




Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Farmers, gardeners, and consumers working to promote an economically viable and ecologically sound Vermont food system. Our vision consists of small farms and agriculturally based businesses that are thriving and improving the ecology of Vermont foodscapes, where organic farms and gardens supply local food to all members of their community, and everyone knows their farmers.

This report highlights our work in 2008 to:

-  Increase consumer access to local and organic foods
-  Provide food and farm education about the benefits of local, organic food, and practical skills to help people meet more of their own food needs
-  Help farms thrive in Vermont by providing technical assistance, farmer training opportunities, developing strong markets, and advocating for policies that support small farms

Increasing Consumer Access to Local and Organic Food

Making Locally-Grown Foods Available For All, Regardless of Income

By partnering with 27 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms, the **Vermont Farm Share Program** linked producers with consumers to provide subsidized shares to 935 low-income seniors and 252 adults and children.

I participate in NOFA Vermont's Senior Farm Share Program because we all have grandmothers and grandfathers. Most grandparents have grown up on farms – they know about nutrition and fresh food. But in our culture, they don't have access. When I pick on a Monday, I know the food is going to surrogate grandparents. The soul of organic is access to a local food system. Food is the foundation.

- Greg Cox, Boardman Hill Farm



In October 2, we held our annual **Share the Harvest** fundraiser with 84 restaurants contributing a percentage of their day's sales, raising over \$10,000 for the Farm Share Program.

Increasing Consumer Access at Farmers' Markets

NOFA Vermont worked with project partners to enable seven new farmers' markets in Vermont to accept electronic food stamps and debit cards by providing EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card readers. Increasing the capacity of farmers' markets to accept food stamps has made fresh, local food more accessible to low-income community members and increased the total sales at farmers' markets.

Growing the Number of Certified Organic Producers in Vermont

Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF), LLC, the organic certification program of NOFA Vermont, was started in 1985 to help growers and concerned consumers define what it means to produce food organically. VOF is an accredited certifying agent by the USDA and certifies most of the organic farmers and processors in Vermont. In 2008, VOF certified 535 producers on over 90,000 acres of certified organic farmland, with a total gross sales of over \$103 million dollars; organic production is one of the fastest growing sectors in agriculture in Vermont! VOF staff worked in 2008 to maintain the integrity of the National Organic Program by organizing farmer responses to standards interpretations, participating in national debates, and developing policy positions and congressional testimony for the 2008 Farm Bill.



Providing Food and Farm Education to All Vermonters

Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED)

VT FEED is a collaborative program of NOFA Vermont, Shelburne Farms, and Food Works. In 2008, VT FEED provided consultation and training to schools, farmers, and school communities to create vital community-based farm to school programs – where children connect with the farms in their community, understand where their food comes from, and have the opportunity to eat local healthy food in their school lunches.



Selling to the schools has been the most satisfying marketing experience our farm has ever had – selling to the lunch program so that kids, who may not ever be exposed to fresh farm food, will have that experience.

— Bruce Kaufman, Riverside Farm, East Hardwick

Farm to Community Mentors

NOFA Vermont's 8 regional **Farm to Community Mentors** serve as resources in their regions to expand agricultural awareness and education by developing a community understanding of agriculture and develop on-going relationships and support between schools and their local farms. In 2008, the mentors coordinated the **Farmer Correspondence Program**. 75 farmers throughout Vermont wrote letters during the winter months describing their life on the farm to 100 classrooms in Vermont. The mentors also coordinated 27 **Youth Farmers' Markets** this year at markets throughout Vermont. The Youth Markets gave kids the opportunity to sell something homegrown or homemade, and helped support the markets by drawing new adults to the market.



Serving as an Educational Resource for Farmers, Eaters, Homesteaders, and Gardeners

- Organized 42 seasonal **on-farm workshops** for gardeners, homesteaders, and commercial farmers including *Grow Your Own Organic Garden*, *Pasture Season Extension*, and *Developing Seeding and Transplant Schedules for a Continuous CSA Harvest*.
- Held the **26th Annual Winter Conference** bringing together over 1,000 organic farmers, gardeners, eaters, and educators to share in two days of workshops and networking.
- Published **NOFA Notes**, our quarterly newsletter, full of farming and gardening information, local food resources, book reviews, opinion pieces, analysis of public policy initiatives, farm profiles, recipes, and event listings.
- Attended 20 local fairs, festivals, and other **outreach events** serving farmers' *pizza* and farmers' *roasted roots* from our mobile oven and educating consumers about the importance of supporting local farms.
- Through our **website** provided electronic resources for farmers, gardeners, and eaters allowing the viewer to find resources on "Growing Organic Food," "Marketing Organic Food," and "Finding Organic Food", including a directory of farmers' markets, CSAs, and localvore chapters. (www.nofavt.org)



Strengthening Commercial Organic Farms in Vermont

NOFA Vermont's **Apprenticeship Program** provided farmers information about 70 potential apprentices through an on-line directory and organized new-farmer workshops for apprentices and farm workers.

Provided on-farm technical assistance to dairy and livestock farmers making the transition to organic production through our **Dairy and Livestock Technical Assistance Program**, including production technical assistance with 36 farms, business planning assistance with 9 farms, and cash-flow analyses with 8 farms. In addition, we held a dairy and livestock technical track at our Winter Conference, and held 16 on-farm workshops on topics ranging from grass management to on-farm slaughter and butcher. Finally, we coordinated a two day conference for agricultural professionals (veterinarians, researchers, and educators) on holistic approaches to animal health specific to the needs and requirements of organic dairy and livestock producers.



NOFA Vermont launched the **Vegetable and Fruit Technical Assistance Program**. In 2008, we organized a fruit and vegetable technical track at our Winter Conference, provided technical assistance in business planning to fruit and vegetable producers, held 12 on-farm technical workshops, and provided consultations in commercial production.

Started an **Energy Management Program** as part of our Dairy and Livestock and Vegetable and Fruit Technical Assistance Programs. The NOFA Vermont Energy Management Program will work with organic farmers to develop long-term energy management plans for their farms, designed to help farmers reduce energy operating costs through a combination of improved energy efficiency and implementation of renewable energy strategies. The first phase of the Energy Management Program is the design and testing of an audit tool to measure the energy expenditures on organic farms. In addition, organized 4 on-farm energy workshops with topics including energy efficient refrigeration systems and converting tractors to electric power.

NOFA Vermont's **Revolving Loan Fund** has loaned out more than \$456,000 to small farmers for equipment and operating expenses. In 2008, NOFA Vermont provided \$23,077 in low-interest loans to 3 farmers.

Building Direct Markets Between Farmers and Consumers

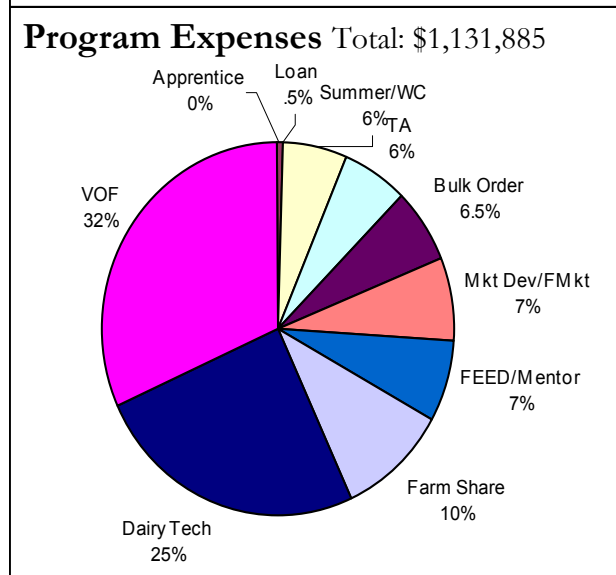
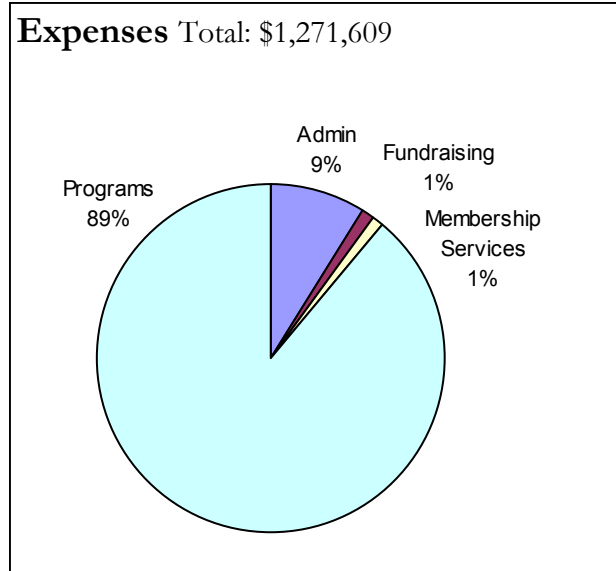
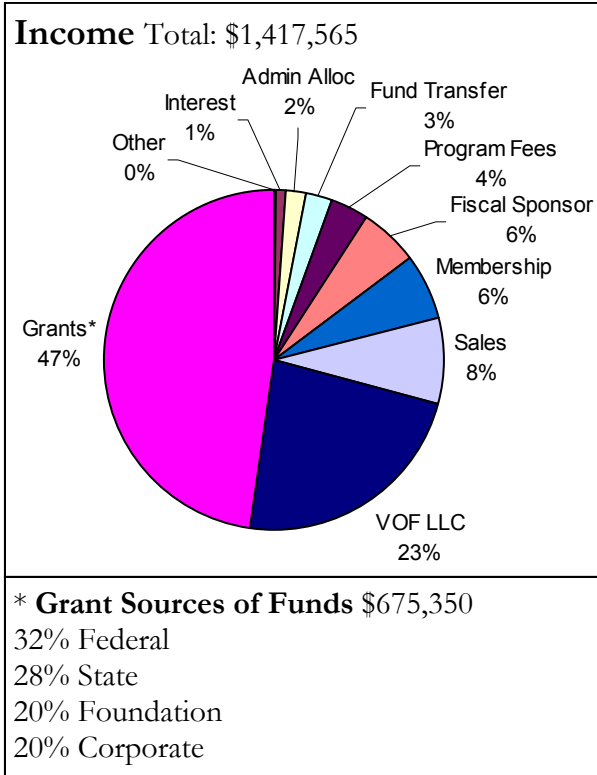
NOFA Vermont strengthens **farmers' markets** in Vermont by providing technical assistance to start-up markets and on-site support to existing markets, collecting annual economic, and organizational data from farmers' markets, and updating annual market listings through print and electronic listings. In 2008, NOFA Vermont received funding to provide strategic planning support to farmers markets and implement a \$100,000 mini-grant program.

In 2008, the **Vermont Farmers' Market Association (VFMA)** was formally launched and held their first annual meeting. The purpose of the VFMA is to encourage and establish successful farmers' markets in Vermont. NOFA Vermont serves as the umbrella for the VFMA

Held a **Direct Marketing Conference** attended by 122 farmers and market managers to provide a networking and educational opportunity for farmers who direct market through CSAs, farmers' markets, and farmstands.



Financial Statements 10/1/07-9/30/08



Cash Balance

Beginning Cash	\$361,438.73
Income	\$1,417,565.26
Expense	\$1,271,608.65
Cash Balance	\$507,395.34

Thank You for Your Support

NOFA Vermont would like to thank the individuals, businesses, and organizations who have supported NOFA Vermont through their generous donations to our annual fund, programs, and events and to the many wonderful people who have volunteered their time. Your contributions help to sustain our programs and ensure the vitality of NOFA Vermont.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following foundations for their financial support of our programs through grants, donations, and matching contributions between October 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008:

Ben & Jerry's Foundation • The Brook Family Foundation • Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund • The Forrest & Frances Lattner Foundation • Freeman Foundation • Lintilhac Foundation • Prudential Foundation • Stratton Foundation • Vermont Community Foundation • Weston A Price Foundation

NOFA Vermont has been the recipient of the following program grants between October 1, 2007 & September 30, 2008:

Chittenden Bank Card for Kids *Youth Famers Market Program* • Farm Credit of Western New York • George D Aiken Resource Conservation & Development • New England Dairy Promotion Board, Inc. *Farmer Correspondence Project* • NOFA New York *Organic Dairy Transitions Project Field Testing* • Northern Vermont Resource Conservation & Development • NE SARE *Developing On-Farm Research Expertise Among Farmers in Vermont* • NE SARE *Community Market Project* • NE SARE *Education to Extension Agents, Veterinarians, and other Professionals in Complementary Treatments and Preventative Management for Organic Livestock Farms* • NE SARE *Integrated Learning Courses for Sustainable Livestock Production* • Stonyfield Farm, Inc. *Energy Management Program* • USDA Agricultural Marketing Service FMPP *Community Market Project* • USDA RBEG *Community Market Project* • UVM sub award USDA Risk Management Agency *Addressing the Challenges Facing the Vermont Dairy Industry* • UVM sub award USDA Risk Management Agency *Crop Insurance Education for Vermont farmers for 2007-08* • UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture sub award *Grazing for Clean Water Initiative ANR 319* • UVM Dairy Econ Study • Vermont Agency of Agriculture • Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living sub award USDA SFMNP *Community Supported Agriculture Farm Share* • Vermont Housing Conservation Board, Farm Viability Enhancement Program