



24 June 2013

Members of the Sustainable Food Policy Board
c/o Austin City Hall
Austin, TX 78701



Dear Commissioners:

We appreciate the work done by the Sustainable Food Policy Board over the last few months on the issues pertaining to urban farms in Austin. As you know, the majority of Austin's urban farms are in or near East Austin, in the shadow of downtown, and are less than five acres. We have held ourselves to a high standard to be an integral part of the community, and do so by:

- Austin Urban Farms use only organic methods to maintain and produce crops and proteins, eliminating all synthetics and chemicals. The resulting food is safe, fresh and nutritious.
- Austin Urban Farms are good stewards of the land, collecting rainwater and protecting the soil. The farms recycle, reuse and adapt materials to new uses.
- Austin Urban Farms care about our community. The farms hold regular markets, host school field trips, farm tours, supper clubs and fundraisers; all of which provide safe, healthy and educational community gathering points.
- Austin Urban Farms bring dollars to Austin through agritourism. Visitors that come from out of town to see the farms subsequently spend money on hotels, rental cars, sightseeing, personal purchases, restaurants and bar visits.



SPRINGDALE FARM

Unfortunately, the current recommendations by the SFPB include too many limitations that threaten to stifle the growth of urban farms. In order to keep doing what they do best -- farming and supporting our community -- Austin Urban Farms urges the City to make the following changes or additions to code:

- Allow sales and delivery (retail and wholesale) of eggs, produce and protein grown on the urban farms and/or on other land owned and farmed by the urban farmer without restrictive percentages.
- Allow the raising, processing and sales of animal protein: eggs, rabbits, fowl and fish (through aquaponics).
- Allow sales of local third party, agricultural associated, products including coffee, produce, meat, dairy, eggs, bakery goods, etc., without restrictions on amounts of products sold.
- Allow Austin Urban Farms to host events including nonprofit fundraisers, weddings, supper clubs, garden clubs and school groups. This provides both a vital revenue stream and an important avenue for helping educate the community about our local farms.
- Allow more than one dwelling, as per current property zoning allows, for farm stays, bed and breakfast rentals and intern lodging.

- Allow classes such as composting, gardening, cooking/canning, harvesting/processing protein and animal husbandry.
- Allow independent craftspeople, artisans, artists and musicians on farm stand days at the discretion of the farm.
- Do not limit the number of employees Austin Urban Farms can hire.
- Do not place a maximum or minimum acreage for an urban farm.

We respectfully ask for your consideration and support for our homes, our farms and our community.

Thank you for your continued support,



Dorsey Barger
HausBar Farm



Carol Ann Sayle
Boggy Creek Farm



Paula Foore
Springdale Farm



Stephanie Scherzer
Rain Lily Farm



Susan Hausmann
HausBar Farm



Glenn Foore
Springdale Farm