

- Farmer-Student Correspondence
- Annual Meeting Summary

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

The Incentive for On-Farm Wind Energy in Vermont

by Cheryl Bruce, VOF staff

With energy costs at an all time high, many Vermonters are exploring renewable energy sources not only to alleviate these costs, but also to lessen their impact on the environment. While Vermont isn't known for its extensive number of sunny days, many people have successfully incorporated solar power as part of their home energy use. Another system that is receiving increased interest among Vermonters is wind power. Due to our mountainous landscape there are many windy spots on ridgelines and hilltops, making this source of power a viable option for many farms and homesteads.

The Potential of Wind Power

Wind energy has the potential to supply 20% of the nation's electricity. Although lower than its full potential, the US Department of Energy has announced a goal of obtaining 6% of US electricity from wind by the year 2020. At the end of 2004, U.S. wind generating capacity reached 6,740 megawatts (MW = 1 million watts), with 5,000 more MW to be added over the next 5 years. As a point of reference, 1 MW of wind capacity is enough to supply 240-300 average homes. This means the current wind capacity generates over 17 billion kWh annually, supplying 1.6 million homes each year. Of course a majority of this energy is generated by large wind farms, but a significant amount of energy can be collectively produced by small on-farm or residential wind systems.

History

Although advances and developments continue to be made, wind power has been utilized for thousands of years. The first windmills were used to grind grain and pump water almost 2,000 years ago in Persia and China. Now famous for their windmills, the Dutch spent hundreds of years working to perfect the design. What resulted was a highly efficient system. It wasn't until the 1800's that windmills spread across the United States. Over that century, over 6 million fan-type windmills, made of wood or steel, were installed on American farms, mostly for water pumping purposes. Many of these rusty relics can still be seen throughout the rural landscape.

Wind Power Basics

The modern, small wind turbine for residential or farm use is typically 75 feet tall, with blades measuring 21-25 feet. The towers are constructed of steel and the blades are made of fiberglass-reinforced polyester or wood epoxy.

Before building a windmill, wind speeds must be monitored. The ideal is to have a majority of wind speeds in the 15-20 mph range. These are the speeds that generate most of the power. The blades should start turning at speeds of 6-7 mph and automatically shut off at speeds over 45 mph.

24th Annual Winter Conference "Local Energy, Local Economies"

The NOFA-VT 24th Annual Winter Conference will be held on Saturday, February 11, 2006 at Vermont Technical College in Randolph, VT.

James Howard Kunstler will be our keynote speaker this year. With his classics of social commentary *The Geography of Nowhere* and *Home from Nowhere*, James Howard Kunstler has established himself as one of the great commentators on American space and place. Now, with *The Long Emergency*, he offers a shocking vision of a post-oil future. Riveting and authoritative, *The Long Emergency* is a devastating indictment that brings new urgency and accessibility to the critical issues that will shape our future, and that we can no longer afford to ignore.

There will be **32 workshops** taught by experienced farmers and agriculture specialists for farmers, home gardeners, educators and concerned consumers. Some of the many workshop topics include: Photovoltaics, Biofuels in Vermont, Climate Change & Farming, Energy Efficiency, Peak Oil & VT's Future, Family Herbs, Organic Apples, Integrating Livestock into Your Garden, Record keeping for Profits, and Holistic Farm Management.

Future farmers can attend the Children's Conference for ages 6-13. The Children's Conference offers farming related workshops, games and crafts. Also, there is a colorful farmer's market, live bluegrass music, and a silent auction benefiting our Farm to School Mentor Program.

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NOFA-VT
 PO Box 697
 Richmond, VT 05477
 www.nofavt.org
 802-434-4122
 802-434-4154 fax
 info@nofavt.org

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NOFA-VT Welcomes New Board Members & Says Goodbye to Three Treasured Veterans

The NOFA-VT staff would like to thank Scout Proft of Someday Farm in Dorset, Lindsey Ketchel, Program Director at Burlington's Intervale Foundation and Camilla Roberts, artist from Athens, VT for their combined over quarter century contribution to the NOFA-VT Board (the new board members are thankful for the new term limits!) They saw NOFA through a period of membership growth, drove many miles to join other board members and discuss the winter conference, agricultural education programs, or national organic standards. We have raised our children, as they have raised theirs, and we have mourned our losses with their support. They have been engaged, committed, and passionate – they are family. So...thanks. And the good news is... they only have to stay off the board for one year before they can run again!

At the annual meeting on December 3, the NOFA members attending the annual meeting voted for Chris Gordon and Sara Coblyn Porth to join the board for 3 year terms.

Chris is the Program Coordinator for the South Hero Land Trust. In addition to working on development of land conservation projects, he has been working with area farmers on the development of the South Hero Land Trust Farm Initiative, a program designed to create stronger connections between

agricultural producers and the community. One of the outcomes of that project was to partner with the Island's farmers to create a farmers' market in South Hero. Chris is especially interested in NOFA's agricultural education programs (VT FEED) and market development initiatives (Vermont Farmers' Market Collective and CSA Network).

Sara is the Youth Horticulture Coordinator for UVM Extension in Brattleboro. She lives in South Deerfield where she and her husband operate a small organic mixed vegetable farm. Sara is "passionate about helping to build a regional food system, supporting family farmers and educating the public about where their food comes from." While working at The Food Project in Boston, Sara developed and published an agriculture curriculum called *French Fries and the Food System*. Sara currently collaborates with NOFA-VT staff on the Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day) project and our collaborative community food security project, the Community Farm Partners project.

We will be seeking 3 new board members for 2007 and, as always, we seek nominations from NOFA members. If you, or someone you know is interested, please contact Enid Wonnacott at the NOFA office.



NOFA Notes Deadlines & Advertising!

Deadlines for submissions

Winter - Nov 15 for late Dec mailing
 Spring - Feb 15 for late March mailing
 Summer - May 15 for late June mailing
 Fall - August 15 for late Sept mailing

Ad sizes and rates:

1/8 pg - \$25 (3.5" w x 2.25" h)
 1/4 pg - \$40 (3.5" w x 4.75" h)
 1/2 pg - \$75 (7.5" h x 4.75 h)

Classified ads: Classifieds are \$5 for first 30 words; 5 cents per word over 30. NOFA-VT members receive one free 30-word ad per year.

NOFA-VT Mission Statement

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.

Thanks for your support in 2005!

A special thank you to our members and friends who generously donated to our annual appeal. Your contributions to our general fund enables NOFA to maintain and grow our quality programs.

NOFA Vermont would like to thank and recognize the following foundations, businesses, and organizations that have supported NOFA's vital work in 2005:

Foundations

Ben & Jerry's Foundation, Central CAT Team, NOFA Winter Conference

Brook Family Foundation, Farm Share Program

Freeman Foundation, Dairy Technical Assistance Program

John Merck Foundation, Dairy Technical Assistance Program's Economic Feasibility Study

NH Charitable Foundation, NODPA Field Days

Stratton Foundation, Farm to School Mentor Program in Rutland/Bennington Counties

Upper Valley Community Foundation, Farm to School Mentor Program in Orange/Windsor Counties

Vermont Community Foundation Green Mountain Fund, Farm to School Mentor Program in Lamoille County

Vermont Community Foundation, Salvation Farms

Grants

NE Region Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (NE SARE), for:

- ◆ Integrated Learning Courses for Sustainable Livestock Production
- ◆ Community Market Project
- ◆ Speaker Grant, FEED Conference

Proteus Fund, general administration

Risk Management Association (RMA), for the Dairy Technical Assistance Program and Farmer Training

USDA Community Food Project, Community Farm Partners Project

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, for winter conference sponsorship, dairy technical assistance, and market development

Vermont Department of Aging & Disabilities, for the Vermont Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Vermont Department for Children & Families, Economic Service Division, for the Market Development Projects

Vermont Department of Education, FEED Conference

Vermont Health Department, FEED Conference

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Farm Viability Enhancement Program

Vermont USDA Rural Development, Value Added Producers Grant for The Vermont Juice Project

Supporting Businesses with donations of \$1,000 or more

American Cancer Society, FEED Conference

Green Mountain Feeds, Winter Conference

Horizon Organic Dairy, NODPA Field Days

Living Future, Winter Conference

Middlebury Natural Food Cooperative, Farm Share Program

National Action For Healthy Kids, FEED Conference

New England Dairy Council, FEED Conference

NRG Systems, Winter Conference

Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative, Winter Conference & Dairy Technical Assistance Program

Stonyfield Farm, Winter Conference & Dairy Technical Assistance Program

Vermont Federation of Farmers Markets



NOFA-VT Members & Friends Gather at Annual Meeting

by Enid Wonnacott, NOFA-VT Executive Director

The NOFA-VT annual meeting was held on December 3 at the Capital City Grange in Montpelier. We were fortunate to share the space with the grangers, holding their meeting on the same evening. The evening started with a dinner and social hour – the dinner featured samples of the foods that we have been testing to serve at local fairs and festivals. NOFA-VT received a grant to have a mobile food cart travel to county fairs, festivals and farmers' markets featuring the local foods of the host event. Over the course of the summer and fall, we tested a flatbread pizza (Vermont Farmers' Pizza), a kabob and savory crepes. At the annual meeting, the members and friends filled out a survey, indicating their food preferences. In general, the attendees gave the pizza the highest marks for flavor, and most appropriate fair food. We apologize that there were not vegetarian or vegan pizza options – the prep crew got a little carried away. The reviewers came up with some other good suggestions, including burritos, veggie wraps, smoothies, potato pancakes, pot pies, cobblers with cream or ice cream, tamales, and grilled quesadillas.

After dinner, we had a brief business meeting to highlight NOFA's 2005 programs, a financial report was distributed, and then Jim Merkel entertained and inspired us with slides and stories of living simply. Jim is the Sustainability Coordinator for Dartmouth College, the founder of the Global Living Project and author of *Radical Simplicity: Small Footprints on a Finite Earth*. Jim shared his process of "getting simple" and outlined how we can measure our ecological footprint. For more information, see Jim's web-site, www.globallivingproject.org.

Per usual, the pies were inspired! After Jim's talk, while the esteemed judges were taste testing a selection of the approximately 20 pies, we were able to choose from several varieties including a pear cranberry pie, pumpkin pie, apple pie, or pecan pie, topped off with Strafford Organic Creamery organic maple or vanilla ice cream. The judges had a hard time deciding, but settled on a tie between Angela Cicioni's mixed berry pie and Tim O'Dell's pear and cranberry pie. The bakers received their choice of a NOFA t-shirt, bag, or hat, and a signed copy of Jim Merkel's book, *Radical Simplicity*. Tim put his shirt to immediate use as he moved into the last part of the evening, a contra dance with Atlantic Crossing. About 15 of the 80 or so people at the annual meeting stayed to dance at Montpelier's regularly scheduled dance. I was in the line swinging with Jim Merkel and apple producer Bill Suhr, and I could see Ginny Cleland, Allison Forrest, and others spinning around me. We look forward to moving our annual meeting (and hopefully dancing) at other venues around Vermont.

Green Mountain Feeds is a small, locally owned family business. The owner, Rick Dutil, has been in the feed business for over 25 years and is proud of a team that listens to our customers' needs and responds to them. That dedication and ability to respond is how we got started producing organic feed in the first place.

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To contact Rick Dutil
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Wind Energy in Vermont

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Because wind is intermittent, large amounts of power may be generated on very windy days, with little generated on less windy days. Unless there is a battery storage system in place, any excess wind energy generated cannot be stored. If the system is grid connected, the homeowner can take advantage of net-metering to compensate for the lack of energy storage. Net-metering allows excess energy generated during windy periods to be accounted for in order to offset costs associated with the use of utility energy consumed when little wind energy is generated. The customer is billed only for the net energy consumed during the billing period. As a result, a wind turbine can lower an average electricity bill by 50 to 90 percent. To benefit from the economics of a wind system, electricity costs should be at least 10 cents/kWh and wind speeds should average 10 mph.

The size of the wind turbine installed is chosen to meet the energy requirements given the available wind resource. Power ratings for turbines vary from 1- 25 kW. A 10 kW wind turbine can generate about 10,000 kWh annually at a site with wind speeds averaging 12 mph. Incidentally, the average household uses approximately 10,000 kWh of electricity each year, making a small wind system a viable option.

A small wind turbine can cost \$3,000 - \$5,000 for every kW of generating capacity, or about \$40,000 for a 10 kW installed system. A wind system will usually recoup its investment through utility savings within six to fifteen years. Additionally, over its life, a small wind turbine can offset approximately 1.2 tons of air pollutants and 200 tons of greenhouse gases.

Vermont Solar and Small Wind Incentive Program

Senator Jeffords secured \$1.5 million in U.S. Department of Energy funds for the Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS) Wind Development Program. The money was used by the DPS for research, mapping, educational videos and direct grants. The incentive funds are available for the construction of wind power systems two ways: as a direct grant through DPS or as funding from the Vermont Solar and Small Wind Incentive Program administered by the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC).

The Solar and Small Wind Incentive Program was originally established pursuant to Renewable Energy Legislation passed by the Vermont State Legislature during the spring of 2003, and signed into law by Governor Douglas in June 2003. The initial program provided \$840,000 to fund the installation of over 200 renewable energy systems. The newest phase of incentives are expected to support the installation of approximately 250 renewable energy systems in the state, which will generate an estimated 540 MWh of electricity and save roughly 17,000 gallons of fuel oil each year. The program will also track and report the economic benefits, avoided emissions, and estimated energy savings as a result of the installations.

To date, the Vermont DPS has funded 15-20 direct grants to schools, farms and municipalities including the town of Hinesburg, the Alburg Welcome Center, and schools in Dover, Mt. Holly and Randolph. Many farms have received direct grants including VOF Certified Organic farms such as Butterworks Farm in Westfield, Maple Wind Farm in Huntington, Button Farm in Colchester, and Taconic End Farm in Leicester. Many more funding incentives have been distributed by VEIC.



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If you are interested in installing a small wind or solar power system on your farm or property, contact either VEIC or DPS.

VT Solar and Small Wind Incentive Program:
877-888-7372 or
www.renc-vt.org.

Direct grants from DPS:
802-828-4072 or
www.state.vt.us/psd.

For information about wind power in VT: www.awea.org/smallwind/vermont.sw.html.

The Public Debate Over Tire Derived Fuel

By Cheryl Bruce, VOF Staff

The parking lot of the Middlebury Union Middle School was filled beyond capacity with cars shortly after 6 pm on the evening of November 15th. It was not parent-teacher night, but rather one of the three public hearings held in response to a draft permit tentatively issued to the International Paper Mill in Ticonderoga, NY. Over 300 people filled the school's gymnasium, while 100 people read statements that would be submitted to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) for consideration in the permit granting process.

Concerns have been raised since July 2005, when International Paper (IP) applied for a permit to conduct a test burn that would replace 10% of its fuel oil power with tire derived fuel oil. The test burn would run for two weeks to evaluate the use of tire derived fuel as an alternative fuel source for the mill's power boiler. This fuel would be combusted in the power boiler along with number 6 fuel oil and bark/wood and tire loading would occur at a rate of 3 tons per hour or 72 tons per day.

Tires are produced from petroleum and metals such as zinc. When tires are burned for fuel, they are first chopped into one-inch pieces. Although most of the metal is removed during this process, some amounts remain. There is concern over particles in the emissions, mainly the fine zinc oxide particulates that can settle deeply in the lungs, be absorbed in the bloodstream and lead to numerous health problems. Emissions can include other metals such as chromium, arsenic, cobalt, aluminum and manganese.

During the test burn, International Paper has said emissions will be monitored, but the amounts of fine particulates, those that are less than 2.5 microns in size will not be measured. Some of the larger particles, those that are 10 microns in size, can be removed by IP's existing pollution control devices (reported removal is 73%). However, removing the fine 2.5 micron particles from the stack emissions would require an additional pollution control device called an Electrostatic Precipitator (ESP). To date, IP has rejected installing the device, citing the high cost (about \$6 million) associated with the technology. No other paper plant in the country is burning this volume of tires without an ESP device.

In October, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) made a tentative determination to issue a draft permit to the International Paper Mill for conducting a test burn. If the permit goes through, IP will be allowed to burn tire derived fuel oil for a two week period, to determine if an ESP is needed. They are resistant to installing the device before the test is conducted. Many opponents of the burn believe the test itself will be quite hazardous.

Driving south along 22A, one encounters beautiful views of Addison County's productive farmland, Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains. Approaching Bridport and

Shoreham, you can see the outline of a smokestack in the distance. This is the International Paper plant in Ticonderoga, a stone's throw across the lake from Shoreham. Addison County is directly downwind from the plant, and many residents live within 1-5 miles of the plant. It is these people who are most concerned about the health risks associated with the plant's toxic emissions.

At Middlebury Union, Governor Jim Douglas was the first speaker of the night. The Governor noted that clean air and water are critical to Vermont's tourist industry. He noted that our state has the cleanest air in New England and he wants it to stay that way. Governor Douglas asked that International Paper be a responsible corporate citizen and a good neighbor and install the necessary pollution control device, the ESP, which is an industry standard. The Governor offered to have the State of Vermont help IP bear a portion of the cost burden of the device, but the offer was rejected. "Vermont has offered an olive branch, but International Paper wants to burn that too," said Douglas. He also added that he would not hesitate to take legal action to settle the dispute with IP if necessary.

Also present at the November 15th hearing were spokespeople for Senators Jim Jeffords and Patrick Leahy and Representative Bernie Sanders. They reported that earlier in the day Jeffords and Leahy co-sponsored a proposed bill on tire burn safety standards and Sanders introduced companion legislation in the House. Since enacting federal legislation is not the fastest solution, all noted the need to work cooperatively with International Paper and the State of New York for a solution. It was also noted how Vermont and New York have a long history of working together to protect their shared resources, most notably against air pollution from coal burning plants in the Midwest and Quebec. They would like to see the same level of cooperation between the two states for this issue.

These speakers were followed by numerous representatives for the small towns of Addison County as well as many concerned citizens. Almost all of these speakers asked that International Paper put air and water quality of the Champlain Valley above the bottom line. The environmental concerns of citizens were numerous.

Elizabeth Carpenter of Orwell and also part of the citizen action group People for Less Pollution does not want to see an increase to the 400,000 pounds of toxins already found in IP's emissions. With tire derived fuel, zinc and dioxin emissions are a concern. She asks, why is the NYDEC granting only an air permit? What about water quality? The particulates from the emissions will eventually settle on the lake, not to mention any leaching that may occur from the plant itself. There is risk of accumulation of toxins in fish and other wildlife. Levels of contamination will not be known, since the lake water will not be monitored. Elizabeth stated that only 2 pages of the 100 page draft permit covers water quality issues and does not discuss the efficiency of the waste water treatment plant in

removing zinc and other heavy metals. She believes a water permit should also be required before the test burn.

Janet Morin of Cornwall raised similar concerns over the dioxin coated fine particles. Her concern is that these particles will fall onto the farms of Addison County and contaminate its soils. The toxins in the soil may then move up the food chain, into grass and then into the fatty tissue of cows. The accumulation in cows may result in a milk product with high levels of dioxins and other toxins. This would have a huge impact on the dairy industry.

Other speakers mentioned the human health risks, associated with International Paper's plan. Jim Beatty of Salisbury, who helped organize the bus rides to the first hearing in Ticonderoga, spoke with many concerned seniors, pregnant women and parents. The concerns of the many residents he spoke with include the potential increased risks of respiratory problems and cancer due to the toxic nature of the fine particulates. Due to the proximity of the plant, there is already an increased incidence of asthma among Addison County residents.

The Vermont Lung Association reports that 9% of the 38,000 Addison County residents suffer from asthma. Citizens are concerned this percentage will increase, especially among children. Children breathe 50% more air than adults per pound of body weight. Because their respiratory systems are still developing, they are more susceptible to environmental threats. One resident mentioned the increasing numbers of students with learning disorders in area schools over the past several years. He questions whether this increase could be due to pollution levels.

The first public hearing on November 9th in Ticonderoga, NY was attended by many Vermonters. The citizen group People for Less Pollution organized eight buses that brought an additional 320 Vermont residents across the lake to speak out against the tire burn. NOFA-VT was one of many groups who helped sponsor the buses. The meeting ran very late and not all Vermonters who wanted to speak were able to do so. Testimony was primarily from Ticonderoga residents who spoke in favor of the test burn, noting that International Paper employs 700 people, making it Essex County's largest employer "in an area where the economy is almost nonexistent". IP has said that the \$3.8 million in savings from switching 10% of its fuel oil to tire derived fuel oil would reduce costs and keep the plant running. Many in favor of the test burn feel that Vermont residents opposed to the burn are putting their own interests above the hundreds of jobs that may be lost at the mill.


Author Bill McKibben, of Middlebury College, points out that the issue has been painted as a battle that "pits people who don't want to breathe pollution from the plant against workers who don't want to lose their jobs". However, he counters that the reality is that the jobs won't exist for long unless the Ticonderoga plant is modernized. He asks, "What happens when companies allow manufacturing plants to age, when they



stop investing, when they fall behind the technological curve? What happens is, they shut down" as the plant becomes less competitive. He states, "It's crucial that Vermonters campaigning for less pollution not insist that their air is more important than the jobs that support hundreds of families... they need to stress that their campaign for plant modernization is the best chance those families have that those jobs will be there a generation hence."

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation held a third and final hearing on November 30th in Ticonderoga, NY and accepted written public comments until December 9th. Many Vermont residents will be watching closely to see if the draft permit for the test burn will be granted. If International Paper is required to install the ESP device before the test burn, residents may be breathing a little easier.

For more information on the International Paper tire derived fuel test burn or the citizen group People for Less Pollution, call 802-388-7050 or visit www.lesspollution.org.



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Made in Vermont? New Rules for Vermont Labeling

By John Cleary, VOF Administrator

The Vermont Attorney General's Office recently adopted a new consumer fraud rule, which addresses the use of the word "Vermont" in labeling and advertising. It will become effective on January 5, 2006 and includes a grace period for re-labeling of up to one year from the effective date. The rule was issued to allow businesses to *pro-actively* avoid violating the Vermont Consumer Fraud Act's ban on deceptive marketing, by defining what kinds of "Vermont" origin claims are allowable and what kinds are not. In general, the rule prohibits the use of "Vermont" or similar terms in connection with the advertising or marketing of products that are not actually made/grown/produced in Vermont. This rule will protect Vermont farmers and processors by ensuring that only true Vermont products can have access to the marketing benefits that come from the Vermont label.

The Rule covers four types of representations of Vermont origins:

- "Qualified representations," where the connection to Vermont is spelled out ("made in Vermont" or "knitted in Vermont" or "made with Vermont apples").
- "Unqualified representations," where the connection to Vermont is *not* spelled out (such as "Vermont cheddar cheese" or "Vermont cider").
- "Vermont" company names ("Vermont Milk Company").
- Use of a Vermont address.

Here are some examples of how this rule will affect products on the shelves:

- A product cannot be labeled as "Vermont Tomato Sauce" unless the tomatoes were actually grown in Vermont. If a company based in Vermont wants to use out of state tomatoes, they can still label it "Made in Vermont" if it was processed here.
- If a company uses Vermont in their name ("Shady Farms of Vermont"), then **a)** the company must be based in Vermont, **b)** the product must be processed in Vermont, **c)** the primary agricultural products must have been grown/raised in Vermont. If the company is located here but the product is not made/grown in Vermont, then the front panel must clearly and conspicuously identify the origin ("Produced in Ohio").
- A company cannot use a Vermont address on their label, unless they have "substantial" operations in Vermont.

For the complete rule & a lengthy Q&A explanation of the details, visit www.atg.state.vt.us/display.php?



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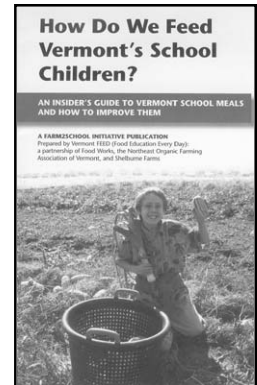
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How do we Feed Vermont's Children?

by Abbie Nelson, VT FEED Coordinator

Often in our work through VT Food Education Every Day (VT FEED—a collaboration of Food Works of Central VT, NOFA-VT, and Shelburne Farms), we are asked to explain the school food system. The school lunch program started in 1946 as a seemingly simple solution to the malnourished 18 year old WW II military recruits. Now, it is more comprehensive, but more complicated with strict nutritional guidelines for breakfast and lunch, USDA commodities, DOD (Department of Defense) Fresh produce, a la carte sales, and vending. Have your eyes glazed over yet?!

To help anyone who wants to enter the school food system, there is now a colorful, relatively uncomplicated, pamphlet created by VT FEED with funds from the Argosy Foundation and with the help of a state legislative working group, Departments of Education and Health, Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets and Vermont food service directors. The purposes of the Primer: *"How Do We Feed Vermont's School Children?: an Insider's Guide to Vermont School Meals and How to Improve Them,"* are two-fold: to outline how VT schools currently provide meals to their children; and to show the opportunities for the farm to school initiative to work with schools to encourage greater use of fresh local foods and help VT children make healthier choices about the food that they eat.



This Primer describes the components and costs of different parts of school food programs, where the food comes from, who prepares school food, what students are being served, how government entities are involved, challenges to increasing fresh local produce in school meals, and initiatives already occurring in VT and nationally to improve school food. Most importantly, there are steps outlined to help interested people get involved.

If this description has enticed you, and you want to receive this pamphlet, call Abbie at 434-4122 and ask for a copy or go to vtfeed.org and download the pdf file.

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Notes from Earthwise Farm & Forest

By Collin Mahoney, workshop attendee

In October, I attended a draft horse logging workshop at Earthwise Farm and Forest in Bethel, hosted by Lisa McCrory and Carl Russell. This three-day hands-on experience covered chainsaw safety and many aspects of logging. Some of the topics covered during the first logging session included basics such as harnessing, hitching, skid trail layout and low impact harvesting techniques. The second session focused on production including the harvesting of fuel-wood, white pine saw-logs and red pine utility poles.

There were six teams of horses and one team of oxen present to provide an opportunity for attendees of all skill levels to learn to drive the animals. Some of the topics I found most interesting were the discussion on the adaptability and uses of the D-ring New England style harness and the placement and set up of a log landing. Many methods of pulling downed logs were demonstrated with the use of various carts and arches, a scoot and a bob-sled. There was a round table discussion and dinner on the second night of the event, which provided an opportunity to ask questions from the experienced teamsters who have such a wealth of knowledge on the subject. Equally important for me was the opportunity to spend time with the horses in the woods and network with other people interested in draft horse logging.

The NOEA-VT Scholarship Fund helped Collin to attend this workshop.



Photos by Collin Mahoney



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New Reference Guide Available for Organic Growers

Reviewed by Nicole Dehne

For growers who want to know how well Spinosad controls aphids compared to thrips or how to deal with yellow spots on tomatoes, there is a new guidebook available that can help answer these questions. Recently released by Cornell University, "Resource Guide for Organic Insect and Disease Management" is a comprehensive guide based on published research that can help growers identify and manage insects and diseases in their crops.

The first section of the guide is organized into 5 major vegetable crop groups: Brassicas, Cucurbits, Lettuce, Solanaceous Crops and Sweet Corn. For each segment growers can find information about control of key pests, both cultural controls and approved materials. In addition, there are color photos of disease-damaged crops as well as close up shots of all of our favorite pests.

The largest section of the guidebook is made up of fact sheets that rate the efficacy of 13 pesticides that are commonly used in organic production systems. The following materials are covered: Bacillus subtilus, Bacillus thuringiensis (BT), Beauveria bassiana, Potassium and Sodium Bicarbonates, Coniothyrium minitans, Copper products, Kaolin Clay, Neem, Oils, Pyrethrum, Rotenone, Pesticidal Soap and Spinosad. Each fact sheet provides information on how the material works, the type of pests it controls, what precautions and protections the grower should take in using the pesticide, allowed OMRI products, other brand name products that may or may not be allowed (talk to your certifier for a definitive answer), and potential effects on the environment and on human health. Lastly the fact sheets describe efficacy with a written summary rating materials with good, fair and poor control as well as using graphs.

The third section is the appendix segment which supplements the text by providing information on plant resistance, habitats for beneficial insects, trap cropping and insect control, induced resistance, increasing plant defenses, understanding pesticide regulations, organic research needs and other recommended resources.

To get your hands on this resource you can access it online at <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/resourceguide> or a limited number of printed copies are available from NYSAESA for \$5 plus \$4 shipping and handling at gro2@cornell.edu or 315-787-2248. Additionally, we have one copy available for loan through the NOFA lending library. The resource guide is spiral bound made from durable, water resistant paper great for throwing in the back of a truck and surviving potential abuse. This is a fantastic resource guide for all certified growers or for folks considering transitioning to organic.

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Fuel Switching: Lower your energy costs significantly by running your equipment with oil or propane instead of electricity.

Variable Frequency Drives: Reduce your vacuum pump energy costs by up to 66% with variable frequency drives. These are appropriate for most parlor milking systems.

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Avian Influenza and Outdoor Poultry

By John Cleary, VOF Administrator

Avian influenza in Asia and Europe has hit the headlines in the past several months. Speculation on how fast it could travel and what impact it would have on farms and on the general public have generated considerable attention. The VT Agency of Agriculture announced that they have been testing poultry flocks for avian influenza since this past spring (with no positive results). While the disease has been discovered in birds in Canada, it is not the same strain found in Asia which has been able to be transferred to humans.

Since the disease could spread by migrating birds, there is some concern that outdoor ranging poultry flocks are at greater risk than confinement operations. France and the Netherlands have temporarily banned the outdoor production of poultry. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has provided guidance to poultry producers, including free range and organic producers, regarding bio-security considerations for their operations. This guidance is found at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity>. If Federal or State animal health authorities determine that more prescriptive actions are required, organic producers could be required to adhere to those actions.

The USDA National Organic Program has provided the following guidance to organic certifiers. "If it is determined that to protect the health, safety, and welfare of organic flocks that there is a need for temporary confinement of birds, producers and certifiers may work together to determine an appropriate method and duration of confinement of organic poultry flocks without a loss of organic certification. The method of confinement used must be approved by the certifying agent and should provide the necessary protection to the birds while meeting the remaining requirements of the NOP standards."

If you have any questions about certification requirement for organic poultry, please contact the NOFA office. If you would like to have your flock tested for avian influenza (free) or have further questions about the disease, contact State Veterinarian Kerry Rood at (802) 828-2421.



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**“Weaving Schools into
Wellness” November 14, 2005
in Burlington, VT**



Nearly 300 people attended the conference sponsored by VT FEED & Action for Healthy Kids



One of the workshops offered at the conference was a panel of food service directors and farmers who are currently involved in local purchasing relationships.

**2006 Vermont Master Gardener
Basic Course**

In this 14-week introductory course we cover the basics of home horticulture and what it means to be a Master Gardener. The instructors are comprised of UVM Faculty and Vermont Horticulture Professionals. Topics include: Botany, Soil Science, Entomology, Plant Pathology, Integrated Pest Management, Woody Ornamentals, Turf and Weeds, Invasive Plant Control, Perennials and Annuals, Landscape Design (Intro) and UVM Extension Volunteering.

**Tuesdays, February 7th-May 9th
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Interested in Farmers' Markets, CSAs & Farmstands? Please Attend the Direct Marketing Conference!

NOFA-VT is holding a Direct Marketing Conference on January 14, 2006 at the Vermont Law School in South Royalton, Vermont. This conference will build on the annual farmers market and CSA gatherings that have been held – featuring workshops on farmers' market board development, creating a value-added business on your farm, creating farm promotional materials, strengthening your CSA and farm planning. The conference is sponsored by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NESARE). For more information, please contact the NOFA office.

Calling all Farmers!

**Want to Make Your Farm More Profitable?
Have a Better Quality of Life?
Take a Look at Other Enterprises?
Develop a Business Plan?
Find Out Ways to Improve Your Farm?**

Then apply for the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program, a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board! NOFA-VT is one of several service providers for this on-farm advising and planning activity. We want to help you make your farm more viable now and for the future! For more information about the program, go to www.vhcb.org.

You can contact NOFA-VT for an application and to get a better idea if this program is for you. It's all free to the farmer!
(And the application is nice and simple, too.)

VT Farm Viability Enhancement Program - MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ~ Are you a year-round Vermont resident?
- ~ Do you own or rent (by written lease) at least one parcel of Vermont farmland?
- ~ Do you have at least 3 years experience managing or working on a farm?
- ~ Did your farm produce at least \$10,000 of gross farm income in the most recent tax year?
- ~ In the next 12 months do you again plan to engage in the business of farming on this land?

If you answered "Yes" to all of the above you are eligible to receive services from the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program! Contact NOFA-VT TODAY!

Farm to School Mentor News

The NOFA-VT Farm to School mentors are farmers and community organizers working in 12 counties statewide to build partnerships between schools, farmers and their communities through agricultural education. In each issue of NOFA notes we will highlight their activities. Here is a sampling of mentor activities in the last quarter:

- **Getting fresh, local foods on school menus**

- *Taste tests at elementary schools in Westford, Johnson, and Craftsbury
- * Healthy snack projects at elementary schools in Hardwick, Manchester, Londonderry, Middlebury
- * Local food purchasing initiatives in northeast region of Vermont (Johnson, Westford, Fairfield, Sheldon and Fairfax)

- **Integrating agriculture into the classroom & kids out learning on the farm**

- * Youth garden and greenhouse projects starting up or on-going in Johnson, Eden, Fairfield, Hardwick, Cambridge, Wolcott, and Bennington.
- * Field trips to apple orchards in Addison County
- * Outdoor classroom and service learning projects for youth: gleaning in Johnson,

maple sugaring in Saxton's River, weekly visits to farms and with agricultural professionals in Bennington County and sugaring in Fairfield.

- * Farmer-classroom correspondence (farmers write letters monthly to schools during the off season) —we are always looking for more farmer writers!

- * Farmer-teacher workshop at Hildene Museum in Manchester

- **Linking kids, food, farmers and community throughout the year**

- * Youth farmers' markets held in August 2005 in Middlebury, Bristol, Stowe, Morrisville, Craftsbury, Dorset, South Royalton, Chester, Waterbury, Hardwick, Bellows Falls, St. Albans, Richmond, Jericho, Norwich, and Woodstock.
 - * County field day activities: scavenger hunt at Franklin County Field Days
 - * Farm Days at Hartland and Pomfret
 - * Farms and Kids activity cards will soon be available for CSA farms, farmstands and farmers' markets (hands-on activities that kids can do on-site or take home to continue their investigation about farms and food)
- For more info about any of these projects and initiatives, please contact the NOFA office.

Top 10 Foods to Buy Organic

- 1-Apples
- 2-Celery
- 3-Cherries
- 4-Nectarines
- 5-Peaches
- 6-Pears
- 7-Potatoes
- 8-Spinach
- 9-Strawberries
- 10-Sweet Bell Peppers

This list was created from a 2003 Environmental Working Group Study that compares the pesticide residues on 46 types of common produce.



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NE Sustainable Livestock Conference - March 2006!

On March 2 & 3rd, the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) and UVM Extension will host a *Northeast Sustainable Livestock Conference* at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, Vermont. The conference will include topics on soils, crops, finances, grazing, animal health, and marketing.

There will be a special emphasis on pressing issues such as rising energy costs including steps people can take for greater energy efficiency and adopting alternative energy systems on a farm. Invited speakers include nationally known organic livestock experts such as Hue Karreman, VMD and Linda Ticofsky, DVM.

Our keynote speaker will be Catherine Austin Fitts, who will speak and give a workshop titled: "Who's Your Farmer? Building Consumer and Investor Support for Fresh Food from Free Farmers." She will focus on a sustainability model to create prosperous local food and natural resource based economies. Catherine operates a web-based information and networking site called SolariAction. You can find it on the web at: <http://www.solariactionnetwork.com>. This conference will enable farmers to gain valuable knowledge and tools, network with one another, and improve their farms' economics, ecology, and quality of life.

For more information, please contact NOFA-VT Dairy Technical Advisors Lisa McCrory (802-234-5524, lmccrory@together.net) or Willie Gibson (802/535-9067, wgibson@thelifeline.net), or UVM Extension Agronomy Specialist Heather Darby (802-524-6501, heather.darby@uvm.edu.) A conference brochure and registration will be mailed out in early January to our mailing lists.

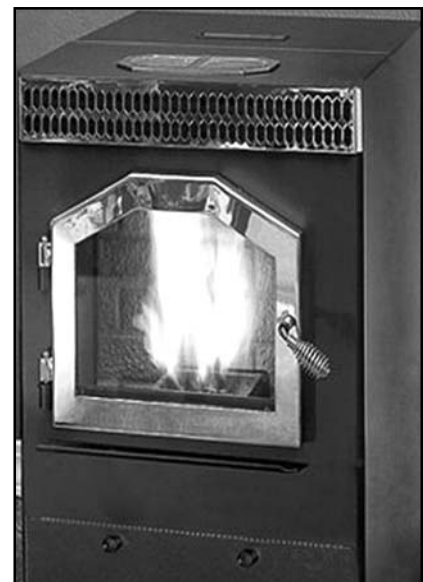
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Pen Pals: Farmers and Students Connecting Through Correspondence

by Abbie Nelson, VT FEED Coordinator

If you are not a farmer, do you ever wonder what farmers do on their farms in the winter months? Well, students in 12 schools in Vermont last year could tell you that draft horses in Fairfield were used to collect sap, and how to train a working farm dog because they were receiving letters from farmers around the state. This was done through the Northeast Organic Farming Association's Farm to School Mentor Program and *The Farmer to School Correspondence Course*, based on a pen pal system. The first step is for teachers who want to receive a letter from a farmer during the winter months, and farmers interested in sharing what they are doing on their farm, to contact their regional farm to school mentor. The mentors match up teacher and student interests (is it dairy cows, draft horses, vegetables, or bees?), and the age group with the farmers in the local area. If the interest can't be met locally, the classes are matched up with a farmer in another region.

As farmers you get to write about what you love, and share the complexities of running a farming business. For example, last year with his corresponding classroom, John Hayden of The Farm Between posed this question, "If one of my sows eats an average of 6 pounds of grain each day, and organic grain costs \$.25 a pound, how many piglets do I have to sell for \$75 each to break even?"

As a school teacher or student, you have the opportunity to learn about agriculture in Vermont, as well as a topic relevant to what you are studying. By spring, students have learned about our Vermont food system, and have developed a strong relationship with a farmer. Several teachers even took their classes to meet their farmer pen pal! One teacher commented, "I didn't know how complicated farming is!"

Signing up is simple: contact NOFA-VT (434-4122) during November and December and ask for the Farm to School Mentor Program. We will put you in touch with your regional mentor who will find out your interests and send you information.



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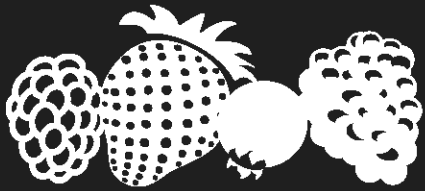
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Opportunities

For sale: Four Normade cross cows. Due in April. Certified organic. From a grass based dairy. Chase Hill Farm, Warwick, MA. 978-544-6327.

Farm Internship for Summer 2006:

Chapparral Farm in Wells, VT is looking for an enthusiastic, hardworking, independent, and responsible individual to assist with daily farm work. Daily chores range from seeding in greenhouse, to transplanting vegetables, weeding, harvesting, going to markets, and feeding animals. This internship is perfect for someone looking for the experience to start a small farm operation or learn the ins and outs of how a small farm works. Stipend, room & board are negotiable. References required, as is transportation. Chapparral Farm is a small, diversified family farm that raises mixed organic vegetables and heritage pork on 100 acres. Call Misse Burrows at 802-325-2461.

Market Garden Grower: Shelburne Farms is a 1,400 acre non-profit educational center and working farm. The farm operates a 3 acre organic market garden providing over 75% of the seasonal produce needs of The Inn at Shelburne Farms from May-October. Responsibilities include the management of: all aspects of production, on site farm stands, off farm accounts, and support of education programs. Please visit the website www.shelburnefarms.org for a full job description.

Sell Ad Space for Farm & Garden!

Farm & Garden (www.farm-garden.com) is a sustainable agriculture and rural living resource project. We are looking for someone to sell advertising space on our website. This is a contract position. The ideal candidate(s) have Internet access, an email account, a telephone, knowledge of the sustainable agriculture and gardening industry, a list of potential advertisers, and are comfortable with navigating websites and using search engines. Payment for services is 20% of revenue generated. This is an ideal position for someone looking to work from home on a part-time basis. Contact: gbanse@farm-garden.com.

Historic Barn Grants The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has a 50/50 matching grants program to assist owners of historic agricultural buildings (barns, corn cribs, sheds, grist mills, etc.). Up to \$10,000 can be awarded to assist the restoration and repair of these buildings. This program encourages the continued use of farm buildings for agricultural use. Eligible work includes restoration & repair of roofs, structure, windows, foundations and other important components of historic agricultural buildings. The grant application and the information manual are available at www.historicvermont.org/financial/barn.html or by contacting Debra Sayers at 802-828-3213. Grant application deadline is January 23, 2006.

Rural & Agricultural VocRehab Program (RAVR) -

Is a cooperative program with the UVM Extension and VocRehab Vermont. Our program has been providing services in support of employment & self-employment to rural Vermonters with disabilities since 1968. RAVR program staff has knowledge and resources available to work with anyone who resides in a rural area of Vermont and meets program eligibility requirements. Offices are located in Burlington, Rutland, St. Albans, and St. Johnsbury and you can contact us toll-free at our main office number of 1-800-571-0668. RAVR provides direct and referral services to rural and farm families through assistance with education and training, vocational evaluation and counseling, coping with physical and mental disabilities, worksite/homesite modifications, and machinery/equipment adaptations. If you or someone you know could benefit from our services, please call our office at 1-800-571-0668 for more information or visit us online at www.uvm.edu/agrocrehab.

Assistant growers sought: Heirloom Harvest in Westborough, MA, for positions beginning April 2006. Will work with volunteers and children. Some management is necessary. Expect variance in workday length. Contact John at 508.963.7792 or heirloomharvestcsa.com.

Resources

Visit www.informedeating.org, the web site of the Center for Informed Food Choices, to sign up for their free e-newsletter which contains "several irreverent news items from Big Food, updates on policy and legal strategies, an occasional in-depth essay, and information of CIFIC lectures and events."

There is increasing interest in the use of biodiesel on Vermont farms. The **Vermont Biodiesel Project** (www.vtbiodieselproject.org) is exploring the market potential for this renewable fuel across various markets in the state, including a variety of "off-road" applications, such as farm equipment and greenhouse use. As a part of this effort they are **conducting a short on-line survey** of heating-fuel and diesel-fuel users in the state. If you are currently using petrodiesel (or biodiesel) in your operations and would like to contribute to the survey sample (and have a chance at a \$100 cash drawing!), please take five minutes to fill out the survey at <http://www.vtbiodieselproject.org>.

Labor Management Farmer Educator Sought: The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program is seeking applications for its Sustainable Farmer Educator program. This program supports skilled and articulate farmers as they travel to meetings, conferences and workshops around the Northeast to address topics in sustainable agriculture. These farmer educators have covered topics as diverse as agritourism, sustainable production, grazing and farm management. Now the SARE program specifically seeks a farmer with a background in farm labor issues who can offer other farmers an opportunity for discussion, coordination, information and improved connections with service providers. The appointment brings with it a \$6,000 award that can be used for travel, meals, lodging, communications costs and compensation for hours worked as an educator. Appointments normally run one year. To apply, go to www.uvm.edu/~nesare or call 802-656-0471. The deadline applications is January 9, 2006 & award will be announced in March.

NOFA STORE



The NOFA-VT kids t-shirts (above) has blue graphics on cream fabric.



Our new NOFA t-shirts & bags have our vivid color logo on them! We're talking 5 colors!



Choose from 2 bumper sticker designs by Heidi Racht. NOFA (above) or Buy Local (below).



Yes! I want to support NOFA-VT!

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___ Basic*	\$15-\$25

* (The Natural Farmer not included)

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- ___ NEW organic cotton tote bag with COLOR logo! \$10 + \$2 s/h
- ___ Organic cotton baseball hat \$10.50 + \$2 s/h
- ___ Bumper stickers (Buy Local or NOFA) \$1 each + .60 s/h

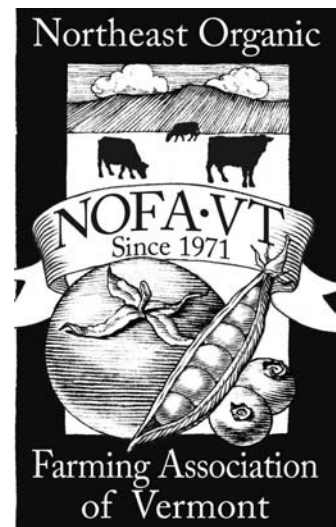
New Members Winter 2005

NOFA would like to welcome the following new members, many of whom joined through our fall membership drive.

Welcome New Members!

Jay & Janet Bailey, Fair Winds Farm, Brattleboro ♦ Barbour Family Dairy, Shoreham ♦ Allan & Karen Bathalon, Paddlebridge Holsteins, N. Troy ♦ Camilla Bowater, Williston ♦ Michael Low & Hart Brent, Meanderstone Farm, W Danville ♦ Anne Burling, MA ♦ Jon Cohen, N Westminster ♦ Ren Davidson, MA ♦ Lois & Russell Deberville, Washington ♦ Deborah Delmore, Vershire ♦ Cheryl DeVos, Kimball Brook Farm, N Ferrisburg ♦ James, Joe, Kevin, & Anne Donegan, Hinesburg ♦ James & Teresa Egbert, Andover ♦ Rochelle Gardner, S Hero ♦ Hugo & Amanda Gervais, Savage Gardens, N Hero ♦ Chris Jackson & Melissa Giuttari, Plainfield ♦ Bob & Sue Hatch, Tow Acre Farm, Walden ♦ Jerry & Miriam Kill, Randolph ♦ Anne Kubicke, Peacham ♦ George & Joann Madison, Shoreham ♦ Amy & Joseph Morel, Eastman Farm, Barnard ♦ Benjamin Moulton, Troy ♦ George and Dorothy Muzzy, N Ferrisburg ♦ Eric & Cathy Paris,

Tamarlane Farm, Lyndonville ♦ Janisse Ray & Raven Burchard, Brattleboro ♦ Lynn Saaby, NY ♦ Susan Socks, Burlington ♦ Abraham Towbin, Washington ♦ Pierre Vaillancourt, Valdale Farm, Inc. Enosburg Falls ♦ Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea, Watebury ♦ Sandra & Merrill Whitney, Chelsea ♦ Derek Wilson, Wilson Dairy, Barre ♦ Rick Wilson, Benson ♦ Robin Worn, Huntington ♦ Joanne Yousten, St Albans ♦ Ariel Zevon, Barre



New NOFA-VT logo by Edgar Stewart Design & Illustration

January 10: *Tilling the Soil of Opportunity* (through March), Rutland, St. Johnsbury, Brattleboro, VT. Info: Deb Heleba, 802-656-0233 or debra.heleba@uvm.edu

January 14: **NOFA-VT Direct Marketing Conference**, VT Law School, S. Royalton, VT. Info: 802-434-4122 or www.nofavt.org

January 21: *10th Annual Vermont Grazing Conference*, Randolph Center, VT. Info: Jenn Colby, 802-656-0858 or jcolby@uvm.edu

January 24-26: *Vermont Farm Show*, Barre, VT. Info: Jon Turmel, 802-241-3545 or jon@agr.state.vt.us

January 25: *Vermont Sheep & Goat Annual Meeting*, Barre, VT. Info: Dave Major, 802-387-4473 or vtshprd@sover.net

February 4: *New Hampshire Dairy Goat Seminar*, Manchester, NH. Info: 603-225-5505x322

February 6: *Vermont Cheese Council Annual Meeting*, Randolph, VT. Info: Jon Wright, 802-824-5690

February 7: *Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Farm Show Meeting*, Montpelier, VT. Info: Vern Grubinger, 802-257-7967

February 11, 2006: **NOFA-VT's 24th Annual Winter Conference, "Local Energy, Local Economies"**, Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT. Info: 802-434-4122 or www.nofavt.org

February 28- Mar 1: *New England Dairy & Beef Expo*, Champlain Valley Exposition, Essex Jct., VT. Info: Ken Maring, 1-800-218-5586.

March 2-3: **Northeast Sustainable Livestock Conference**, Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, VT. Info: 802-524-6501 or www.nofavt.org

March 9-10: *Cornell University Shearing Schools*, Harford, NY. Info: Doug Rathke, 320-587-6094

April 4-5: *Fifth National IPM Symposium*, St. Louis, MO. Info: www.ipmcenters.org

April 28-29: *Organic Beekeeping Workshop*, Chestnut Ridge, NY. Info: www.pfeiffercenter.org

