



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Founding Farmers



12505 Park Potomac Avenue
Potomac, MD 20854
240-750-0449
www.foundingfarmers.com
Restaurant
Member since April 2019

Management and Leadership

Environmental Policy Statement

SUSTAINABILITY IS NOT A CATCH PHRASE; IT'S A NATURAL EXTENSION OF WHO WE ARE. For us, sustainability is not a lofty idea but a fundamental, and necessary, endeavor. Our concept is about the food and drink of course, but it's also about our team, our facilities, our practices, and the hundreds of decisions we make each day that affect the world around us. We believe it's about finding a balance, which allows us to sustain our quest of making quality, accessible food, while also giving back to our community and the environment.

FOOD WITH A CONSCIENCE. We give a great deal of thought to the farmers who grow, raise, and harvest our food, as well as the people who eat it. We seek out family farmers and support purveyors who employ responsible farming methods. This includes farms that value and support conservation, biodiversity, animal stewardship, economic viability, and fair treatment of workers. Above all, we focus on quality, whether we're bringing in peaches from down the road or broccoli from across the country.

*A GREEN FOUNDATION. Our flagship location opened as Washington, D.C.'s first LEED Gold Certified restaurant and as the first upscale-casual, full-service LEED Gold restaurant in the country. These prestigious certifications, offered by the U.S. Green Building Council, recognize architecture and interiors that have been constructed and created with a minimal impact on the environment. Every element is thoughtfully designed, from the efficient HVAC and lighting systems all the way down to the paints and furniture. **Our Maryland***

location is LEED Silver certified. In addition, we continually work to establish and pursue all of our Founding Farmers locations as 3 and 4 Star Certified Green Restaurants®. To make this possible and continue our commitment to being a green business, we compost food waste, use no bottled water on site, donate our used grease so it can be recycled into biofuel, use the most energy efficient equipment, and use occupancy sensors to reduce energy usage.

MAINTAINING OUR BELIEFS. We hold ourselves accountable for living our green mission each and every day in our stores, but so does the Green Restaurant Association. The GRA measures, among many things, recycling practices and high-efficiency water and energy usage. Every two years we undergo a careful recertification and reevaluation process where the GRA reviews invoices and systems, and scores on a strict point system. We keep a close eye on maintaining and improving our score as we evolve and new green initiatives become available.

<https://www.wearefoundingfarmers.com/about/story/sustainability/>



Environmental Team

At Founding Farmers, we rely on a team of company-wide experts who work across all topics related to sustainability. Our Co-Owners, Mike Vucurevich and Dan Simons with the American family farmers of the North Dakota Farmers Union, decided from day one to be pioneers in the restaurant industry by making sustainability a core value and by constantly finding new ways to improve upon that commitment. To support our mission, we rely on a group of in-house subject matter experts:

- *Vicki Griffith, Vice President of Quality Assurance and Purchasing, who works with our farmers, suppliers, and distributors to ensure our sustainability mission is built into our purchasing decisions. She recently worked with our seafood distributor to eliminate the single-use packaging from our deliveries, eliminating another layer of waste coming into our restaurant. Other examples of her work are detailed in the purchasing and product section below.*
- *Lara Hardcastle, Senior VP in charge of restaurant development, works to ensure our restaurants are built to LEED standards and coordinates the Green Restaurant Association Certifications.*
- *Leah Frankl, Director of Design, ensures the dining environment is not simply lovely, but also decreases our environmental impacts through selection of energy efficient lighting and low VOC materials.*
- *Erin Chalkley, Construction Project Manager and Project Manager for Our Last Straw, works with these leaders and also oversees our composting and waste management programs to ensure we are doing everything we can to reduce our waste footprint.*

Our team and company-wide sustainability mission is in action every day at our MoCo's Founding Farmers located in Potomac, MD. This mission is strengthened through this leadership team, as well as our company "Constitution" and the company management practices.

We are a high-performing, fast-paced restaurant. In order to walk our talk requires commitment, continual staff development, and a consistent workforce. We have regular classes for employees on our Constitution and company practices. Very often, we provide one-on-one trainings and mentorship. We work to grow our talent in house, which has major impact in all of our programs and environmental efforts, because it creates a stable work force of well-trained and very often like-minded individuals that truly care about the company and its mission.

Knowing we can't have all the necessary expertise in-house to support some of our efforts, we rely on third party evaluators. They ensure our practices are in keeping with the times and the latest earth-friendly innovations, teaching and guiding us when we fall short of our intended goals. We work with the Green Restaurant Association who provide audits to maintain MoCo's Founding Farmers 3 star rating on a pre-determined schedule. And we worked with the U.S. Green Building Council in obtaining our LEED certified SILVER status for MoCo's Founding Farmers. More details above in our sustainability statement.



Environmentally Preferable Products and Services

At Founding Farmers, we seek out family farmers and support purveyors who employ responsible farming methods. This includes farms that value and support conservation, sustainability, biodiversity, animal stewardship, economic viability, and fair treatment of workers. While most restaurants buy from large companies and corporate food factories, we select and work with our vendors individually to ensure they match our company values. From the local, artisan hand soap we use in our bathrooms to the chicken we buy for our guests (that is air chilled, requiring less water, and isn't soaked in chlorine baths) to the Beachley furniture specifically designed for our restaurants to even the original art we commission, every choice is considered carefully, and often reconsidered again and again as new products become available.

See next section for more details how we address another critical aspect of our sourcing decisions and efforts: packaging and our procurement work to ensure the packaging is earth friendly.

Founding Farmers also supports the George Washington University Urban Apiary and Honeybee Research Program. Since 2011, we have been providing funding for the program to maintain the hives, for an undergraduate researcher,

and for a [24-hour bee cam](#). The honey harvested is used in some of our recipes, when available, and for our [Founding Spirits](#) distillery. In addition, we support the environmental researchers at the [Cornell University Maple Syrup Research Program](#) and buy our maple syrup from their maples and sugarhouse.



Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Across our company, Farmers Restaurant Group, we are constantly evaluating the sources of our ingredients, as well as our furniture, cleaning supplies, and more. One of the areas where we focus significant attention and staff time is what our ingredients are wrapped and delivered in, that is, the types of packaging and the layers of packaging. We have banned the presence of Styrofoam in our restaurants. We also avoid products with tertiary layer. We work with many of our vendors, but below are a few examples:

- 1) We worked with our seafood company and coffee company to receive products in reusable plastic totes that go back to the vendor. In the case of the seafood company, we eliminated wax coated cardboard boxes.*
- 2) We were buying Coca Cola from a third party who was shipping the cans in 4-6 pack case with plastic collars holding them together. We reached out directly to Coca Cola, and they agreed to sell to us directly without the plastic collars. Now, we receive our Coca Cola direct in a corrugated case, no plastic collar.*
- 3) We worked with our artisanal miller in Kentucky – they didn't pack product for restaurant wholesale business – and we were able to specify the type of corrugated box, with recycled content and made in America. It was a triple win.*

We are actively evaluating and looking for things that are made with recycled content – and even if we can – post consumer recycled content. Unfortunately, a lot of post consumer recycled content cannot be used for food products. As an alternative, for our to-go food, we have found containers that are 100% reusable and perform just like plastic storage container people buy. They are great for using at home, and we encourage our guests to use them again and again before recycling them.

All of this research and evaluation takes work and staff time. We are constantly working to improve our efforts, especially as new and more innovative products are becoming more readily available. For example, we have never used plastic straws, but for some time we were using compostable straws until we learned that the “compostable” part was a bit of a fallacy. They were compostable only if the straws made it to an industrial composting facility, which we use, but we couldn't guarantee that all of our straws were making it into that bin. We switched to biodegradable paper straws and more recently given supply

chain difficulties with the paper straws and preference, we have switched to hay straws. We are also researching rice/tapioca straws confirming their production is both food safe and sanitary and earth friendly.



Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects

We work with the Alice Ferguson Foundation on their annual Potomac Cleanup and joined their annual Trash Summit, participating in a panel discussion providing the critical business perspective of managing waste. We also encouraged Summit participation in our coalition turned non-profit, Our Last Straw, which we launched in June 2018 to eliminate the distribution and use of plastic straws across the restaurant and hospitality industry. Having always used non-plastic straws at Founding Farmers, we wanted to expand beyond the walls of our restaurants and encourage others to make the switch. We believe businesses can drive change by increasing the demand on our suppliers and manufacturers to come up with effective, affordable alternatives.

We also support a honey bee education curriculum with a non-profit based in Virginia called Sweet Virginia, the GW Urban Apiary, and the Cornell University Maple Syrup Research program (more details above in environmentally preferred products).

Waste



Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

Much of our waste management is certified through a third party, the Green Restaurant Association, and reviewed regularly. The Green Restaurant Association estimates our practices divert 90% of our waste from landfills. During our last review, we received a three-star rating. More details and our evaluation of our efforts are available at:

<http://dinegreenco.com/customers/featured.asp?ID=REST11257&featured=yes&safaribrowser=yes>

We limit single-use beverage containers. Since we opened, we have been providing free filtered water, sparkling or flat, to all of our guests, served in reusable glass water bottles. We also serve scratch-made sodas and mostly draft beer, which draw many more guest orders than the traditional sodas we serve in cans, and the small sampling of bottled beer.

We only use biodegradable hay and paper straws or no straws at all. We have specifically chosen water glasses because they don't need a straw, and many of our craft cocktails are served strawless by design. Our efforts reducing

our straw usage led to the development of our coalition turned non-profit, Our Last Straw.

We provide no paper towels in our restrooms, no tablecloths, no paper napkins, and reusables are used for staff meals. In the procurement and products section, there are more details about our work reducing the packaging coming into our restaurants from working specifically with all of vendors to change their packaging practices.

Recycling

We recycle all plastics, glass, aluminum, cardboard, paper. Combined with our composting program, we divert 90% of our trash from the landfill every year.

Composting

We compost almost all of our food waste. In 2018, we diverted 280,800 lbs., or 140 tons of compost, from the landfill to the Prince George's County Compost Facility. This figure is calculated specifically based upon compost pickups averaging 1800 lbs. three times per week.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

As a three-star Green Restaurant Association certified restaurant, we look to a third party to evaluate our energy efficiency. We earned 57 points for our energy efficiency, which includes high efficiency and energy star equipment in our kitchen and across the restaurant, occupancy sensors in our restrooms, use of energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems, and our commitment to regularly scheduled maintenance. For more details on our GRA certification, <http://dinegreenco.com/customers/featured.asp?ID=REST11257&featured=yes&safaribrowser=yes>

Water

Water Conservation

We conserve water in our restrooms (with automatic faucets, 1.28 gpf toilets, 1/8 gpf urinals) and in our kitchen (with energy star dishwashers and steamers and 1.5gpm Faucet Aerators, Handwashing Sinks). This is certified through a third party, the Green Restaurant Association, which gave us a three-

star rating. More details are available at:

<http://dinegreenco.com/customers/featured.asp?ID=REST11257&featured=yes&safaribrowser=yes>

Green Building

LEED Certification

We LEED certify all of our restaurants. MoCo's Founding Farmers is LEED Silver under the 2009 ID + C rating system.

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, and Other Activities



- *All of our restaurants are Green Restaurant Association certified.*
- *MoCo's Founding Farmers has been a Three Star GRA Certified Green Restaurant since 2012.*
- *Our MoCo's Founding Farmers in Maryland won the Leading by Example Green Business Award from Bethesda Green.*
- *Founding Farmers and our parent company, Farmers Restaurant Group, won the 2018 People's Choice Award from the Green Restaurant Association. <https://www.wearefoundingfarmers.com/two-major-wins-for-us-the-planet/>*
- *In 2016, Founding Farmers was named one of the 10 most sustainable restaurants in the US by Huff Post. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-10-most-sustainable-restaurants-b-11057274?utm_hp_ref=good-news&ir=Good+News§ion=us_good-news*
- *Our restaurant company, Farmers Restaurant Group, won the People's Choice Award at the 2019 District's Sustainability Awards.*
- *Our very own Erin Chalkley, Construction & Development Project Manager and LEED Green Associate, was named one of the nominees for the Green Leader of the Year Award for her tireless work in helping us build and operate green restaurants.*
- *Our sibling restaurants have also won numerous green awards.*



[View our video](#)

[View our video](#)



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at green.maryland.gov

