

Established in 1995, Mountain Partners in Agriculture initiated the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) that was launched in 1999 and was formalized as a nonprofit organization in July of 2002. ASAP is a private nonprofit that supports farmers and rural communities in the mountains of western North Carolina and the southern Appalachians.

ASAP's mission is to create and expand regional community-based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable and health-promoting.

Our vision is a future food system throughout the mountains of North Carolina and the southern Appalachians that provides a safe and nutritious food supply for all segments of society; that is produced, marketed and distributed in a manner that enhances human and environmental health; and that adds economic and social value to rural and urban communities.

ASAP programs are focus on the organization's mission by creating demand for local farm products, building farmer capacity to meet the new demand, and making market connections between farmers and markets.

Over the last decade ASAP has established a reputation for effective outreach and education delivery to limited resource farmers.

- ASAP initiated and coordinated the first WNC farmland preservation conference;
- established the Sustainable Mountain Farming Program at A-B Technical Community College;
- initiated and expanded the Local Food Campaign;
- participated in a national agriculture policy development project;
- organized Appalachian Harvests 2000, a major celebration of locally grown food;
- organized the Mountain Tailgate Market Association and the Mountain Community Supported Agriculture Association, two farmer organizations that are empowering local farmers;
- recruited nearly 200 farmers (transitioning many farm families from tobacco to food production), over 60 retailers, distributors, and dozens of farmers' tailgate markets to join the Local Food Campaign;
- conducted highly successful grant and farm to school workshops and the ASAP Market Opportunities for Farmers Conference, the largest market-focused agriculture conference in the region;
- selected to participate in the FoodRoutes Network national learning organization focused on buy local programs;
- developed school garden programs for more than 1450 Title I students;
- and received funding from the NC Health and Wellness Commission for ASAP's Growing Minds program to provide: garden-based learning, food stamps for farmers' markets, and collaboration in a social marketing campaign