

In January of 2013, Laura Fields founded the Delaware Valley Fields Foundation (DVFF) as an organization committed to helping the region's agricultural industry.

Laura established the Foundation's mission with two main objectives. The first was to help provide an economic jumpstart for local farmers by creating partnerships and opportunities with locally producing agricultural industries. The second was to educate the public on the important role that local agriculture plays in the well-being of the region.

Laura has identified the fast-growing whiskey distilling industry as a potential growth partner for Pennsylvania farmers. Her foundation works to create a bridge between the two industries.

To accomplish the goal of being an economic catalyst, Laura created the innovative SeedSpark Project™. The first task of the SeedSpark initiative is to revive lost cereal grains and bring them back into full scale production. For the first years of the program, the focus has been on rye - an historically important whiskey grain for Pennsylvania. The Delaware Valley Fields Foundation has partnered with Penn State University's College of Agricultural Sciences to revive a heritage grain called Rosen Rye. That partnership has turned a handful of seeds into over 100,000 pounds of Rosen rye (2022's harvest). This grain has now been shown to contribute exceptional flavor in whiskey, and its economic viability looks very promising.

By providing the initial funding and resources that wouldn't otherwise be possible, Laura Fields and the Delaware Valley Fields Foundation's SeedSpark™ Project is giving farmers the opportunity to create regionally exceptional products with worldwide appeal. The SeedSpark™ Project continues to identify heritage grains that can thrive in the Pennsylvania's diverse microclimates and serve as a benefit to the Pennsylvania's agricultural economy.

The second phase of the Delaware Valley Fields Foundation's mission is reminding the local region about the importance of local farming for

the region's economy. The Foundation does this primarily through special events that highlight farming and local production.

The nexus of this idea is an event created by Laura Fields called the American Whiskey Convention in Philadelphia. The AWC brings together whiskey distillers, farmers, maltsters and local artisans in the largest event of its type in the country. The general public attends this grand tasting event to sample the finest American-made whiskeys in the country while meeting the farmers who grow the grains used in their production. Each attendee learns that their favorite whiskey would not exist without grain farmers and a successful agricultural economy to support each distillery.

By following through on Laura Fields' vision, the DVFF hopes to play a role in helping regional agriculture be a part of the Delaware Valley's economic success.

A native of the Delaware Valley, Laura holds a degree in Fine Arts from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She has worked with different farming related activities for the past 20 years. She also hosts historical whiskey events and is often called upon for her expertise in American and Pennsylvanian whiskey history.