



# VEGGIELUTION

## SIZE:

6 acres

## YEARS IN BUSINESS:

11

## PRODUCTS:

150 varieties of fruits, 40 varieties of vegetables, and various herbs

## MARKETS:

Fresh produce sold at farm stand; Prepared food distributed through food truck, commercial kitchen, food carts, and at educational programs

## COUNTY:

Santa Clara

**Veggielution was started in 2007 by three San Jose State University students who hoped to create community through farming and food.**

Initially they grew food in the front and backyards of homes around the University. Then in 2008, Veggielution moved to half an acre of land at the City of San Jose's Emma Prusch Park, where the farm has since expanded to 6 acres.

Like many other farming nonprofits, Veggielution sees growing food as a way to achieve broader social goals. Veggielution's mission is "to connect people from diverse backgrounds through food and farming to build community in East San Jose." As a result, engaging the community is at the heart of the programming that Veggielution offers. Veggielution hosts volunteer programming and a farm stand every Saturday of the month. On the first Saturday of each month, Veggielution holds its Community Engagement Farm Day, where attendees can participate in farm tasks, cooking classes, yoga, and kids' activities. Veggielution also works with local food system advocates through its Eastside Grown program, which provides resources, assistance, and the opportunity for participants to advocate for the changes they want to see in the food system. Another program, Eastside Explorers, offers field trips to middle schoolers in East San Jose, who visit the farm to learn about agriculture, cooking and nutrition, and the local environment.

# VEGGIELUTION'S MISSION IS "TO CONNECT PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS THROUGH FOOD AND FARMING TO BUILD COMMUNITY IN EAST SAN JOSE."

Veggielution currently grows 150 varieties of fruits, 40 varieties of vegetables, and various herbs. The different crops grown on the farm are sold through their farm stand, used in various foods prepared in their commercial kitchen and food truck, and served at community engagement events on the farm. As a non-profit farm, Veggielution does not rely on sales of its produce to support its operations. Instead, the farm and Veggielution's other programs are funded by grants, individual donations, and the Farmer 4 A Day program, which offers corporate employees the chance to participate in a wide range of projects on the farm.

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, one of the challenges that Veggielution faces is the cost of staffing. It is hard to find and retain skilled labor, and equally hard to pay them living wages in such an expensive labor market. The costs of salaries, health insurance, and workers compensation quickly

add up for their staff of nine people. As a non-profit farm with an annual budget of \$750,000, fundraising is their main source of revenue, and it can be a challenging process. Having a full-time staff member dedicated to fundraising and increasing name and brand recognition has helped them to fundraise successfully. Some of the challenges of being an urban farm such as vandalism, homelessness, and lack of community access to the farm (via public transportation, and bike and walk paths) have also been opportunities for the organization to engage with the local city government to help find solutions.

Over the next five to ten years, Veggielution plans to improve and increase both the infrastructure and programming on the farm. They would like to highlight the diverse agriculture in the county by bringing people together to share their food and farm stories. In the longer term, they hope to become a nationally recognized cultural gathering space.

