



Corporate Social Responsibility

Speaking Out for Justice Sharing Our Resources

Iroquois Valley Farms – Supporting Family Farms

Since the establishment of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia's Community Development Loan Fund, the sisters have invested in numerous organizations that help improve the social and economic well-being of financially at-risk communities. Domestically our loans focused chiefly on affordable housing, education, small business, and cooperatives. Globally our investments impact lives mainly through microfinance and job creation.

Through this portfolio we are able to effect systemic change to promote sustainability, justice, and human dignity and to advocate for the preservation and protection of the environment for present and future generations. More recently our Committee for Responsible Investment has broadened our reach, approving loans for renewable energy for low-income communities as well as two loans to organizations serving those with disabilities.

Our newest loan marks another first—an investment in sustainable family farming. Iroquois Valley Farms, founded in 2007, was established to support family farmers through patient, long-term capital. They proudly state that they are the “first socially responsible farmland company in the United States



IROQUOIS
Valley Farms
Investing with Impact

focused on supporting sustainable food production and the mid-size family farmer.”

Iroquois Valley purchases farmland (over 4,000 acres, all of which is certified organic or in transition to becoming organic) and offers long-term leases to farmers who are independently operating their own family farm business. More than 70% of recent leases have gone to millennial farmers because younger people have led the country's push toward healthy, organic food.

Although based in Illinois, Iroquois Valley also owns farms in West Virginia, Indiana, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Michigan, Kentucky, Maine, and Vermont. The cofounders, David Miller and Dr. Stephen Rivard, view Iroquois Valley Farms as a business and an investment in good health. By supporting a range of educational, local foods, and sustainable agriculture initiatives, the company has developed a broad pipeline of

prospective tenants and is continuously purchasing farmland for lease to these sustainable family farmers.

Success for these and other organic farms means revitalized communities as well. Organic farm businesses help make their areas attractive as food hubs, food markets, and eco-tourism. The Organic Trade Association claims the organic food industry created over 500,000 jobs in 2010—21% more jobs than would have been created had the food industry relied solely on conventional farms for its ingredients.

While many areas in the U.S. and around the world are shifting towards a more urbanized society, Iroquois Valley Farms is exploring the virtues of a rural, farm-based community. This is certainly a worthwhile endeavor.

Tom McCaney