



Empowering Growers To Thrive With Less Water

Dry Farming Institute in 2025: Resilient Roots Support New Shoots

Greetings!

Wishing you Happy Holidays as the sun begins to set on 2025! It has been an eventful year for the Dry Farming Institute with big transitions in funding and staffing, while engaging in intentional strategic visioning & planning with our community. The sunflower here felt symbolic for this year - it was knocked over by a tractor, and while the roots were still intact, new shoots started to grow against gravity, aka gravitropism!



Looking ahead we are preparing to turn up our light and local presence in 2026 with two new staff members! Read on to learn more and please forward on to others. Thank you!

As you make your year-end gifts, please consider supporting the Dry Farming Institute!

We're excited to build an organization focused on:

Our Vision: to empower growers to thrive with less water

Our Values transparency, communication, innovation, and collaboration

2025 Successes

Thank you for being in community with us!

Western Water Resilience Collaborative

Over the past couple of years we have been working with American Farmland Trust, Oregon State University Extension, the Washington Water Trust, the USDA's California Climate Hub and Northwest Climate Hub, as well as multiple partner farms and organizations to advance water resilience in the west. Here are some highlights of what we have been able to accomplish together:

- [Advancing Water Resilience in the West](#) - project summary
- [Water Resilience in Action: Case Studies from the West Coast](#)
- [Water Resilience Workshops for Western Ag Advisors](#)



DFI Strategic Vision & Direction

DFI engaged in strategic visioning and planning process this year with [Amy Stork Consulting](#). We have integrated the input that many of you provided via interviews, focus groups or by filling out our survey that went out in July into our [DFI Survey Summary](#) and [DFI Strategic Direction](#).

Expanding Our Leadership: New Staff & Board Members!

We are so excited to announce that we are growing from a staff of one to a team of three **starting in February 2026!** Learn more below!

Also, Lance Young joined our board this fall and is now DFI's treasurer. We are so grateful to have an enthusiastic and very well qualified treasurer! Learn more about Lance here on our [board and staff page](#).





Gabrielle returns to the dry farming community as our **Executive Director**. Dr. Roesch-McNally brings two decades of work in agriculture, at a national and local scale. Gabrielle first worked with the dry farming community as a Fellow with the USDA Climate Hubs where she engaged in social science research on the power of participatory research. She left the Hubs to lead the Women for the Land program at American Farmland Trust and built their nascent Social Science Research program. Gabrielle brings extensive leadership, program development, fundraising and research experience to the agriculture and climate sector. She lives in Albany Oregon with her partner, daughter, dog and bountiful chickens.

"I am incredibly excited to bring my work full circle with dry farming as I 100% believe in the critical importance of working at the nexus of water and climate while seeking solutions that support farmers to thrive in uncertain and challenging times. I am excited to build and strengthen partnerships in the region and beyond."

-Gabrielle Roesch-McNally



Cassandra returns to the dry farming community as **Communications Director**, bringing experience in dry farming research, small-scale agriculture, and non-formal and formal community-based education.

She previously supported the OSU Dry Farming Project by co-hosting virtual field tours, launching the YouTube channel, and organizing stakeholder workshops. A former instructor at OSU, she holds an M.S. in Agricultural Education and training in facilitation and conflict resolution. Originally from the Bahamas, Cassandra is passionate about connection, resilience, and amplifying community voices.

"I'm thrilled to be joining the DFI team and reconnecting with our vibrant community of practice. Some may remember me from the early days of virtual field tours during the pandemic, and I can't wait to breathe new life into those conversations, amplify grower voices, and keep learning alongside all of you."

-Cassandra Waterman



Amy as the founder and current Director of the Dry Farming Institute (DFI) is very excited to be moving into a **Program Director** role and working with this amazing team to build capacity at DFI.

Previously she worked with OSU Extension Small Farms Program in the Southern Willamette Valley 2011-2022, where she initiated the OSU Dry Farming Project in 2014, the Dry Farming Collaborative in 2016, founded DFI in 2019, and was hired as the Director in 2023.

As Program Director, Amy is looking forward to investigating and exploring the potential for dry farming through land-based demonstrations and research partnerships.

"I am so grateful to have an opportunity to expand DFI's program work and spend more time doing what I'm good at in the field and in our community with this incredible team."

-Amy Garrett



DFI In the Field:

We see our land-based work as a living laboratory for dry farming innovation, demonstration and connection with the land and community.

In 2025, DFI participated in to several research projects, hosted a tour with produce buyers from Market of Choice, dry farmed 100 lbs of seed for the [Dry Farming Adaptive Collection at Adaptive Seeds](#) and donated 547 lbs of produce to the South Corvallis Food Bank!

Events & Opportunities

February 11th from 9-noon Dry Farming Collaborative Winter Convening. Save the Date!
More details soon on the [DFI Events page!](#)

The [Western Arid Grower Network](#) (WAGN) is a new community for small-scale vegetable growers in arid places. This year they will host several, free online gatherings with presentations and discussion focused on growing in *dry, extreme* climates.

Upcoming sessions include:

January 12 - "Improving summer germination, transplant success, and yield" with Sarah Benimana of the University of Hawai'i, Manoa. (Don't let the Hawai'i part fool you--she has plenty of arid growing knowledge!)

February 9 - "Humidity, Temperature, and Soil Water Tension in Arid Agriculture: Fundamental Concepts and Monitoring to Empower On-Farm Decision Making" with Jacob Hurst also of the University of Hawai'i Manoa.

For more info and registration for WAGN series visit: <https://aridgrowers.org/speakers-topics/>

February 21st - [Oregon Small Farms Conference](#) - Our new Executive Director, Gabrielle Roesch-McNally, will be tabling and presenting in the Western Water Resilience Collaborative session. Come say hi!

Do you have dry farming or water resilience events you would like to share here?
Please email info@dryfarming.org with details and we will add it to our [events](#) page and share via our enews and/or social media!

Help us grow our impact in 2026 -- support our work today!

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Thank you from our DFI Board and staff:



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