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THE WORLD'S FIRST FREE PUBLIC URBAN AGRICULTURE DATABASE TO SUPPORT URBAN GROWERS AND EXPAND HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION

NEW YORK, NY (Tuesday, October 27, 2015) – The Design Trust for Public Space and Farming Concrete present the Farming Concrete Data Collection Toolkit, the first-ever public interface for collecting, tracking and analyzing urban agriculture production and a variety of benefits that community gardens, urban farms, and school gardens generate worldwide. The toolkit is a product of the final phase of the Design Trust’s six-year-long initiative, Five Borough Farm, to understand and expand the benefits of urban agriculture in New York City.

The Farming Concrete Data Collection Toolkit features:

- **A user-friendly manual** that includes field-tested, simple, and realistic methods of generating and collecting data about the things that matter most at each garden and farm; and accompanying instructional videos;
- **Barn** – an online data portal for farmers and gardeners to input and track their production internally;
- **Mill** – an online data aggregator that provides public access to raw numbers and reports for practitioners, researchers, policymakers, funders, and anyone with interest in urban agriculture.

The project team, with a core group of farmers and gardeners from New York City, developed twenty methods that can be cheaply and conveniently replicated at any farm or garden, to measure gains in five critical categories:

1. Food production is measured by (i) crop and (ii) harvest counts;
2. Health benefits are measured by (iii) changes in attitude, (iv) good moods, (v) healthy eating, and (vi) beauty of the garden;
3. Social benefits are measured by participation by (vii) geography, (viii) task and (ix) project, (x) skills & knowledge in the garden and (xi) sharing with other gardens, and (xii) reach of programs;
4. Environmental benefits are measured by landfill waste diversion by (xiii) weight or (xiv) volume, compost production by (xv) weight or (xvi) volume, and rainwater harvesting by (xvii) surface area or (xviii) volume;
5. Economic benefits are measured by (xix) market sales and (xx) food donations.

“It is important for us to be serving the community as best as we can and to be able to track and share that with the people who fund and support us, as well as find ways to streamline and make our operation more efficient to better serve a wider group of people,” said East New York Farms! project director David Vigil.

“The Farming Concrete Data Collection toolkit generates cutting-edge summary reports with charts and graphs that are easy to print, email, and share with other gardeners, with policymakers, and with potential funders. Gardens and farms create access to fresh and healthy produce in areas with few grocery stores or markets, promote biodiversity and create vibrant habitats for non-human species, and foster the development of tight-knit communities empowered to participate in local democratic processes,” said Five Borough Farm III Outreach Fellow Philip Silva.
“There are now over 285 urban farms and community gardens in 43 cities nationwide and across the globe that contribute data to the Farming Concrete Data Collection Toolkit. So far 75,000 pounds of food have been harvested and 4,000 pounds of compost have been recorded. While numbers can’t possibly describe the immense value community gardens bring to neighborhoods, the Toolkit is a huge milestone in understanding the significance of these spaces,” said Farming Concrete Project Director Mara Gittleman.

“Urban agriculture crosses so many policy areas and environmental issues. There has been no data available to clearly understand the value of urban agriculture until now. Design Trust’s work will advance how the government conceptualizes, prioritizes and supports the food system through urban agriculture citywide with funding, land, fencing, soil, compost and technical assistance. The Toolkit builds on the grassroots momentum that would help urban agriculture enthusiasts in tackling regulatory and financial challenges in New York City,” said Design Trust Executive Director Susan Chin.

**Design Trust Fellows**
A team of Design Trust Fellows, each an expert in her or his own field, has led the research, design, and planning work for the *Five Borough Farm project Phase III* and the creation of the Farming Concrete Data Collection Toolkit. They are Outreach Fellows Liz Barry, Sheryll Durrant, D Rooney, and Philip Silva; and Video Fellow Christopher Englese. [http://designtrust.org/projects/five-borough-farm-iii/team/](http://designtrust.org/projects/five-borough-farm-iii/team/)

**Farming Concrete**
Launched in 2009, Farming Concrete is an open, community-based research project started by gardeners to measure how much food is grown in New York City’s community gardens and school gardens. Farming Concrete is fiscally sponsored by the Open Space Institute, Inc. as part of their Citizen Action Program. [http://farmingconcrete.org/](http://farmingconcrete.org/)

**Design Trust for Public Space**
The Design Trust for Public Space is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the future of public space in New York City. Our projects bring together city agencies, community groups and private sector experts to make a lasting impact—through design—on how New Yorkers live, work and play. Design Trust’s projects jumpstarted the High Line’s conversions from derelict railway to a green corridor of open space, activated innovation for the first custom-built *Taxi of Tomorrow*, and developed the sustainability guidelines that became the precursor to New York City’s Local Law and PlaNYC. [http://designtrust.org/](http://designtrust.org/)

*Five Borough Farm III* was made possible by:

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