

# NOFA NOTES

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

A NOTE FROM  
SENATOR LEAHY  
...  
SHARE THE  
HARVEST

A BRIEF HISTORY  
OF NOFA-VT

HISTORY OF VERMONT  
FARMERS MARKETS  
...  
40 YEARS WITH JOY + JOHN  
AT WILDSTONE FARM

# FIFTY YEARS

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD TO 50 YEARS OF MOVEMENT BUILDING

"On September 17, 1983, NOFA held a Dawn Dance at Memorial Hall on the shore of Mirror Lake in North Calais. Five different bands kept the contra dances, polkas and waltzes going all through the night. People came and went, but the dancing never stopped. At daybreak, breakfast was served. This is the energy of NOFA: to dance all through the night until the sun rises."

- Sara Norton, NOFA-VT Executive Director 1980-1984







Dear Friend of NOFA-VT,

Welcome to our 50th anniversary throwback issue.

Things look a little different, don't they?

Inspired by our 50th anniversary, Sara Norton—NOFA-VT's Executive Director from 1980 to 1984—combed through her personal files and assembled decades worth of typewritten newsletters, photos, barn dance posters (like the one that inspired this NOFA Notes cover), newspaper articles, photocopied brochures, and other ephemera from the many chapters of NOFA-VT.

Sara lovingly gifted these items to us with the hope that we could use them to help celebrate this momentous milestone. Her gift prompted us to revisit NOFA-VT's own archives where we found even more material and inspiration for this celebratory issue of NOFA Notes.

What started as a fun opportunity to give this newsletter a vintage treatment complete with funky seventies fonts, beautiful etchings, and precious illustrations from NOFA-VT's earliest communications materials became much more than an aesthetic exercise. The process of compiling this issue became a journey of reconnection—with our roots, with our movement's leaders, and with the collective mind, heart, and soul of the NOFA-VT community.

This reconnection has been medicine for these trying times. A seemingly never ending pandemic, extreme weather events around the globe and here in Vermont, sustained food insecurity, and inequities pervading all aspects of society—including our agricultural system—has people feeling more disillusioned and isolated than ever before.

To look back through 50 years of NOFA-VT is to be reminded that we're all part of a community that has shown up again, again, and again during dark and trying times to creatively and collaboratively build a more economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just future. We've accomplished so much, and despite the current challenges we must take time to honor our successes and celebrate. Celebration is fuel for our movement.

We hope this issue of NOFA Notes provides you the same kind of nourishing reconnection, comfort, and inspiration as it has for us.

Together, onward,  
the NOFA-VT Staff

# Commemorating The 50th Anniversary Of The Founding of NOFA-VT

By Senator Patrick Leahy

In 2020, we marked the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA). That law, established within the 1990 Farm Bill when I was Chairman of the United States Senate Agriculture Committee, unleashed what has become a multi-billion dollar industry. Based on strong roots and vibrant advocacy in Vermont, it is the cornerstone of the organic movement. It is also one of the legislative achievements of which I am most proud.

It is no coincidence that the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) now celebrates its own significant milestone: 50 years serving Vermont's food and farming community, predating the passage of OFPA by nearly two decades. The establishment of a voluntary USDA label with clear standards and full transparency was very much a 'born in Vermont' idea, and NOFA-VT's leadership and tireless advocacy were indispensable in working with me to scale it into a national framework. Vermont's organic farmers, pioneers in the field and the marketplace, saw the potential for this approach to level the playing field, give consumers a trusted label, and create opportunities for future



generations to steward our working landscape.

There was one problem: In 1989, most members of the Senate Agriculture Committee had no idea what organic farming was or what it looked like. So, instead of bringing farmers to the Senate, we brought senators to the farm. No one could make a better case than the Vermonters who were putting in the work on their farms every day. I will never forget that U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee field hearing in the Montpelier State House. Enid Wonnacott, then NOFA-VT's director and one of my most trusted resources on organics, testified so passionately to members of the Committee, presenting NOFA's shared vision of what an organic market and label could do for farmers and consumers. She called

for organic transition cost share and organic research and extension programs, outlining programs that still exist to help our organic farmers to this day.

When we returned to Washington, after Enid's testimony, after hearing from a number of forward-thinking Vermont farmers, and after actually seeing things—directly on the farm—a majority of the Committee's members, both Republicans and Democrats, became cosponsors of the "Organic Farm Bill." And that first-hand testimony of Vermonters made it a better bill.

Not everyone was pleased with our success. First, industrial poultry producers tried to sneak in some Midnight language that would have gutted OFPA. This early challenge to the new organic standards was a crucial test. We passed that test, and in the process sent shock waves across the Nation's Capital. Backed by Vermont's advocacy, I led the effort to beat back that challenge, and Capitol Hill learned that the organic community had arrived as a voice to be reckoned with.

Another challenge came when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued their first draft rule, years in the



making. To say that they 'missed the mark' would be understating it. So again, we marshaled the necessary pushback. Farmers and consumers flooded USDA with nearly 300,000 comments, at the time a record for any Federal rulemaking. I led 30 senators in sending a strong, bipartisan letter objecting to the rule. USDA listened, went back to work for two more years, and finally issued a much better rule.

It is an important time to remember the early victories, those first headwinds that we overcame, and to remember why we worked so hard for the organic label in the first place. Those victories are a reminder that this community has achieved great things and overcome big challenges in the same way: together. Our own success

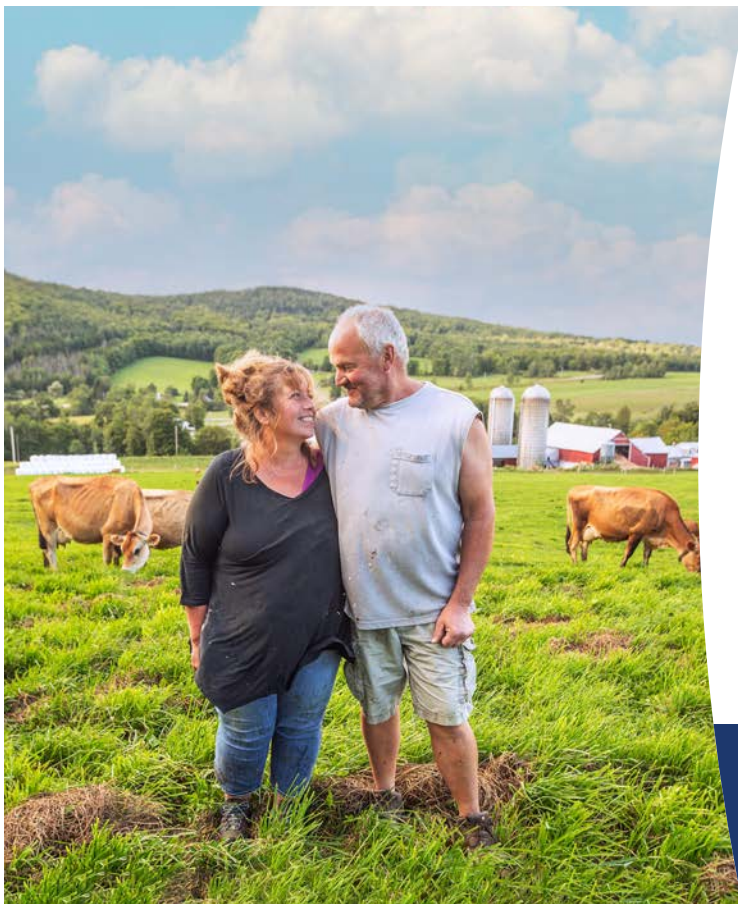
in enabling a more than \$60 billion organic consumer market has, unfortunately but predictably, attracted those who prefer to erode the standards rather than meet them, and to bend the rules to fit their industrial-scale vision for agriculture and pursuit of short-term profits. For years, we have fought against organic import fraud and hydroponics, loopholes in the origin of livestock and animal welfare standards, and for adequate enforcement of the pasture rule.

In recent weeks, in Vermont and neighboring states, we have seen that those fights are not just intellectual or hypothetical. Our access to important organic markets is eroding before our eyes. The stakes in this struggle are very real for

our farm families, our rural communities, our state, and I believe, for the nation.

For 50 years, NOFA-VT has not just provided the voice for those farm families and the communities they support. You have brought a broader vision for organic agriculture, one that connects the healthy soils to healthy kids, food equity to racial equity, and vibrant ecology with a viable rural economy. I will continue to look to NOFA-VT as my strongest ally as we tackle challenges both immediate and global. This holistic vision is more important now than ever before. ♦

*Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) is a leading member and former chairman of the U.S Senate's Agriculture Committee, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and President Pro Tempore of the Senate.*



## THESE ARE OUR HEROES.

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\*Organic standards prohibit the use of pesticides that are harmful to human health.

# A Brief History of NOFA-VT

and by no means complete!

In our early days, NOFA-VT grew out of a primarily white-led back to the land movement, but it should go without saying: Indigenous peoples used organic and sustainable agricultural practices long before NOFA formed.

Founding meeting of "Natural Organic Farmers Association (NOFA); Samuel Kaymen organizes kick-off meeting in Westminster, VT for like-minded growers who want to farm in an organic, natural, and sustainable way. (1971)



Though informal (not yet regulated by USDA), NOFA launches a certification program and label. High Meadows Farm in Putney becomes the first certified organic farm in Vermont. (1975)



First On-Farm Summer Workshop Series; 60 people turn out to the first one. (1980)

## 1970

NOFA makes 17 trips to NYC to deliver organic produce in a 10-ton truck to Harlem co-ops and day care centers, connecting "farm radicals" with "food radicals." (1973)



NOFA starts organizing farmers markets; Rutland and Brattleboro are two of the first. (1974)



First Summer Conference held in Wilton, NH; Wendell Berry is keynote speaker to 350 attendees. (1975)

## 1980

NOFA splits into "Vermont NOFA" and "NH NOFA." (1979)



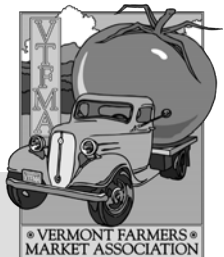
Name Change #4 to "Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont." (1994)

National Organic Program formed; NOFA-VT works closely with federal legislators to ensure program works for Vermont organic farmers. (2000)



First year of Senior Farm Share Program; 160 seniors at assisted living sites enroll to receive CSA shares from local farms across the state; program grows to 1,000 participants in coming years. (2001)

Vermont Farmers Market Association (VTFMA) is created to organize market managers and vendors for better resource and knowledge sharing. (2005)



106 VOF certified producers (1995)

**2000** 289 VOF certified producers (2003)

392 VOF certified producers (2006)

Farmer Emergency Fund launches to support farmers who have been adversely affected by natural and unnatural disasters such as crop failure, extreme weather, flooding, fire, barn collapse, and financial hardship. (1997)



Vermont FEED launches to help grow robust farm to school programs across the state. (2000)



National Organic Program (NOP) implemented in U.S., VOF accredited as USDA certifier. (2002)

Mobile pizza oven takes its first tour across Vermont! (2005)

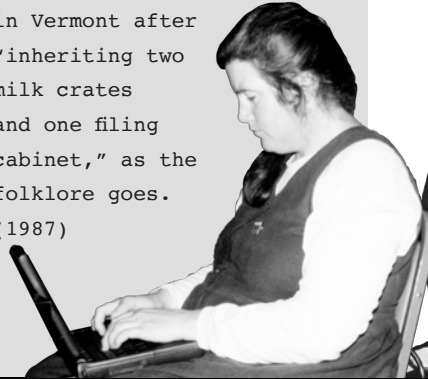






NOFA establishes itself as an advocacy organization with Adopt-an-Acre Farmland Preservation Campaign; raise awareness of 17,000 acres of Vermont farmland lost each year and lobbies for land preservation and access for family farms. (1981)

Enid Wonnacott hired as Executive Director and begins 30 year career leading the organic movement in Vermont after "inheriting two milk crates and one filing cabinet," as the folklore goes. (1987)



Organic Food Production Act passes in US Congress as part of the Farm Bill, introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. (1990)



55 VOF certified producers (1990)

**1990**

64 VOF certified producers (1992)

First Vermont Winter Conference held in response to feedback that summer conferences were hard to make because of the growing season. (1982)



Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) created; certifies 17 farms certified in its first year. (1985)

NOFA hires second employee, Kirsten Bower, (who works at NOFA to this day as Finance Director). (1989)



First Junior Iron Chef competition organized by VT FEED. (2008)



Vermont passes nation's first GMO Labeling Law; NOFA-VT works closely with Rural Vermont and other advocates to push for law. (2014)



NOFA-VT Board of Directors votes to update the organization's mission to include Social Justice. (2018)

**NOFA-VT Now:** 1,100 members. 800+ producers certified organic. 27 staff on Farmer Services, Food Access, Community Engagement, Certification, and Advocacy teams. (2021)

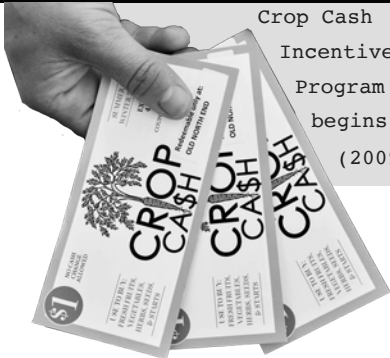
**2010**

582 VOF certified producers (2011)

683 VOF certified producers (2016)

**2020**

Crop Cash Incentive Program begins. (2009)



Tropical Storm Irene hits Vermont; NOFA-VT distributes \$150,000 to farmers for recovery. (2011)



First Annual Farmer Olympics, Vermont Open Farm Week. (2015)

NOFA-VT works with partners to launch Keep the Soil in Organic campaign, raises awareness through rallies about organic integrity. (2017)



**NOFA-VT** celebrates 50 years! (2021)



# 40 Years with Joy and John at Wildstone Farm

By Bill Cavanaugh, Farm Business Advisor

When we look back at the last 50 years of NOFA-VT's history, it's incredible to reflect on the early leaders of organic farming in Vermont.

To understand the roots of the organic movement and how it has led us to our present day, it's critical to talk to the people who have been in the fields and learn how their experience farming has evolved throughout their careers.

We want to share the story of two of these farmers: John and Joy Primmer of Wildstone Farm in Pownal, veteran farmers of over 40 years.

In the early 80s, Joy and John were living in North Adams, Massachusetts. They grew vegetables in an oversized garden and sold the excess at local farmers markets. When they were presented with an opportunity to buy the land in Pownal that now makes up Wildstone Farm, they jumped on it. Joy and John moved to the property with their young son and lived in a canvas tent, continuing to sell their extra produce at the farmers market. Their commitment to growing healthy food without a reliance on synthetic inputs inspired them to get involved with NOFA-VT, and

in 1989, they became the first certified organic farm in Bennington County.

Some of Joy and John's most cherished memories from NOFA-VT's early days revolve around the comradery and connection they experienced at conferences and events. They said the early Vermont Organic Farmers meetings (before the USDA) offered some of the most valuable opportunities to learn and exchange information, long before the internet existed. John remembers some of the farmers: "...Richard Wiswall, Dave Chapman,

*continued on page 11*



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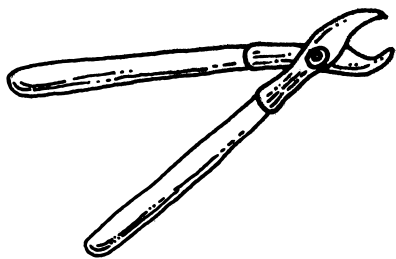
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Davey Miskell, Paul Harlow, Anne and Jack Lazor, Bruce Kaufman, Laini Fondilier, Will Stevens, Earl Ransom and so many others. And then Enid was there to facilitate—because boy it would go off on all these wild tangents. What an education! Enid managed to keep the whole bunch of us on track."

When we talked with the Primmers for this story, they shared many happy memories of getting to interact with Enid Wonnacott, NOFA-VT's Executive Director from 1987-2019. In fact, Enid was their inspector when the farm was first certified! Joy and John didn't have a phone in the early 90s, so the only way Enid could communicate with them—besides just stopping by—was via the mail. One of their favorite memories is how Enid would send them a postcard to schedule the inspection visits. They saved these postcards and have them to this day.



There's a lot to be proud of in a farming career that spans 40 years, but for Joy and John one of the most significant accomplishments was purchasing the 10 acre plot adjoining their original farm. This gave them more space to grow, more soil to improve, and connected two pieces of what was historically a much larger farm—a notable achievement in an area with major development pressure.

We were thrilled to hear that there was a NOFA-VT connection to this major

milestone for Wildstone Farm. As John tells it, "I was coming back from a run one day before work and our



dog Skye saw the "For Sale" sign and started barking at it—I probably would have missed it. We decided right away that Joy was going to go down to the bank to get out money for a deposit. And the second call we made was to Enid."

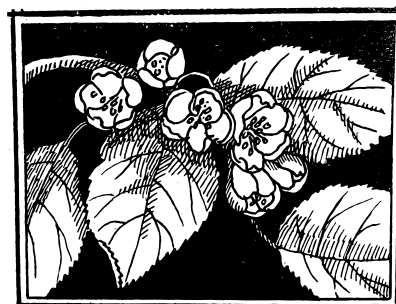
Enid gave them advice and a list of lenders to get in touch with, though ultimately they received financing for the property through NOFA-VT's revolving loan fund, which has since morphed into the Farmer Emergency Fund. Additionally, Richard Wiswall provided technical assistance for their production. "We like to say Richard came with the farm," John remembers.

Despite many years living an analog lifestyle, Joy and John have been working hard to keep up with the changing world we live in. Like so many, they faced overwhelming disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Wildstone Farm received one of NOFA-VT's first round of Resilience Grants in 2020, which were aimed at funding projects that helped farms adapt to changes brought about by the pandemic. Joy and John received funding for a new online ordering system and a printer to print out pick lists for the farmers market and CSA shares, both of which improved their business operations and workflow.

They've also worked to move from pen and paper record-keeping to digital records and spreadsheets. They give credit to Jen Miller, NOFA-VT's Farmer Services Director, for being instrumental in making this necessary change by providing one-on-one technical assistance. As John says about the process, "Jen's been great. Very helpful, very patient."

Their work with Jen has also focused on the future of Wildstone Farm. Joy and John—while in no hurry to retire—are getting "a bit long in the tooth" (their words, not ours) after long and fruitful careers, and they are looking at how the next generation could keep building on top of their strong, 40 year-old foundation. The Primmers love their land and feel like it's been good to them, and they'd love to see a young farmer come in to keep it in production. Part of their work with Jen has been planning how they can transition the farm to the right person while still remaining a part of the day-to-day. "I think we can be useful, not just ornamental," John says.

Looking back on over



four decades of farming, John expresses appreciation for having had NOFA-VT to rely on. "When we came to Vermont, NOFA was a really welcoming community to be a part of. It made a big difference in our lives. We've been grateful to be a part of it." ♦

# *Food and farming are where people and planet converge. Vermont needs to get both right.*

By Grace Oedel, Executive Director

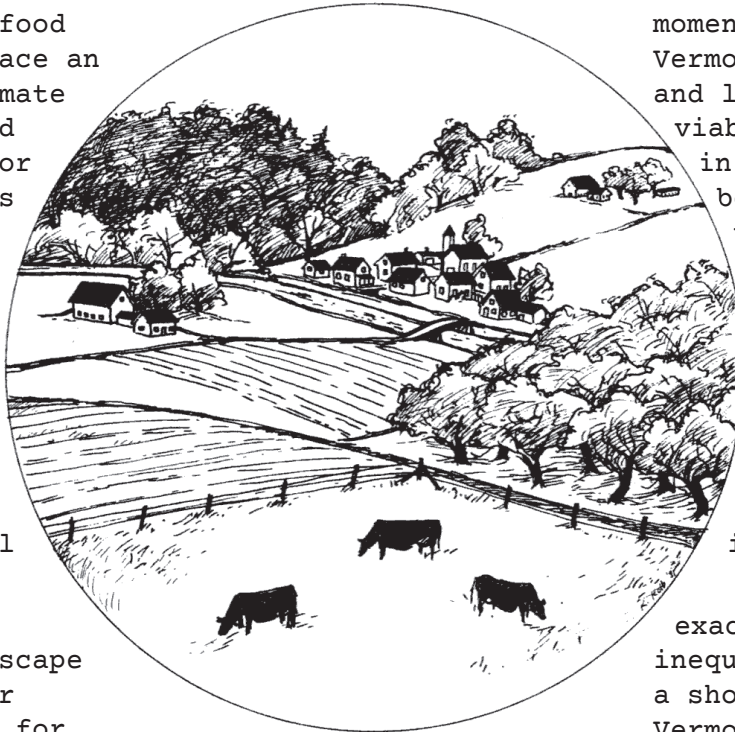
Relentless pandemic instability, coupled with the reality of climate change experienced firsthand (underscored by the recent IPCC report) converge here in Vermont around food and farming.

Just as Vermonters are experiencing rampant food insecurity, farmers face an intensification of climate challenges—drought and flood in one season, for example. As Vermonters wake up to our need for a more reliable and ecological food supply, the pandemic real estate boom becomes yet another variable contributing to the rising cost of land and loss of Vermont's agricultural acreage.

In a state that claims a working landscape as foundational to our identity and critical for our future, the health and growth of organic agriculture—which can heal many of the impacts of ecological decline and climate change while also keeping Vermonters fed—should be seen as a keystone species, an indicator of Vermont's overall vitality.

Unfortunately, recent news of Horizon Organic abandoning smaller-scale

Vermont dairies shows that without intentionality, it will only get harder to be an organic farmer keeping Vermonters fed and Vermont's land healthy. Horizon's move towards sourcing milk from mega farms in the west and Midwest threatens both



Vermont farmers and the resiliency of Vermont's food system. The vast majority of food we eat in Vermont is imported from out of state. Continued consolidation on farms in the west—which are facing intensifying water shortages, aquifer depletion, and raging wildfires—highlights the need to shift away from the sole metric of a "lowest price possible" and a national

corporate food system that externalizes all the costs it can. Preparing for the impacts of climate change here at home requires investing in a stronger local and organic Vermont food system now.

We can take this moment to address both Vermont's food insecurity and long-term farm viability. By investing in programs that support both eaters and farmers through equitable food access and farm viability, and support farmers in making sound ecological choices, we can ensure a future in which our communities are fed and our land is nourished.

The pandemic has exacerbated income inequality and resulted in a shocking one in three Vermonters facing food insecurity. However, it has been deeply heartening to experience the community's response stepping up to this enormous challenge quickly, dexterously, and collaboratively. The Vermont Foodbank, Hunger Free Vermont, Shift Meals teams, school nutrition teams, farmers, food hubs, food pantries, and many more organizations, neighborhoods, and



individuals all rose to the enormous challenge of keeping our communities fed in a time of great need.

One of the things that has been most inspiring about the food access community's response is precisely their look to solutions that work both short and long term. Programs like the Vermont Foodbank's "Vermonters Feeding Vermonters" or NOFA-VT's "Farm Share," which both promote food access while supporting local farmers directly, are innovative and critical for a thriving future for Vermont's people and land. These are seedlings we should cultivate for our shared future.

We have the opportunity to shore up our food system to improve resiliency in the future, but we must act now. As we look to the long term, the current food system instability we are experiencing appears to reveal just the tip of the iceberg.

Short term, national food prices will rise, increasing food access inequality. Long term, continuing to support harmful methods of food production (designed to maximize profit margins for a few corporations) such

as consolidation, fossil-fuel intensive production, monoculture, toxic chemical overuse, and exploitative labor practices will only exacerbate climate chaos and economic injustice.

The good news: we

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**"In a state that claims a working landscape as foundational to our identity and critical for our future, the health and growth of organic agriculture—which can heal many of the impacts of ecological decline and climate change while also keeping Vermonters fed— should be seen as a keystone species, an indicator of Vermont's overall vitality."**

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already have many of the strategies that provide answers for these issues simultaneously. Vermont can invest in win-win food access programs that support local and organic farmers while providing Vermonters with nourishing local food for years to come, guaranteeing our food security in a continually turbulent environment and economy.

This investment looks like increasing incentives for public institutions like schools and state funded agencies to buy local and organic foods. It looks like better compensating farmers for ecosystem services they provide. It looks like reducing land

cost for aspiring farmers— additionally important for historically marginalized groups.

These are not pie in the sky ideas, but viable efforts already under way in our state. However, they need public understanding and loud support to succeed. By choosing another way of producing our food and feeding our people, we will set an example for the rest of our nation. Ultimately, all health and all justice is interdependent. The health of the land cannot be separated

from the health of its people, and the strength of its economy cannot be separated from the quality of its culture. Vermont can center organic farming and food equity as a core metric of health, and help to build a more resilient future for the people and the land of Vermont. ◇

*This op-ed was published in VT Digger on September 5th, 2021.*

*NOFA-VT is participating in the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets taskforce aimed at providing immediate support for farmers impacted by the Horizon news, as well as focusing on long-term systems change work to create better conditions for organic farmers.*

# NOFA-VT

PO BOX 697  
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NOFA: 802-434-4122  
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## *Feeding children is feeding the future*

By Helen Rortvedt, Farm to School & Food Access  
Programs Director

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"These would be delicious in a soup!"

"I bet the kids would try them in pesto!"

The dandelion greens that Angus Baldwin grows at West Farm in Jeffersonville were a topic of much discussion among the dozen-or-so school nutrition professionals that attended the first (of five) on-farm workshop this summer organized by our Vermont FEED team (our Farm to School project partnership with Shelburne Farms) in collaboration with the School Nutrition



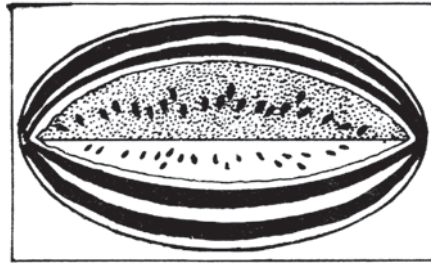
Association of Vermont and Food Connects.

Angus' famous carrots are also a much-loved staple served in school meal programs throughout Franklin and Lamoille counties. The school nutrition professionals that gathered at his farm on a drizzly day in August were thrilled to see the carrot fields thriving. But the dandelion greens—those were new for everyone!

After a grueling 18-months where school nutrition programs stepped up in unprecedented ways to serve their communities in this time of significant need, it was a literal, and much-needed, breath of fresh air. We gathered to celebrate the coming harvest season and to forge even stronger connections between the school nutrition professionals that purchase and prepare local food with the producers at West Farm, Cedar Circle Farm in Thetford, Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, Berry Creek Farm in Westfield, and Laughing Child Farm in Pawlet.

We were also celebrating the landmark passage of Vermont's Local Food Purchasing Incentive for schools—a historic investment in our school nutrition programs, in our farms, and in our kids. In 2021-2022, the State of Vermont will invest \$500,000 in schools to increase their local food purchases and we believe this investment is just the beginning. We plan to work tirelessly to ensure the successful roll out of

this program and advocate for an increase to the future funding for this program. But this August, it was truly amazing to be able to pause, celebrate with school nutrition professionals and farmers alike, and remember just how far we have come.



NOFA-VT's roots are in feeding children. Some of our earliest work involved volunteers driving a box truck around Vermont to collect produce from organic farmers, which was then driven to New York City where food activists distributed the farm fresh, nutritious food to childcare centers in the Harlem. This project didn't last long due to persistent breakdowns on the side of the highway and the realization that driving multiple hours down treacherous roads wasn't the most efficient way to address food insecurity, yet the drive to support the health and food access of all Vermonters still persists today.

When the Vermont FEED project began in 2000, school meals had suffered from nearly two decades of slashed federal funding and many schools had no choice but to turn to the highly-processed cheap foods industry to put food on their kids' trays. Additionally, in Vermont, many schools

weren't even outfitted with proper kitchen equipment (or even kitchens at all!) to prepare and serve fresh, whole foods as part of the school meals. Over the past twenty years, we have worked to elevate the profession of school nutrition by providing hands-on training in scratch cooking and helping schools to properly equip their kitchens, identify their food values, and develop local food purchasing plans that reflect those values. We've developed cookbooks, curricula, and best practices for breaking down the silos between the classroom and the cafeteria. And now, in 2021, with school meal programs finally receiving more of the recognition and support they deserve, we are poised to take the next big step forward in ensuring that all Vermont kids have access to nourishing school meals prepared with more food grown and raised by our hard working farmers.

So this October, as the nation celebrates Farm to School month, we will be reflecting here in Vermont on all the trailblazing farmers, school nutrition professionals, administrators, school board members, teachers, and countless others who have shown us the way for over twenty years. The very roots of the national Farm to School movement can be traced back to many of our village schools and small family farms who have always known that there is a better way to feed our kids: the Vermont way. ♦

# To Market, to Market!

## A Brief History of Vermont Farmers Markets & the VTFMA

By Andrew Graham, Direct Markets Coordinator



It's hard to imagine a time before farmers markets. We're accustomed to the sight of tents clustered in the center of a Vermont village, people strolling about, folk music wafting in the distance, and pick-ups and box trucks parked nearby. We take for granted the ease of showing up at our local market, at the same predictable time and place each week, and being able to select the freshest, most beautiful food available.

But in the sixties and seventies, when conventional agriculture was the predominant practice, food was largely only available in grocery stores. As the organic movement grew throughout Vermont, more and more producers needed new markets for their organic products. NOFA-VT was already rallying the community around shared resources including

buying co-ops, root cellar co-ops, and more, so it began building shared resources for developing local markets and became an early steward of farmers markets in Vermont.

The radical politics shared by many in the organic community of those early days meant there was some resistance to focusing on making money, but it was short-lived. As Grace Gershuny writes in her memoir, *Organic Revolutionary*, "despite the prevailing distrust of the profit motive, the more serious growers quickly learned that you

can't make a living growing vegetables—you have to sell them. A change of strategy was clearly called for, and the group quickly adopted a new mission of 'local food for local markets.'"



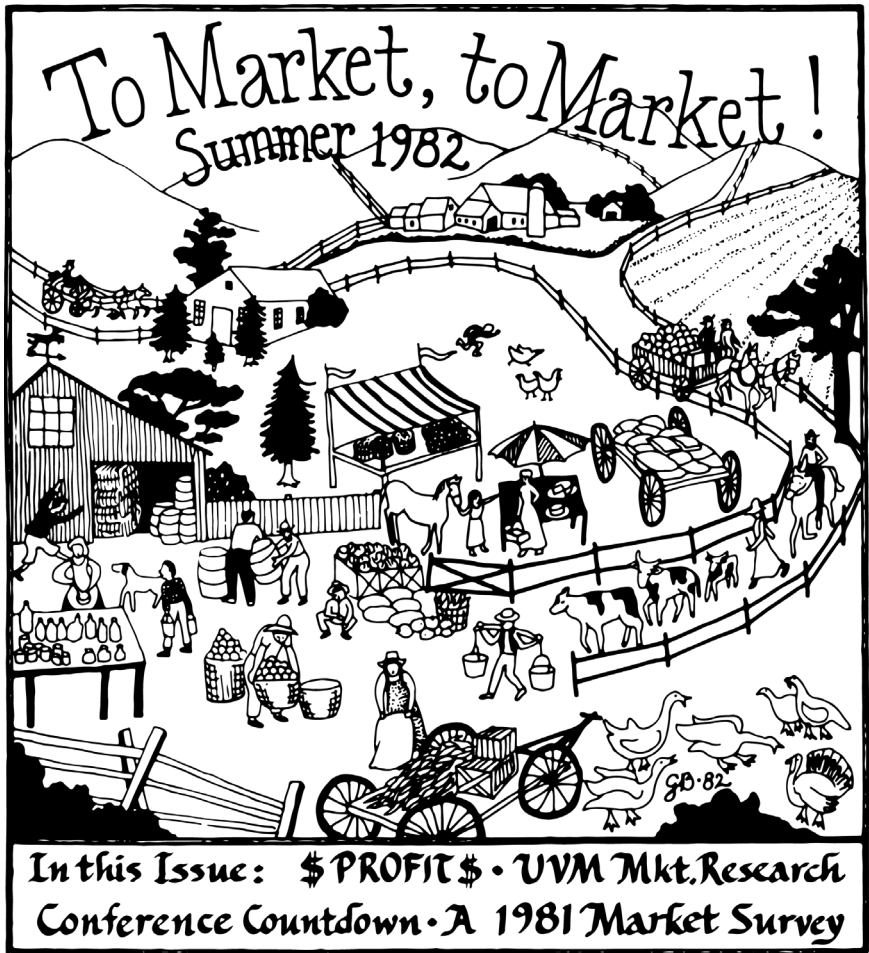
But when they sought permission from towns and villages to organize the markets, there was more resistance. Gershuny writes, "farmers markets were first viewed with suspicion by conservative local merchants, who feared that they would take business away from established grocery stores." In addition, some communities



viewed farmers markets as an open invitation for hippies and riff-raff to occupy their downtowns and cause trouble.

Determined NOFA-VT coordinators and volunteers pushed on, and after a couple seasons it was clear to the towns and the business communities: farmers markets were a cultural asset that attracted tourism and promoted commerce, all while being a critical sales channel for early-stage farmers.

As more and more farmers markets launched around the state, the need for resource sharing, information exchange, and networking increased. The Vermont Federation of Farmers' Markets (VFFM) was launched in 1980 with the mission to make markets a viable and dynamic outlet for locally produced foods, but was disbanded in 1986 due to a lack of leadership and funds. Throughout the 2000s, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMA) collaborated with NOFA-VT to support markets through a mini-grants program. In 2003, NOFA-VT hosted a statewide meeting for market managers and vendors where the reorganization of a Vermont Farmers Market Collective took place. Since the VAAFMA lacked capacity to coordinate the Vermont Farmers Market Collective, they asked NOFA-VT to take up the task, and NOFA-VT has served as a networking coordinator for farmers markets in Vermont ever since. The VTFMA, or the Vermont Farmers Market Association, was officially organized in 2005 and guidelines were formerly adopted in January, 2008.



**In this Issue: \$ PROFIT \$ • UVM Mkt. Research Conference Countdown • A 1981 Market Survey**

The cover of a 1982 issue of The Natural Farmer.

The VTFMA has grown significantly since its inception and has become an important piece of NOFA-VT's work to ensure that Vermonters have access to fresh, local, organic food, and that farmers have access to local markets. Currently,

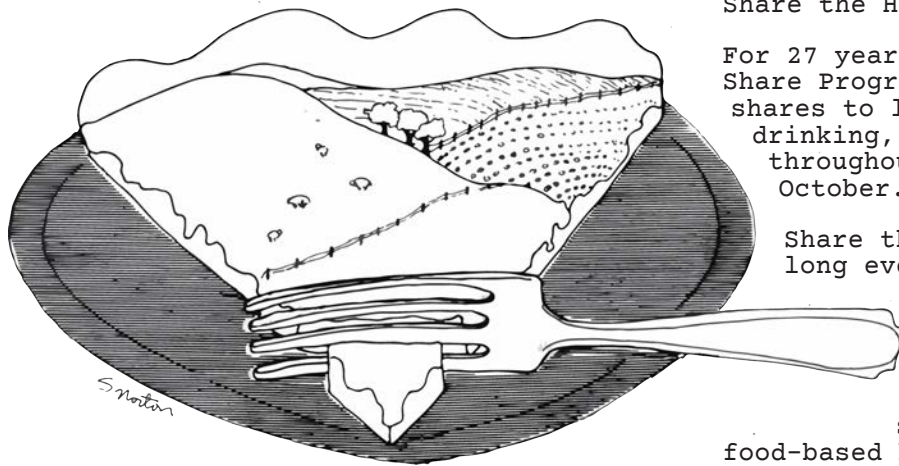
the VTFMA has over 50 member markets. Just like NOFA-VT's commitment to a majority-farmer board of directors, VTFMA is committed to a board of directors representing farmers markets from all over the state. NOFA-VT is able to get real-time input and feedback and make

sure our work supporting vibrant farmers markets is timely and relevant. Farmers markets were hit hard due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some didn't make it, but the vast majority opened in some way in 2020 and many have reported record sales in 2021.

Through a generous grant from the Vermont Community Foundation, NOFA-VT has also been able to provide funding to over 80% of the VTFMA markets in the state to help them recover from pandemic-induced challenges.

There's never been a better time to support your local farmers market during the bounty of this fall's harvest season, and remember that if you receive 3SquaresVT benefits, you can double your money at most farmers markets in Vermont with our Crop Cash program (learn more at [nofavt.org/croptcash](http://nofavt.org/croptcash)). ◇

# Share the Harvest

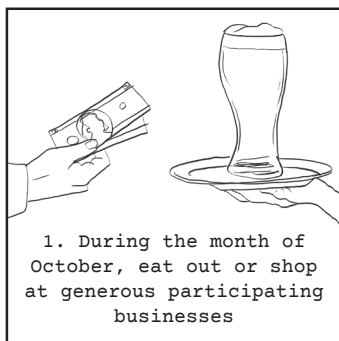


Share the Harvest is back!

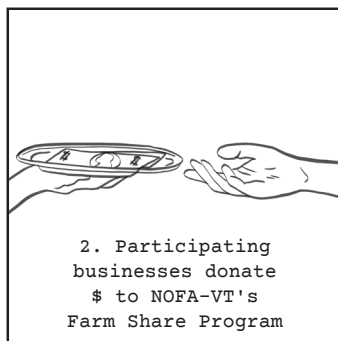
For 27 years, folks have supported our Farm Share Program—which provides half-priced CSA shares to low-income Vermonters—by eating, drinking, and shopping at local businesses throughout Vermont during the month of October.

Share the Harvest is a win-win-win month-long event. By dining and shopping at participating restaurants, co-ops, breweries, and stores, you're supporting local farms, increasing food access for food insecure Vermonters, and supporting restaurants and other food-based businesses—many of whom have been hit hard by the pandemic.

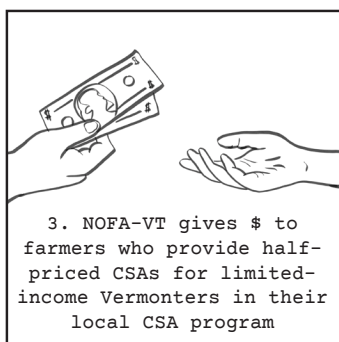
## How it Works:



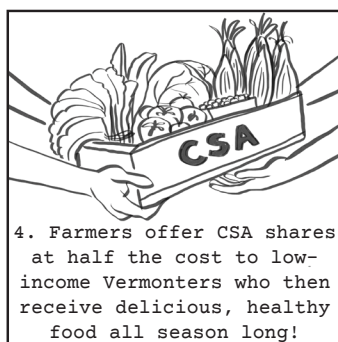
1. During the month of October, eat out or shop at generous participating businesses



2. Participating businesses donate \$ to NOFA-VT's Farm Share Program



3. NOFA-VT gives \$ to farmers who provide half-priced CSAs for limited-income Vermonters in their local CSA program



4. Farmers offer CSA shares at half the cost to low-income Vermonters who then receive delicious, healthy food all season long!

## Donate:

If you want to ensure that low-income Vermonters can access healthy, local food, but you can't partake in Share the Harvest, that's okay!

We accept donations to support our Farm Share Program year round.

Demand for Farm Share Program support has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic and food insecurity in the state is still incredibly high. NOFA-VT believes that all Vermonters should be able to eat local organic food, regardless of their income level, while also making sure farmers get a good wage for their hard work.

Donate online at [nofavt.org/donate](https://nofavt.org/donate), or mail checks made out to NOFA-VT to PO Box 697, Richmond VT 05477. Please put "Farm Share" in the memo line.

## Restaurants, breweries, co-ops, & food stores - want to participate?

If you would like to participate in Share the Harvest 2021 or partner with the Farm Share Program, please contact Erin Buckwalter at [erin@nofavt.org](mailto:erin@nofavt.org) or 802-434-7152. ♦





# A Warm Welcome to our New Staff!



## Zea Luce

**Events & Engagement  
Coordinator**

Zea is a community builder and steward of the earth. She grew up on a farm and her background includes zero waste work & local food systems. She has coordinated farm-to-school and Buy Fresh Buy Local programs, managed an educational farm, a Master Composter program, and more. Most recently, she managed various programs and events for Vermont Fresh Network & DigInVT. She has a degree in Environmental Studies from Oberlin College and completed an Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems program. Zea currently serves on the board of her local food cooperative and lives in an eco-village. ◇



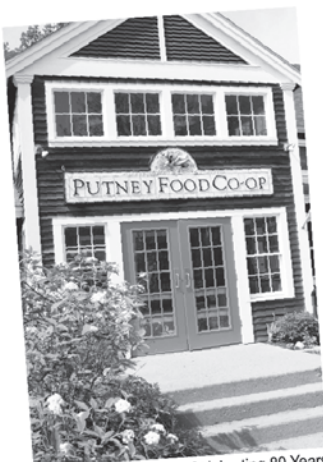
## Katie Robinson

**Database Coordinator &  
Finance Assistant**

Katie was born and raised in Warren, VT surrounded by farms and ski mountains. Her interest in community development was sparked during a gap year program spent in Thailand and India learning about sustainable agriculture and international development. She earned a BS & MS in Community Development & Applied Economics at UVM. In addition to food systems and agriculture, Katie is interested in gender equity and the economic empowerment of women and girls. Outside of work you can find her camping, enjoying coffee with friends, working on a puzzle, or taking in some live music. ◇

## Your Neighboring VERMONT FOOD CO-OPS

*Locally Owned by 50,000 People Like You!*



Putney Food Co-op — Celebrating 80 Years at the Heart of the Community!

Food co-ops are people like you, working together to ensure access to healthy food, support local producers, and build good jobs. Find out what the buzz is about at your neighboring Vermont food co-op!

- Brattleboro Food Co-op, Brattleboro, VT
- Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op, Hardwick, VT
- City Market, Onion River Co-op, Downtown & South End Burlington, VT
- Co-op Food Stores, White River Junction, VT
- Hunger Mountain Co-op, Montpelier, VT
- Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Middlebury, VT
- Morrisville Food Co-op, Morrisville, VT
- Plainfield Food Co-op, Plainfield, VT
- Putney Food Co-op, Putney, VT
- Rutland Area Food Co-op, Rutland, VT
- Springfield Food Co-op, Springfield, VT
- Upper Valley Food Co-op, White River Junction, VT



*Working Together to Grow a More Healthy, Just & Sustainable Food System!*



LEARN MORE AT [WWW.NFCA.COOP](http://WWW.NFCA.COOP)



# Chronicles of the Early Years of NOFA

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Sara Norton served as NOFA-VT's Executive Director from 1980 to 1984. In honor of our 50th year, she compiled reflections from her time leading the organization in a piece titled *Chronicles of the Early Years of NOFA*. You can read the full piece— and flip through a digitized version of the first issue of NOFA Notes published in 1982— on our website at [nofavt.org/chronicles](http://nofavt.org/chronicles).

Below are selected excerpts from Sara's reflections.

• • •

"Each era of NOFA has its unique story. Yet the deep story remains the same. It is a story of a vision for a different world than what conventional agriculture and economic systems offer us. It is people working together to build this sustainable and just world, and it is a story of people creating an intimate relationship with the land, with the fields, as Larry Karp wrote, "who are living beings, friends a farmer gets to know." Samuel Kaymen said, "NOFA should have 200 million members. Everyone has to share in the care for the earth and the production of food. We are all members of the soil community."

• • •

"Building a grassroots organization in a state like Vermont where the community comes together for festivals and fairs, where meetings are held in homes and church basements, was a face to face relationship with people and the tactile experience of the land. It was driving through winding back roads in all seasons -- to a board meeting up on Joey Klein's windy hill in Williamstown, or down on Andy Snyder's hillside in Rutland County, on Konrad Kruesi's sheep farm in Woodstock, in Jane Dwinell's barn in Randolph, at Peter Betts' strawberry farm in West Danville, and on Olive McKenzie's homestead at her Wolcott hill with her free-range goats wandering about. Directions to places spoke of topography and landmarks, not coordinates. But one always could spot the farmhouse where the NOFA meeting was by the array of old Saabs and pick-ups lining the roadside. And inside folks gathered with an abundant mixture of good cheer and seriousness."

"In the days before the internet, petitions were circulated by hand around the state -- set out on clipboards on cashiers' counters in grocery stores or hung up on bulletin boards. Our members put the "Save Vermont Farms" petitions everywhere they could imagine. This petition was launched to focus public and legislators' attention on the importance of agriculture and the preservation of farmlands; to shake public opinion loose from its single-mindedness about economic growth through commercial and industrial development. This was the beginning of our grassroots lobbying efforts. This was the kind of lobbying NOFA was made for. "

• • •

"The topography of Vermont and New Hampshire, where NOFA began, with its hillsides, sometimes steep and sometimes gentle, and with its river valleys, sometimes narrow and sometimes wide, begs for small farms and diversified farming practices. And the times, with their desperate need for local, healthy food and with their planetary climate crisis, demand organic agriculture. And it is deeper: it's about having an intimate relationship with the intelligence of the land and to know the fields as friends."

• • •

"I don't know how far away we are from re-sacralizing our relationship to the land. Sometimes it seems very, very far. But I do know that no change will ever come without a grassroots movement. It makes sense, doesn't it? Especially since we are talking about land. Of all the groups in the Northeast, it is logical that the people of NOFA would be the ones to spur such a movement."





# *NOFA-VT Members: Thank you for supporting organic agriculture and a just and ecological food system!*

A warm welcome to the following members who joined us or renewed their membership in the 3rd quarter of 2021:

## **NEW MEMBERS**

Liz Bleakley, Brownsville, VT  
TJ Curt, Shelburne, VT  
Erica DeLorenzo, Brattleboro, VT  
Ellen Fox, Westfield, VT  
Andrew Godin, Franklin, VT  
Melissa Hirschhorn, Burlington, VT  
Jacobs Household, South Strafford, VT  
Jabari Jones, Athens, VT  
Augustin Masuy, Waterbury Center, VT  
Ashly Mellon, Newfane, VT  
Robert Minearo, West Wardsboro, VT

Lisa Plourde, Maidstone, VT  
Mallory Staskus, Underhill, VT  
Darlene Stone, Northfield, VT  
John Thurgood, Oneonta, NY  
Odella Woodson, New York, NY  
Donielle Workman, Marshfield, VT  
Sharon Wright & Carlos Mckeon, Burlington, VT  
Two Sisters Farm, Johnson, VT  
Wayward Goose Farm, West Pawlet, VT  
Yvette Lanneaux, Princeton, NJ

## **NEW & RENEWING BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATION PARTNERS, & FRIENDS OF NOFA-VT**

Morrison's Custom Feeds, Barnet, VT  
Green Mountain Feeds, Bethel, VT  
Red Hen Baking Company LLC, Middlesex, VT  
King Arthur Baking Company, White River Junction, VT  
Vermont Soap, Middlebury, VT  
Rhapsody Natural Foods, Cabot, VT  
Stone Leaf Teahouse, LLC, Middlebury, VT  
Nitty Gritty Grain Company of Vermont, Charlotte, VT  
Depot Farm Supply, Whiting, VT  
O Bread Bakery, Shelburne, VT  
VT Artisan Coffee & Tea Co, Waterbury Center, VT  
All Souls Tortilleria, Burlington, VT  
Dobra US LLC, Burlington, VT  
Sweet Tree Holdings 1, LLC, Island Pond, VT  
Mocha Joe's Roasting Company, Brattleboro, VT  
Franklin Foods Inc, Enosburg Falls, VT  
Vermont Bean Crafters Co, Waitsfield, VT  
Addison County Commission Sales Inc., Middlebury, VT  
True North Granola LLC, Brattleboro, VT

Putney Farmers Market, Putney, VT  
The Maple Standard, Burlington, VT  
Upstate Elevator Supply Co., Burlington, VT  
Cattis LLC, Hardwick, VT  
Bravo Botanicals LLC, Brattleboro, VT  
MG Coffee Roasting Enterprises LLC, White River Junction, VT  
3rd Generation Farming/Heinz Hill Farm, Montpelier, VT  
North Country School, Lake Placid, NY  
River's Bend Design LLC, Moretown, VT  
Kingdom Homewatch & Property Care LLC, Lyndonville, VT  
Bill & Kate Schubart, Hinesburg, VT  
North Branch Coffee LTD, Montpelier, VT  
Sunja's Oriental Foods, Inc, Waterbury, VT  
Ron Miller & Jackie Fischer, Woodstock, VT  
Michael Lennon, Leicester, VT  
Sunsoil, Hardwick, VT  
Joseph & Sara Farley, Stowe, VT  
Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Middlebury, VT



## **New Organic Certifications**

Vermont Organic Farmers welcomes the following new producers who have recently obtained organic certification (certified between 6/1/21-8/31/21) for all or a portion of their operation, joining the more than 800 organic farmers & processors throughout the state.

Alchemy Gardens  
Amandola Farm LLC  
Bee Tender Farm  
Dhatu Botanicals LLC  
Fresh Roots Farm  
Gratitude Farms LLC  
Hop and Stuff INC  
Old West Church Farm LLC

Paradiso Farm LLC  
Ridge Vermont Craft Roasters LLC  
Rolling Bale Farm LLC  
Greg Smith  
The Farm Upstream  
Tio Farm LLC  
X-TRACT VERMONT LLC

**Learn more about the benefits of certified organic, locally grown at [NOFAVT.ORG/WHY-ORGANIC](http://NOFAVT.ORG/WHY-ORGANIC)**



# A HEALTHY AGRICULTURE IN VERMONT IS...



## THE CONCERN OF US ALL

### FOR OUR ECONOMY

In Vermont 80% of our food is imported, often from large corporate-owned farms thousands of miles away. Many of these foods could be grown in Vermont, strengthening our local economy. A healthy agriculture is locally based, self-sustaining and diversified.

### FOR OUR HEALTH

Locally grown food not only tastes better, but it is better. Much of the natural goodness is lost transporting and processing foods. There is increasing evidence that highly refined, processed food grown in chemically treated soil is a cause of many ailments.

### FOR OUR LAND

Healthy agricultural practices don't mine the soil, they nurture it; they enhance, rather than destroy the natural eco-system upon which we depend.

### FOR THE FUTURE

Every day in the United States, 4 square miles of prime farm land are shifted to uses other than agriculture. Yet our need for food is increasing

### FOR OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY

As prime farm land disappears, food is not our only loss. The quality of our lives is diminished. There is the loss of farm family life, of the sharing community and of the values that spring from living close to the land.

### FOR PEACE

The industrialized nations contain 1/3 of the world's population but consume 2/3 of the world's food. Self-sufficiency not only means peace of mind but also moves us toward an equal and peaceful world.

"When I recently reflected on why I have been inspired by the job for so long, it all boils down to my respect for organic farmers who nurture the land and work to grow good food for people near and far. When I started working at NOFA, I was hired as an organic certification inspector and I met the pioneering organic farmers. There is not a more inspiring bunch of farmers! I have been driven by wanting to provide organizational support for organic farms to thrive, and to increase access to local, organic food for all Vermonters."

- Enid Wonnacott, NOFA-VT  
Executive Director 1987-2018



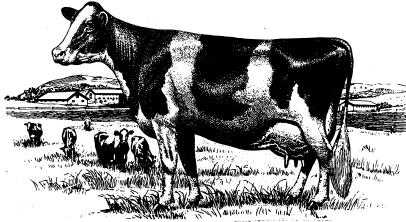
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# Happy harvest season!



## Join our board!

*Do you believe that agriculture can help to heal the planet, while supporting farmers and eaters?*

*Do you feel that we need to move towards a more just and sustainable food system and that we have all the tools we need to make that happen?*

*We're currently recruiting for new board members! We have a majority farmer/farmworker-led board, and that remains important to us in our board composition.*

*Learn more at [nofavt.org/board](http://nofavt.org/board)*



NOFA-VT logos 1971 - today