



Agriculture and Food Systems Fellows Program

2023 Student Profiles

Name: Abbie Jammeh

Hometown: Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Major: Biological Sciences; Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

Expected Graduation date: May 2024

As an AFS Fellow, I worked with two programs - the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed) in Providence. The programs are offered to people with limited resources, and aim to teach the basics of nutrition, food safety, shopping on a budget, and food preparation skills to clients using hands-on activities and practical, easy-to-understand materials. Most of my work was nutrition-based and with youth; I also facilitated programs at farmers markets and other community-based events. Agriculture and food systems is a fascinating field to study and explore because it offers a lot of room for growth and creativity; I am deepening my connection with my family history of owning farm lands through this experience. I work as a URI Resident Assistant, which I love because it allows me to meet new people and help them feel at home—something that can be challenging at times, especially for a freshman. I also participate as a CELS ambassador, where I get to talk about my experiences as a CELS student and what it's like to pursue higher education at URI. I enjoy traveling, discovering new locations, cultures, and ways of living outside of school. I'd like to travel the world someday.



Name: Olivia Massotti

Hometown: Rumford, Rhode Island

Major(s): Animal Science; Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

Expected Graduation date: May 2024



As an AFS Fellow, I worked with Dr. Katherine Petersson, a professor in the URI Department of Fisheries and Animal Veterinary Science, to support research about gastrointestinal parasite management in small ruminants. The purpose of the project is to provide the underserved and underrepresented agricultural communities with new parasite management information and educational opportunities to increase their overall production success and sustainability through outreach and education. I like to spend as much of my free time as I can outdoors, whether it is working or spending time with friends and family. Livestock animals are my passion, so I try to surround myself with opportunities to learn about them and take care of them when I can. I have worked at Peckham Farm (URI's animal farm on campus) in the past and I have also been a teaching assistant in animal science classes for the last year. When I'm not with animals, I enjoy activities such as baking and gardening.



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2023 Student Profiles

Name: Orla Peck

Where are you from: Westerly Rhode Island

Major: Landscape Architecture

Expected Graduation date: May 2025

Ocean Hour Farms' mission is to be a center for educational scientific research as well as a demonstration of regenerative agriculture techniques. It was established in 2022 on the former site of the SVF Foundation. I assisted Ocean Hour Farm with a planting design for the farm entry, specifying plants to support pollinators and birds to align with the organizational mission. I have been enjoying learning how to identify all sorts of plants through my academic studies. In my free time, I like to do all sorts of outdoor activities including hiking, biking, backpacking, kayaking, and climbing. I am involved with the climbing club at URI and I am the secretary of the biking club which I helped create during my freshman year. I also enjoy art in all forms including painting, drawing, and photography.



Name: Jenna Salem

Hometown: Douglas, Massachusetts

Major: Biological Sciences; Sustainability

Expected Graduation date: May 2024

As an AFS fellow, I worked with Dr. Rebecca Brown, a professor in the Department of Plant Sciences and Entomology, supporting an effort to expand the reach of URI vegetable production trials so that they are more accessible and digestible to the agricultural community. I worked on the media development team, creating posts, working on social media publications, and writing articles; I also assisted with field work. Most of my free time is dedicated to practicing and training with the URI Swimming and Diving team. When I have a chance, I love to spend time outdoors, drawing, painting, and crocheting. I try to go to the beach at least once a week and take advantage of the University's close proximity to the ocean. I am also a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, where I assist and contribute to discussions about improving the athletic experience; whether it be advocating

for access to nutritious snacks to enabling better access to mental health resources. My favorite volunteer group I am a part of is Rhody Reads, where I am able to visit local elementary schools and read stories and books to the school children.



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2023 Student Profiles

Name: Amy Voigt

Where are you from: Byram, New Jersey

Major: Biological Sciences; Psychology

Expected Graduation date: May 2024

As an AFS Fellow, I worked with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation's Director of Food Strategy, Julianne Stelmaszyk, assisting with the implementation of RI's food strategy, otherwise known as *Relish Rhody*. I shared stories of successes of different RI food businesses on our new and improved website, and promoted a variety of RI Commerce resources that are available to businesses across the state. My work aimed to advance the cultivation of a more equitable, robust, and resilient local food system. In addition to being a Fellow, I served as a research assistant in the Big Data and Eating Decisions Lab, where interventions to promote healthy eating behaviors in different populations are developed. I volunteer with URI Habitat for Humanity and Service CORPS clubs; my interests in agriculture, food, and people follow me in my free time activities. I manage the social media for my local hometown cafe, and love learning about gardening, nutrition, eating behavior, and psychology.



Name: Ella Zalewsky

Where are you from: South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Major: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems: Food and Society

Expected Graduation date: May 2024



As an AFS Fellow, I worked with the City of Providence Healthy Communities Office, which works to solidify positive health policy, health promotion, and substance use disorder prevention in Providence. Working with community organizations on projects including the Farm to School Plan, Senior Health and Wellness Program, and many others, the office emphasizes educating youth, the public, and senior citizens about a variety of health-related topics in order to further equalize equitable access and knowledge to improve lifestyles. My work included organizing meetings, discussing first-hand accounts with important members of the local community food system, and developing progress reports based on provided information. In my free time, I enjoy working out at the university's gym or spending time outside at either the beaches or hiking.



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2023 Student Profiles

Name: Westin Palumbo

Where are you from: Coventry, Rhode Island

Major: Environmental Science and Management; Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

Expected Graduation date: May 2025

As an AFS Fellow, I worked with the Eastern RI Conservation District's AgInnovation Farm in Portsmouth, RI. The Farm is part of an agricultural initiative founded to combat food insecurity on Aquidneck Island and promote youth education on sustainable practices and biological concepts. I assisted with crop and property maintenance, helping to identify production issues and design potential solutions, and assisted with the educational programs conducted in cooperation with the Portsmouth and Middletown school districts.

For me, the most interesting aspect of the AFS industry is the innovation potential of modeling food production after ecological systems and interactions. Agroecology and the implementation of natural synergy to improve the efficiency of production systems is an incredibly diverse field of study that I can't wait to pursue through my fellowship and beyond. In my free time, I enjoy cycling, hiking, reading, playing games, spending time with friends, singing, and listening to music. I also enjoy volunteering and working with animals, which I have done jointly in the past and hope to do again in the future. On campus, I'm a member of Engineers for a Sustainable World, where I contribute to various projects and events and have been developing an initiative to improve recycling on campus. Off campus, I'm in the process of becoming a member of the Coventry Land Trust, where I hope to be able to bring an ecological and scientific approach to land management in my hometown.

