

# Headwaters Farm Business Incubator

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*Cultivating Farms &  
Future Stewards*



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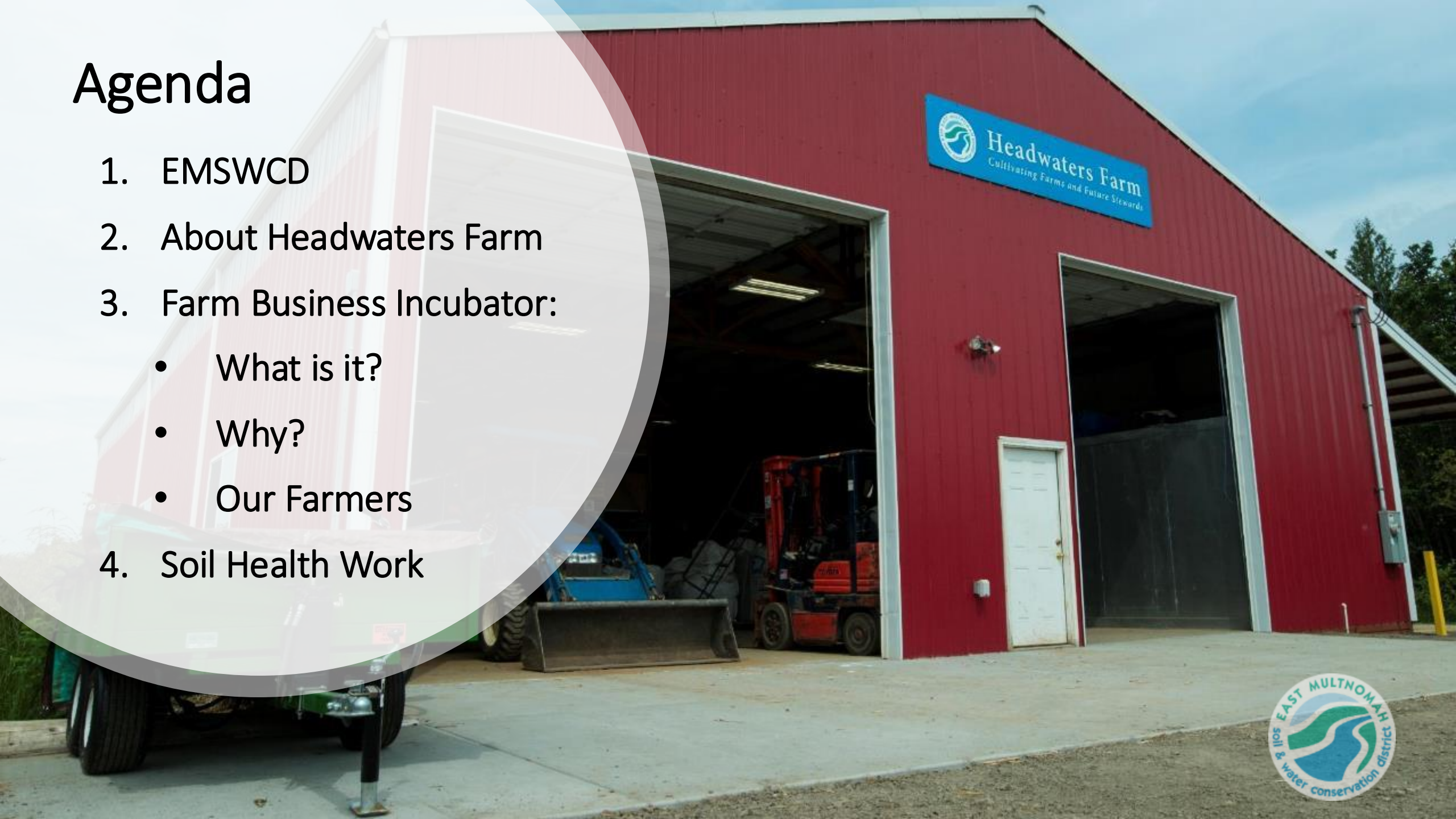
East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District

1/12/2026



# Agenda

1. EMSWCD
2. About Headwaters Farm
3. Farm Business Incubator:
  - What is it?
  - Why?
  - Our Farmers
4. Soil Health Work





# East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

[Rural Residents ▾](#)[Urban Residents ▾](#)[Farmers & Growers ▾](#)[Community Grants ▾](#)[Events ▾](#)[About ▾](#)A close-up photograph showing two hands, one in a blue sweater and one in a brown jacket, holding a clump of dark, rich soil. In the background, a green plant with broad leaves is visible, along with a white garden hose and a yellow watering can.

## We help people care for land and water.

We offer free workshops, expert advice, and practical support to grow and protect healthy yards, gardens, and farms across East Multnomah County.

[LEARN MORE](#)

# East Multnomah SWCD Service Boundaries





# Headwaters Farm





# At Headwaters Farm We...



## Headwaters Farm

1. Amplify Conservation Ag
2. Launch viable, conservation-oriented farm businesses



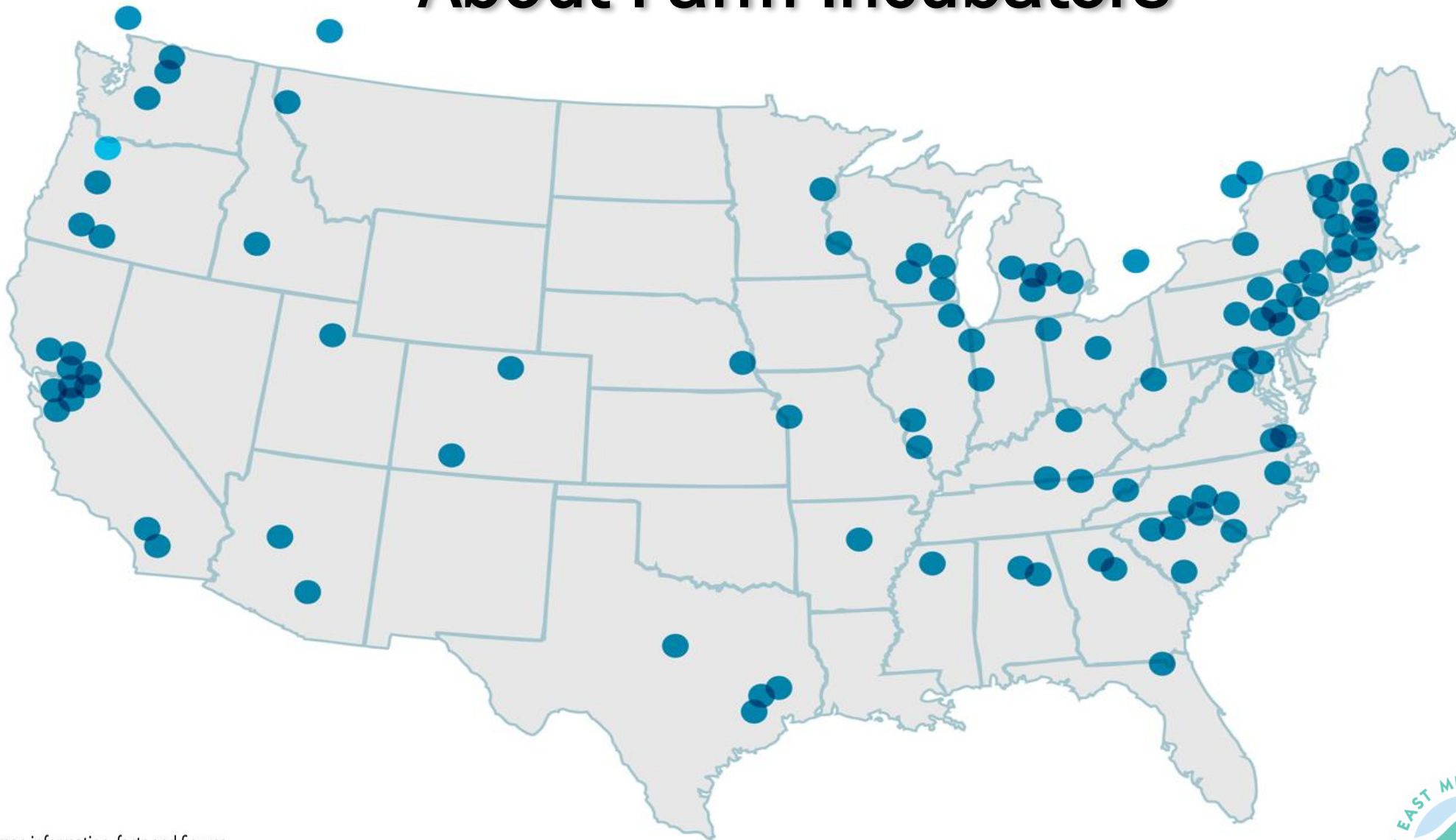
# What is Farm Business Incubator?

***Land-based program designed to launch viable, stewardship-minded farm businesses***





# About Farm Incubators



Locations approximate. All map information, facts and figures  
courtesy of the [National Incubator Farm Training Initiative](http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/food-systems/national-incubator-farm-training-initiative).  
<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/food-systems/national-incubator-farm-training-initiative>





# How Headwaters Works

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- Landlord/lessee
- 5-Yr Tenure
- Experienced Growers
- Direct-to-consumer, Right-Sized Farm
- Address barriers to new growers





# Headwaters

## Lowering Barriers...

1. Cost of entry
2. Production & Business TA
3. Farm networks
4. Market access





# Making farming affordable...

- Graduated land lease
- Equipment/facility rentals
- Purchase support for Equip/infrastructure







# Technical Assistance...

- Soil Health
- Production Support
- Business development – outsourced
- Equipment trainings





# Farm Networks and Community...

- Sharing resources
- Co-marketing
- Bulk purchasing
- Support network!



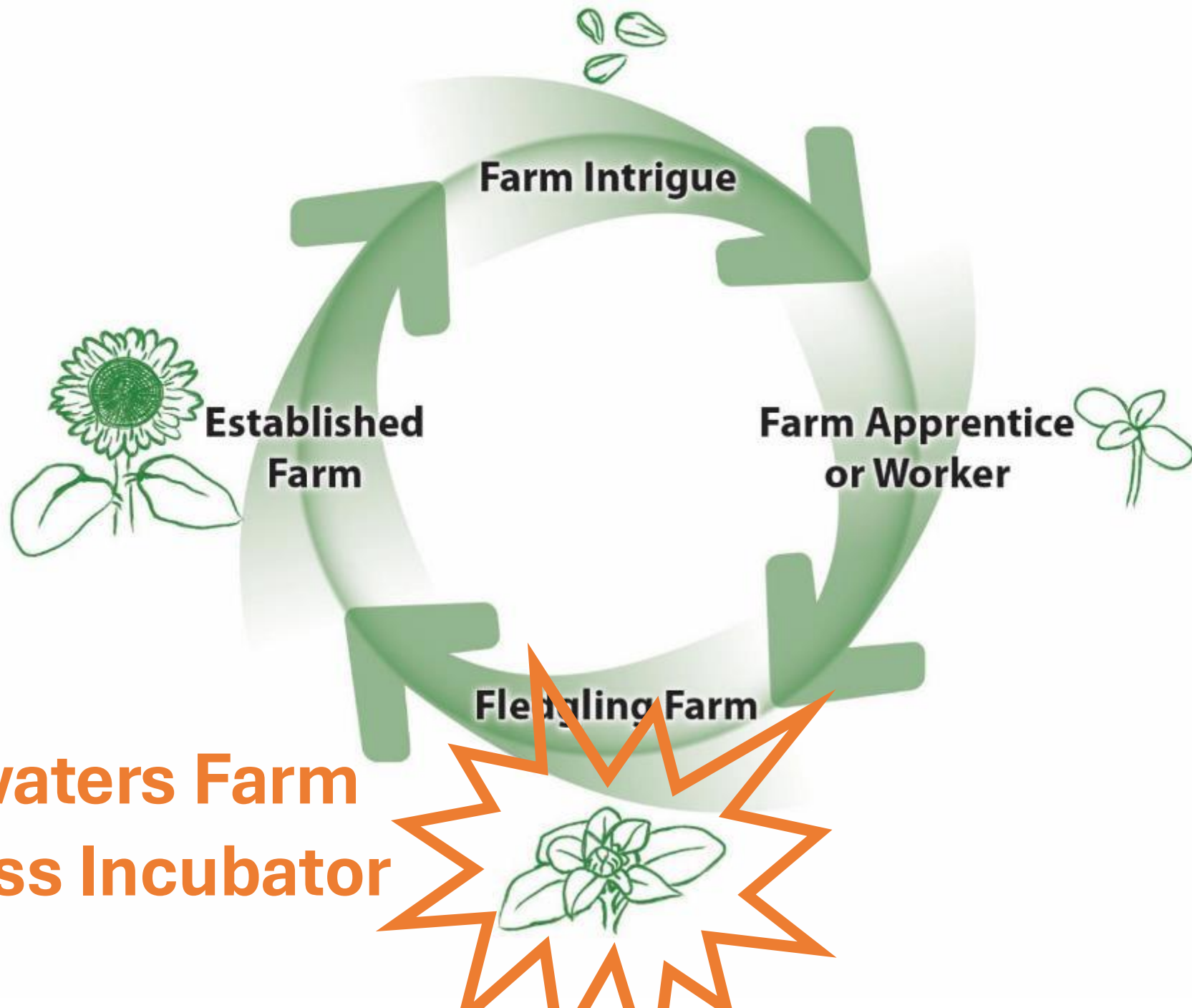


# Market Development...

- Not a primary focus
- Portland Farmers Market Partnership
- Selling the “story” to customers & buyers







# Headwaters Farm Business Incubator





# Why Headwaters?

- CDs work with Farmers
- Aging farmer demographics
- Newer farmers = long tenure of future land management
- **Conservation Project:**
  1. Ample supply of farms/farmers
  2. Keep local farmland active
  3. Make sure it is well stewarded





# Headwaters The Farmers...

- 45 Farms to date:
  - 14% immigrant/refugee
  - 27% BIPOC
  - 61% Female
- 2025 = 7 Farms
- 25 Graduate Farms:
  - 90% Still Farming
  - 70% "Serving District"
- Veg, flowers, herbs, native plants, starts, livestock





# Questions?





# Weeds & Soil Health

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# Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

**Soil Health =**

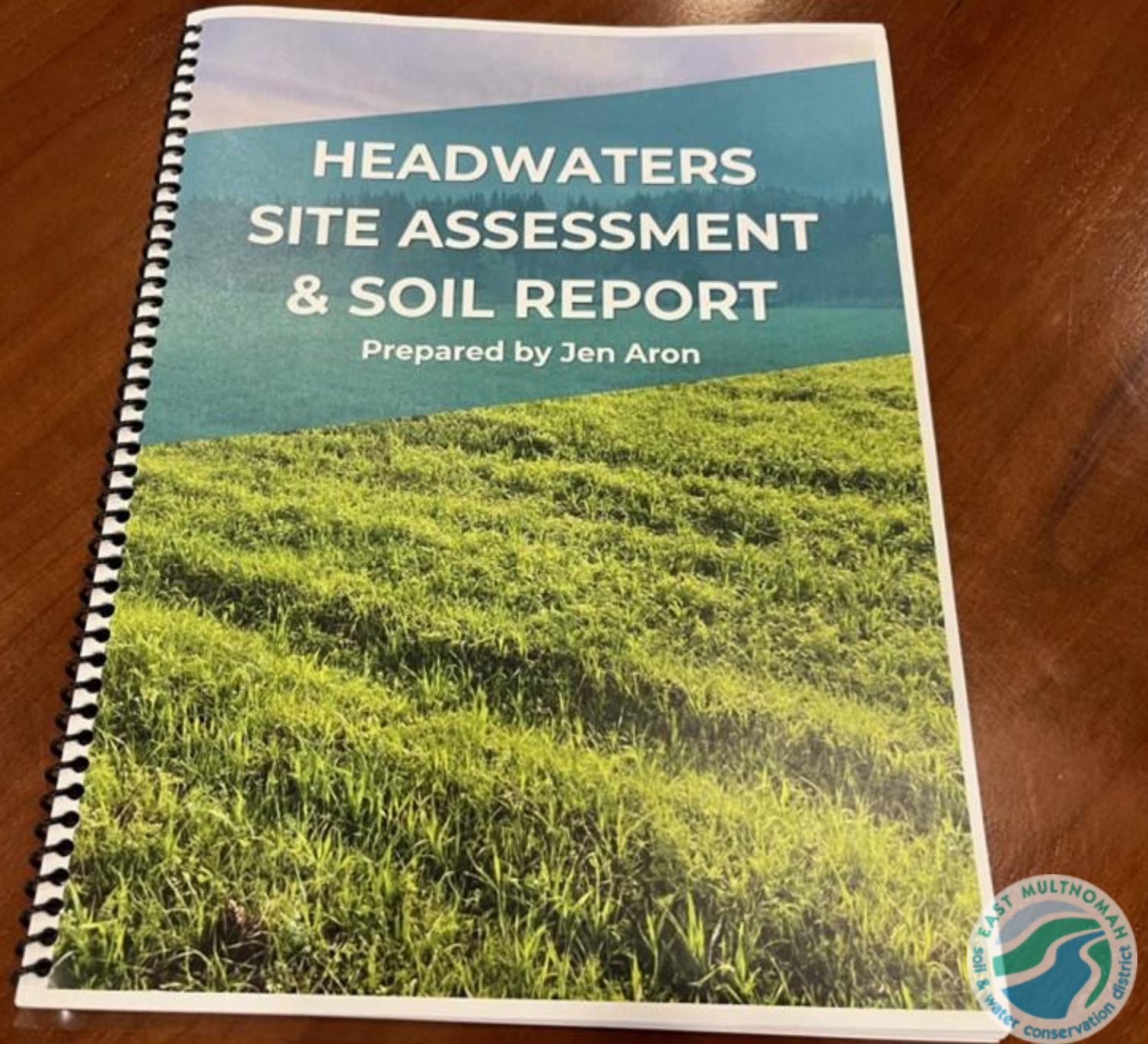
***The ability of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains life***

--Dr. Shannon Cappellazzi



# Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

- Started July, 2024
- Guided by Jen Aron, BRF
- Focused on four pillars:
  - Cover crops
  - Inoculants
  - Nutrient balancing
  - Optimized tillage





# Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

## Inoculants





# Headwaters Soil Health Initiative

**Nutrient Balancing**





2023



2025



**Field 2 VSA  
Worst Conditions**



## Field 2 Visual Soil Assessment – Worst Conditions on Farm

	2023	2025
Depth at 300psi	7.6"	17.5"
Rhizosheaths	None	Yes and mycelium
Nodules	None	Yes, small/sparse
Worms	2	19
Root depth	1.5"	3"





Questions?

