The Giant Company And Rodale Institute Announce New Partnership

By Ashley Flower

WIND GAP – To support ecologically safe farming, sustainable retailing, and efforts to eliminate hunger, The GIANT Company today announced a new partnership with Rodale Institute, the leading voice in developing solutions for the regenerative organic movement. Widely recognized as a founder of the modern organic movement, Rodale Institute has been a global leader in regenerative organic agriculture for over 70 years.

"Through education, research, and training, Rodale Institute is quite clearly leading the charge to transform farming for the better, and we're incredibly fortunate to have this resource just two hours from our home office," said Nicholas Bertram, president, The GIANT Company. "Their important work complements our other en-

vironmental initiatives including offsetting our carbon footprint, creating pollinator habitats, and reducing food waste. By partnering with Rodale Institute, the pioneers of organic farming, we are able to support sustainable efforts from the farm to our stores and ultimately to our customers' tables."

Rodale Institute's 333-acre experimental farm, which conducts research into regenerative organic agriculture as well as farmer training and education opportunities, is headquartered in Kutztown, Pa. As part of the partnership, The GIANT Company will support three key initiatives of Rodale Institute centered around farm consulting, farmer training, and research.

These initiatives include:

Rodale Institute's Organic Crop Consulting Services, launched in 2019 with the support of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, which support farmers who are seeking to transition to organic through one-on-one mentorship with the Institute's trained agronomists.

Rodale Institute Farmer Training program (RIFT), an on-site internship that trains beginning farmers for a career in regenerative organic agriculture and supports the Institute's farm share program, mobile pop-up markets and farmers markets.

One of Rodale's ongoing research studies connecting healthy soil with human health. These programs are aimed at healing people and the planet by increasing organic acres, training new organic farmers, and putting science behind the organic movement.

"Rodale Institute is proud to have a retail partner in The GIANT Company, who provides food for so many in our home state," said Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute Chief Executive Officer. "Despite the organic food market reaching $55 billion last year, only 1% of U.S. cropland is currently organic. Now more than ever, it's critical that food retailers, farmers, and consumers join together to advocate for the food system they want to see—one that heals both people and the planet. The support of a retailer like The GIANT Company will allow Rodale Institute to continue our research, farmer training, consulting, and education initiatives to grow the organic movement and build an organic future for all."

"Agriculture grows when we produce what consumers want," said Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. "Pennsylvania is a national leader in organic sales and we are investing in organic research at Rodale and in a new PA Preferred® Organic program. These targeted investments grow opportunities for consumers to buy what they want and farmers and grocers to earn more. And investing in regenerative farming improves our soil and water so we can keep growing in the future. With this partnership, The GIANT Company and Rodale Institute are cultivating that growth and joining us in promoting a healthier, greener Pennsylvania economy."

Starting March 1, The GIANT Company is launching its Healing the Planet campaign in support of organizations focused on environmentally friendly initiatives. In addition to Rodale Institute, customers at GIANT, MARTIN'S and GIANT Heirloom Market stores also can contribute to Planet Bee Foundation and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful when shopping by rounding up the dollar amount on their purchases at the checkout.