



2021-2022

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# Annual Report

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Berkeley Basket CSA  
PC-Paige Green

# DEAR KTA COMMUNITY,

On our shared journey toward a reimagined food system, we believe that our interconnection catalyzes growth in ourselves, our relationships, and the broader foodshed. Nowhere is this more evident to us than in the stories of the small sustainable farms and ranches we support at Kitchen Table Advisors.

In recent years, our client farmers and ranchers have endured layers of hardship and crisis, at times making resilience imperative. While we've recognized the varying impacts of these experiences, especially when unjustly forced upon them, we have also witnessed clients evolve alongside their communities and landscapes by tapping into their innate ingenuity, cultivating solidarity, and owning their leadership.

At KTA, we envision a vibrant food system based in community, justice, and ecological responsibility, where all farmers and ranchers can thrive. Given the landscape in which small sustainable farms and ranches have operated – navigating drought-related instability, economic uncertainty, systemic disempowerment, and more – we've observed clients' needs increase as well as new opportunities surface. Simultaneously, we've continued to understand that supporting farmers and ranchers in reaching economic viability is not enough when the marketplace in which they exist does not recognize their lived experiences nor nurture their businesses.

To bring us closer to realizing our vision, we have responded to what our client farmers and ranchers have faced by deepening our 1:1 advising, providing support and resources to uplift clients when challenges intensify while continually exploring how to strengthen the framework of our advising program. We have also grown our Ecosystem Building program to address disparities in farmer access and power – particularly among communities who have had resources stolen and their voices silenced – by rebuilding the marketplace around land, capital, and markets. And, now as a team of 22 staff, we have looked to nurture the foundation on which we deliver these programs by tending to KTA's internal culture and systems.

We invite you to discover more about how our clients and KTA have been evolving this past year. We hope you find insight and inspiration through connecting with our clients' experiences, just as we do.

In community,

Angie, David, Erika, Favio, Federica, Gianna, Henry, James, Lauren, Lily, Liz, Maclovia, Maria, Marilyn, Melina, Paige, Pei-Yee, Sarah, Sumi, Tania, Thomas & Wendy

Kitchen Table Advisors

Note: For those of you who are familiar with our past reports, you might notice a difference in this year's version. In our efforts to increase the accessibility and reach of KTA's communications, this new report format has allowed us to create a translated version in Spanish. While this marks a step forward, we know there is even more work to be done.

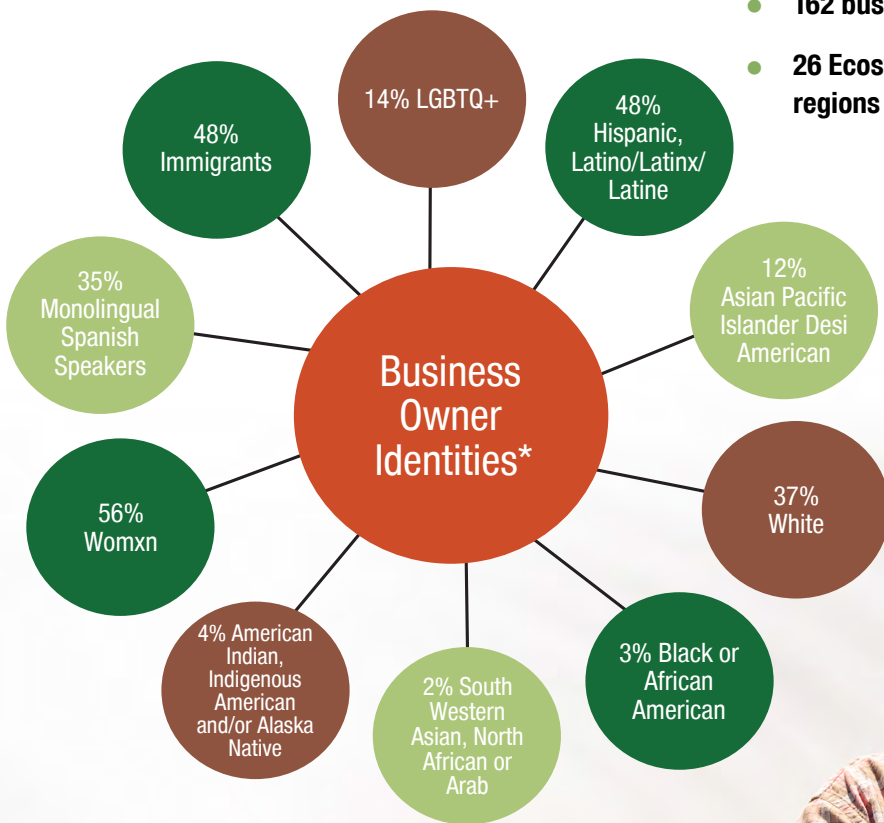


# OUR SUPPORT AT A GLANCE

The information shared in this report provides a look into the operations of our client farmers and ranchers. The paths these individuals shape and milestones they mark represent their vision, perspective, and talents, which we are fortunate to celebrate alongside them. The combination of the numbers and stories contribute to our understanding of clients' needs and goals, which in turn guides how we develop our programs.

The metrics reflect 2013-2021 aggregated data for all clients participating in our 1:1 advising program who have responded to our annual business assessment. Ecosystem Building program information was reported by KTA staff.

- **111 farm & ranch businesses advised to date**
- **162 business owners advised to date**
- **26 Ecosystem Building projects within the four regions we serve in Northern and Central California**



\*In sharing this self-reported client information, we honor that identity is fluid and intersectional for these individuals, meaning this data may change over time and individuals may name multiple identities for themselves.





El Zenzontle  
PC-Tania Zuñiga

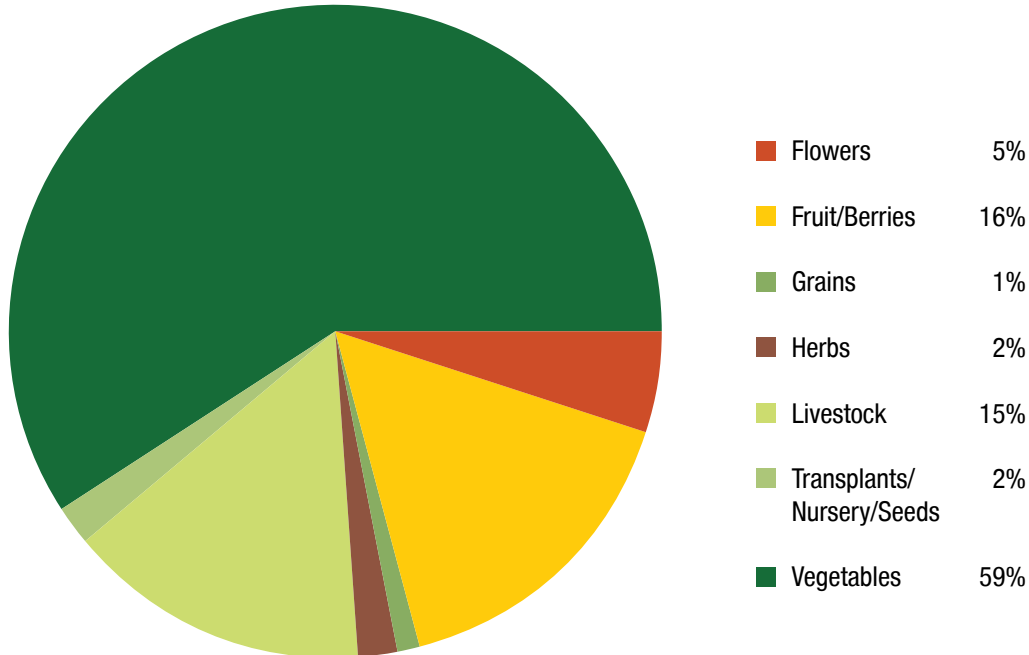
## ONE-ON-ONE BUSINESS ADVISING

For nine years, KTA's core programmatic work has been 1:1 personalized business advising, meeting small-scale farmers and ranchers where they're at in their journeys. With advisors living in the same communities as our clients, our approach is to cultivate trust-based relationships by asking questions, listening, and offering resonant resources, training, and thought partnership. We work alongside our client farmers and ranchers to support them in realizing their business goals – extending from financial management and business planning to personal sustainability as a business owner to accessing land, capital, and markets.

KTA prioritizes work with owners of small sustainable farms and ranches who have historically been excluded from resources and recognition within our food system — namely the BIPOC, womxn, low-income, immigrant, and LGBTQ+ communities. Our clients are driven by a deep sense of responsibility for the environment while also serving as community leaders through job creation, peer mentorship, mutual aid support, contributions to food access programs, board and advisory committee roles, and more.

We are grateful for the numerous ways these farmers and ranchers – in addition to so many others in our foodshed – contribute their talents, wisdom, and offerings to nourishing our communities and ecology.

## Primary Operation Type of Clients\*



Skyelark Ranch  
PC-Nicola Parisi

## Highlights of Client Operations

- **57.9% growth in take home pay**
  - On average, clients who have completed their three-year journey with us, began our program with \$21,350 in take home pay per business owner from their farm or ranch business, and grew to an average of \$33,718 after three years. This number does not account for inflation.
- **33.5% increase in average gross income from 2020 to 2021**
  - This percentage may be impacted by grant and relief funding that individual clients received.
- **93% of active clients feel they improved their ability to make better business decisions in the past year**

\*This information was initially assessed at the time clients joined our advising program and is revisited annually with clients, but the focus of operations may transition over time. Primary operation type is assessed based on a client's majority of sales.



CLIENT:

# MOUA FARM

To reconnect with her Laotian heritage after moving to California, Ge Moua first began growing produce for her family in her backyard, relying on agricultural knowledge passed down from her parents. Now, Moua Farm cares for many communities across the Bay Area by offering organically grown vegetables and flowers.

In 2021, Ge applied for a State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program (SWEEP)\* grant to help fund structural upgrades for her farm, including the installation of an off-grid solar powered pump and a more resilient underground water main line. The application for the grant was complex and time-consuming. Ge, already stretched thin managing her farm, turned to Senior Farm Business Advisor Federica Beatrice for assistance. A first-time learning experience for her, Federica dedicated weeks of work to the application, calculating past and future emission levels, formatting and compiling documents, coordinating meetings, and conducting water management research.

Ge was awarded \$58,000 in funding from SWEEP and, once installations are complete, will be able to significantly reduce her greenhouse gas emissions, save \$10,000 annually in operating costs, and more efficiently water her fields. From this experience, Ge and Federica were not only able to deepen their advising relationship, but they also conveyed feedback to the grant administrators about making the SWEEP program a more feasible experience for under-resourced, small-scale producers.

\*SWEEP grants are managed under the Office of Environmental Farming & Innovation at the California Department of Food and Agriculture.



PC-Shao Shan Farm

CLIENT:

## SHAO SHAN FARM

For Scott Chang-Fleeman, farming is not just the act of growing but an active cultivation of culture and identity. Growing Asian-focused produce is Scott's way of honoring his own biracial identity while nourishing the Asian American diaspora around him.

As the sole proprietor of Shao Shan Farm, Scott oversees all aspects of his business – a weight that for many business owners, can be heavy to shoulder. Understanding the decisions of a farm business owner, KTA Senior Farm Business Advisor Lily Schneider has acted as a sounding board for Scott, providing technical and strategic support to help him thoroughly evaluate tough decisions.

Namely, in 2021, Scott was forced to relocate his farm due to drought, a significant decision that would affect not only where he farmed but also how he farmed in terms of his crop plan and market strategy. Scott and Lily worked together to evaluate different land options, and developed a Land Decision Matrix that took into account Scott's specific criteria and objectives for land opportunities. After a year of searching, Scott secured a five-acre parcel in Sebastopol where he is currently running his operation. Even while navigating land instability, Scott ensured that uplifting Asian-focused produce remained a constant and defining feature of Shao Shan Farm – a steadfast vision that guided Lily as she refined her understanding and support of Scott's needs.

# ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

Complementary to our 1:1 business advising, KTA has been expanding our Ecosystem Building program, which seeks to rebuild the marketplace to center farmers' ownership, leadership, and solidarity. Drawing on the wisdom and needs of our client farmers and ranchers, we have understood that in order to transform our food system and enable small sustainable farms and ranches to thrive, we also need to shape the institutions that control land, markets, and capital. These three focus areas were shaped by our 1:1 advising, specifically in understanding from clients that support was needed not just for their businesses but also in the broader ecosystem where they operate.

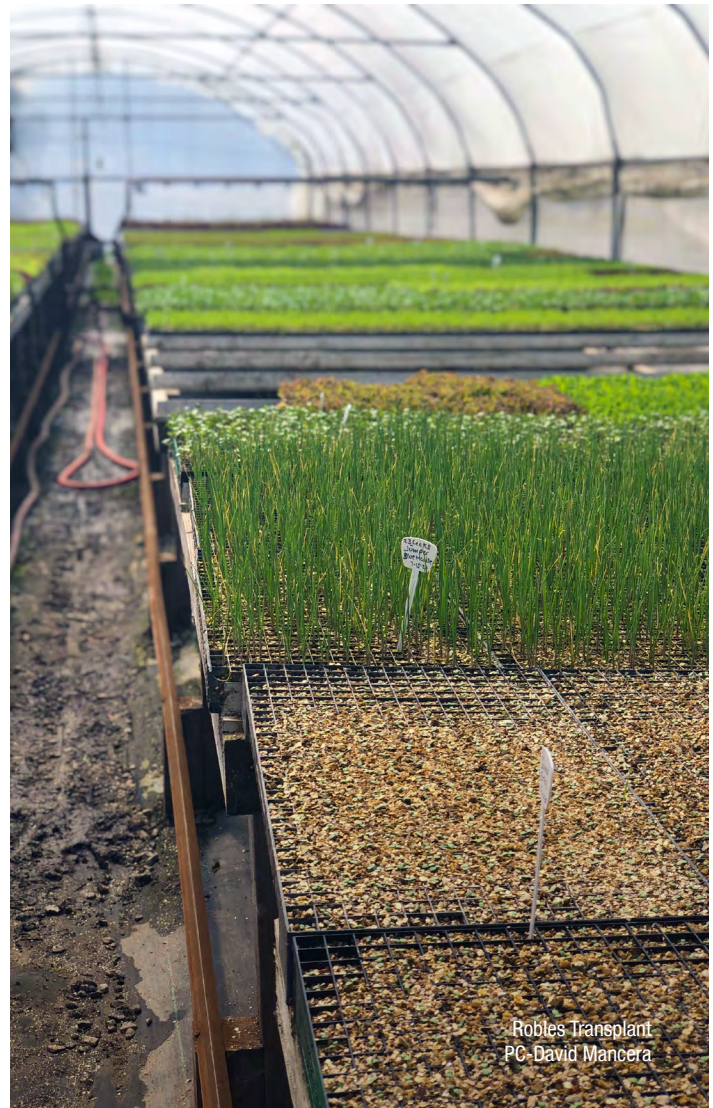
Over the past three years, our team has incubated or supported 26 Ecosystem Building projects within the four regions we serve, designing and testing creative solutions to increase power and equitable access for farmers and ranchers in the marketplace. Our approach to these projects is rooted in collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing among both our community of clients and values-aligned partners. We maintain a long-term outlook toward this work by researching, innovating, learning, and adapting with a commitment to stacking benefits for clients, their communities, and our regional foodshed.

The following information highlights clients' needs, experiences, and practices in the marketplace which inform how we tailor our program in support of them.

## Capital

Funds representing critical investments or lifelines for our clients can often be inaccessible owing to language barriers, eligibility requirements, complex application processes, and extended timelines to apply and receive funds. During the past couple years of wildfires and a global pandemic, we've seen these challenges become particularly burdensome as clients struggled to secure emergency funds in order to keep their businesses afloat. Within our 1:1 business advising, our focus has been to support farmers and ranchers in finding and evaluating funding options as well as assisting them in preparing applications. Looking more broadly at capital access via our Ecosystem Building program, our work entails leveraging our relationships to connect community leaders directly with funders, collaborating with partners on new direct assistance opportunities, and piloting a community capital model that places funds in the hands of producers for their stewardship.

- **While in our program, clients have accessed \$12.8 million in financing through grants and loans**







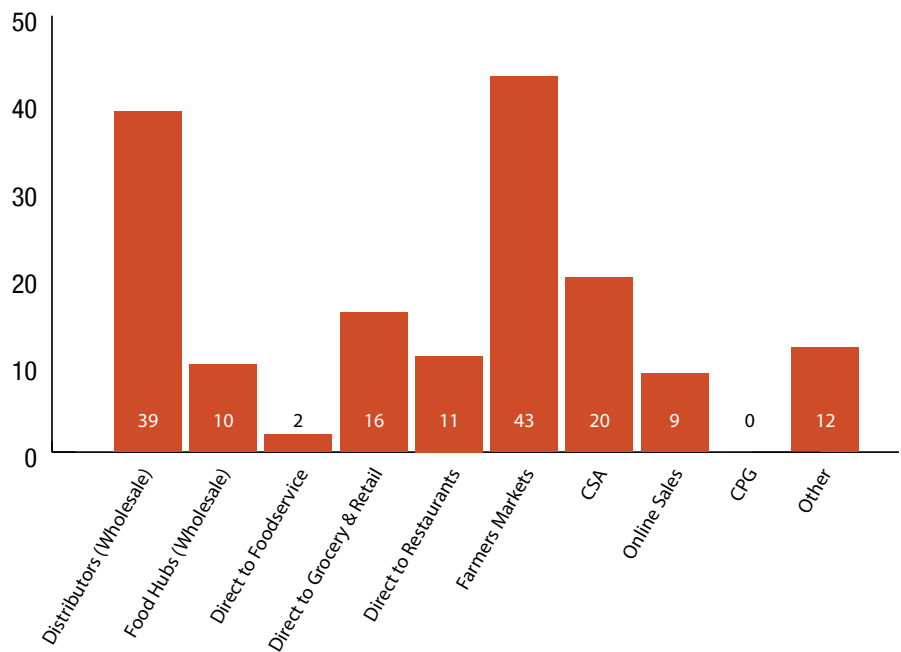
Lunaria Flower Farm  
PC-Daniella Sawaya

## Markets

Each client has a unique market channel mix, which we work with them to assess for their business. The information in the graph represents how our clients get their product to market across the entirety of our client community. In growing our Ecosystem Building program, this data supports us in ascertaining market trends among clients in addition to identifying opportunities for expanding market access.

## 2021 Market Channel Composition

Average market channel size (%) for individual client businesses



# Land

Our clients' goals around land ownership vary based on each individual's business and lived experience, and, for some, can entail exploring their role in Indigenous land rematriation. Whether looking for a mortgage, long-term lease or any other land arrangement, we align our support with what our clients identify as the resonant approach for their business. From these experiences with clients, it continues to be clear to us that long-term land security is a key component for farm viability. As land prices remain exorbitant and considerations around wildfire risk and water accessibility become more acute in California, we are experimenting with and uplifting land access and ownership models through our Ecosystem Building work.

- **14,117 acres stewarded by clients, which increases as our client community grows**
- **40% of clients reported that there was some degree of instability in their land situation while 59% indicated having a stable situation**
- **91.3% of clients actively use practices that can reduce adverse agricultural impacts on the land and ecosystem**
  - Client self-reported practices include low or no-till farming, rotational grazing, cover cropping, native hedgerow planting, dry farming, crop rotation, composting, and more.



Fogline Farm  
PC-West Cliff Creative

## Client Land Tenure

Percentage of clients with lease terms in each range



■ 11+ years	4%
■ 4-10 years	24%
■ 2-3 years	32%
■ Less than 1 year	21%
■ Not stated in lease	10%
■ Not applicable (own land or access land for free)	10%

ECOSYSTEM BUILDING PROJECT:

# RANCHO SAN BENITO

Rancho San Benito was born out of the vision for a Latino farmworker cooperative on the San Mateo Coast. Several years ago, Joaquin Jimenez, along with other members of the Half Moon Bay Latino Advisory Council, advocated for a place for Latino farmworkers to grow and sell their own produce. This advocacy eventually led to the creation of Rancho San Benito, a 501c3 organization whose aim is to address barriers to land and market access by leasing land to Latino farmworkers. The organization offers a space for farmworkers to cultivate and sell their own crops, build soil health, and develop their business skills.

KTA Director Sarah Gearen first connected with Joaquin through Puente de La Costa Sur, the community resource center for Latino families on the coastside.

When the organization was forming in early 2021, Joaquin reached out to Sarah to invite her to join the bilingual board he was assembling. KTA's approach to supporting Rancho San Benito has been to offer resources, connections, and thought partnership, standing in solidarity with the Latino community on the coastside. KTA has been able to leverage our relationships with regional partner and land trust Peninsula Open Space Trust to advocate for the identification of 56-acres of suitable land, a parcel known as Wavecrest Acres, in Half Moon Bay. In early 2022, Rancho San Benito Farm Manager Serafin Avila broke ground at Wavecrest Acres, a major milestone on the path towards fulfilling the vision of Rancho San Benito.



ECOSYSTEM BUILDING PROJECT:

# RANCHO CORRALITOS

As an area denoted by high land costs and a limited availability of small acreage plots, California's Central Coast is a region with significant barriers to organic farmland access, particularly among producers from vulnerable communities. Rancho Corralitos was initiated through a partnership between Kitchen Table Advisors, Dirt Capital, and The People's Land Fund – three organizations motivated to increase equitable land access for Latino farmers in the Central Coast. In 2021, our organizations collaborated on the purchase of a 170-acre parcel of organic farmland in Watsonville with a plan to transfer ownership to a group of Latino immigrant farmers at a reduced cost. Each organization contributed diverse yet complementary strengths to the project – KTA provided knowledge of and connection to the local farming community, Dirt Capital supported with farmland acquisition expertise, and The People's Land Fund brought experience around the land and infrastructure needs of POC farmers and land stewards.

Together, we leveraged an integrated capital strategy that entailed equity financing, grants, and low-cost loans to purchase the land. In the next few years, the land will be transferred to a group of Latino farmers, whom we are currently working with to prepare for the purchase. By understanding the needs of regional Latino farmers and launching this cross-organization collaboration, our organizations were able to innovate around capital and farmland transfer models, shifting the landscape of organic farmland ownership in the Central Coast.



# GROWING IN COMMUNITY

Next year, Kitchen Table Advisors marks 10 years of our organization's journey in community with all of you – our clients, partners, and supporters. The impact of this journey is felt in the reflection and learning that is constantly taking place across this community. It is in listening to, and being guided by, our farmer and rancher clients, pursuing innovative projects with partners, and finding connection with each other through our shared values that we are able to transform our food system together.

In the year ahead, these reflections and learnings will continue to inform us at KTA as we evolve our internal operations alongside our programmatic work. Our key internal focuses include nurturing our organizational structure, culture, and team so that we can keep fulfilling our purpose. Additionally, we are building out critical departments and program areas, elevating the interdependencies across our distributed organizational model. Within our program work specifically, we're developing our program evaluation and efficiency. What this means is that we'll be sharing more about how we define our organizational impact, our ongoing refinement of our program evaluation methods, and how we're remaining accountable to all our stakeholders.

As we think about the road ahead, we are deeply appreciative that you've joined us at the kitchen table. We look forward to more learning, growth, and celebration in uplifting small sustainable farms and ranches together.



Magaña Farm  
PC-Ben Gibbs for the Schmidt Family Foundation



Spreadwing Farm  
PC-Jonathan Fong



Fogline Farm  
PC-West Cliff Creative



Feral Heart Farm  
PC-Paige Green

# CONNECT WITH KTA

Get in touch, stay connected, and learn more about the farmers and ranchers we support.

[kitchentableadvisors.org](http://kitchentableadvisors.org)

[info@kitchentableadvisors.org](mailto:info@kitchentableadvisors.org)



[@kitchentableadvisors](https://www.facebook.com/kitchentableadvisors)



[@KitchenTableAdvisors](https://www.instagram.com/KitchenTableAdvisors)

# CONTRIBUTE WITH KTA

It takes all of us working together to rebuild our food system toward community, justice, and ecological responsibility. If you haven't yet joined us in this work, we appreciate the opportunity to walk alongside you in uplifting small sustainable farms and ranches.

[kitchentableadvisors.org/donate](http://kitchentableadvisors.org/donate)

