

Transcript – GFAS Outstanding Sanctuary Award

October 20, 2025

Jessica Harris:

Hi there everyone, I'm Jess, Farmed Animal Program Director here at GFAS. It is my privilege to present the Outstanding Farmed Animal Sanctuary award to a sanctuary I deeply admire- Full Circle Farm Sanctuary in Georgia. They have made a big impression in a short time.

If you were to ask me to describe Full Circle, my first thought is this: those folks run a TIGHT ship. The phrase originates from nautical practice and sea captain leadership as a metaphor for strict, well ordered management on board, discipline and attention to detail under pressure. I couldn't think of a more apt description for Full Circle. In a sanctuary setting, that discipline and attention to detail translates to the best possible care for animals.

Now in their 15th year, they care for over 100 rescued residents while educating folks about veganism and compassion for farmed animals. The crew over at Full Circle is truly captaining this ship as a team: with a unique structure that empowers caregivers and benefits from the leadership of an extremely dedicated volunteer board that is deeply involved in the success of the organization and wellbeing of the residents.

The professionalism and diligence with which we saw them approach the Accreditation process told us a lot about who they are and the integrity with which they approach their work. When I was there earlier this year, what most stood out to me were the meticulous systems they had in place for care and team communication. This was paired with clear adoration of the residents. They could tell me the story of any resident at the drop of a hat, including their unique personalities and preferences. They had concrete plans for sanctuary development, facilities projects and a keen awareness of upcoming needs.

That diligence, planning, and striving to always improve for the sake of the residents tells me what I need to know – Full Circle Farm Sanctuary is running a tight ship – and that ship is not only ready to weather the storms, but it is headed to some pretty spectacular horizons – for the animals.

Jennifer Price:

"Honored" feels far too small a word for what this recognition means.

We've fought through countless bleak moments, times when hope felt out of reach, when it would have been easy to count us out.

This award represents what becomes possible when you refuse to give up, when you have the humility to evolve and the courage to keep pushing forward against all odds.

Four years ago, we started over. We chose the harder road, unwinding past mistakes, reshaping

structure, mission, operations, and above all, the approach to care. It wasn't easy. But there was a belief that the sanctuary could be something different, something truly resident-centered.

Every decision now begins with one guiding question:

What serves the residents best, and how does it advance the mission and the movement?

When every choice begins with the residents, the way forward becomes clear.

Through close collaboration with the committed Animal Care Manager Emma Fobean, resident care has reached new heights, proactive wellness checks, detailed documentation, individualized plans, and advanced onsite treatment.

Many residents now thrive well into their senior years, living proof of what compassion and skilled care can achieve. In the industries they were born into, few farmed animals reach adulthood, let alone old age. At Full Circle, they grow old with dignity.

We work within a field still deeply underserved, not for lack of veterinary skill or compassion, but because the system was never built for farmed animals to receive long-term care.

Because society views them as products rather than patients, farmed animals face limited research, treatment options, and facilities suited to their needs, and their size alone can make advanced care challenging.

By partnering closely with veterinary teams, the sanctuary helps bridge that gap, giving veterinarians the chance to treat senior farmed animal patients and to see that there are people who will fight for them, exhausting every option before considering euthanasia for economic reasons.

Together, they show that compassion and persistence can redefine care for farmed animals. This year, Full Circle celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and achieved two milestones that reflect that ongoing commitment:

GFAS accreditation and the Outstanding Farmed Animal Sanctuary Award, earned within just four months of each other.

Courtney Perez:

That is not coincidence.

It's the result of years of quiet work, learning, and persistence in the pursuit of better care and stronger systems.

Along the way, we've reflected on how we talk about sanctuary, because language shapes how we see those in our care. At Full Circle, we use words that remind us the residents don't belong to us, we belong to them. The sanctuary isn't ours; it's theirs. It's a small shift, but it helps us stay centered on the animals, their autonomy, and the responsibility we share in their care.

We continue to learn, adapt, and do our best to live the values that sanctuary represents.

Since assuming leadership, the sanctuary has been rebuilt from the inside out, cutting the budget in half while achieving more for the residents, the sanctuary, and the mission than ever before.

This transformation was made possible by a unique operating model: a resident-first structure with no paid administrative staff, where every resource directly supports animal care and mission-critical work.

It's a lean, disciplined approach that demands creativity, teamwork, and constant re-evaluation, but it ensures that compassion, not overhead, influences every decision.

Through that lens, we've seen that impact isn't driven by dollars, it's defined by care, integrity, and heart.

These milestones aren't just recognition, they're proof that when every decision centers on the residents, extraordinary things happen.

Full Circle is 100% publicly funded, with no financial safety net. Every decision must balance today's needs with tomorrow's sustainability, for the residents here now and for those still waiting for compassion.

Through education, advocacy, and digital engagement with more than 300,000 people across 37 countries, the sanctuary amplifies resident voices and raises awareness for farmed animals worldwide.

Change doesn't happen in isolation, compassion grows through knowledge, example, and support.

The team is small and resources limited, but the commitment is boundless. The sanctuary refuses to let size define impact, thinking beyond its fences to meet a need far greater than any one place can hold.

Each year, more than 80 billion farmed animals are trapped in the global agricultural system, denied compassion, care, and the right to live.

That reality fuels this work every day.

So yes, we are thrilled to receive this award. But even more than that, we're inspired by what it represents: for the residents, for farmed animals everywhere, and for the future. Because this isn't just recognition, it's possibility. It's the expansion of compassion, visibility, and hope.

This award isn't an ending, it's a beginning. We will continue to learn, grow, and work toward lasting change for farmed animals every day.

With so much to do and so few hands to do it, we rarely pause. But today, we do. We take a moment to reflect on how far we've come and how every decision and late night has brought us here.

To the GFAS community, thank you. To everyone who voted, supported, cared, and believed, to the vet teams, the volunteers, and all who give their time and heart, thank you.

We do this together, for the animals and for a more compassionate world. It's an honor to stand beside you as we work toward lasting change and a kinder future.