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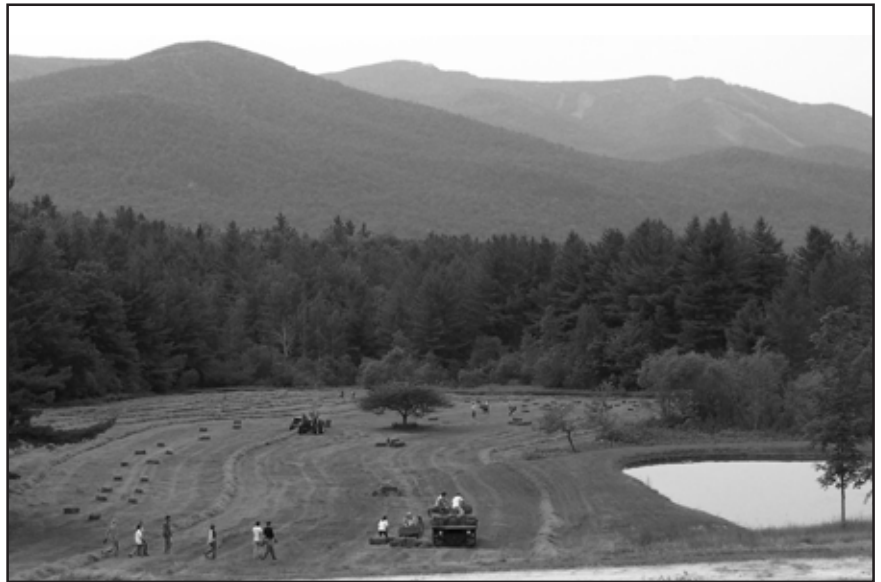
- Growing Rice in Vermont
- Youth At Farmers' Markets

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Eating Vermont

By Dave Rogers, NOFA-VT Policy Advisor

Michael Pollan, the well-known author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food*, mentions in one of his articles a European bumper sticker advising people to *Eat Your View*. The implication, of course, is that people who love and care about their local communities, environment, and working landscapes can help sustain them by purchasing locally produced food. The idea is something that Vermonters understand very well. On a per capita basis, direct sales of locally produced food in Vermont, as well as the number of CSAs, farmers' markets, and farm stands, are all greater than anywhere else in the nation. And these numbers continue to grow each year. We are gobbling up Vermont.



The View at Farm and Wilderness in Plymouth, VT

Eat Your View also implies that people ought to learn about the methods and practices of food production so that they'll be able to judge for themselves how well, in fact, locally produced foods contribute to their values. Obviously, not all locally produced food is produced in the same way.

There is no better way to do this than to have the opportunity to get to know and learn directly from the farmers who grow the vegetables, raise the chickens, and milk the cows. In effect, every farmers' market, farm stand, and CSA offers seminars on the art and science of farming, food, and food production — with ongoing lessons on healthy soils, livestock nutrition, animal health, pest and disease control, plant and animal breeding, water quality protection, food quality and nutrition, and more.

In Vermont, as elsewhere, when people have an opportunity to “know” their food in this way, it leads to a greater commitment to locally produced food, in turn feeding the continued expansion of direct sales. It also leads to greater support for organic methods of food production — without the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, antibiotics, genetically modified grains, and other “conventional” inputs and practices.

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Summer Thoughts from Enid

There are a lot of important conversations going on right now on the vision for Vermont's future, press calls about forecasting organic food prices given national energy prices, and what agriculture will look like with new leadership. I feel fortunate to be part of a lot of these conversations – I was asked to be part of the first Council on the Future of Vermont retreat, speaking on a panel to discuss “The Future of VT Agriculture and Natural Resource Economy.” When I realized that I would be sharing the table with John Bramley (Windham Foundation), Jonathan Wood (VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation), Darby Bradley (VT Land Trust), and Jackie Folsom (VT Farm Bureau), I sent an e-mail to the NOFA-VT Board and staff requesting that they help me be inspiring. What ensued were days of very thoughtful statements, ideas and hopes about Vermont's agricultural future. John Hayden from the Farm Between in Jeffersonville offered, “The work we are doing at NOFA-VT is a great direct response to the world's problems. We are building resiliency and diversity into our landscape and social fabric. This enhances stability and security. Vital communities and robust local economies are better suited to withstand potential future onslaughts and disruptions that are beyond our control.” Regina Beidler, from the Beidler Farm in Randolph pointed out the challenges for organic and conventional dairy producers with the rapid cost increases in grain, fuel and bedding. “We see the future trend for agriculture containing a movement back to more self contained farms – ones that raise the food and inputs needed themselves.” I am happy to share the statement I crafted with the input from board and staff members, if anyone would like. What surprised me most about the participants on the panel was the support of what I would consider NOFA-VT's historical mission – that of self-sufficiency, back to the land, innovation and diversified agriculture. The Council on the Future of Vermont is a project of the Vermont Council for Rural Development. They will be holding public discussions around Vermont in July and August, look at their website www.futureofvermont.org for more information.

Soon after, I attended a day in Michael Pollan's presence – participating in a discussion of a proposal for UVM's new Vermont Food Systems Leadership and Policy Institute, and a public presentation as part of the UVM Aiken lecture series. Pollan's comments focused on nutrition and health, stating that health care is an important driver of a new food economy; the cost of health care will push changes in the food system more than energy, according to Pollan. “There can be no healthy people without a healthy diet and there can be no healthy diet without a healthy agriculture.” In making the argument for what he calls ‘real foods’ versus processed foods he quipped, “What's best for your health is best for our agriculture – how lucky is that?” I typed a transcript of the day's proceedings if any readers are interested.

Michael Pollan recognized Vermont as a leader in food system transformation, calling Vermont a “laboratory for change.” From being part of all of these discussions, I recognize that Vermont has the opportunity and the responsibility to show that community-based agriculture is a viable model – where food access is as important as food production, and how shortening the producer to consumer food chain can be a model of economic development. There are examples of this all over Vermont. At the Strawberry Festival at Cedar Circle Farm in Thetford yesterday (June 29), we cooked up our local “farmers’ pizza” from our mobile oven to serve to many of the 1,500 strawberry pickers, families, and farmers.

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NOFA-VT is an organization of farmers, gardeners, and consumers working to promote an economically viable and ecologically sound Vermont food system for the benefit of current and future generations.

Could Rice be Vermont's Newest Grain Crop?

By Cheryl Bruce, VOF Certification Specialist

For the past two years, Linda and Takeshi Akaogi have been experimenting with growing rice on their small farm in Putney, VT. This past March, they were awarded a SARE Farmer Grant to evaluate the viability of rice production in the Northeast and to create a supply of seed for other interested farmers. The goal of their 'Northern Rice Project' is to introduce rice as a commercial crop to this region.

People are often surprised to hear that rice can be grown in Vermont. After all, this grass, of the genus *Oryza*, is known as a tropical plant. Cultivated rice, *Oryza sativa*, was first domesticated 6,000 years ago. Today the species is divided into two subspecies, *O. sativa 'indica'*, which is the long grain type (such as jasmine or basmati) grown in tropical southern regions, and *O. sativa 'japonica'*, which is a shorter, more round grain that is also more cold tolerant. Japonica rice has been grown in temperate climates such as northern Japan and some other locations that may sound surprising, such as the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Romania.

The Akaogi's first attempt to grow rice was in 2006. The plants grew, but did not produce any viable seed. In 2007, they had better luck. In just a 25' x 25' paddy, they grew and evaluated 21 different varieties and by season's end identified six varieties that produced seed. This year they are evaluating 31 varieties for seed production.

When evaluating varieties, several criteria are used for selection, with date to maturity/harvest being the most important. Other factors include resistance to both disease and lodging. Takeshi says once varieties are found that meet these criteria, they will then select for yield as well as taste. In fact, they have connected with Susan McCouch and Gen Fumio Onishi of Cornell University who specialize in rice breeding.

To grow their rice, Linda and Takeshi have constructed an actual rice paddy. The paddy is 6-8 inches deep and allows for controlled flooding. Nearby is a reservoir constructed for water storage and heating. Cold water

comes into the reservoir from a nearby brook and is naturally heated before entering the paddy.

Rice plants are transplanted into the paddy by mid-May about a month after seeding in the greenhouse. In April, seeds are soaked for 10 days at 50 degrees and then planted in plug flats. When transplanted, the plant only has 1 shoot, so it is important that the tender plants have

warm water in the paddy. Linda and Takeshi routinely monitor the temperatures of the water and the soil in the paddy to ensure the growing conditions are optimal. The water level in the paddy should be half the height of the small rice plant. Although rice can be transplanted up to 4 weeks before the last frost, when low temperatures are predicted Linda and Takeshi say that the water level is increased to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the height of the plant for added protection.

By June, the number of stems per plant increases significantly and plants are much taller. In July, some varieties begin to head out and start producing grain. September is the month of harvest, and last year rice was harvested from September 13th to 26th. Since their production

was such a small scale, all the rice was harvested by hand. Plants were bundled, dried, threshed, and then later dehulled.

The constructed rice paddy resulted in a created habitat for various types of wildlife. Linda and Takeshi observed 5 species of frogs and 3 species of dragonflies that had come to reside in the paddy. The abundance of wildlife could potentially result in a separate study with biologists to document the benefit rice paddies have in the landscape.

So what are the requirements to grow rice? First the soil has to have the ability to hold water. Because of its need for water, rice must be grown in an area that has a good watershed with an abundance of water. Lastly, the crop needs heat. Rice needs a certain accumulation of heat throughout the growing season. To further evaluate this, Linda and Takeshi are collecting accurate weather information this year.



Rice Growing at Akaogi Farm. Photo by Cheryl Bruce

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Eating Vermont

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This has been true in Vermont for a number of years: Vermonters' increased purchases of locally produced food have supported healthy increases in the number of organic farms in the state. In 1993 there were 78 certified organic producers in Vermont. Today the number stands at 540.

These trends will continue. Dramatic increases in the price of oil — increases that are likely to be permanent — have led to comparable increases in the price of the petroleum-based fertilizers, chemicals, and fuels that are essential to conventional and large-scale food production in this country. Processing and distribution costs, including the cost of trucking food hundreds or thousands of miles to Vermont, have also risen sharply. All this has led to steadily rising prices of non-local, non-organic foods found on the shelves of Vermont's supermarkets and retail stores.

These oil-driven cost increases are greatly reduced when consumers buy organic food directly from the farmers who produce it. As a result, vegetables, fruits, meat, and

dairy products produced and sold by Vermont's organic farmers are increasingly competitive in price with comparable conventionally produced foods. And, of course, there is no comparison in terms of freshness, quality, and taste.

In 1993 there were 78 certified organic producers in Vermont. Today the number stands at 540.

At Vermont's farm stands, farmers' markets and CSAs the variety, availability, and affordability of locally produced organic food is better than ever. Unlike some other parts of the country, Vermonters are in the enviable position of not having to choose between locally produced food *or* organic food. We can satisfy all our "appetites" when we Eat Vermont.



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543 Certified Organic Producers & Growing!

The latest figures out from NOFA-VT's certification program, Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF), show the number of farms, and acreage of certified farmland are growing! 2008 saw the 500th farm receive their organic certification from VOF. The numbers below speak volumes about the success of organic agriculture in Vermont.

90,410 acres certified organic farmland!

Gross sales by VT certified organic farmers (farm income): \$47,590,372

Gross sales by VT certified organic processors: \$55,614,680

Total gross sales: \$103,205,052

Total number of producers: 543



Vermont Certified Organic Producers, 2008 Totals

Total Producers	543
Processors (non-farm)	52
*Processors (on-farm)	13
*Vegetable	130
*Field Crop	74
*Dairy	209
*Livestock	50
*Maple Syrup	82

*Farms producing a variety of products may be listed more than once.

Growth In Organic Dairy Certification		Growth In Total Number of Certified Organic Producers		Growth In Total Number of Acres of Certified Organic Production	
1993	3	1993	78	1999	15,967
1994	3	1994	90	2000	22,148
1995	14	1995	106	2001	23,638
1996	28	1996	150	2002	24,351
1997	35	1997	170	2003	30,387
1998	33	1998	179	2004	35,826
1999	38	1999	187	2005	48,759
2000	47	2000	212	2006	66,827
2001	55	2001	230	2007	85,147
2002	59	2002	253	2008	90,410
2003	64	2003	289		
2004	79	2004	332		
2005	93	2005	366		
2006	129	2006	394		
2007	204	2007	487		
2008	209	2008	543		

Certified Organic Acreage In Vermont

Pasture	23,263 acres	Green House (sq.ft)	587,209 sq.ft ~ 13.5 acres
Feed Grains	2,197 acres	Vegetable	900 acres
Cereal Grains	846 acres	Fruit	436 acres
Hay Land	45,306 acres	Sugar Bush	15,904 acres
Silage	47 acres	Other (mushrooms, x-mas trees, flowers, etc.)	1,472 acres

* These statistics are based only on production certified through Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC. There are other producers in Vermont certified by other certification organizations. The data compiled 6/17/08 are actual figures for the number of farms certified by June 17, 2008.

Reconnecting Youth to Local Food and Agriculture Through Farmers' Markets

By Abbie Nelson, NOFA-VT Agricultural Education Coordinator

During the summer, if you want to expose a child to the food that is grown in Vermont, what better way than to visit a farmers' market? And, for a child, what better way to spend a summer day, than to join those farmers and sell home grown or homemade foods and crafts at a farmers' market? This summer, NOFA-VT, in collaboration with various Vermont farmers' markets, will be sponsoring the 5th Annual Youth Market Days in 24 towns.

On designated market days, children and youth will sell a variety of homegrown vegetables, fruits, flowers, syrup, and homemade crafts that they have made or grown. On average, 8-14 youth participate in each market.

NOFA-VT's Farm to Community Mentors, who help organize many of these Youth Market Days, find that children learn about where their food comes from just by being at a market for a few hours. Even if they sell duct tape wallets, they spend their money on cherry tomatoes, local beef burgers, or yellow watermelon. In addition, through selling their products they get a sense of business management—including elements of customer service, marketing, money management, and pricing. A market manager commented, "parents report that their children planned for months what they would make and sell, and it was the highlight of their summer."

One youth who has been selling at the Richmond market for 2 years (since she was 9 years old) says, "I started selling homemade cookies and lemonade. I did it to make money for books. It was fun and exciting to see what the other vendors were selling." She is not a frequent visitor to the market because her family grows most of their own food. However, she enjoys being a vendor for a day. This year, encouraged by her gardening parents, she is switching to selling flowers and fresh fruit smoothies. Asked why she does all the work for the market, she replied, "when I sell something it

makes all my preparation and effort worthwhile and I make money to spend!"


Another purpose of the Youth Market Days is to introduce new adults to the market. Youth vendors introduce their family and friends to the market who may not have been before. To add to the fun at some of the markets, NOFA-VT Farm to Community regional Mentors provide agricultural activities and taste tests for market goers.

Children learn about where their food comes from just by being at a market for a few hours.


Listed on the next page are the planned Youth Market Days. Youth Markets are generously supported by Chittenden Bank's Card for Kids, the Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement, and the Stratton Foundation.


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2008 Youth Markets

Youth Markets currently scheduled (youth may also contact NOFA-VT or the farmers' market managers in the town listed below):

June 14, Brattleboro, 9-2pm, contact Dave Schoales, 254-8885
July 12, Montpelier; 4-H Day, contact Jesse Schmidt, 685-4360
July 12, Randolph, contact Art Rollins, 728-9123
July 12, Williston Green, 9-1pm, contact Christina Mead, 872-7728
July 25, Bellows Falls, 4-7pm, contact Margo Ghia, 869-1214
July 31, Winooski, 3:30-6:30, contact Karen Greene, 655-6410
Aug 1, Richmond, 3-6:30pm, contact NOFA-VT office, 434-4122
Aug 2, Dorset, Someday Farm Stand, 10-2pm, contact Scout Proft, 362-2290
Aug 2, Middlebury, 9-12:30pm, contact Pam Taylor, kidsonstage@gmail.com
Aug 2, Norwich, 9-1pm, contact Amy Richardson, 436-7017
Aug 2, Craftsbury, 10-1pm, contact Allison van Akkeren, 279-5572
Aug 3, Stowe, 10:30-3pm, contact Kate Riley, 730-2781
Aug 3, Chester, 11-2pm, contact Amy Richardson, 436-7017
Aug 3, Jeffersonville Smuggs Resort, 4-7pm, contact Kate Riley, 635-7021
Aug 9, Enosburg Falls, 3-6pm, contact Levi Irish, 782-4669
Aug 13, Bristol, 3-6pm, contact Olga Boshart Moriarty, 453-3001
Aug 14, Jericho/Underhill, 3-6pm, contact Sarah Stein, 363-6618
Aug 16, St. Albans, 9-2pm, contact Julie Wolcott, 933-4592
Aug 16, Montpelier, contact Jesse Schmidt, 685-4360
Aug 20, Woodstock Green, contact Amy Richardson, 436-7017
Aug 20 Morrisville, 9-1pm, contact Kate Riley, 730-2781
Aug 22, Hardwick, 3-6pm, contact Kate Riley, 730-2781
Aug 26, Woodstock, 9-1pm, contact Neil Lamson, 763-2070
Aug TBA, Bethel, contact Amy Richardson, 436-7017
Aug TBA, Richford, 9-1pm, contact Levi Irish, 782-4669
Sept 20, Brattleboro, 9-2pm, contact Dave Schoales, 254-8885
Every Friday, Adamant Market, contact Erika Mitchell, 456-7054
Every Sunday, Cabot, contact Irene Harvey, 563-2289
Every Sunday, Plainfield, contact Christie Aucoin, 563-2250



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Vermont Compost's Legal Fight Heats Up

By Dave Rogers, NOFA-VT Policy Advisor

Karl Hammer has been a farmer for the last 14 years on the 49 acres he owns and manages on upper Main Street in Montpelier, near the city's northern boundary. He has 1200 free-ranging chickens and is one of Vermont's largest egg producers. He sells over 1000 dozen eggs per month at local stores, coops and directly to customers at his farm. According to Vermont's Agency of Agriculture, Karl is a farmer. The Vermont Attorney General's office and city officials of Montpelier think so too.

But Ed Stanak, Coordinator for the Vermont Natural Resources Board's District 5 Environmental Commission in Barre, doesn't agree that all of the activities at Main Street Farm are "farming" as defined by Act 250. Earlier this year, in response to a request by an enforcement officer from Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, Stanak issued a Jurisdictional Opinion (JO) that argued that Karl does indeed operate a farm, but also operates a separate compost product manufacturing facility. If upheld, this opinion would require Karl to apply for and receive a permit under Vermont's Land Use and Development Act, Act 250.

Karl is the owner/operator of the Vermont Compost Company. On several acres of his farm he composts tons of food waste, natural organic materials and animal manure from local schools, businesses and farms. Karl's hens' diet consists largely of the "food residuals" and material they find while foraging among the compost piles. Karl's position is that the compost operation, therefore, is part of and integral to the operation and production of the farm.

Karl is appealing the District Commission's JO to Vermont's Environmental Court. If the appeal is denied, the Natural Resources Board may move to force Karl to suspend operations sometime this summer pending the eventual outcome of future legal proceedings. Meanwhile, mounting legal fees and the prospect of continuing legal actions are creating serious financial hardship and placing the future of Karl's farm and compost business in real jeopardy.

Karl is one of the most knowledgeable *compostologists* in the country; his compost products are used by the majority of Vermont's organic commercial greenhouse

Continued on Page 15




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Board Member Profile: Helen Whybrow

Editor's Note: Helen Whybrow joined NOFA-VT's Board of Directors in February 2007.

I grew up on a small organic family farm in the Connecticut River Valley of New Hampshire and spent my youth exploring the hills and fairgrounds of Vermont. As a college student in Amherst, MA, I became a loyal and enthusiastic attendee of the NOFA Summer Conference. My training in literature led me toward book publishing, and my first job was with Vermont publisher Chelsea Green. As a young editor, I had the great privilege to learn from Eliot Coleman while editing his classic book *The Four-Season Harvest*. I also met and worked with Helen Nearing at that time.

My life more fully intersected with organic agriculture when my husband, Peter Forbes, and I moved to Knoll Farm in Fayston, VT. We bought our 140-acre hill farm from the Vermont Land Trust in 2001. We grow organic highbush blueberries, raise purebred Icelandic sheep for breed stock, grass-fed meat, and wool, and have a small CSA for vegetables and eggs. In 2003 we founded the nonprofit, Center for Whole Communities, whose mission is to help create a more just, balanced, and healthy world by exploring, honoring, and deepening the connections among land, people, and community. With the help of a highly accomplished and diverse faculty, we run programs for leaders in the land movement all over the country. We host many of these retreats and seminars at Knoll Farm, where we serve local food – most of it grown in our own gardens – teach people about organic agriculture, and lead dialogue sessions to help leaders



Helen Whybrow

articulate their deepest values and find ways to implement deeper, more lasting change for land health and human health in their communities. It's powerful and rewarding work, and we get to do it in a place that rewards and astonishes us each day with its beauty and abundance.

In 2007, Enid – whom I had met through my work with Whole Communities – asked me to join the NOFA-VT board, and I was thrilled to accept. To me, NOFA exemplifies so much that we strive for in our own nonprofit – an organization that is open-minded, creative, visionary, community-oriented, and making a tangible difference to the lives, health, and working landscapes of Vermonters. I am extremely grateful to be part of NOFA, to learn from the amazing people who are also connected to it, and to contribute in any way that I can.



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Producing Eggs in Winter Without Artificial Light

By Ben Gleason, *Gleason Grains*

In the Spring 2008 issue of *NOFA Notes*, Enid mentioned that chickens need at least 12 hours of daylight to lay eggs. Most people who keep chickens have heard this; however, I would like to lay this myth to rest. A combination of the right breed and housing will allow you to produce eggs all winter without artificial lighting even here in Vermont. Looking back at my egg sales for 2006, 2007, and now 2008, the highest sales in '06 were in October, November, and December. In '07 and '08 the highest sales were in October, November, December, and January.



Ben Gleason with his chickens. Photo by Lisa McCrory

About 10 or 12 years ago I decided to start housing my chickens in hoop houses built with plastic water pipe and covered with chicken wire. I built these houses of a

light enough weight so that I can lift and move them by hand every day. Many friends and neighbors have copied my basic design with their own choice of materials and improvements. During the growing season these houses are moved to fresh pasture every day. In cold weather I cover the houses (I have 5) with plastic to make a mini greenhouse. When it snows I sweep off the houses for maximum daylight. Even in the dead of winter I try to move the houses to provide the chickens with grass and clover

buried under the snow. It can mean a lot of shoveling!

The breed I have settled on is Golden Comet. I buy them in early May and they start laying eggs in August. It is important to buy a chicken that starts laying early if you want eggs all winter. Several years ago I bought some Aracanas in May and mixed them in with the Golden Comets. The Aracanas did not lay one egg until late winter.

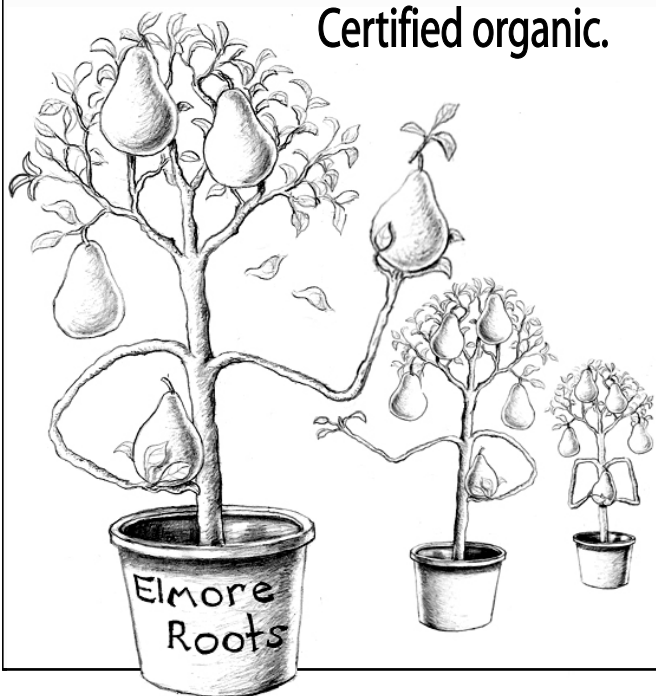
Because I grow wheat and mill flour on my farm, I have waste from cleaning grain that my chickens and pigs eat. The only feed I buy is one bag of starter (for 40 chicks). In the winter I sprout clover seed (harvested on the farm) and feed small quantities to help keep the yokes yellow and nutritious. I think nice green clover or alfalfa hay would work as well.

It is a lot of work and effort to produce high quality eggs in the winter, but I get a lot of positive feedback from customers. And my hens seem to be very happy!

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Certification Conundrums for Cally



Dear Cally,
During a rainy day last week, I cleaned out the old cabinet where I store my pesticides and found an old bottle of Sabadilla in the back corner on the bottom shelf. This biological pesticide was purchased in the 80's and I remember that the manufacturer said its potency improved with age (much like a fine wine). Is this product approved for use on organic farms and if not what's the best way to get rid of it?
- Pesty in Peacham

Dear Pesty,
It's a good idea for producers to periodically go through their arsenal of pesticides to make sure that items are still approved for use and have not expired. The pesticide that you found, Sabadilla, is derived from the seeds of the sabadilla lily. The active ingredient is an alkaloid known as veratrine. It is non-synthetic and is approved for use on organic farms. In fact Sabadilla is considered among the least toxic of botanical insecticides. However, your pesticide also contains inert ingredients. Inert ingredients are any substance, other than an active ingredient, which is intentionally included in a pesticide product. In order to be allowed for use on organic farms, all inert ingredients must be non-synthetic or classified by the EPA as an "inert of minimal concern." The manufacturer of the Sabadilla product would have to disclose all of the ingredients, both active and inert, and have them reviewed for compliance by the VOF office.

If you can not get this information, the product is not allowed for use. So what should you do with it? If producers find themselves with extra pesticides, it is best to try and find a grower that can use them. However, if this is not possible, the pesticides can be taken to the Solid Waste District to dispose of them free of charge. Collection events for 2008 are listed at www.vermontagriculture.com/ARMES/wastepest.htm

Dear Cally,
I produce a very tasty Caesar dressing. I use all organic ingredients and would like to get my dressing certified. However, I am also a clean freak and I want to make sure that my facility, food contact surfaces, equipment, etc are spotless. If I want to get certified does this mean I can only clean with hot water?
- Spotless in Salisbury

Dear Spotless,
Processors may use any cleanser, disinfectant and sanitizer provided that they do not contaminate the organic product. In order to prevent contamination VOF recommends an intervening event such as a hot water rinse or documented purge of the product, so that the substance does not come into contact with the organic food. If the products used are highly persistent and leave a residue, such as quaternary ammonia, it is the producer's responsibility to demonstrate that the organic product is not being contaminated. Any cleanser or sanitizer that appears on the National List is allowed in direct food contact. This means that often a rinse is not required unless the material has a restriction. This list includes:

- Chlorine (must be followed by a water rinse with no more than 4ppm Cl)
- Phosphoric Acid (as livestock equipment of food contact surface cleaner only)
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Potassium Carbonate
- Sodium Carbonate
- Sodium Bicarbonate
- Sodium Hydroxide
- Ozone

Products formulated with these approved active ingredients must include only approved inert ingredients. In other words, all ingredients in the product must be on the National List.

Organic processors have many options to consider when choosing a sanitizer. The organic regulations simply require that processors take steps to prevent the contamination of the product. It is vitally important that processors have appropriate tools to keep their facilities and equipment clean.

*Do you have a Certification
Conundrum for Cally?*

email it to info@nofavt.org

or mail it to:

PO Box 697

Richmond, VT 05477



It's A Farm Bill!

By Dave Rogers, NOFA-VT Policy Advisor

After many months of hearings, delays, and political maneuverings, Congress has, after more than a year of labor, given birth to *The Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2008*, AKA, The Farm Bill. It was delivered by Congress on May 22, after President Bush vetoed it.

Like other Farm Bills, this 600 page, \$290 billion creation, arrived stuffed with programs, provisions and initiatives — some deplorable, such as continuation of outsized subsidies and programs benefiting industrial-scale farms and corporate agribusinesses. But it also includes much that is laudable, including increased support for many important community food, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and organic agriculture programs.

Passage of the final bill was favored by hundreds of environmental, food and nutrition, and progressive farm organizations whose sustained hard work, grassroots organization, and effective advocacy over many months made all the difference. NOFA-VT and other members of the National Organic Coalition are particularly pleased that, for the most part, their recommendations pertaining to organic agriculture were included in the bill.

Vermont's entire congressional delegation – Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders, and Representative Peter Welch – deserves the thanks of all Vermonters for their tireless efforts on behalf of many programs in the Farm Bill of central importance to our state. We are especially grateful and proud of Senator Leahy's work. As a senior member of the Senate's Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Senator Leahy was instrumental in forcefully advancing and defending provisions pertaining to organic agriculture and many other valuable programs. Brian Baenig, Senator Leahy's Senior Legislative Assistant, deserves special thanks for his hard work over many months.

Brief summaries of Farm Bill provisions of interest to Vermonters may be found at these websites:

Senator Leahy's Homepage: leahy.senate.gov

Community Food Security Coalition:

www.foodsecurity.org

National Organic Coalition:

www.nationalorganiccoalition.org

Sustainable Agriculture Coalition:

www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org

Northeast Animal-Power Field Days

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Sun. 28: Auction; Harness, hitch-gear, logging equipment, and animal powered farming implements, in good working condition.

More than 1200 people attended the 2007 NEAPFD!

Below are some excerpts from letters received:

"I just wanted to thank you guys for one of the best agricultural events I've ever been to!... was so exciting for me, I can still hardly sleep..."

"What a thrill it was to be in the grand stands, ... and see this beautiful picture; draft horses, mules, oxen and people talking with teamsters and vendors of small farm-related products..."

For Information, Schedule & Current Planning, Please Visit

www.animalpowerfielddays.org



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Carl Russell & Lisa McCrory

Call 802-234-5524

info@animalpowerfielddays.org

Summer 2008 Farmers' Market Updates

By Jean Hamilton, NOFA-VT Food Security and Marketing Coordinator

EBT (Food Stamps) and Debit Cards Now Accepted At 10 Markets!

At least 10 Vermont farmers' markets are expanding their sales opportunities this summer by joining the EBT and Debit Card at Farmers' Market Project. Through this project, seven new markets will join last year's three pilot sites in being able to accept food stamp (EBT) and debit cards. These markets include: Winooski, Brattleboro, Bellows Falls, Old North End (Burlington), Capital City (Montpelier), and Newport. For a complete list of markets that accept EBT and debit cards visit www.nofavt.org or call 802-434-4122.

NOFA-VT would like to thank our partners, The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, The Vermont Department for Children and Families, and our funders the Northern Vermont Resource Conservation and Development Council, the George D. Aiken Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Project Grant for making this project possible.

Vermont Farmers' Market Association Board Sets First Priorities

On February 14, the new Vermont Farmers' Market Association Board of Directors held its first meeting to discuss top priorities for 2008. The 13 member board developed working committees to tackle important Vermont farmers' market concerns including:

- Establishing best practices in regards to market and vendor insurance
- Developing stronger communication opportunities between market managers, boards, and vendors through web-based media
- Working with partners to create state-wide and regional farmers' market promotional campaigns

For this first year, all Vermont farmers' markets are granted free membership and participation in VFMA activities. Market managers and vendors will be notified about VFMA updates including information about how to join the Association Listserv. If you have any questions, please contact Jean at NOFA-VT (jean@nofavt.org or 434-4122).



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NOFAvore Celebrations

Celebrate the taste of Vermont's local and organic food at a NOFAvore Celebration this summer. We invite you to join us for dinner featuring our Vermont Farmers' Fare pizza with local and organic cheeses, meats, and toppings, hot from our mobile, wood-fired oven. These celebrations will provide an opportunity to meet other NOFA-VT supporters in your region, introduce your friends to NOFA-VT and tour the host farm. These gatherings are free and open to all (members and non-members alike). Please pre-register and get directions by calling the NOFA-VT office at 802-434-4122. See you there!

- July 15**, 5-7pm - Woods Market Garden, Brandon
- July 24**, 5-7pm - Anjali Farm, South Londonderry
- Aug 2**, 12-2pm - Beidler Family Farm, Randolph Ctr
- Aug 13**, 6-8pm - Green Wind Farm, Enosburg Falls
- Sept 9**, 5-7pm - The Last Resort, Monkton

Summer Thoughts from Erid

Continued from Page 2

Seeing so many people celebrating and other people just discovering local food was inspiring – next year we're thinking pizza topped with strawberries and ricotta cheese with a maple drizzle.... And the important role of Vermonters as agricultural innovators is exemplified by farmers such as Ben Gleason and his winter chicken housing so he can produce eggs all winter without artificial light (page 10). I appreciate that Ben challenged my assumption that chickens need 12 hours of daylight to lay eggs. According to an increase in seedling and seed sales, there are many farmers, gardeners and homesteaders increasing their production this summer to meet growing consumer demand, and to fill their root cellars – that means more garden trials, more on-farm experimentation and more innovations to share. Those are the ideas that will get transferred at summer on-farm workshops and winter conferences – what a great cycle. As always, I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at those upcoming events!

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Vermont Compost

Continued from page 8

growers and vegetable farmers. Thousands of home gardeners buy Vermont Compost at stores throughout the region. It would be hard to find anyone who does a better job of “closing the loops” of the local environment, economy and food system. Over the years these contributions and innovations have been widely recognized and appreciated in Montpelier — and beyond.

While the environmental and economic benefits of composting are widely recognized by Vermonters and state and local officials, the status of composting facilities under Act 250 and other laws is uncertain. As a result, in May the legislature passed and Governor Douglas signed into law, an act (H.873) suspending further regulatory and enforcement actions related to commercial composting operations in Vermont pending the outcome of a two-year comprehensive study and review of related issues. This will enable commercial composting activity at Burlington’s Intervale, which was the subject of widely publicized controversy and state enforcement actions earlier in the year, to continue during this period.

It would be hard to
find anyone who does a
better job of “closing the loops”
of the local environment,
economy, and food system.

Unexpectedly, and for reasons that are not entirely clear even to some legislators, Vermont Compost Company was not included under H.873’s moratorium. This has provided the state’s Natural Resources Board with the

opportunity to immediately pursue its legal action against Vermont Compost Company.

It is NOFA-VT’s opinion that Karl is being treated unfairly. Vermont Compost Company is a responsible and well-established business that provides valuable services and high quality local food to citizens of the community, as well as essential agricultural products to a large number of Vermont’s organic vegetable farmers. Its status as a farm has been recognized and affirmed by both state and local officials. For Vermont’s Natural Resources Board to press ahead at this time and under the current circumstances strikes us as gratuitous and threatens to disrupt the businesses of organic growers across Vermont.

For these reasons, NOFA-VT is exploring opportunities to participate in the appeals process on behalf of Vermont’s certified organic vegetable and greenhouse growers. Additional actions by NOFA-VT and its members in this matter are being considered. Updates will be included in NOFA-VT’s E-Newsletter. Contact Dave Rogers at NOFA-VT for further information - dave@nofavt.org.

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Welcome New Members!

We've had so many new members join us in the past few months that we weren't able to fit them all into our typical new member area (pg 19)! NOFA-VT welcomes the following members who recently joined through the NOFA-VT website, VOF certification applications, FEDCO Seed Order, the NOFA Vermont and Vermont Land Trust joint membership drive with High Mowing Seeds, and other events. Thank you for supporting Vermont organic agriculture!

New & Renewing Business Members

Aurora Farms, Charlotte • Autumn Harp Inc., Bristol • Crooked Fence Farm, Putney • Dorigen Keeney, Plainfield • Farm & Wilderness Foundation, Inc., Plymouth • Giroux's Poultry Farm, Inc. Chazy, NY • Harvest Hill Farm, Hardwick • Intervale Community Farm, Burlington • Island Pond Farmers' Market, Island Pond • Kent Ridge Orchards, Cornwall • Mama's Special Family, Inc., MA • Maple Side Orchard, Starksboro • Neshobe Farm, Brandon • The Perfect Wife Restaurant, Manchester Center • Proctor Maple Research Center, Underhill Center • The Randall Cattle Registry, Inc., CT • Resource Management, Inc., NH • Stepping Stone Farm Alpacas, Stowe • Sunrise Orchards, Inc. Cornwall • Thesewoods, Underhill • Upper Valley Food Co-op, White River Junction

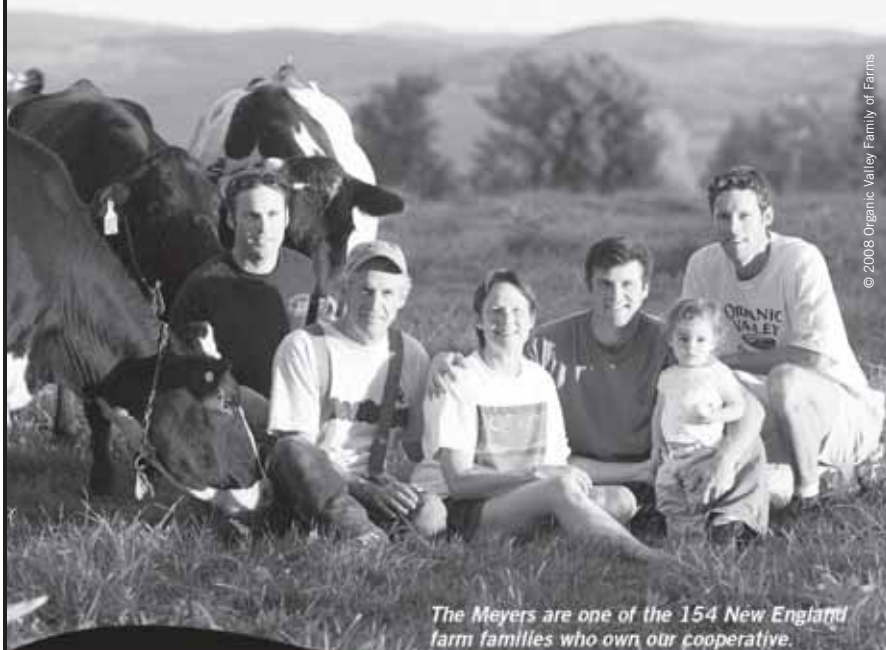
New Members

Carol Garguilo, Sky Berry Farm, Putney • Amanda Garland, Burlington • Jonathan Gibson & Eliza Mabry, Shrewsbury • Kristine Gilman, Grand Isle • Cori & Jim Giroux, Richmond • Caleb Goossen, Bennington • Christian & Holly Gowdy, Brookfield Farm, NH • Christine Hager & Mel Hastings, Troy • Barbarina Heyerdahl, Shelburne • Tom Gilbert, Highfields Institute, Craftsbury Common • Karen & Colin Henderson, El Sagrado Farm, CO • Eric & Jenny Hord, W Brookfield • Ray Howrigan, Fox Hill Maples • Carly Humke, Worcester • Robert Hyams, Charlotte • Matthew Jerome, Greensboro Bend • April Johnson, Fairfax • Hope Johnson, Garden Lady, Shelburne • Kingdom Mountain Farm, Westfield • Kurtis Kling, Starksboro • Carolyn Kuebler, Middlebury • Peggy Lackey, Stowe • Christopher & Angie Lanfear, West Rutland • Lisbeth Larsen, Cedar Hill Farm, Brandon • Gary & Margaret Leavens, Moos Meadow Farm, Derby • Aaron Lee & Caroline Zeilenga, Calais • Brent & Maurice Lehouiller, Maple Mountain Sugarworks, E Fairfield • Mark Letorney, Marandale Farm, Westford • Karen & Joe Livingston, NY • Alfred Lunde, Barre • Susan Lybeck, Fair

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Could Rice be Vermont's Newest Crop?

Continued from Page 3

The Akaogi's farm is located in southeast Vermont at 900 feet above sea level. Their farm may be the coldest climate for the production of rice. In our climate, we are at the northern edge of the growing area, making production more challenging. Linda and Takeshi believe that rice grown in the lower lying Champlain Valley region may do well given that area's longer growing season. However, trials are needed at other locations to compare. This year, several individuals will grow rice plants in buckets at various locations around Vermont. The participants will monitor growth and collect data throughout the season. It is hoped that this information will help in determining the potential growing areas in the state.

There may be potential for rice to be grown on marginal land with poor drainage. However, please note that poor drainage does not mean wetland areas. Linda and Takeshi have stressed that wetlands need protection and the conditions of wetlands are not suitable for rice production because the amount of water flowing in and out cannot be controlled. There is plenty of agricultural land in Vermont considered marginal. These wet fields are already being cropped for hay, for example. Consider the marginal fields in the Lake Champlain region that are already in current agricultural use and there is the potential for up to 60,000 acres of rice production. If the yield estimates of 2 tons per acre are accurate, a lot of rice could be grown in our region.

Linda and Takeshi see a lot of potential for rice production in Vermont. Besides transforming poor, marginal land into productive paddies rich with wildlife, farmers could recycle wastewater from their operations to be used for irrigating the rice paddy. This could include wash water from vegetable production or may even hold promise for dairy farms where the rice paddy could purify water running off from the barnyard, and remove nutrients before they enter the waterway.

In addition, rice production would benefit the greater community as well by increasing the diversity of agricultural products grown here. Vermont grown rice



Takeshi Akaogi presents at a Rice Growing Workshop hosted by Akaogi Farm. Photo by Cheryl Bruce

would create a niche market for farmers and also increase our self-sufficiency, growing what we can right here. Other Vermont farmers are growing soybeans, wheat and other grains with this same purpose and have established a Northern Grain Growers Association.

In contrast to organic California rice, Vermont rice would be local *and* organic. Because our rice would be grown on a smaller scale, it would not be a monoculture, but rather diverse stands that attract wildlife and utilize water resources efficiently while sustainably producing grain for local consumption.

If the yield estimates of 2 tons per acre are accurate, a lot of rice could be grown in Vermont

If you are interested in hearing more, contact the Northeast SARE office for a copy of the Akaogi's grant proposal (802-656-0471). Linda and Takeshi will be presenting their findings at the NOFA Summer Conference in August. They will also hold a second on-farm workshop in September. In addition, a basic crop manual will be prepared at the end of the season to share with other farmers.

Opportunities

Southern Vermont Farm for

Lease: Beautiful property located in Dummerston, Vermont. House, barns and greenhouse on 150 acres. Respond to bastco@sover.net or send inquiries to D. Hicks, 43 Green St., Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Central Pennsylvania Farm for

Sale: Beautiful farm in rural, Beaver Springs, PA: about 70 acres which includes approximately 25 tillable acres (15 additional acres available for rent), 6 acres pasture, 39 acres woodlands, plus barn, workshop, chicken coop, and large implement building. Neighboring farm is a Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture & Pennsylvania Certified Organic member. Call Kristen Markley for more details: 570-658-8512, sweetmfarm@aol.com, 410-533-6687 (cell).

Cheese Maker Needed at Cobb

Hill Cheese: Experience preferred, for hands-on work making and aging cheese at our small scale artisan cheese company. Approximately twenty hours a week, MWF schedule, some variation possible. Proximity to Hartland Four Corners desirable. Please contact Judith or Phil at 802-436-1488 or email bush@together.net about your interest.

Cultivars Available: Eric Johnsen of E & E Horticultural Services, Plymouth, VT propagates many cultivars of lilacs and other choice shrubs for planting in your landscape. Call 802 672-3493 or email eehort@vermontel.net for a plant list.



VOF Labels and Signs

VOF offers their organic certified logo for certified producers and processors. The logos are available on stickers (rolls of 500), and large metal signs. Prices include shipping.



Producer Labels

Small (3/4" diameter) Stickers \$4.25/roll
Medium (1 3/8") Stickers \$6.50/roll
Metal Sign (18" x 24") \$26.00

Processor Labels

Small (1 1/4" width) Stickers \$7.50/roll
Medium (2" width) Sticker \$11.00/roll
Metal Sign (24" x 18") \$26.00

Contact the VOF office to place an order. 802-434-3821.

Employment: Applecheek Farm in Hyde Park, VT, a sustainable, organic, diversified multi-species grazing farm with agri-tourism business and direct marketed products is looking for a full time employee. People, dairy, mechanical, and carpentry skills a plus. Contact John or Rocio Clark at 802-888-4482, or email resume to: applecheek@pshift.com See www.applecheekfarm.com for more information.

Vending Opportunity: The Burlington Winter Farmers' Market is accepting vending applications for the new downtown monthly winter market set for November to April, 2008--2009. For more info and an application contact Meg Klepack at 802-540-0365 or mklepack@gmail.com.

Resources

New books are available at the NOFA-VT office! All current NOFA members receive a 10% discount on books.

Visit our website www.nofavt.org for a complete list of books for sale. To order by mail, please add shipping/handling: 0-\$29.99 add \$3, \$30-\$49.99 add \$3.50, \$50 + add \$4.50. Please pay by check or money order made out to NOFA-VT.

The Complete Compost Gardening Guide by Barbara Pleasant & Deborah Martin. Banner batches, grow heaps, comforter compost, and other techniques for saving time and money and producing flavorful, nutritious vegetables. Available from NOFA-VT, \$19.95 plus \$3.00 s/h.

Organic Gardening the Natural No-Dig Way by Charles Dowding. Charles shares the philosophy, tips, and techniques which have enabled him to run a successful organic garden for over 25 years. Based on his experience of permanent, slightly raised beds, Charles takes you through what to choose, when to plant and harvest, and how best to avoid pests and diseases. Available from NOFA-VT, \$22.00 + \$3 s/h.

Video presentations from the 2007 Understanding Organics Conferences The package of 9 DVD's contain over 25 hours of excellent material from nationally known speakers covering topics including the history and basic principles of the National Organic Program, animal welfare, integrated parasite management, soil and forage quality, intensive grazing management, livestock health strategies (preventive, herbal, biologics, homeopathy, nutrition) and basic clinical trial designs for on-farm research. DVD sets are \$75. To order, contact the NOFA-VT office.

New Members

(continued from pg 16)

Haven • Bill MacKentley, St Lawrence Nurseries, NY • Sadie MacKillop, Sharon • Christina Malanga, N Troy • Elizabeth Mattox, Topsham • Laura McConaghy, MA • Chad Mills, Thetford • Thomas & Beverly Minor, Cambridge • Kathy Morse, Maplewood Farm, Adamant • Chip Allen Natvig, Roxbury • Andy Naylor, Judevine Farm & Excavating, Johnson • Robert Nuner, Montpelier • Caitlin O'Brien & Jeremy Gilden, Norwich • Ashely O'Neal, Putney • Laura & Mari Omland, Northfield • Albert Paradis, Ensborg Falls • Todd Parlo, Walden Heights Nursery & Orchard, Walden Lisa Pawlik, Underhill • Kit Perkins & Andrew Thurber, Charlotte • Sara Gideon Porth, Atlas Farm, MA • Jennifer Prince, The Rebel Pioneers, Grande Isle • Denise Quick, Burlington • Jenny & Adam Quinn, Underhill • Carlene Ramus, Landscape Architect, Warren • Lydia Ratcliff, Lovejoy Brook Farm, Andover • Markey Read, Career Networks, Williston • Peter & Karen Reed, CT • John Reynolds & Edwina Ho, Shoreham • Nancy Rice, Randolph Center • Ethan Roland, Appleseed Permaculture, MA • Rafe Rosen, MA • James & Gayle Rowe, Mountainside Maple, Huntington • Alexei Rubenstein & Thea Schwartz, Middlesex • Nicko Rubin, Plainfield • Joseph Russo, The Green Mountain Maple Sugar Refining Company Inc, Waterville • Mary Schwartz, Bosky Dell Farm, E Dorset • Katharina Sikkes, Charlotte • Colleen Skeffington, Bristol • Liza Sprout, Craftsbury Common • Bill & Karyn Stack, Hartland • Herb Swanson, Lyndonville • Amanda Tabor, Burlington • Ryan Terrell, Proctor • Brian Titus & Frances Recchia, Randolph • Jerry Trinder, NY • Kate Turcotte, Common Ground Student

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Summer Workshops Announced!

For more information, or for a complete list, visit our website or contact the NOFA-VT office at 802-434-4122.

July 13: Grow Your Own Organic Garden, Craftsbury

July 19: Organic Apples, Shelburne

July 20: Getting Started with Poultry, Orwell

July 23: A Plan for Pastured Pork, East Wells

July 24: Organic Dairy Grazing for Commercial Farmers, Newport Center

July 29: Developing Seeding and Transplant Schedules for a Continuous CSA Harvest, Burlington

July 31: Vegetable and Berry Integrated Pest Management, Plainfield

Aug 2: Grow Your Own Organic Garden, Burlington

Aug 2: Field Day and NOFAvore Celebration, Randolph Center

Aug 9: The Family Cow, Randolph Center

Aug 12: Balancing High Dairy Production with Creative Forage Crops, Tunbridge

Aug 16: Grow Your Own Organic Garden, Highgate

Aug 17: Cooking with the 10 Best Herbs, Manchester

Aug 23: Grow Your Own Organic Garden, Peru

Aug 24: Earthen Ovens, Marshfield

Aug 27: Holistic Planned Grazing, Highgate

Aug 30: Pollination Gardens, Ferrisburgh



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