



# DUKE FARMS COMMUNITY GARDEN 2024 Handbook





*Welcome to the*  
**Duke Farms  
Community Garden!**

The mission of the Duke Farms Community Garden is to offer members the opportunity to grow fresh, delicious food while connecting with nature and your community. The Duke Farms Community Garden follows organic practices - everything we teach and do is about working in harmony with nature. The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidelines and rules to yield an abundant and positive gardening experience.



**DORIS DUKE  
FOUNDATION**

Duke Farms is a center of the Doris Duke Foundation, who seeks to build a more creative, equitable and sustainable future by investing in artists and the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research, child well-being and great mutual understanding among diverse communities. For more information, visit [www.dorisduke.org](http://www.dorisduke.org).

**HAPPY GARDENING SEASON!**



## WHO WE ARE

# Meet the Team

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**Meghan Martin**

*Community Garden Coordinator*

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**Cathy House**

*Community Garden Assistant*

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**Jeff Geist**

*Manager of Community &  
Professional Education*

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

1112 Dukes Parkway West Hillsborough, NJ 08844

**Website:** [www.dukefarms.org/cg](http://www.dukefarms.org/cg)

**Members Only Webpage:**  
[dukefarmscommunitygarden.wildapricot.org](http://dukefarmscommunitygarden.wildapricot.org)

**Email:** [cg@dukefarms.org](mailto:cg@dukefarms.org)

**Security:** 908-243-3600

*Regularly scheduled office hours with Garden staff and Garden Mentors are available through the season if you have questions or want to seek gardening advice.*



# Duke Farms Community Garden

Legend  
Specialty Gardens

Contact us at [cg@dukefarms.org](mailto:cg@dukefarms.org)

## Neighborhoods

- Tomatoville
- Cauliflower Corner
- Turnip Town
- Garlic Grove
- Cucumber City
- Rutabaga Ridge
- Broccoli Boro

- Education Plot
- Giving Gardens
- Accessible Plots
- Garden waste

Well shed



Staff shed



Donation Station



Picnic area



Composting toilet



Accessible parking



Education Plot



Play Kitchen



Trading Post



Silos



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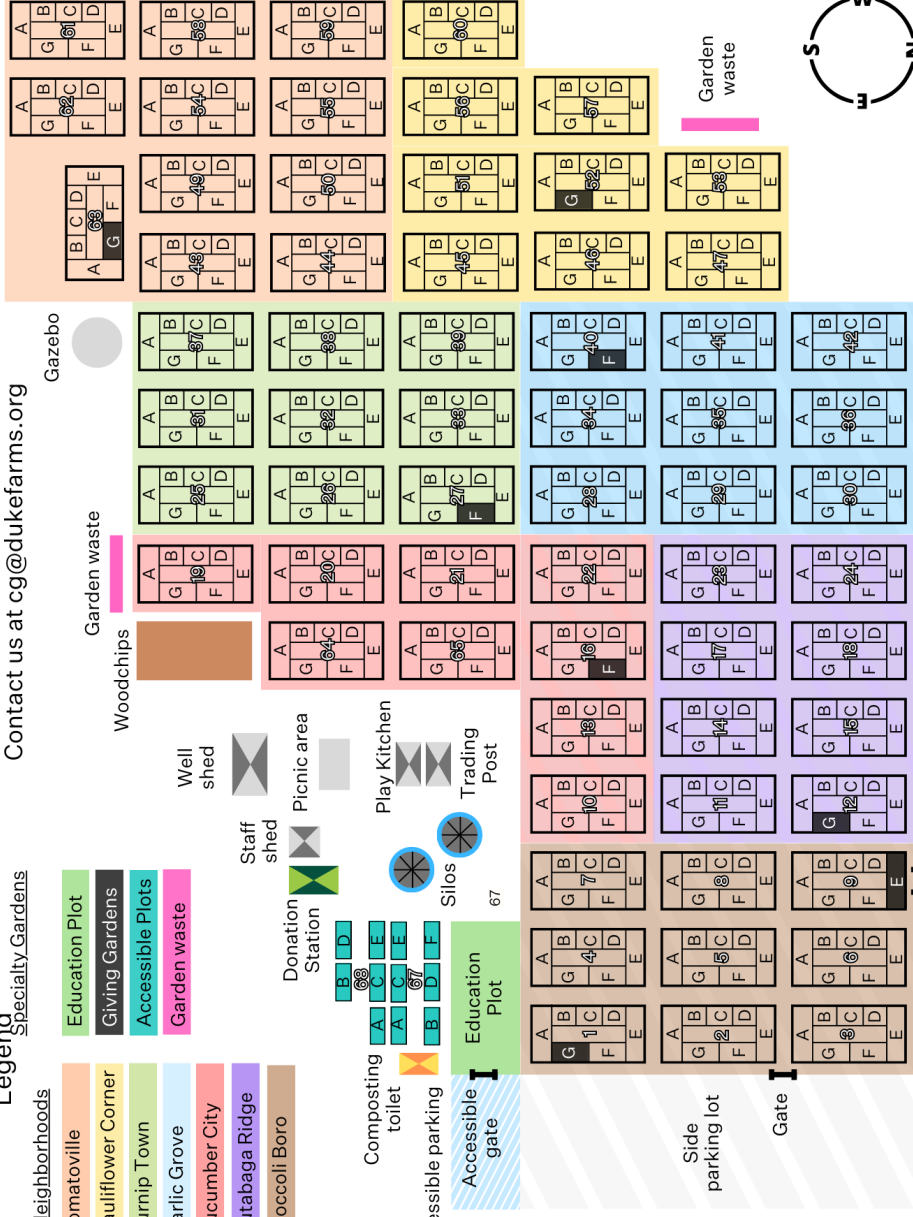
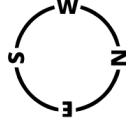
Side parking lot

Gate

Main parking lot

Garden waste

Garden waste



# GARDEN PLOT INFORMATION

Primary Gardener:

Secondary Gardener(s):

Plot Number(s):

Neighborhood(s):

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# PLOT REGISTRATION

*Anyone who lives and/or works in Somerset County, NJ is eligible to participate in the Duke Farms Community Garden.*

## *Plot size fees are as follows*

<b>10x10</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>15x15</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>15x30</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Accessible</b>	<b>\$20</b>

## *Registration*

- All registration is done online.
- Garden plot renewals take place in early November.
- Additional plot registration for current gardeners occurs in mid-to-late November
- Plot registration for the general public begins on January 2.
- Plots are rented on a first-come, first-served basis until no more plots are available. There is no waitlist.
- Returning gardeners are allowed up to 3 plots. New gardeners are restricted to 1 plot.
- In order to renew, gardeners must have met all requirements of the previous year.
- Garden plots are for personal use only; no commercial use is permitted.
- Fees are non-refundable.

*If you are unable to fulfill your obligations and would like to terminate your agreement with Duke Farms, please contact the Duke Farms Community Garden staff.*

# GARDENER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Duke Farms Community Garden spans 5 acres and is considered the largest allotment-style community garden in the country. It is a challenge to manage this number of gardeners, so strict adherence to our rules and policies, as outlined in this Garden Handbook, is required. It is each gardener's responsibility to review the Handbook and contact the Duke Farms Community Garden staff with any questions or concerns.

## Primary & Secondary Gardeners

The person who rented the plot is considered the **Primary Gardener**. This gardener agrees to be the designated contact for all correspondence and assumes full responsibility for the other gardeners on the application. Additional gardeners who work in the plot should be listed as **Secondary Gardeners**. They may assist in completing requirements for each of the garden plots. All gardeners are collectively bound by the Participation Agreement signed during registration. Please add new gardeners by contacting Duke Farms Community Garden staff before they begin.

**NOTE:** *Gardeners who fail to fulfill the following requirements will not be eligible to rent any garden plots at Duke Farms for one year. Please refer to the Community Garden webpage, newsletter and Slack page for garden course dates and volunteer opportunities.*



# PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

*Gardeners are bound to this agreement which is signed online during plot registration. **Gardeners are required to fulfill the following obligations annually in order to maintain membership.***

1. **COMMUNICATION:** Maintain a valid email address. This will be the primary form of communication between staff and gardeners. Gardeners also must join the Duke Farms Community Garden Slack group for emergency alerts and updates. Any changes in email are to be reported within 3 business days.
2. **MAINTENANCE:** Plots must be food-centric with at least 50% fruit/vegetable crops. Gardeners must comply with all maintenance expectations listed. Surveys will be done weekly between April 15 and October 31. If a gardener receives a notice, they must address this issue within one week.
3. **CONTINUING EDUCATION:** Attend 1 elective environmental course of your choice through Duke Farms or another suitable vendor. Record title course & date in your Online Garden Profile on the Community Garden webpage in order to receive credit. **NOTE:** *First year gardeners must complete 3 courses in total: Orientation, Intro to Organic Gardening and 1 elective.*
4. **VOLUNTEER:** Complete 4 hours of volunteer time at Duke Farms for your first garden plot, plus 1 hour for each additional plot. Record hours in your Online Garden Profile on the Community Garden webpage in order to receive credit.
5. **CODE OF CONDUCT:** Please be courteous in the garden at all times. You are expected to review all safety, security and conduct expectations as stated in the Duke Farms Community Garden Handbook.

Duke Farms has a Zero Tolerance Policy for the following. Any violation of this will result in expulsion from the Community Garden at the discretion of the staff.

- **Harassment:** Duke Farms is committed to managing a garden community that is free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Inappropriate verbal, written or physical actions are considered harassment.
- **Harming wildlife:** Duke Farms is a center for environmental stewardship and the conservation of wildlife is of the utmost importance.
- **Theft:** Each plot is private property. Rotting produce or weediness are not means for entering another plot without explicit permission.

By registering for membership in the Duke Farms Community Garden, you are acknowledging and will abide by:

- all guidelines expressed in the participation agreement
- the Duke Farms Community Garden Handbook
- all written ongoing communications stating guideline



# CONTINUING EDUCATION

Participation in the Duke Farms Community Garden is contingent upon a gardener's participation in 1 elective environmental course per year.

- Course may be taken through Duke Farms or another suitable vendor. Gardening programs are available on the members platform.
- It is the responsibility of each gardener to record the course title and date in the online gardener profile in order to receive credit.
- Your class must be completed and recorded by October 31st in order to rent a plot the following year.

*NOTE: First year gardeners must complete 3 courses total: New Gardener Orientation & Introduction to Organic Gardening (both offered through Duke Farms) plus one elective.*

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Participation in the Duke Farms Community Garden is contingent upon a gardener's completion of their required volunteer hours.

- Each gardener must complete 4 hours of volunteer time for the first plot, plus 1 hour for each additional plot.
- It is the responsibility of each gardener to record hours in the online gardener profile in order to receive credit.
- We encourage gardeners to complete and record half of their required hours by August 1st. The remaining hours must be completed and recorded before October 31st in order to rent a plot the following year. To receive credit, you must include the date, task performed and time spent (to the nearest 1/4th hour).

*There are four ways gardeners may choose to complete their volunteer requirement. Opportunities will be shared via Newsletter and Slack.*

## 1. Garden Monitor & Maintain Crew (M&M)

- Work days alternate monthly between the 1st Saturday and 3rd Tuesday of each month between May and October. *Note: these M&M sessions are subject to cancellation at any time.*
- Registration is not required. 1-4 hours.
- Many pop-up opportunities in addition to these work days will be shared throughout the season.

## 2. Giving Garden Program

- To volunteer for your Giving Garden, contact your neighborhood Giving Garden Coordinator.
- To assist with sorting and delivery of donated produce, sign up in the **Event Calendar** of the Community Garden webpage.

### 3. Join a Volunteer Group (managed by Meghan)

- **Garden Guardians** will maintain plots owned by others facing personal hardships, medical challenges or family troubles. Responsibilities include weeding, watering or harvesting to provide assistance to those who cannot be present in their garden spaces. Together, let's sow seeds of support and grow a garden of compassion!
- **Weed Warriors** tend to weeds in perimeter pathways, education area, wheelbarrow parking and entrances by the main gate, side gate and accessibility gate. Cardboard and woodchip areas as needed. Check the Giving Gardens to assess whether they need more woodchips or not. You would be a perfect fit if you love weeding, cultivating a well-maintained space and have a deep care for the overall upkeep of our Community Garden.
- **Plant-it-Forward** and adopt an abandoned/vacant plot for the season to grow vegetables for donation. This job revives neglected garden spaces for a meaningful purpose and prevents land from going unused. All materials are provided by Duke Farms, you just need to grow and maintain the space.

### 4. Independent Volunteer Activities

- These opportunities will be posted on the Community Garden Slack channel titled *Independent Volunteer Activities*, the donation shed on a black board and on the bulletin boards on each of the main gates.
- All activities can be done independently at any time.
- Before & after pictures are required before logging the hours on Wild Apricot.

## MAINTAINING YOUR PLOT

- Garden plots are offered in AS IS condition. Duke Farms is not responsible for soil and overall garden plot conditions, including drainage and other related issues.
- Maintenance surveys will occur between April 15th and October 31st on a weekly basis.
- Plots must be cleaned of weeds and cover crops by May 15.
- Gardeners must make provisions for plot maintenance during absences.
- Plots that have weeds going to seed are subject to a maintenance warning.

### Setting Up Your Plot

**HEIGHT:** There is a 5-foot height restriction (measured from the main garden pathway) for all items & plants. Trellises should be kept to 4 feet to allow for plant growth over the top.

**BOUNDARIES:** Stakes that mark plot corners must be left in place. Fencing is permitted as long as it does not pose a tripping hazard or encroach on adjacent plots. Please plant at least a foot within boundaries to avoid encroachment as plants grow.

**COMPOST/SOIL:** Gardeners must use organic practices in order to improve their plots.

- All packaged soil and amendments stamped with the OMRI or USDA Organic label are approved for use in the garden. All amendments without one of these stamps **MUST** be approved by garden staff before use.
- Gardeners are welcome to schedule bulk deliveries of compost and soil from approved vendors. Contact garden staff for more information.
- Use of unapproved materials is grounds for expulsion.
- A thick layer of organic mulch (straw, dried grass or dried leaves) will conserve soil moisture. Gardeners must provide this for their plot.
- Homemade compost/garden debris kept in plots must be stored in a solid compost bin.



**COMMON AREA:** Located in the middle of each numbered garden block. No personal materials (aside from hoses) may be stored here.

**GARDEN WASTE:** Weeds and other plant debris should be placed in any of 3 garden waste piles (see garden map). Non-biodegradable materials (like plastic) should not be included.

**WATER:** Available on-site. Hoses must be provided by gardeners and may be shared.

**TOOLS:** Gardeners are responsible for providing tools to tend their plots. A small number of wheelbarrows and garden carts are provided by the Community Garden.

**WOOD CHIPS:** Provided by Duke Farms as available for use on pathways.

**TRASH:** Duke Farms is a carry in/carry out facility.

**BATHROOM/WATER:** Two compost toilets are located near the silos. Water is only available through the spigots and is not potable.

**WILDLIFE:** Duke Farms makes no claim or guarantee against damage from wildlife. It is each gardener's responsibility to protect their own plots as needed, provided such action meets an organic approach and that it does not affect surrounding neighbors. Small rodent traps are permitted for use within plots and must be checked daily. Any rodent trapped must be removed from the garden. Rodent poison is not permitted.

**FALL CLEANUP:**

- Please remove all non-secure materials, including chairs and string trellises, by October 31st. Fences and other secure items may remain over the winter.
- If you ARE NOT renewing your plot: The plot must be cleared by **October 31st**. Any materials remaining after that time are considered property of Duke Farms.





## The following items are not permitted in the Community Garden:

- Mechanical tillers
- Sprinklers
- Gas powered equipment
- Materials made of PVC - plastic type 1, 3 (PVC) or 7
- Treated lumber (pressure treated wood)
- Chemical fertilizers or pesticides
- Manure
- Dyed or treated wood chips
- Insect lures and/or traps; rodent poison
- Bird netting
- All structures taller than 5 feet
- Any flying devices, including drones
- The use of any contractors or professional services

**NOTE:** *Anyone helping in the garden and not listed as a secondary gardener must complete a waiver. Contact [cg@dukefarms.org](mailto:cg@dukefarms.org) for waiver requests.*

## The following plants are not permitted in the Community Garden:

- Invasive plants
- Trees, shrubs or any illegal or poisonous plants
- Castor beans, (*Ricinus sp.*), *Cannabis sp.*, sunflowers (all varieties), currants, gooseberries (*Ribes sp.*), shiso/perilla (*Perilla frutescens*)
- Raspberries, blackberries, mint, tansy, Jerusalem artichoke, garlic chives, horseradish and comfrey are only allowed planted in pots
- Perennials other than blueberry, strawberry, asparagus, rhubarb and assorted herbs and flowers are not permitted
- Plants taller than 5 feet should be avoided or trimmed to 5 feet

# MAINTENANCE SURVEYS

- Maintenance surveys will occur between April 15th and October 31st on a weekly basis to ensure the safety & comfort of all community gardeners.
- Gardeners are expected to keep their plots weeded, harvested and well-maintained throughout the season. Gardeners must make provisions for plot maintenance during absences, including vacations.
- Plots with weeds going to seed will be subject to a maintenance warning.

## Notification System

**1st-3rd notices:** Email notice is sent with description of problem. Gardener has one week to bring plot into compliance. Notices are cumulative and do not have to be consecutive. All notices are logged into online profile.

**4th notice:** Final email notice is sent. Garden plot must be cleaned up within one week and maintained for the remainder of the growing season. If not in compliance in one week or at any other point during the growing season, the gardener receives a 5th notice.

**5th notice:** Plot is reclaimed by Duke Farms; email notification of reclamation is sent and gardener has one week to remove personal belongings. Any materials remaining after one week are considered property of Duke Farms.

## Personal Hardship

If you have a personal hardship that is preventing you from successfully maintaining your plot, please contact the staff to request assistance so your plot is not flagged with maintenance warnings. Garden Mentors and Garden Guardians are available. Please email [cg@dukefarms.org](mailto:cg@dukefarms.org) for more information.



## Expectations

**Weeds:** Keep plot weeded. Do not let weeds cover more than 25% of the plot, grow to 12-inches or to go seed. Plot boundaries between neighbors, pathways (which includes 1/2 of the pathway between garden blocks) and fencing must also be kept free of weeds. Gardeners must cooperate to keep common areas weed-free & woodchipped.

**NOTE:** *Gardeners are expected to keep 1/2 of the pathway that surrounds their plot(s) between garden blocks weed-free throughout the season. Weeding this area is only volunteer time when performed at the request of a staff member, garden mentor or M&M crew leader.*

**Boundaries:** All plants must be kept within the boundaries of all 4 plot edges. No personal materials may be stored in the common area.

**Height:** No plant, structure or other item in the plot shall exceed 5 feet in height, as measured from ground level of the pathway.

**Materials:** Do not use non-permitted materials such as inorganic amendments, manure and anything over 5 feet tall.

**Plants:** Garden plots should be centered around food production and be at least 50% fruit/vegetable crops. Non-permitted plants include sunflower (all varieties), raspberries, blackberries, & mint.

**Harvesting:** Harvest at least once per week to avoid rotting produce. Notice will be given for severe neglect of crops. If you want the Donation Team to harvest produce from your plot, please make a note on the white board on the Donation Station door.

**Pests:** Remove pests as needed. Notice will be given for severe infestations.

# GARDEN PROGRAMS

In addition to offering a space for growing food, Duke Farms Community Garden is an educational space where both new and seasoned gardeners can learn about growing organic food in a sustainable, eco-friendly manner. Please check the garden webpage & newsletter for dates and registration info.

We encourage our members to get involved in the many educational and community-building opportunities we offer, including:

- Seed Swap
- Opening Day
- Summer Celebration
- Giving Gardens
- Garden Workshops (count towards Continuing Education requirement)





# GIVING GARDENS

The Community Garden is divided into seven garden neighborhoods: Tomatoville, Cauliflower Corner, Turnip Town, Garlic Grove, Cucumber City, Rutabaga Ridge and Broccoli Boro. The neighborhoods were formed to encourage community building among garden neighbors.

Within each neighborhood is a **Giving Garden**, a plot maintained to grow organic produce to be donated to local organizations in need. Each neighborhood Giving Garden has Coordinators who will work with volunteer gardeners to prepare, plant, harvest and maintain the neighborhood Giving Garden. Please contact your neighborhood Coordinator to volunteer. No experience needed!

Produce from the Giving Gardens (as well as excess produce from personal plots) may be left in the coolbot located in the Donation Station shed. Volunteers will sort, weigh and deliver produce every Monday from late May through October. No experience is needed to participate in the donation program!



*Every year, the Duke Farms Community Gardeners grows and donates over 6,000lbs of fresh organic produce to local food banks as part of our Garden Donation Program.*

# OPERATION & CONDUCT

Following these rules and responsibilities ensures the safety and well-being for all our gardening participants and visitors. Please report any inappropriate behavior to garden staff. In the event of an emergency, contact Duke Farms Security directly by calling 908-243-3600.

## Guidelines

Neither Duke Farms (DF) nor the Doris Duke Foundation (DDF) will be responsible for any accidents, injuries, damages, theft, damage to, loss of or replacement of any belongings, equipment, materials, tools or plantings. As a member of the Duke Farms Community Garden, you therefore agree to hold harmless and indemnify DF and DDF for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by yourself or any other gardeners or guests. There is no security for personal belongings. Failure to follow any garden or public area rules and regulations, after reasonable attempts to notify Gardener, may result in loss of your garden plot(s). The Gardener will not be eligible for any refund or reimbursement for any seed, plantings or other materials left at the gardening site. By renting a plot, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the above Statement and will abide by the Duke Farms Community Garden Operation & Conduct Guidelines.

## Hours of Operation

The Duke Farms Community Garden is open year-round, sunrise to sunset, seven days per week.

## Parking

There are two designated gravel parking areas adjacent to the Community Garden. Please keep in mind that Saturdays during the spring and summer months are high visitation days at Duke Farms and the Community Garden parking lot may be used for overflow visitor parking. Email [cg@dukefarms.org](mailto:cg@dukefarms.org) for accessibility accommodations.

## Security & Theft

The Community Garden gates are locked to prevent nonmembers from entering. Codes are changed each year and will be emailed to gardeners. Please do not share the combination code with others. The gates are to remain closed AT ALL TIMES to prevent theft as well as to prevent wildlife from entering.

1. Duke Farms has a zero tolerance policy for theft. If you are caught in another person's plot without their explicit permission, your garden plot privileges will be revoked immediately. Each plot is private property. Rotting produce or weediness does not mean you are allowed to enter, even if you are harvesting for donation.
2. Report non-working gate locks to staff via email. Don't assume we are aware of the issue.
3. Call security immediately at 908-243-3600 in the event of theft or damage to file a report.
4. Please report any suspicious activity to security immediately at the above listed number.

## Safety

Drive carefully and slowly through the Duke Farms parking lot, observing posted speed limits of 10 mph and being aware of pedestrians. Please do not bring anything into the garden that will compromise the safety or enjoyment of the gardeners such as radios, BBQs or pets (excluding service animals). Participants will hold Duke Farms harmless for any and all illnesses that may arise from consuming food produced on Duke Farms' property.

## Behavior

- Be courteous and kind in the garden at all times. Inappropriate behavior or failure to follow the instructions, will be grounds for expulsion from the garden at the discretion of the garden staff.
- Duke Farms is committed to managing a garden community that is free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Inappropriate verbal, written or physical actions will be considered harassment and will be grounds for expulsion at the discretion of the garden staff.
- Remain on designated wood-chipped paths. Cutting through other gardens is inappropriate and considered trespassing.
- Gardeners are expected to supervise guests or children at all times and are responsible and liable for their conduct.
- Children must be supervised while in the mud kitchen/picnic area.
- Tobacco, alcohol and illegal substances are not permitted on Duke Farms' property.







**Duke Farms**

[dukefarms.org/cg](https://dukefarms.org/cg)

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Duke Farms is a center of the  
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