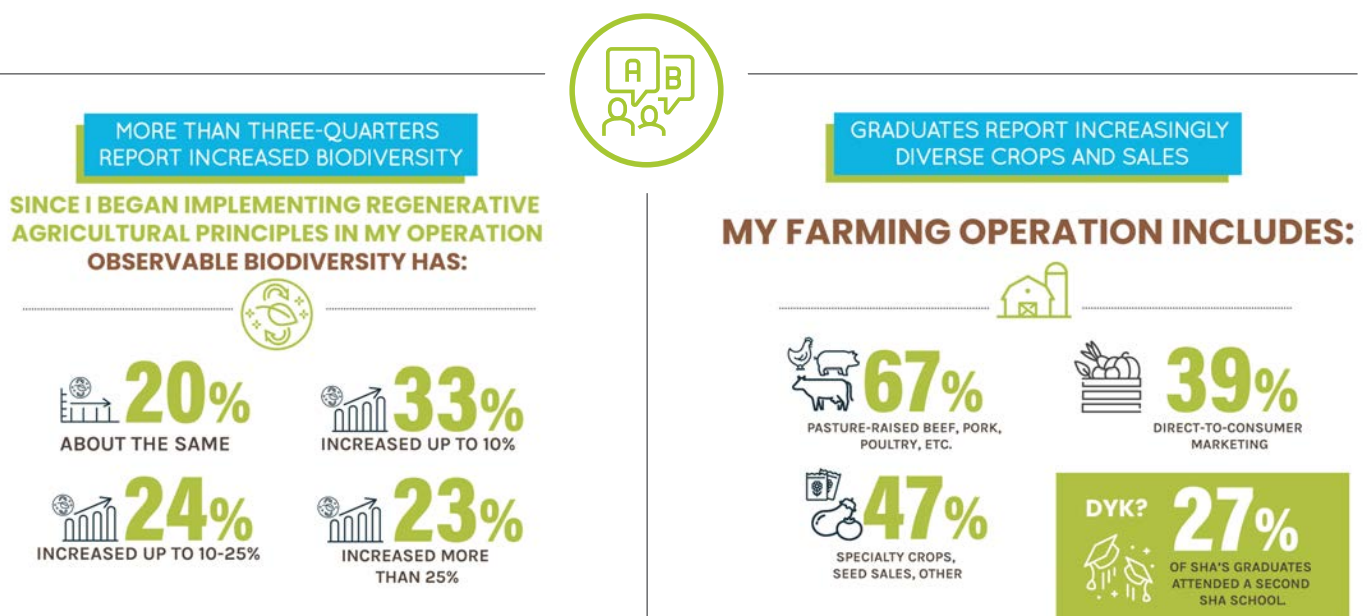
Destination Regeneration's regenerative docuseries pilot episode is designed to give programming directors at streaming platforms and broadcast outlets a glimpse of the docuseries' entertainment value, setting the stage for the potential funding of a 10-episode series season. As outlined in a previous article, the pilot episode will serve as a "sample" episode/prototype for pitching the series to major streaming services or broadcast outlets. SHA's goal is to secure funding, either through a streaming platform or from a donor, for the entire 10-episode season.

#6 Publish 10 regenerative farming/ranching case studies

Case studies detailing the history, economics and production activities of specific agricultural enterprises that have transitioned from input-intensive conventional ag practices to low-input regenerative ag practices are extremely helpful to those producers considering a similar transition. Ten detailed reports, funded by the Wells Fargo Foundation in 2022, are in the final stages of development and are expected to be published in 2023.

Because of you...

We're proud of and thankful for our generous donor community whose contributions have made our previous years' regenerative goals a reality. We look forward to our continued partnership and support as we endeavor to make our important 2023 goals a reality, too.



A Note From an SHA Scholarship Recipient

Dear Soil Health Academy,

I want to send a heartfelt thank you to you and your donors for providing me with the scholarship that allowed me to attend the workshop in Cimarron, NM. It was both incredibly educational and inspirational, I left filled with enthusiasm to put everything I learned into practice.

Since the workshop, we've planted our first cover crop into a field that only had about 10% coverage (maybe less in places!) and when we felt bad about the amount of coverage that came up, the monthly call for alumni answered our questions about what happened and reminded us that even with spotty growth, we've doubled the coverage and to keep going. I've reworked our grazing plan to allow for more rest time between grazes and now actually have a plan for dealing with early spring/late fall grazing – that's a huge improvement for us.

There were so many small tidbits that came up during the workshop that have already started to improve our lives. Based on the Brix values, we've changed the time of day we move our cows and when we cut our hay. We've also improved how we set up our paddocks to make them a little easier. They are such simple things that have such a big impact. The number of changes we've started to implement since the workshop is quite amazing.

We ranch in a very arid climate with changing rainfall patterns and need to increase our water infiltration rates. Attending a workshop focused on arid lands by people who understand was huge. We now have a plan for monitoring annual changes in the infiltration rates and soil testing. Its important to me that we document the changes so that we talk with others about what we're doing, we can back up the changes we've made with actual numbers showing the improvement. We've also started testing the Brix values in our forage, which we didn't know anything about prior to the workshop.

It was very inspirational and humbling to see the improvements others have made in arid climates without irrigation. It opened my eyes and mind to the potential we have to make improvements on land that we've not been utilizing, which has caused it to rest for far too long. Learning about the specific needs of arid climates was critical to our future success, as was the emphasis to focus on improving our best areas first for the fastest impact.

Again, thank you so much for this amazing opportunity.

Regards,
Laura Velasquez



Man's Best (Working) Friend



Thriving regenerative farms with stacked enterprises are job creators for people in the local community. Some of those jobs, however, are best performed by “Man’s best friend,” as August Horstman of Horstman Cattle Co. in Owensville, Missouri recently reminded us...

“We finally bought two, partially trained livestock guardian dogs (pups). We had one several years ago that ate more chickens than he saved and left us wondering. These came from northern Washington on a farm like ours that has laying hens on pasture. We named the dogs John and Wayne.

“This was Wayne’s first night off his tether. John is still on his tether until we get this system down and then we will probably alternate them. We did not lock up the chickens last night and left it up to the dogs to protect them. It felt strange, a little worrisome, and a lot hopeful for the freedom to not have that task EVERY single night of the year. This morning, we haven’t found any losses, so here’s hoping the livestock guardians will be a huge help.”

- August Horstmann, Horstmann Cattle Co.,
Owensville, MO



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Thanks to the Soil Health Academy, our family has a renewed hope for agriculture and the profitability of our farms. We now closely watch the plants and animals on our land and have ran the Haney and PLFA tests in each of our fields. We have worked with our renters to seed cereal rye, triticale, and winter wheat in a few of our fields and resolve to never use tillage equipment again.”

—Jason Wisniewski,
Ivanhoe, MN

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A Note From an SHA Scholarship Recipient

Dawn,

Many thanks to you and the Soil Health Academy for the scholarship support to attend the May soil health school hosted at the CS Ranch in Cimarron. In the end, with much inspiration from Gabe's reflections in *Dirt to Soil*, I have decided to personally pay, retroactively, for the course once I have saved up enough funds. My hope would be that it could provide a similar opportunity for someone else, preferably another educator.

The course was valuable to me not only for my educational outreach work at this soil and water conservation district, but also as a small-scale grass and sheep farmer. By paying for the course, I feel a greater personal investment to my land and livestock work. And this work helps me also be a more effective educator. But receiving the scholarship initially motivated me to take the time off of work to attend the course and the necessary time to save funds to pay for it.

Since the three-day Academy course, I have led five public soil health demonstrations utilizing methods and concepts learned from Ray, Gabe, Alejandro, Shane and Fernando. Next week I begin my 2022-23 classroom visits throughout Taos County where I will aim to reach over 1000 K-12 students, teachers, parents, and ag producers with soil health science and demonstrations. I also was able to share many local anecdotes from other farmers and ranchers that attended the course and shared their stories.

Most recently, I was able to join a local team in presenting to New Mexico and US lawmakers on the importance of animals, especially managed livestock, in soil and watershed health. Ecologically, I understand mismanaged or under-managed herds can cause ecological harm. I believe that agricultural producers in Northern New Mexico can rise to the occasion to adopt better grazing practices to enhance soil, water, and plant resources with their ruminant herds.

Two US Senators from New Mexico, Ben Ray Lujan and Martin Heinrich, had field representatives join our local soil health team on a recent field tour. During my time with these folks, they shared an interest in learning more from soil health leaders (all the trainers at the Soil Health Academy) about ways to improve federal programming.

Many thanks,

David Gilroy
Taos, New Mexico



SHA's Board of Directors



Dawn Breitzkreutz, President

Dawn, along with her husband Grant, run Stoney Creek Farm along the bluff of the Minnesota River near Redwood Falls, MN. Over the past 21 years they have converted a conventional crop and cow/calf operation into a multi-enterprise regenerative family business. They run at least a three-crop rotation, with cover crops incorporated whenever and where ever possible in their 100% no-till cropping system. They use managed, adaptive grazing throughout their pasture systems and their farm fields. Their overall goal is to heal the land, create a successful and enjoyable multi-generational family business, and ensure that future generations have a beautiful legacy to carry on. They strive to help educate others about regenerative agriculture through on-farm tours and classes. Dawn is a U.S. Air Force veteran.



Kim Barmann, Treasurer

One of six siblings raised on the CS Ranch located in northeastern New Mexico, Kim is part of a family owned and operated ranch that spans five generations. The main business is beef cattle and the CS also raises quality Quarter Horses. In 1982 Kim began managing the south end of the ranch. A desire to improve the drought-prone prairie ecosystem led her to the study and implementation of Holistic Management and the fascinating promise of regenerative agriculture. To this day Kim is a long-time soil health champion who is dedicated to bringing pioneers/advocates of regenerative agriculture principles to New Mexico. After a decade away from the ranch, Kim returned to her roots in 2017. She is excited to continue her passion of regenerative agriculture practices, which she believes is a must to sustain the CS legacy and surrounding rural communities.

For More Information

Dawn Striegel, Director of Operations, (256) 996-8742
soilhealthacademy.org

THREE SHA CLASS PHOTOS FROM 2022



BDA Farms, Unionville, Alabama



Chico State University, Chico, California



Brown Ranch, Bismarck, North Dakota



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