

2019 Farm Report to IYMC

Dear Friends,

In 2013 we took out of production some highly erosive land on the farm and in November 2015 the Advanced Biology class planted it into a forb-heavy prairie mix called Pollinator-Palooza. Four years in, it is now one of the highlights on the farm. This took patience and perhaps something parental. As Gillie was growing, I remember thinking that every stage of her life was pretty great, though every subsequent stage was even greater. Sitting: great; crawling: greater; signing simple desires: even greater (fast forward through many wonderful stages); talking about life and Scattergood and the world: even greater. Similarly, each stage of the restored prairie seems wonderful, only to be outdone the next year. Year one: a lot of mowing, but no eroding--good enough. Year 2: less mowing plus a few blossoms— even better. Year 3 (the yellow phase): much less mowing and many blossoms—great. Year 4: very little mowing and so much diversity in color and bloom times and textures—absolutely incredible. I consider the prairie as it is now and am awed.

Here is what else was pretty great on the Scattergood Farm this past year.

We began our farm experiences during Student Orientation, with Farm Fun Day, an afternoon of work, play, eating, and worship. In September we completed our second year of Farm Term, with all of the students spending their mornings at the Farm pursuing academic classes in Immigration and Agriculture, Enterprise Budgets, Soil, or Construction. The students learned, played, harvested, created goofy skits in Spanish, and ate a lot of pears, popcorn and watermelon. Nine students also signed up for Donkey PE class, in which we trained our donkeys to obey voice commands and led them around the Farm. In the spring, with grants from Friends Council on Education and the Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation, we offered a class on beekeeping and now have two hives refurbished and re-queened.

The Farm continues to value relationships with others and has welcomed students from Willowwind school in Iowa City as well as Taproot Nature Experience and Outdoor Adventures Camp. With the FGC Gathering happening in Grinnell this year, we supplied food to their co-op kitchen and presented on sustainability efforts at Scattergood. We are beginning a relationship with Prairie Farm Corps in Grayslake, IL. We continue to work closely with Practical Farmers of Iowa, providing childcare for their Annual Conference, administering two field trials, hosting their grazing workshop and this coming September, will host a field day featuring our prairie restoration work. Some of this work has been done with technical and financial assistance from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and a Luther College biology class has conducted preliminary beetle population counts. We also continue to work with Field to Family, Iowa Farmer's Union, Iowa Organic Association and others.

This work is made possible by Ben Bowman, our livestock manager, Jenny George, our beekeeper and summer help, Dana Foster, Farm Term organizer, all of the teachers who seek opportunities to integrate the farm into their classes, the Farm Subcommittee of the School Committee and of course our cooks, Irving Treadway and Karen Huff who always find ways to make delicious what we grow.

As many of you have witnessed the evolution of Scattergood and as we all bear witness to various changes happening all around us, let's appreciate what is great and prepare for it to be even greater.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark Quee, Farm Manager