

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**RODALE INSTITUTE EXPANDS LEADERSHIP WITH FIRST-EVER CHIEF FARMING OFFICER**

*Leader In Regenerative Organic Agriculture Also Names New Chief Operating Officer*

**Kutztown, Pa. — October 7, 2024**— [Rodale Institute](https://www.rodaleinstitute.org) has named Luke Howard as the Institute’s first Chief Farming Officer. In the newly-created role, Howard will oversee the Institute’s Organic Consulting and Farm Innovations divisions. Additionally, the Institute has promoted David Willey to Chief Operating Officer.

“We know that some of the most profound innovations and breakthroughs in regenerative organic agriculture happen with producers in the field,” said Rodale Institute CEO Jeff Tkach. “Under Luke’s leadership, the Farm Innovations team will collaborate with the Institute’s prestigious Research department to implement discoveries and prioritize innovative agricultural techniques that will future-proof the food supply.”

Howard brings decades of leadership experience in large-scale organic and regenerative organic agriculture. He began working in the organic sector in 1998, and served as the former chairman of the Maryland Agricultural Commission and the past president of Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO). His previous roles also include serving as the Chief Farming Officer for SLM Partners and Farm Operations leader of Belltown Farms.

Rodale Institute also announced that David Willey, former VP of Regenerative Operations, will now serve as the Institute’s Chief Operating Officer. After joining the Institute in April, Willey has worked across the organization to improve communication and productivity in several key areas. Prior to his role at the Institute, Willey served for 14 years in a range of executive and operational roles at Rodale Inc. He was also the Founder and Director of Project Next, where he provided strategic and creative consulting to a range of clients, including the Change Climate Project and National Geographic.

“David has driven our Master Plan building project, a vital priority that will enable the construction of a state-of-the-art Education Center, the Institute’s first LEED-certified, all-electric building, and a regenerative working hub for Institute employees,” continued Tkach. “David will ensure that big-picture strategies are translated into daily operations in a way that helps our nonprofit reach its goals and deepen its impact.”

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## **ABOUT RODALE INSTITUTE**

*Rodale Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to growing the regenerative organic agriculture movement through rigorous research, farmer training, and education. The Institute's groundbreaking science and direct farmer support programs serve as a catalyst for change in farming and food production worldwide. Over its 77-year history, Rodale Institute has proven that organic farming is not only viable but essential to humanity's survival. More information can be found at [www.rodaleinstitute.org](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org).*

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