# THE HUDSON VALLEY FARM COOP COMMITTEE REPORT: UPDATE AND CALL FOR NEW MEMBERS

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*By Jonathan Farber*

The Park Slope Food Coop Hudson Valley Farm Coop Committee is recruiting new members. This is an exciting venture and an opportunity to join a diverse team creating positive change in our food and farming systems. Committee members receive PSFC shift credits for their work. Agriculture and food-related business experience are not required to join.

The Coop voted at the April 2021 General Meeting to become the original sponsor of this new and separate cooperative business. Our website is under development at hvfarmcoop.com. PSFC members interested in joining the committee may contact us at info@hvfarmcoop.com.

The HVFC is a proposed enterprise that will acquire, improve and operate fifteen farms in the mid-Hudson Valley for the benefit of its shareholders and the wider community. The start-up budget for this project is $30 million. The Farm Coop will raise funds through a unique financial mechanism called a Direct Public Offering. The HVFC will provide its members the rare opportunity to own a stake in socially progressive and ecologically regenerative farms. Their investments will help to recreate, sustain and protect this wonderful corner of our threatened and critical agricultural region.

Our immediate needs are in three broad areas. First, we are looking for experienced accounting, business management and finance professionals. The tasks at hand include refining the business plan, preparing our financial model and proforma statements, establishing the cooperative corporation, and structuring the direct public offering. Second, we need professional planners and geographers to round out our design team. And third, we need seasoned marketing and sales pros to help us sharpen presentations to attract project cosponsors in the public, private, and not-for profit

sectors—and, eventually, individual Farm Coop shareholders. Community organizers and public relations professionals will further hone and deliver our message.

Most recently, HVFC members have participated as a client in a semester-long Engaged Learning Project of the Cornell University Cooperative Enterprise Program, SC Johnson Business College, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management; presented the Farm Coop at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs Sustainable Finance Seminar; enrolled in a four-session module of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Agricultural Workforce Supervisory Leadership Course titled, “Organizing Farm Work for High Quality Results”; met regularly with the Hudson Valley Devon Cattle Community Breeding Project; participated in a hands-on workshop at the SUNY Cobleskill Meat Processing Lab; and corresponded about the Farm Coop with numerous farmers, agricultural specialists, organizers, and others.