



by Chris Dubuque & Jen Matto

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# Lowcountry Farmland

above photo: Thornhill Farm "Chucktown Acres" located in McClellanville, SC

For most of its history, agriculture virtually defined South Carolina, as its favorable climate led to a diverse crop concentration and robust agricultural economy. Today, as stated on the South Carolina Farm Bureau website, there are more than 25,000 farms in South Carolina amounting to nearly 5 million acres of farmland. Some of the best farmland for crop production can be found right here in the Lowcountry, where the ground is naturally moist with medium-textured soils ideal for agriculture. Unfortunately, we are seeing a concerning trend as rural and agricultural lands are quickly disappearing throughout the nation, especially here in South Carolina. According to the American Farmland Trust, South Carolina is one of the top ten states most threatened by agricultural land loss. In a blog titled "How Farmland Fuels the Lowcountry's Economy," Victoria Bock with Lowcountry Land Trust points out some interesting facts. She states, "According to a 2023 study by the American Farmland Trust, agriculture contributes over \$2 billion annually to the Lowcountry economy, making it the region's largest industry. Despite this, we are losing an estimated 200 acres per day of agricultural and forested lands." Aside from its economic impact, local farms can also provide environmental benefits, improve food safety, encourage healthy eating, and bring communities together. While the Lowcountry has some of the most productive farmland in the state, development and urban sprawl continue to increase and put stress on the farming industry. The Greenbelt Department partners with organizations like Lowcountry Land Trust and has helped fund a significant amount of conservation easements that forever protect



Chucktown Acres storefront

productive farmland. Conservation easements protect agricultural practices and valuable natural resources while allowing the owner to stay on the land. In addition, fee simple acquisitions can be funded like Thornhill Farm, a 93.96-acre farm purchased by Lowcountry Land Trust and currently managed by Chucktown Acres. The farm serves as a regenerative agricultural model, but also provides an opportunity to educate the public and raise awareness about the importance of saving the nation's farms. To read more about the impact farmland has on the Lowcountry economy and what you can do to help support local farms click here.

## Cannonball Jellyfish everywhere!



If you've been to any shoreline in South Carolina, chances are you may have seen these jellyfish washed up on the beach. These ocean drifters are at the mercy of the currents and are quite predictable. According to SCDNR, they are the most common jellyfish in our area and one of the least venomous. Leatherback turtles are the main predator of this jellyfish. For more information about this odd shaped jellyfish click here.

## Upcoming Events

in and around Charleston County



**Early Morning Bird Walk**  
West Ashley Park  
April 20th - 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.



**Dolphin Count**  
Daniel Island  
April 20th - 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.



**Painting at the Angel Oak**  
Johns Island  
April 24th - 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.