

The Founding Farmers Triple-Green Approach

Sustainability, in its most basic form, is the ability to maintain the resources of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs. Founding Farmers is proud to be pioneering sustainability in the food industry through our food, through our operations and through our LEED Gold design.



Sustainable Food

We Honor the American Family Farmer

The *Founding Farmers* name represents a combinations of ideas: it is a celebration of the land and the American Family Farmer; it is a nod to the founding fathers of our country, many of whom owned and farmed the land that surrounds Washington, D.C.; and it is a place where true, sustainable, farm-grown and harvested American foods reminiscent of traditions from across the land are brought to our guests.

The rich history of American cooking tradition is celebrated through the menus at Founding Farmers, with a philosophy to promote sustainable agriculture and the ways of the American family farmer at every turn and new seasonal choices to reflect the best of what's available from our farm sources. For more than 400 years, and to this day, America's independent family farmers have been both the foundation and the pillars of their communities. They grow high quality food, they are active in civic life, and are essential to the economic vitality of both their hometowns and the nation. As stewards of the land, family farmers work to protect the soil, air, water and biodiversity, in addition to producing high quality, healthy food for everyone. Thus, the Founding Farmers philosophy to operate, serve and live green is the heart of the American Family Farmer.

Our logo captures many related ideas: the two "F's," one facing backwards with an eye to history, the other facing forward with an eye to the future of food and farming; the rows of corn kernels, representing food but also representing people gathering at the community tables that we have in the dining rooms; the seven shades of color of these corn kernels representing the coming together of people from all seven continents.

We walk the talk when it comes to buying food

At Founding Farmers we believe that everyone benefits by all of us knowing about the source of our food and its journey from seed to harvest to table. We exist to promote the products and services of farm families, ranches and fisheries and to educate the public about the long-standing connection between farmers and their historic stewardship of natural resources.

While most restaurants buy from large companies and corporate food factories, at Founding Farmers we stock our kitchen and bar with the freshest ingredients from sustainable farms. When animals and vegetables grow in their natural environments free of chemicals, the result is better tasting food and drink. Using sustainable food is not a new, trendy idea; the best chefs in the world, and certainly here in Washington have long known the secret to a great dish is locally grown seasonal produce and naturally raised meat. In fact, cooking with fresh, natural ingredients has been an old American tradition that began with our founding farmers.

Buying directly from farmers not only allows us to deliver the highest quality food to your table but also helps transform the food economy. Sustainable food production engages methods that produce healthier food, preserve the environment, respect workers, treat animals humanely, and support farming communities. By contrast, the current industry standard for food production is not sustainable because it prevents independent farmers from earning a reasonable living, destroys the environment and delivers low quality food to the American public. The movement for sustainability in the food industry has developed as a direct result of these problems and is quickly becoming a popular alternative to industrial food choices.

Sustainable Design

Sustainable design, which is commonly referred to as green design, ranges from the design of small objects for everyday use to the design of buildings, cities, and the landscape. The aim of sustainable design is to create places, products, and services in a way that reduces use of nonrenewable resources, minimizes environmental impact, and relates people with the natural environment.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Green Building Rating System, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), provides a suite of standards for environmentally sustainable construction. LEED certified places use key resources more efficiently when compared to conventional places, which are simply built to local building codes. LEED certified places are healthier working and living environments, which contributes to higher productivity and improved employee health and comfort.

What makes the design of Founding Farmers sustainable and LEED Gold? Simply put, how we built it.

We Implemented Energy Efficient Concepts: Electricity, plumbing, and mechanical systems consume the most energy throughout the life of a building. With this in mind, Founding Farmers was designed to take advantage of high efficiency lighting and plumbing fixtures to greatly reduce energy and water consumption. Much of the kitchen equipment used to prepare your meal is Energy Star rated. All our plumbing fixtures have flow regulators and we even have waterless urinals. Where we couldn't save energy, we have purchased carbon credits to offset our usage to make us 100% carbon neutral.

We Sourced Locally: Gathering materials for Founding Farmers from regional sources reduced our carbon footprint; it minimized fuel consumption for delivery. All the tabletops and chairs are made from walnut extracted from nearby Harrisburg, PA. and were manufactured in High Point, NC – all within 500 miles of the restaurant. Even the jars of fruits and vegetables are from a farm in West Virginia, canned by the farmer himself.

We Emphasized Reclaimed and Recycled Products: This common sustainable philosophy was put to use through the materials we used and the waste we didn't throw away. The wood flooring downstairs was reclaimed from a textile mill in Georgia and the whitewashed wood used at the front door and the barn wall came from a razed barn in West Virginia. Other materials containing recycled content include the carpet, gypsum board, steel and wall covering. Most impressive of all, greater than 75 percent of our construction waste was diverted from landfills and recycled. We continue this effort by maintaining a recycling and composting program for restaurant waste, along with a biofuel program that reuses the oil from our fryers.

We Shepherded an Intelligent Approach to Sustainability: The idea of stewardship is best described as intelligently using resources to prevent loss of future habitat. In order to balance our demand for wood with forest preservation, we specified wood veneer from certified, sustainably managed forests. To further our commitment, we have put in place a "green cleaning" program to ensure that the chemicals used to clean the restaurant don't negatively impact the environment.

We Focused on Comfort: LEED places great importance on an individual's comfort, and Founding Farmers is no exception. All restaurant seating has access to natural daylight and outdoor views. Chairs and stools, custom designed for us, were built especially for a cozy dining experience. Fresh air is paramount in creating a pleasant environment, so our space receives increased air circulation beyond the required minimum. Paints and coatings used during construction contain low to no volatile organic compounds, so there is no toxic "new car smell." The restaurant was also designed to have several individual zones for air conditioning and heating to allow for greater adjustability. All of these factors promote greater comfort and health for you and our staff.

What makes Founding Farmers, well, Founding Farmers?

Much like the approach to our food, the design intent was to put a twist on the classic farm. The restaurant is a relevant, contemporary space with the warm quality of the old. You'll notice the materials we used are what you would commonly find in a farmhouse: the wood beams, whitewashed barn wood, and standing seam metal roof. We've used them in ways not originally intended, creating more interest. We've also taken classic architectural forms you'd see on a farm and abstracted them, such as the façade of the house you enter and the silo booths you sit within. Look at the floor below you and you'll see it was created to look like the foundation of an old timber framed home.

All the furnishings you see are unique to the restaurant. The pieces of greatest interest are the long community tables, which were crafted from solid walnut slabs, hand-selected just for us. The custom chairs and stools were designed to be spacious and comfortable so you can truly relax during your meal.

Transparency of food to table was an important design concept. Two restaurant components directly recall an original function of the farm while bringing us closer to the source of our food. First is the curing room, which at

different times of the year will display wines, produce, cheeses, and meats that have arrived fresh from local farms. Meanwhile, the adjacent pastry bar allows you to view chefs preparing our incredible apple pies, fabulous cakes, and banana splits.

There are also some playful touches added to the design. Molly Dakota, the lamb atop our welcome station, was custom carved by Noella Cotnam for Founding Farmers. The fluffy clouds and flock of birds flying up the staircase add another touch of whimsy. A reclaimed barn ladder sculpture sits in the front window, rising to connect the two floors.

Our local artist, Tom Ruttkay, left his touch on the restaurant by painting the exposed columns, bar front, and restroom walls. In fact, all the designs on the bar front originate from agricultural botanical drawings, barn stars, and quilt designs. The restroom quotes are from old turn-of-the-century publications on manners and common courtesy.

Sustainable Operations

A sustainable operation, or “going green,” refers to the internal practices of the restaurant as a business. The goal of employing sustainable practices is to reduce waste and use our resources more wisely.

The Green Restaurant Association, in its mission to create a more ecologically sustainable restaurant industry, has created a certification system to identify restaurants that meet its standards of green operations.

What makes Founding Farmers a certified “Green” restaurant?

We are proud to have accomplished 13 steps of the Green Restaurant Association’s certification system. Some of the areas in which we are operating in a sustainable ways are:

Conservation efforts. We use energy-efficient appliances throughout our kitchen and office, which reduce our usage of water and energy.

Pollution production: We utilize an energy efficient water purifier in house to bottle our own water that allows us to eliminate bottled water waste. Additionally, we use only recycled disposable products that are biodegradable.

Waste management: We adhere to strict recycling standards and compost all of our food waste.

The Fruitful Collaboration to Create Founding Farmers:

American Family Farmers, VSAG & CORE architecture + design

A collective of 40,000 American Family Farmers owns the restaurant. This group engaged VSAG (Vucurevich Simons Advisory Group) and Washington, DC based award-winning firm CORE to develop their idea, which simply put, was to have a profitable restaurant that positively represented and promoted American Family Farmers. CORE provided design + architecture services and collaborated with VSAG on the brand development. VSAG is the management company for Founding Farmers.