Food & Environment Reporting Network

2019 Annual Report
MISSION STATEMENT

The Food & Environment Reporting Network (FERN) is the first independent, non-profit, non-partisan news organization that produces explanatory and investigative reporting on food, agriculture, and environmental health through publication partnerships with respected local and national media outlets.
The Food & Environment Reporting Network is pleased to present its 2019 Annual Report, following its eighth full year of operations. FERN produces high-impact, change-making journalism about food, agriculture, and environmental health. Without FERN, the world would be a little darker, our understanding of these issues a little leaner. FERN reaches millions of readers — educating consumers, informing influencers, and deepening policymakers’ understanding of our food, the people who produce it, and the land and sea from which it comes.

We believe a free and independent media underpin a healthy democratic society. FERN provides the editorial expertise to explore, explain and investigate all corners of the food system, as well as to fill gaps in coverage that have arisen due to the ongoing disruption of the traditional media business model. FERN expands public understanding of these crucial issues at a time when trusted sources of information are more critical than ever to maintaining our democracy.

In 2019, we produced 28 stories on subjects including immigration, climate and agriculture, biodiversity, oceans, and toxic chemicals. Publication partners included *Scientific American, National Geographic, The Washington Post, The*
Weather Channel, and EatingWell. We continued our strong broadcast efforts, producing radio pieces with KQED as well as our first collaboration with Reveal, from the Center for Investigative Reporting, the nationally distributed radio show and podcast.

Our 2019 budget was $957,000. That funding came from a mix of foundations and individuals, including The 11th Hour Project, the Woodcock Foundation, the BAND Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Joyce and Irving Goldman Foundation, Panta Rhea Foundation, and the Nell Newman Foundation, among others.
Over the course of 2019, we began to organize coverage around broad themes, dissecting an issue with multiple stories published in different outlets. The idea is to reach a broad range of audiences, help readers grasp the scope of a problem, and give them a deeper understanding of where systems are breaking down and what the solutions might be. FERN’s collaborative approach to distribution ensures that these stories reach large, influential audiences.

Apart from that, a frequent theme in our coverage last year involved matters of equity and environmental injustice. They are a cornerstone of our investigative series on the impact of large-scale livestock agriculture on rural communities. These issues also were central to our story with The Nation on how farm laborers are banding together to protect their health as climate change increases heat risk for them; and to our piece with Yale Environment 360 about companies trying to profit from seed used by indigenous farmers in Mexico; and to our story for The Weather Channel of how the fast-growing wood-pellet industry negatively affects communities of color in the American South as it justifies its “green energy” credentials using questionable science.

A significant share of our work in the past year was driven by two particular initiatives: An investigation into rural conflicts between large-scale animal production facilities and local communities, and an exploration of agriculture as both a contributor to climate change and a potential strategy for mitigating its effects. For the livestock series, although CAFOs are controversial in the environmental community, the perspective of rural residents who live among these facilities with thousands of animals often gets short shrift in the public conversation. This omission is significant since those most harmed by these facilities tend to be poor and/or people of color. But power and how it’s used is also key to understanding the issue, so we explored the role played by local political and regulatory authorities in allowing — or actively supporting — this agricultural practice.

Given that there is no “solution” to climate change that does not include agriculture and food production, we are taking a hard look at creative strategies in agriculture and the impediments such strategies face. While our approach to this series addresses the destructive implications of the status quo, we’ve been investigating solutions that potentially expand the constituency for climate-friendly agriculture — ways to feed people sustainably, for instance, whether through conservation practices, incentives, technology or bottom-line economics. It doesn’t matter if the protagonists who lead us there are traditional environmentalists, innovative farmers or corporate CEOs.
FERN’s social media presence continued to expand its reach and influence. We are active on three platforms — Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Our audience-engagement editor supervises activity on these platforms, including the judicious use of paid promotion (a.k.a. “boosts”) in order to reach beyond our followers (and in the case of Facebook, to reach a significant number of our followers). We also work closely with our publication partners’ social media staff, who help promote our collaborations and “tag” us within the individual platforms in which they operate.

FERN’s combined social media following grew during the course of 2019. We started the year with 43,000 followers and have gained a total of approximately 2,000 followers since then. The current breakdown of our social media audience is 15,500 on Facebook, 27,900 on Twitter, 1,460 on Instagram.

FERN had 2.6 million combined social media post/tweet impressions in 2019 and 44,000 engagements on our social media posts (i.e. someone clicking on or interacting with a post). While our impressions and engagements fell overall in 2019, Instagram strongly defied that trend with a 300-percent increase in impressions. In 2020, we’ll focus on producing more content on social media as well as on conducting more consistent paid boosts throughout the year in order to keep these numbers up.

One likely cause of the drop was a redirection of our social media advertising dollars to Google Display Ads, which allowed us to access the Google Ad platform on sites across the web. Through the latter part of 2019, we used this ad platform to boost visibility of our donation pages and newsletter signups on our website, which appeared to work. While not designed to be a destination site — our work finds its audience through our publication partners — site traffic was up significantly in 2019. We now reach 190,000 unique users a year with over 730,000 pageviews annually.

For earned media throughout 2019, our stories and reporters were featured in interviews with WUNC’s The State of Things, Blue Ridge Public Radio, Cheddar TV, WBAI NYC and the Building Local Power podcast. FERN stories have been mentioned by popular outlets such as Longform, NBC News, The Wall Street Journal, and CNN. And influencers such as Marion Nestle, Mark Bittman, Michael Pollan, and Tom Colicchio continue to boost FERN’s profile via their social media and personal blogs. In addition, FERN organized and presented two sessions at SXSW 2019, one on rural reporting and the other on the future of sustainability at large food companies.

We continue to maintain and support FERN’s Friday Feed newsletter, a.k.a. the #FFF, a weekly survey of the stories in our areas of interest that have been
published by other outlets. We send this newsletter weekly to a subscriber base of 9,800 as a way to enhance engagement with an audience that is mostly distinct from our social-media audience. Overall, our total email audience across all our newsletters is now over 13,600, which also includes our FERN’s Ag Insider daily newsletter.

Finally, we produced another edition of *The Dirt*, the fourth of our annual print collection, which we offer to donors as a gift. As a predominantly digital content company, we have found that producing a tangible product greatly enhances our relationship with our readers. As so many publishers move away from, or otherwise de-prioritize print, these beautifully designed magazine-style collections become more and more valuable to our audience.

**Business Line Development**

Complementing our ability to reach a broad audience, FERN’s Ag Insider policy news service is aimed at a small but influential audience of policymakers, government officials, advocates, and food industry representatives. For a modest annual fee, subscribers gain access to original reporting by Chuck Abbott (Ag Insider’s editor) and staff writer Leah Douglas, as well as a full archive of past issues with tag-based organization. The email newsletter, which includes summaries of the full stories, is available for free. We now have over 300 individual and corporate subscribers and a growing number of academic institutional subscribers, including New York University, Harvard Law School, University of California, Berkeley, Tufts, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, approximately 2,200 people receive the newsletter version every weekday. We produced dozens of original articles during the past year covering a broad range of federal and state legislative and regulatory issues.

We also syndicate Ag Insider content to Agriculture.com, one of the leading news sites for commodity farmers with an audience of over 275,000 monthly visitors.
and 390,000 monthly print subscribers, as well as to other outlets such as Mother Jones and New Food Economy (now known as The Counter). Ag Insider articles is among the best-performing content on Agriculture.com. Our product is a key source of information for this audience and also serves as a “tip sheet” for reporters as it helps influence coverage across the media spectrum. This year we also saw Ag Insider reporting cited by large national media organizations as well as by candidates in the 2020 presidential election.

In 2019, we transitioned to a new fiscal year. FERN had been operating on a calendar year basis, and as of June 30, 2019 has shifted its fiscal year to begin July 1. We did this because we believe ending our fiscal year in June better aligns our revenue cycle and fundraising schedule to our fiscal year end. At the end of our 2019 fiscal year (i.e. June 30, 2019) we had $149,800 in retained earnings representing $110,000 in net assets against $1,296,884 in annual revenue and available funds. In the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 we had $1,086,800 in expenses. For details on our financials, see our current 990, which is available for review on our website at https://thefern.org/what-we-do/.

Impact Report

FERN defines journalistic impact as “a change in the status quo as a result of a direct intervention, be it a text article, documentary, or live event. Impact can be characterized by three types of outcomes: structural/macro events like changes in laws and policies; meso-level changes such as shifts in public debate; and micro-level changes, like alterations in individuals’ knowledge, beliefs, or behavior.”

We implement this concept by tracking (i) views and reads of online stories and ancillary products like infographics, (ii) reach of print and broadcast partners, (iii) awards received, (iv) media uptake (including media appearances by the writer/ FERN representatives, coverage of the story or re-reporting by other outlets, and changes in coverage patterns), (v) effects on public debate, (vi) public engagement campaigns created by other organizations based on our reporting, (vii) changes in individual/consumer behavior, and (viii) policy changes at the corporate, federal, state, or local level.

Our editorial production over the past year was strong, both in terms of reach as well as impact. We continue to emphasize a variety of partners and audiences including Scientific American, The Washington Post, National Geographic, and
Reveal, from the Center for Investigative Reporting. Our reporting last year generated policy changes as well as responses from corporate or governmental authorities. We succeeded in alerting millions of “new to the issues” readers and priming them for reform.

“Bees face yet another lethal threat in dicamba, a drift-prone weedkiller,” by Liza Gross, was a followup to Gross’s 2018 dicamba investigation that explains how the weedkiller is wreaking havoc on honeybees and other embattled pollinators. Originally published with Reveal, which reaches 300,000 users a month, the story was republished by Mother Jones, Grist and Wired. On social media, the piece appealed to groups interested in pesticides and bee issues. It was shared by Bee City USA’s Facebook group (fosters ongoing dialogue in urban areas to raise awareness of the role of pollinators) and was tweeted by the Non-GMO Report (monthly news magazine). The organic company Earthbound Farm shared it via its social media channels.

“A lifeline for SNAP payments at farmers’ markets,” by Jane Black, was a followup to our high-impact story from July 2018 that directly led to policy change. This one broke the news that the SNAP electronics payments company, which was headed for bankruptcy, leaving thousands of farmers’ markets around the country unable to accept food stamps, had been bailed out by payment processor Square, Inc. Both the original story and this followup were published with The Washington Post, which has an audience reach of 90.2 million. This story received social media attention from organizations such as Slow Food, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), Fair Food Network, Roots of Change, FoodPrint, and Food Policy Action.

“As coastal flooding surges, ‘living shorelines’ seen as the answer,” by Rowan Jacobsen, was our latest piece with Scientific American, which has a monthly audience in print and online of 7.1 million. The piece tells the story of a growing scientific consensus that traditional bulwarks against coastal floods, so-called hard barriers like seawalls, are far less effective than natural barriers such as salt marshes and oyster reefs. The story was mentioned on Coastal News Today, home of the American Shoreline Podcast Network. The Trustees of Reservations (a nonprofit that protects properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts) included the story in their weekly #FRIDAYFIVE of must-read articles each week. Tweets came from Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership, the Department of Homeland Security’s Coastal Resilience Center, and East Carolina University’s Integrated Coastal Programs.

“What pesticide monitoring misses,” by Liza Gross, spotlights the shortcomings of the nation’s pesticide-monitoring process, noting specifically that it is focused on
consumer protection while largely ignoring the exponentially higher exposure risks to farmworkers and their families, as well as to women and children who live near farm fields. We published this piece directly on our site, and then syndicated it with The Nation, which has over 1 million monthly readers, and with New Food Economy (now The Counter). Liza’s piece was pegged to the release of the Environmental Working Group’s latest “Dirty Dozen” report on pesticides. In addition to its significant print and online audience, The Nation’s social media audience is about 2 million. And though New Food Economy’s audience is not as large as The Nation’s, its niche audience tends to be actively engaged on social media. Nutritionist Keri Glassman cited the piece on her blog, Nutritious Life. Keri is a renowned expert in nutrition who’s been featured on TV and in magazines. On social media, the article appeared to resonate strongly with organizations focused on how pesticides can harm children’s development. Examples include Thinking Autism (UK charity supporting people with autism and their families) and Jonas Philanthropies (formerly the Jonas Center, a NYC-based health organization that invests in solutions that can be scaled for the greatest impact).

“As the heat rises, farmworkers band together,” by Audrea Lim, was the final piece in our series with The Nation on how communities are adapting to climate change. Lim’s reporting took readers to Washington State to see how rising temperatures have become another factor driving organizing efforts among migrant farmworkers. As previously mentioned, The Nation has a significant social media audience. The piece was linked to by RealClearEnergy, a sister site to the more well-known RealClearPolitics. Both Farmworker Association of Florida and Climate Justice Alliance engaged with our tweet for the story. Our Instagram post was noticed by organizations such as Fair World Project, Food Print, and Farm Forward.

“After a mega-dairy was shut down, Oregon lawmakers consider moratorium on new operations,” by Leah Douglas, tells the story of a legal fight in Oregon between the dairy industry and those who want to limit huge industrial farms. CAFOs are a big story for FERN, but this piece represents a promising new path in our local/regional syndication efforts. It was published with Oregon’s largest newspaper, The Oregonian, which has over 7 million monthly visitors to its website. The story was widely circulated on social media, especially Twitter. It was retweeted by both individuals and nonprofit organizations who closely follow issues related to animal agriculture. Farm Forward mentioned and linked to the story via its blog.

A radio version of our earlier dicamba investigation with Reveal, “The herbicide dicamba is sparking civil war in farm country,” by Trey Kay and Loretta Williams, was broadcast on more than 600 public radio stations as well as on the Reveal
podcast. It built on our 2018 investigation by Liza Gross, which showed how the EPA had ignored independent science in approving dicamba, which is prone to drift off target and damage other crops. Trey and Loretta explained how the fight over dicamba is pitting neighbor against neighbor, sometimes with deadly consequences.

“The Loophole: How American forests fuel the EU’s appetite for ‘green energy,’” by Carson Vaughan, tells how companies are turning vast tracts of forest in the American Southeast into wood pellets that are then sold to Europe as a “carbon-neutral” energy source for electricity generation, despite the questionable science behind that claim. George Steinmetz, who frequently shoots for The New York Times Magazine and National Geographic, provided stunning photography that was widely shared on its own. This is the latest in our ongoing partnership with The Weather Channel and its massive audience of over 80 million monthly visitors.

Carson spoke about the story on WUNC’s The State of Things, a daily North Carolina radio program and podcast. Blue Ridge Public Radio also published the interview on its website. FERN Editor-in-Chief Sam Fromartz appeared on Cheddar TV to discuss the story. Cheddar TV is a live streaming financial news network that receives over 100 million views per month. Within a few weeks of the publication of our story, the company at the heart of our investigation announced an “enhanced and expanded global sourcing policy” to recommit itself to reforestation and to restrict harvesting in “high conservation value” forests.

“The Toronto restaurant fights food waste by chopping menu prices till all the dishes are gone,” by Jonathan Bloom, published with NPR’s The Salt, tells the story of a
restaurateur who grew up on a farm, learned to hate food waste, and devised a creative strategy to minimize the waste in his popular restaurant — a strategy that could easily be adopted by other chefs. He simply cuts prices until the food is gone. At NPR, the story had 118,000 pageviews. We’ve also noted that The Salt’s version of the piece was published to dozens of other NPR affiliates’ websites. Indiana Public Media’s Earth Eats also republished the story. Earth Eats is a weekly podcast, public radio program and blog that brings audiences news and recipes inspired by local food and sustainable agriculture. Another web mention for the story included EIN Newsdesk, a news aggregation service geared toward food industry professionals.

“As the oceans heat up, the types of seafood we eat will change,” by Ben Goldfarb, was published with EatingWell, which has more than 4 million readers, and showed in vivid detail how climate change is scrambling the world’s fisheries, changing what is “native” to a given region, and, ultimately, what Americans will have to learn to love. Our tweet for this story was shared by folks who work for the Marine Stewardship Council, and by Manomet (a nonprofit based in New England that’s focused on applying science and engaging people to sustain our world). The Ocean Policy program at the Center for American Progress also tweeted the story. This piece was the partial inspiration for a climate and oceans event FERN will host in February 2020 in New York City, sponsored by The 11th Hour Project.

“Organic farming has a plastics problem. One solution is controversial,” by Lisa Held, published with NPR’s The Salt, explains that organic farmers rely on plastic — thousands and thousands of miles of it — to suppress weeds, conserve water and aid plant growth, just like their conventional counterparts. When the season
is over, the plastic ends up in landfills. One conceivable solution, biodegradable plastic, isn’t allowed under organic rules, though some think those rules should be changed. Dozens of NPR affiliates republished this story, including WHYY, KUOW, and Oregon Public Broadcasting, as well as the Earth Eats and Field Work podcasts. Other sites that republished the piece included Rural Messenger (print publication serving rural-minded readers of Central Kansas) and

Illinois Newsroom (regional journalism collaboration supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, McCormick Foundation).

“One man is trying to save the world from climate change by mobilizing an unlikely team: Iowa’s farmers,” by Brian Barth, was published with Mother Jones (8 million readers) and was the first article in our climate and agriculture series. It’s the fascinating story of Matt Russell, a gay farmer who runs the Iowa branch of Interfaith Power and Light, a nonprofit that promotes a religious response to climate change. Russell believes that farmers, a demographic seen as religious and conservative, are a secret weapon in the climate fight. Mother Jones tweeted the story a few times (and tagged FERN) from both its main Twitter account and its Mother Jones Food account, reaching about 1.76 million users. Within a month of our story, CNN followed it with a profile of Russell and his organization.

In “Justice Dept. intervenes in major poultry price-fixing case,” our own Leah Douglas broke the story on how the DOJ is investigating a major poultry antitrust issue, which has been the subject of several lawsuits. Although the lawsuits had been reported, DOJ’s investigation had not. The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, Reuters, CNN, USA Today and many others "matched" the story the following day, i.e. reported it as news with their own coverage. In several cases, including in The Wall Street Journal and CNN, FERN was credited in
these articles with a “as first reported by the Food & Environment Reporting Network” mention. The story caused poultry company stocks to decline and was a newsbreak from a larger Guardian item in August about companies having the power to coordinate and lower prices paid to farmers. This piece also put us on the radar of John Oliver’s HBO show Last Week Tonight. We were contacted by the show’s news producer to help provide some context for the recent livestock news.

“Who should profit from Oaxaca’s nitrogen-fixing corn?” by Martha Pskowski, was published with Yale Environment 360, a small but influential outlet with 4 million readers per year. The story is a nuanced look at the global problem of biopiracy and the need to ensure that indigenous communities are treated fairly by government and corporate researchers who seek to profit from the genetic resources that these communities rely on, and in many cases have cultivated over thousands of years. The piece is also an example of something FERN does well: work with inexperienced but talented young reporters who find a good story that is beyond anything they’ve done before.

In a first for FERN, the story was translated into Spanish and appeared on the Mexican news site Animal Político. The outlet has a significant social media following that includes over 1.35 million Facebook followers, 2.1 million Twitter followers, and over 59,000 Instagram followers. On Twitter, its link was shared over 200 times. The piece was republished by Infofural (a digital space that aggregates information related to the rural sector, from various media) and discussed on a blog run by Grupo Chávez Radio in Sinaloa. On social media, we saw tweets from influencers such as Organic Seed Alliance, California Institute for Rural Studies, National Organic Coalition, and Ricardo Salvador of the Union of Concerned Scientists.
“Are we handling the bee crisis all wrong?” by Rowan Jacobsen, was published with HuffPost, the massive news site with over 170 million users per month. We do a good number of bee stories, 1) because they’re important to the future of agriculture, and 2) because they consistently are among our most popular stories. People like to read about bees. This story tells of a growing consensus among scientists that our singular focus on honeybees — the only bee species we commercially manage — overlooks the needs of what might be an even more important group of pollinators: wild bees. This piece was republished by Yahoo News, and by the massive news site MSN, which has a monthly audience of over 120 million users. Rowan was interviewed on WBAI’s Leonard Lopate at Large.

“Is the U.S. chicken industry cheating its farmers,” by Leah Douglas and Christopher Leonard, was published with The Guardian (152 million monthly unique visitors worldwide). Relying on leaked documents, this story shows how the U.S. poultry industry is able to share highly detailed information — provided by a secretive data-sharing company called Agri Stats — on farmer pay, giving companies the potential to collude and depress prices paid to farmers. It is exactly the kind of story that FERN exists to do: investigative, explanatory journalism that reveals something that powerful entities wanted to keep hidden. This story comes out of our animal agriculture initiative, which aims to shed light on issues surrounding large-scale livestock production. The piece was republished by The Denver Herald. It was also referenced on the blogs of both the Organic Consumers Association and The Poultry Site, which publishes Poultry Digital magazine.

On social media, this story was shared by a variety of influencers including Mercy For Animals, Farm Sanctuary, The Humane League, We Animals Media, Sierra
“The disappearing act in North Carolina’s hog industry,” by Barry Yeoman, published by The Guardian, documents how North Carolina officials buried complaints about hog farm pollution for years. This came to light via our FOIA request to the North Carolina department of environmental protection for complaints, which revealed only 33 for an entire decade. (Other big livestock states logged thousands in the same period.) The story shows how the state “disappeared” these complaints, leading to a situation where residents had to sue to fight hog farms because regulators refused to act. This year, North Carolina under a new governor, began posting complaints online.

This piece was the second story in our livestock series and the first based on our data project, which involves document requests from state departments of environmental protection across the country. The story was widely shared and was republished in the Sunday print editions of the Charlotte Observer and the Raleigh News and Observer, North Carolina’s two largest papers, that are part of the McClatchy network. In addition, the North Carolina Pork Council, an industry lobbying group, responded to our story with attempts to prevent its print publication. Their hostile response demonstrated the importance of revealing the underlying facts to the public and the power of transparency.

“The strange, uncertain fate of Alaska’s biggest wild salmon habitat,” by Julia O’Malley, told the story of how Bristol Bay’s pristine wild salmon fishery is under
assault by a changing climate and by a massive, Trump-administration-backed mine. Our media partner was The Nation, which made it the cover story in its October 2019 print edition, and photojournalist Nathaniel Wilder produced stunning images (one of which became the cover of The Dirt). The story was shared on social media by local organizations focused on protecting salmon, including United Tribes of Bristol Bay (the Tribal consortium working to protect the traditional Yup’ik, Dena’ina, and Alutiq ways of life in Southwest Alaska that depend on the pristine Bristol Bay Watershed and all it sustains), and SalmonState (works to preserve Alaska’s wild salmon and their habitat, especially in Bristol Bay). The piece also drew attention on social media from international organizations such as Bear Trust International (helps conserve wild bears and other wildlife). Slow Food DC tweeted the story, as did Mother Jones food reporter Tom Philpott.

“Food scholarships. Homeless shelters. Emergency loans,” by Bridget Huber and published with The Nation. With Congress mired in partisan gridlock and the White House showing little interest, the nation’s colleges and universities are scrambling to address the growing crisis of hungry, homeless students. This story went viral on The Nation’s site, drawing over 100,000 reads within a week of posting and 7,400 social shares.

2019 Published Work

JANUARY 2019
* [Dawn of the slow chicken?](#) - Eating Well
* [Bees face yet another lethal threat in dicamba, a drift-prone weedkiller](#) - Reveal, re-published by Mother Jones, Grist, and Wired
* [Where beef is more than dinner](#) - KQED’s California Report
* A lifeline for SNAP payments a farmers’ market - The Washington Post

MARCH 2019
* As coastal flooding surges, ‘living shorelines’ seen as the answer - Scientific American
* What pesticide monitoring misses - FERN, syndicated with The Nation and New Food Economy
* As the heat rises, farmworkers band together - The Nation
APRIL 2019
- After a mega-dairy was shut down, Oregon lawmakers consider moratorium on new operations. - *The Oregonian*
- The herbicide dicamba is sparking a civil war in farm country. - *Reveal*
- The Loophole: How American forests fuel the EU’s appetite for ‘green energy.’ - *The Weather Channel*

MAY 2019
- Toronto restaurant fights food waste by chopping menu prices til all the dishes are gone. - NPR’s *The Salt*
- As oceans heat up, the types of seafood we eat will change. - *Eating Well*
- Fifty years later, a daunting cleanup of Vietnam’s toxic legacy. - *Yale Environment 360*

JUNE 2019
- Justice Dept. intervenes in major poultry price-fixing case. - FERN’s *Ag Insider*
- Organic farming has a plastic problem. One solution is controversial. - NPR’s *The Salt*
- One man is trying to save the world from climate change by mobilizing an unlikely team: Iowa’s farmers. - *Mother Jones*
- An unhealthy alliance between almonds and honeybees. - *HuffPost*

JULY 2019
- Are We Handling the Bee Crisis Wrong? - *HuffPost*
- Editor’s Desk: A modern-day abolitionist - and the reporter covering her.
- Who should profit from Mexico nitrogen-fixing corn. - *Yale Environment 360*

AUGUST 2019
- Is the U.S. chicken industry cheating its farmers? - *The Guardian*
- For years complaints about North Carolina’s hog pollution vanished in state bureaucracy. - *The Guardian*

SEPTEMBER 2019
- Today’s special: Grilled salmon laced with plastic. - *Mother Jones*
- Down on the smart farm. - *Eating Well*

OCTOBER 2019
- The strange, uncertain fate of Alaska’s biggest wild salmon habitat. - *The Nation*
● **Food scholarships. Homeless shelters. Emergency loans.** - *The Nation*

**NOVEMBER 2019**

● **Arizona’s water supplies are drying up. How will its farmers survive?** - National Geographic

**DECEMBER 2019**

● **Are ‘forever chemicals’ in our milk? Nobody really knows.** - *HuffPost*
● **A breathtaking lack of oversight for air emissions from animal farms.** - *The Nation*
● **Here are the rural residents who sued the world’s largest hog producer over waste and odors - and won.** - *The Nation*
Our 2019 Publishing Partners

Eating Well
HuffPost
KQED’s California Report
Mother Jones
National Geographic
New Food Economy/The Counter
NPR’s The Salt
Reveal, from the Center for Investigative Reporting
Scientific American
The Guardian
The Nation
The Oregonian
The Weather Channel
Washington Post
Yale Environment 360

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Broad Reach Fund
Nell Newman Foundation
Lumpkin Family Foundation
2019 FERN At-a-Glance

Staffing

- **Editorial**: 5 full-time/3 contractors
- **Support**: 2 full-time
- 70 **freelance reporters** engaged over eight years
- 62 partner **news outlets** since 2011