

Solar-Powered Farm from a Box Is a Compact Farm Kit That Feeds 150 People

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Farm From a Box fits all the essential equipment for a two-acre farm inside a shipping container, including solar power generation and a complete water system.

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Two acres of land is enough to farm a sustainable food supply for as many as 150 people, and now a San Francisco startup is making it even easier to get that farm growing. [Farm From a Box](#) is [a shipping container kit](#) that holds all the essentials for setting up a two-acre farm (except the land, of course). Founders Brandi DeCarli and Scott Thompson got the idea after working on a youth center in Kenya where [shipping containers](#) were being used to substitute where infrastructure lacked. That project didn't address [food insecurity](#), though, which led DeCarli and Thompson to found their own venture specifically for that purpose.

Click here to watch "Farm from a Box: Community Farming. Reinvented.":
<https://youtu.be/VlcijvWRJGU>

[Farm From a Box](#) is a kit designed to make it easier for all types of organizations to start growing [sustainable food](#). Nonprofit humanitarian agencies, schools, community groups, and even individuals can buy a \$50,000 kit, which comes with a complete water system including a solar-powered pump and drip irrigation system. Together, those features help conserve water by using it more efficiently, delivering water directly to the roots of growing plants. All of the kit's components are solar-powered, so the kit also includes 3 kW of solar energy capacity which is enough to power the water pump as well as WiFi connectivity that makes it possible to monitor the farm conditions remotely. Because the built-in solar power technology generates more than enough energy to power the farm's equipment, the farm is suitable to run completely off the grid.



All the prospective [farmer](#) needs to have is viable land, of course, and seeds. Luckily, the Farm From a Box team realizes that farming is largely about skill and science, so the kit also includes three stages of training materials on sustainable farming, farm technology and maintenance, as well as the business of farming. In a recent interview with Smithsonian Magazine, DiCarli explained that the farm kit was designed to “act as a template” and that it’s possible to “plug in” components that specifically fit the farm’s local climate and the farmers’ needs. Those options include internal cold storage, to help preserve crops between harvest and consumption or sale, and a [water purification](#) system, if needed.

So far, Farm From a Box has deployed one prototype at [Shone Farm](#) in Sonoma County, California. A project of Santa Rosa Junior College, the farm is part of a larger outdoor laboratory in which students learn how to cultivate crops in [drought](#) conditions, and then the harvest is used to supply the farm’s own community-supported agriculture (CSA) program as well as the college’s culinary arts program. DiCarli said the Shone Farm prototype turned out to be “more efficient than we had even planned,” with “really high” production and energy output. Farm From a Box has a number of other potential sites lined up already, in Ethiopia, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan, as well as additional test farms in California and a veteran-partnered site in Virginia.

Via [Smithsonian Magazine](#)

Images via [Farm From a Box](#)
