



# NOFA Notes

Summer 2016

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The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

## For the Love of Soil

By Jack Lazor, Butterworks Farm

We celebrate forty years on our farm this summer. Four decades of Earth stewardship has taught us many lessons, some easy and obvious—others more difficult and involved. Originally, we bought our farm because we wanted to be self sufficient homesteaders producing everything we needed to sustain ourselves. We soon found out that we needed some income to provide for the other necessities required by the modern world. This meant off farm jobs and some kitchen stove top milk processing of the milk from our two family cows. We began selling a variety of homemade dairy products to our friends and neighbors in 1979. All of a sudden, we were real farmers.

We began cutting hay and growing wheat and barley in 1977. It was also right about this time that I became acquainted with Fred Franklin, a self proclaimed soils guru and soil fertility expert. Fred encouraged me to do some soil testing and much to our surprise, our soils were somewhat balanced and stocked up with essential minerals

all left over from the dairy farmer who had used the land until the year before we bought it. Our first crops were adequate and satisfactory, especially for a couple of beginners who had

never farmed on any scale before.

I remember that my first concepts of soil fertility management were quite limited and rather simplistic. Having grown up with a father who used

5-10-10 and manure on his garden, it all seemed like a depleted bank account to me. How was I going to get enough nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium to meet the needs of my crops when all that I had were a bunch of cow manure paddies scattered throughout our pasture? We wanted to be using organic practices, but were pretty clueless on how to make it happen.

Fred Franklin recommended that I begin subscribing to Acres USA and that I get myself a copy of the Albrecht Papers which I did. Acres was full of stories about larger scale farmers who were successfully using natural practices and no chemicals on their farms. I began to learn about the wonders of soils by reading the essays of William Albrecht. Albrecht was an agronomist and soil scientist at the University of Missouri from the 1920's to the late 1950's. He noticed that the most abundant highly nutritious crops came primarily from the prairies that stretched from the panhandle of Texas to the Dakotas. This is where the



Jack Lazor. Photo by Bethany M. Dunbar

huge herds of bison had roamed north to south and where wheat crops with the highest protein levels were produced. It was also where rainfall and evaporation/transpiration were balanced equally. Soil pH's were in the 6.5 to 7.0 range. Albrecht explained that when one travelled eastward from this area, rainfall began to exceed evaporation and soils became more acid. The reverse happened when one went westward. Evaporation increased as rainfall declined and soils became much more alkaline. Albrecht conducted thousands of soil tests in this high fertility region and determined that these soils had cation (plus charged elements) balances that were all pretty similar. A typical negatively charged soil colloid (particle) was usually "saturated" with 65 to 70% calcium, 15 to 20% magnesium, 5% potassium and much smaller amounts of sodium and hydrogen. He also explained that the soil's acidity or pH depended on how much hydrogen was present on the soil colloid.



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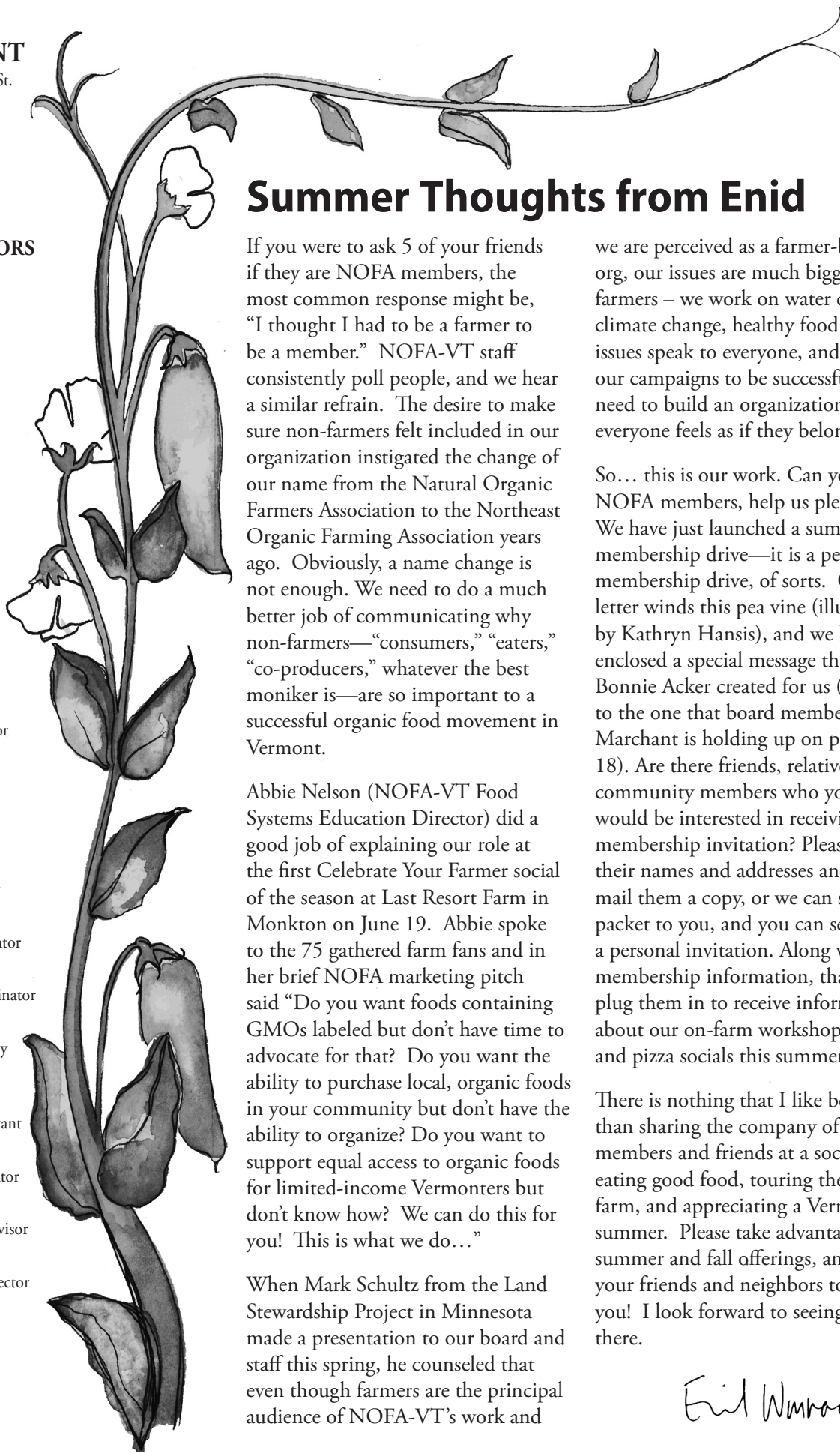
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## Summer Thoughts from Enid

If you were to ask 5 of your friends if they are NOFA members, the most common response might be, “I thought I had to be a farmer to be a member.” NOFA-VT staff consistently poll people, and we hear a similar refrain. The desire to make sure non-farmers felt included in our organization instigated the change of our name from the Natural Organic Farmers Association to the Northeast Organic Farming Association years ago. Obviously, a name change is not enough. We need to do a much better job of communicating why non-farmers—“consumers,” “eaters,” “co-producers,” whatever the best moniker is—are so important to a successful organic food movement in Vermont.

Abbie Nelson (NOFA-VT Food Systems Education Director) did a good job of explaining our role at the first Celebrate Your Farmer social of the season at Last Resort Farm in Monkton on June 19. Abbie spoke to the 75 gathered farm fans and in her brief NOFA marketing pitch said “Do you want foods containing GMOs labeled but don’t have time to advocate for that? Do you want the ability to purchase local, organic foods in your community but don’t have the ability to organize? Do you want to support equal access to organic foods for limited-income Vermonters but don’t know how? We can do this for you! This is what we do...”

When Mark Schultz from the Land Stewardship Project in Minnesota made a presentation to our board and staff this spring, he counseled that even though farmers are the principal audience of NOFA-VT’s work and

we are perceived as a farmer-based org, our issues are much bigger than farmers – we work on water quality, climate change, healthy food – those issues speak to everyone, and for our campaigns to be successful, we need to build an organization where everyone feels as if they belong.

So... this is our work. Can you, our NOFA members, help us please? We have just launched a summer membership drive—it is a pea-themed membership drive, of sorts. On the letter winds this pea vine (illustrated by Kathryn Hansis), and we have enclosed a special message that artist Bonnie Acker created for us (similar to the one that board member David Marchant is holding up on page 18). Are there friends, relatives or community members who you think would be interested in receiving a membership invitation? Please send us their names and addresses and we can mail them a copy, or we can send the packet to you, and you can send them a personal invitation. Along with membership information, that will plug them in to receive information about our on-farm workshop series and pizza socials this summer and fall.

There is nothing that I like better than sharing the company of NOFA members and friends at a social, eating good food, touring the host farm, and appreciating a Vermont summer. Please take advantage of our summer and fall offerings, and invite your friends and neighbors to join you! I look forward to seeing you there.





This information was all brand new to me and it was the beginning of my quest to balance the minerals in the soils on our farm. I bought my own soil testing kit and began using soil testing labs that used the base saturation method of soil testing. I found that our soils here on our hill top farm were low in magnesium and potassium. I also discovered a commercially available mineral called langbenite or sulfate of potash magnesia commonly known as sul-po-mag. With a chemical formula of 0-0-22-11, this crystalline mineral fertilizer from Carlsbad, New Mexico provided potassium, magnesium and sulfur to my soils and crops. Of course, cost was an issue. Soil tests indicated that we needed about 500 pounds to the acre of the material to achieve the proper balance. In our early days on the farm cash was tight and we could only afford 100 pounds to the acre.

Things changed once we got a Vermont milk handlers license in 1984. All of a

sudden, we had more disposable income from selling our yogurt in stores statewide. We invested heavily in minerals for our land and the payback was almost immediate. Clovers and other legumes increased in our hayfields along with the yields. The health and general well being of our tiny herd of cows increased as

well. All of a sudden animals were being bred on time. Milk production increased. This was such a revelation to me. I very quickly realized that balanced mineral inputs do not cost—they actually pay.

Thus began my love affair with soil. All I needed to do was to take care of it and it took care of us. Shortly after this, we bought and applied an entire hopper train car load of hard rock phosphate from Florida. Our farm was stocked up on minerals. As legumes increased in our pastures and hay fields, the accompanying grasses began to thrive from the surplus nitrogen fixed by the clovers and vetch. Our fields had tripled in feed quality and output. As a result, we were able to grow our herd. Cow numbers began to climb because reproduction was improved along with increased forage quantity and quality. The resulting milk from our cows had a high brix level and was naturally sweet tasting. This in turn was transformed into wonder-

ful yogurt loved by all of our customers. Income from yogurt sales bought us more fertility and improved our farm. All in all, it was a win win situation.

We laid the foundations of our soil improvement program back in the 80's. Since then, we have practiced the power of observation along with resulting management tweaks. This is the beauty of farming a piece of ground over an extended period of time. We try new things based on what we notice going on out there. Some experiments are successful and become standard operating practices for us while others are not. Over the years, we have begun to learn about other aspects of soil health and fertility. Physical properties like soil structure have improved along with a more diverse soil biology. The three main aspects of soil—the chemical, the physical and the biological—are all intertwined and mutually dependent. Better structure means less compaction and better drainage. Humus and organic matter have increased to the 9% level here on our farm which means that we can sustain a drought much better these days. High and diverse levels of microbes—fungi, bacteria and millions of other organisms have created an on-farm nitrogen cycle that has eliminated the need for nitrogen inputs of any sort. We simply provide the microbes with the right amount and balance of minerals and they take care of the rest.

These basic tenets of soil care have stood by us for three decades or more. As the years and seasons have passed by, we continue

*Soil, continued on page 5*

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## A Warm Welcome to Our New Staff Member

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*We are excited to welcome Stephanie Eiring, VOF Certification Specialist (Dairy, Livestock, & Field Crop)*

Stephanie came to Vermont in 2004 to attend the University of Vermont where she earned her Bachelors of Science in Environmental Science in 2008. She then continued to study at Vermont Law School where she earned a Master of Environmental Law and Policy in 2009. After interning for Rural Vermont during her time at VLS, she recognized that she had a passion for agricultural law and policy and working for organizations that support farmers. After finishing her graduate studies, she took a part-time “summer job” on an organic dairy farm in Addison County and has never looked back. Stephanie has spent the last 7 years working for various Vermont non-profit organizations and organic dairy farms in Vermont. She now owns and operates a raw milk micro-dairy and diversified farm on her family’s homestead in Bakersfield and is excited to bring her experience and knowledge to NOFA-VT.

# Jon Turner: Working for Wild Roots Farm and the Farmer Veteran Coalition

By Rachel Fussell, NOFA Vermont Farmer Education Coordinator

Jon Turner, of Wild Roots Farm in Bristol, did not grow up on a farm or even intend to become a farmer, but that hasn't stopped him from nurturing his own forest farm by growing food using regenerative practices on his land. In addition to his hopes to grow food for his community while restoring the soil, he also aspires to help fellow veterans by providing educational opportunities and mentoring services on his farm with the help of the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Vermont.

Jon grew up in Connecticut, and joined the United States Marines at the tender age of 18. Over the next three years he was deployed three times, once to Haiti and twice to Iraq. In total, he spent 14 months serving in a war zone during the Iraq War. During this time he suffered two traumatic brain injuries while on duty and was honorably discharged in order to recover from his injuries sustained during his tour.

Unfortunately, the military at this time did not offer the services that a 22 year old with PTSD needed, and Jon's transition from service to civilian life was difficult. He eventually found his way to Vermont, and began to find a sense of place through the community. He met his wife and together they had their first experience growing food by tending a community garden plot. The garden plot grew in size each year and the act of gardening and nurturing the plants also helped him work through his experiences of war.

Jon realized that his garden offered him

exactly what he was missing: an opportunity to create life, and to leave a place better than before. His gardening hobby blossomed into a full time endeavor when he and his wife purchased their land in Bristol, a two and half acre parcel for their forest farm site, and a 10 acre homestead.

They spent the next two years improving the soil on their property by planting buckwheat and clover in rotation with the idea of feeding the soil, rather than the crop. Their hard work and patience paid off in the form of 6-8 inches of newly formed organic matter. They decided it was time to begin their forest farm.



*"I didn't grow up farming, but I've always had an appreciation for growing food. One of my earliest memories was seeing big fields of food; watching the fields of corn grow and seeing it sway in the wind. That's what drew me to agriculture and farming—if you are farming, you're nurturing life."*

*- Jon Turner*

fields, while also taking into careful consideration the waste products. The large, nicer logs were used for mushroom production while the branches and other forest debris was used to form hugelkul-



Jon Turner and his family work on raising a barn at their farm in Bristol.

tur mounds (a permaculture technique of using logs, branches and soil to create a raised bed) that would continue to store and sequester carbon and grow more food for his family and community, instead of releasing it into the atmosphere by burning. Once the land was cleared and waste products utilized, Jon planted 150 trees on contour to create a silvopasture for their pastured animals using four varieties of trees, including black locust, black maple, sugar maple and elderberry, and intercropped oats and peas as fodder for their sheep.

Jon and his family are building a life around the farm, continuing to work on the difficulties that accompany veterans after a war, and working to regenerate their land. Jon started this ambitious undertaking without a mentor or a family farming background. He learned from reading books and attending classes after his military service ended. Now Jon wants to offer more to his fellow veterans: to introduce farming as a livelihood and as a way of coping with the transition back into civilian life. Since 2013 he has been working with the National Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) by providing feedback, attending meetings and speaking at events. The Farmer Veteran Coalition is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to cultivate a generation of new farmers and food leaders, and develop viable employment and meaningful careers



Jon Turner, continued from previous page

through the collaboration of the farming and military communities. He gradually rose to become the chapter chair when the national coalition created a Vermont Chapter in 2014.

Jon is working to help other veterans in Vermont who are either interested in beginning to farm, or are already farming and seeking support. His goal is to help provide mentorship on veteran farms, educational opportunities on his farm,

and community space for every veteran interested in farming. Jon believes that we need more farmers, that veterans possess the necessary skills to create a sustainable food system, and that agriculture offers purpose, opportunity and physical and psychological benefits that the veteran community needs. ✨

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Join Jon Turner and the Farmer Veteran Coalition this summer during the NOFA-VT On-Farm Workshop Series. Jon will be presenting a workshop on Small-scale Regenerative Agriculture and Forest Farming at his farm, Wild Roots Farm, in Bristol. There will also be a NOFAvore Pizza Social hosted at Meadowdale Farm in Putney, a veteran run farm, in partnership with the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Vermont. More information is at [nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops](http://nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops), or call (802) 434-4122.

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Soil, continued from page 3

to learn more about the nuances of Earth care and soil health. We have refined our animal housing situation into a straw based bedding pack that has allowed us to compost our entire winter's worth of manure. We have learned the importance of carbon in the equation by using what many others would consider an inordinate amount of bedding under our cows. Hardwood bark has been added to the bedding pack to promote the fungal side of our compost mix. Compost is spread in September when the ground is good and firm and there is still time for the earth below to assimilate its goodness. Soluble minerals like sul-po-mag, potassium sulfate, copper, zinc, manganese and boron are spread in the early spring and are buffered by the presence of soil carbon from the previous year's compost. At times, we have added soluble calcium to the mix in the form of gypsum or cement kiln dust. And last, but not least, we have begun a crop spraying program with fish, sea minerals, molasses, humates and minor essential minerals like cobalt, molybdenum and selenium. Miniscule doses of these trace minerals promote increased photosynthesis because they are all enzyme cofactors in the process.

I find that I may have taken my love of soils, crops and animals to a level well beyond where others would feel comfortable. My manic behavior is certainly not for everyone, but I will say that everything that I have done and achieved has been worth it. The payback has been immense. I see it every time I walk in a forage field or feed hay to my cows. We have diversity of species, high energy and high protein. We have been able to stop feeding grain to our cows because we have attained these high levels of forage quality. Having been both a dairy and a grain farmer for the past forty years, I have also come to realize that we have done a much better job building soil carbon and health on our forage fields as opposed to our distant grain fields which have seen a lot of tillage. This opens doors into developing organic no-till grain systems that we hope will work for us in the future.

Organic agriculture is all about soil first and foremost. Thankfully, I've had a continuing relationship with the Earth that I steward for the last forty years. I hope that I get a few more years "on the land" and having fun farming. The greatest lesson that I have learned in all this time is that the Earth comes first. Be generous in your

dealings with Mother Earth. Be a giver instead of a taker. You will be paid back in interest many times over if you love the land and do right by it. Everyone's situation is different. However, we all need to do whatever we can to build our own farm organism and remove as much carbon from the sky as we can and lock it up in the ground as soil humus. This will help everyone in a world whose climate seems to be much more fickle than ever before in our living memories. Good luck in your pursuits of regenerative agriculture. ✨

Jack & Anne Lazor farm at Butterworks Farm in Westfield. He is the author of *The Organic Grain Grower*.



NOFA-VT summer interns practice stretching doughs to make pizza. Interns Grace Butler, Arianna Matthews-Salzman, Chloe Kidder and Katie Cuthbert are working on a number of projects this summer - gardening with kids, communications, price studies at farmers markets, and helping to make pizza at our events!



# 2016 On-Farm Workshops & Pizza Socials

By Grace Butler, NOFA Vermont summer marketing intern

From up in Alburgh to down in Putney and out in Greensboro, NOFA Vermont is offering our On Farm Workshops and Pizza Socials all over this good-looking state of ours. These workshops, taking place throughout the summer and into September, consist of a wide variety of learning opportunities for farmers and eaters. Our Pizza Socials are events meant to bring together any, and all, community members to celebrate local farmers whilst dining on handmade pizza from our very own traveling oven. Whether you're a seasoned agriculturalist, new gardener, lifelong learner or just hungry – we've got an event, hosted on a beautiful farm, for you to attend.

This year's workshops include a series on local wheat production, processing, and

harvest that culminates in a baking class with King Arthur Flour in Norwich. We have workshops to educate you on tomatoes, berries, forest farming, brassicas, pollinators and more. You can bolster your business skills in Danville and Putney. Without a doubt, make sure to join us at the Farm to Ballet in Manchester and the Farmer Olympics in Vershire. Please, join us in celebration of the Vermont food system and the people who make it work. Attend one of our workshops to make that system even richer.

**More information and registration is at [www.nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops](http://www.nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops). We'll see you on the farm!** ✨



Photos from 2015. Above: John Hayden talked with workshop participants about "Emerging New Fruits" before giving a tour of his Farm Between in Cambridge. Left: Charlie Nardozi taught a workshop in Woodstock on "Cover Crops for Gardeners & Homesteaders". Bottom left: Ripe and delicious organic blueberries photographed at a "Celebrate Your Farmer" Pizza Social at Adam's Berry Farm in Charlotte. Below: Enid Wonnacott, NOFA-VT's executive director, fires hot, delicious, pizzas made with farm-fresh ingredients at a pizza event!





# Hemp: Pot of Gold?

*This article is contributed by Joel T. Bedard, Founder and CEO, The Vermont Hemp Company*

As of the 2014 season, it has been legal to varying degrees for individuals in Vermont to cultivate hemp, whether it is a few plants in your backyard garden, or a multi-acre commercial install. The process to gain state compliance is simple—a \$25 annual permit that relies upon your signature as assurance of compliance with the simple rule that your hemp has no THC (<0.3%), the psychoactive cannabinoid in recreational and medical Cannabis. Federal compliance is another question altogether, as the 2014 Federal Agricultural Appropriations Bill (co-written by US Senator Patrick Leahy) allows for the cultivation of hemp—for research purposes. Section 7606 explicitly states that said research must be in accordance with either a state-sponsored pilot program; or in affiliation with an academic institution. For Vermonters, that means that, unless you are a part of limited ongoing studies at UVM, your hemp field does not have federal farm bill compliance. The State of Vermont's Secretary of Agriculture has publicly stated that he does not see hemp as a commodity crop for Vermont and as such has balked at assigning anything but nominal resources to the Hemp Registry Program.

The long and the short of it is that cultivating hemp in Vermont is not without that risk factor. The reality is that there are dozens of individuals in Vermont that are eschewing federal compliance, paying for a \$25 fee to the Agency of Ag and growing hemp anyways. It is a calculated risk, in that the Federal Omnibus Budget prohibits the DoJ/DEA from spending financial resources to interdict legitimate hemp cultivation. A governmental gray area? Shocking.

And so, with all of that said, what is the big deal about hemp? Is it worth it? Yes. It is, or at least can be. The 3 primary uses for hemp are fiber, food and 'medicine'. Fiber for feed, hempcrete and fiberboard as well as biofuels; hempseed as a nutritious superfood that yields high grade seed oil, nut meat and even such things as hemp milk from the vegetation. And for the truly invested, cannabinoid extractions for CBD oil. Any of these individual or combined uses for hemp more than offer a return on investment. Imagine a plant that can clean your soil, sequester carbon, requires little fertilizer and far less watering than a standard crop. It grows so aggressively that it out-competes weeds and can be installed at rates from 1 plant to 400 plants per square meter. And imagine that same plant generating equivalent fiber on 1 acre in a single season to 4+ acres of 20-yr old trees. The question is often posed, "What can't hemp do?"



Is hemp for you? It can be. A number of us are diligently working to develop a new approach to agriculture, focusing upon hemp. Our goal is to integrate contemporary theory with lost knowledge—an 80 year absence of a plant upon which our nation was founded and wars were won. ✨



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# Musical Headliners Shine at SolarFest in Manchester, Vermont July 15th & 16th

Top musical performers, many in their only Vermont appearance this summer, will brighten up two SolarFest stages at the beautiful 120-acre Southern Vermont Art Center campus in Manchester. The 2016 SolarFest Sunrise Celebration will feature headline performers Dar Williams, Donna the Buffalo, and Marcia Ball, along with other nationally and internationally acclaimed artists - The House Jacks, Sister Carol - and local favorites Madaila, Freddy Shehadi, and Wild Adriatic. The lineup reflects SolarFest's usual eclectic mix of rock, folk, blues, reggae, fusion. Pitch Blak, a hip-hop brass band from Brooklyn, and a jazz/world music quartet stopping at SolarFest on their way to tour in Asia, blood drum spirit, ensure that there will be something to delight everyone. In all, 14 world-class acts will perform on two

solar-powered stages: the Arkell Pavilion, with 400 indoor seats plus lawn seating, and the outdoor Equinox Stage on the natural amphitheater of Mount Equinox. SolarFest also continues its tradition of presenting new talent in its Singer-Songwriter Showcase of ten excellent emerging artists.

About SolarFest – [www.solarfest.org](http://www.solarfest.org)  
SolarFest is proud of its reputation as New England's most entertaining solar-powered energy and music festival. Exploring and enjoying new and different music has been central to SolarFest for over two decades. SolarFest's new home at SVAC demonstrates our continued commitment to high quality, and accessible, music and art. The 2016 Sunrise Celebration will continue this blend of music, art, and education, outstand-

ing speakers, excellent food, and a safe, family-friendly environment offering camping, theater, exhibits, dancing, and the most interesting conversations.

Since its inception in 1995, SolarFest promotes artistic excellence and community-building while providing both general and detailed information on a wide range of sustainable living topics. The mission of this 501(c)3 non-profit corporation is quite simple, and vital: SolarFest connects people, the arts, ideas and technology, fostering partnerships to create a vibrant present and a sustainable future.

Tickets are now on sale, including discounted one and two-day passes and camping, at [www.solarfest.org](http://www.solarfest.org). ✨

**July 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>**  
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# NOFA Summer Conference

August 12-14 in Amherst, MA

Join people from across the Northeast and beyond for a three-day celebration of the grassroots organic movement. The NOFA Summer Conference is a collaborative event of the seven Northeast NOFA chapters, organized by NOFA/Mass. Here, learning is a community action – with amazing farmers, presenters, seminars, workshops, food and fun. Immerse yourself with like-minded practitioners and curious learners eager to share their inspiration and ideas for organic food, farming, health, activism, and beyond.



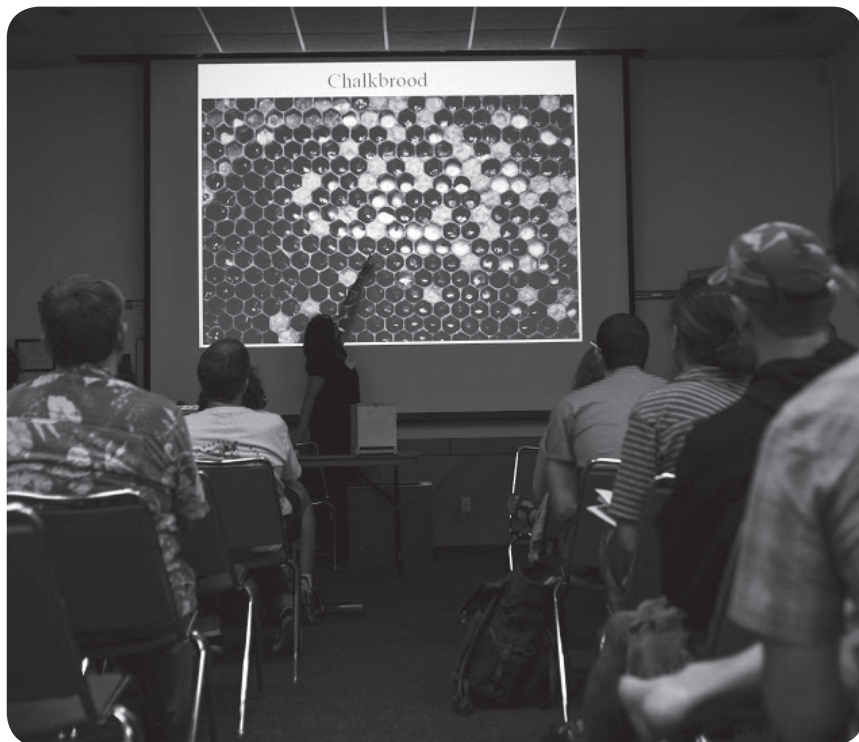
Young people can build their organic vision for the future at the children and teens conferences.

This year's keynote speakers bring a passion for solutions – Leah Penniman, food justice activist and farmer at Soul Fire Farm, and André Leu, international organic agronomist and President of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements.

We want as many as possible to be able to attend, regardless of income! Work exchange and scholarship opportunities are available, as are discounts for groups of five or more and multiple children from the same family. ✨

**NOFA-VT members receive 20% off!**

For more information, visit [www.nofasummerconference.org](http://www.nofasummerconference.org)





# Vermont Open Farm Week 2016

Farmers across Vermont will throw open their barn doors and garden gates to welcome the public for a behind-the-scenes look at Vermont's vibrant working landscape. Vermont's Open Farm Week will be held Monday, August 15 – Sunday, August 21, 2016.

Open Farm Week is a weeklong celebration of Vermont farms. Over 100 farms are participating, many of whom are not usually open to the public. Open Farm Week offers Vermonters and visitors alike educational opportunities to learn more about local food origins, authentic agritourism experiences, and the chance to build relationships with local farmers. Activities vary

and may include milking cows and goats, harvesting vegetables, collecting eggs, tasting farm fresh food, scavenger hunts, hayrides, farm dinners, and live music.

Visit DigInVT for a map of participating farms by region. Many events are free and costs vary depending on what activities are offered. Everyone is invited to join the #VTOpenFarm conversations on social media. All participating farms, geographic location, and offerings are at [www.DigInVT.com](http://www.DigInVT.com). ✨



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Golden Russet Farm, Shoreham

photo by J.Silverman

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| Goats' Milk                           | Barley                  |
| Single-Source Cottage Cheese          | Buckwheat               |
| Grocery                               | Rolled Oats             |
| Beet Sugar                            | Meats                   |
| Nuts (black walnuts, hazelberts, etc) | Buffalo                 |
| Flour Tortillas                       | Duck                    |

For a full list, visit [www.citymarket.coop/local-product-gaps](http://www.citymarket.coop/local-product-gaps) or contact Lynn Ellen Schimoler, Assistant Director of Operations-Retail at 802-861-9751 or [lynnellen@citymarket.coop](mailto:lynnellen@citymarket.coop).



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# Happy Birthday, NOFA Pizza Oven!

By Maria Buteux Reade for NOFA Notes, Summer 2016

What's ten years old, weighs 4,000 pounds, and travels the state spreading yeasty, cheesy love? Sounds like a graphic novel in the making...

If you've attended the annual Winter Conference at the UVM campus, then you've probably seen Enid Wonnacott happily tending her beloved pizza oven, warmed by her ski cap and whatever heat emanates from the fire within the oven's blackened dome. Since everyone stops by for a slice of fortification on the way to or from a workshop, Enid can spend the day reconnecting with friends new and old.

The NOFA-VT mobile pizza oven is Enid's love child, a project she nurtured from concept to reality in 2006. Recognizing how food brings people together and can initiate conversations about local and organic, Enid applied for a SARE (Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education) grant that would help fund the oven. A mobile oven was essential as it would allow representatives from NOFA-VT to travel around to fairs, festivals, and farmer socials, fire up the oven, and crank out pizzas made primarily with ingredients sourced from local farms and producers.

"The oven makes NOFA a visible presence statewide and allows us to connect with people in their communities. At farmers markets, we purchase toppings from the vendors, and at festivals and farmer socials, we feature the veggies, meats and fruits of the host farm," Enid explained. While most of us now take eating and sourcing locally for granted, that was a new mindset for many people back in 2006. "This project helped introduce eaters to the farms, foods, and flavors of their communities," she added.

The Maine Wood Heat Company constructed the oven in 2006. The two ton behemoth is built onto a permanent trailer which can be easily pulled by any Vermont-worthy pickup truck. White earthen tiles form the floor of the well insulated oven, and it takes two hours for a clean burning wood fire to heat the interior space to 800 degrees. At that temperature, a thin crust pizza will bake in about three minutes!

A number of people have enhanced their pizza-making chops over the past decade, thanks to the oven. The basic routine goes like this: Arrive at least two hours before the event starts. Start the fire. Organize the equipment and coolers of ingredients. Divide the dough (usually made earlier that morning) into baseball-size portions. While the dough proofs, set up the tent and arrange the cooking station. Volunteers arrive to prep veggies and grate cheese. As the event starts, the crew begins to stretch the dough balls into rounds and load on the prepared toppings. The pizza maestro slides a 10 inch round pie into the

blistering oven and removes a bubbling, fragrant beauty a few minutes later.

The scene draws people in: tables laden with luscious, chopped veggies; the aroma of pizza or other wood-roasted delights, the overall festive ambience. Conversation ensues as they wait patiently for the next pizza to emerge. Which farms provided the toppings? What are the most popular combinations? Ever try kale, apple, and sausage? Or roasted beets, a NOFA favorite?



Outdoor cooks learn to prepare for the unexpected. Tucker Levy, pizza master for the last two years, explained that inclement weather can add a whole level of complication. "Since we're outside, cooking in the rain can be a mess. If the flour gets wet on the table, that impacts how the pizza will behave in the oven. If it's windy, the oven doesn't burn as efficiently. Anyone who bakes knows that temperature and humidity can affect how dough proofs. And we never know exactly how many people will show up at an event which makes it challenging to portion the ingredients. But that all adds to the magic of the experience because somehow, it always works out!"

This summer, the NOFA oven will be on the road once again. Check out the NOFA website for dates of farmer socials and workshops. If interested in hiring the oven and a small crew for a special event, contact Enid at [enid@nofavt.org](mailto:enid@nofavt.org) or (802) 434-4122 for pricing details. "We'll bring everything needed. Although pizza is our most popular item, we can cook anything in our oven, from roasted root vegetables, bread, meats, etc..." Sounds like a party in the making, thanks to a ten year old, two ton star of the road! ✨

# Ask Callie

## Dear Callie,

I have heard that on top of all of the current records and requirements of the organic program that I also need to manage and conserve biodiversity on my farm. What does this mean? I am a small scale vegetable producer and due to the size of my operation, I inherently encourage biodiversity. What are these new requirements regarding biodiversity and where is this new emphasis coming from?

Sincerely,  
Polli Nator

## Dear Polli,

At the beginning of 2016, the National Organic Program (NOP), responding to a recommendation of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), published a guidance document that clarifies how organic farmers must maintain or improve the natural resources of their farm including soil, water, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife and conserve biodiversity.



There was no new language added to the regulations, instead the NOP provided examples of how organic farmers are expected to manage and conserve the natural resources and biodiversity on their farms. The guidance also laid out the responsibility of the certifier to verify that farmers are meeting these standards.

Why is biodiversity important? Biodiversity is a founding principle of organic farming. Organic producers strive to work with nature in order to benefit from its inherent balance. For example, organic producers are required by the NOP rule to rotate crops in order to prevent pests from accumulating in one production area. In addition, organic producers plant native vegetation to provide habitat for beneficial insects and birds that lessens their need to control pests with harmful pesticides. Even some pesticides used on organic farms are considered “broad spectrum” and will reduce populations of beneficial insects and honeybees.

The organic regulations are not static and the organic community is constantly being pushed to make improvements to our practices. This clarification on biodiversity will push farmers to think hard about the practices used on their farms and what they can improve. Making simple changes can have big impacts on biodiversity. For example, mowing fields starting from the center of the field and moving outward can help flush out wildlife. Leaving a strip of alfalfa unmowed can help provide habitat

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for beneficial insects. Providing birds habitat in hedge rows can help reduce insect populations. Providing “escape ramps” in water troughs can help trapped rodents, birds and other wildlife escape drowning. All of these simple practices can allow your organic farm to do its part to preserve and improve biodiversity.

For some this will require a shift in how we think about what a farm should look like. Perhaps letting go of the image of a tidy and perfectly mowed farmstead will help us see how creating additional habitat for wildlife can be beautiful in its own right.

Organic farmers everywhere should expect to hear more about biodiversity over the next few years. This growing season in Vermont, organic inspectors will begin to discuss with farmers practices they are already implementing that encourage biodiversity and natural resource conservation. In the future, organic producers will be expected to articulate the practices on their farm that support the general natural resources conservation and biodiversity requirement and will be evaluated on whether their farming practices avoid, to the extent practical, any activities that would diminish it.

Yours truly,  
Callie



# Summer Policy Update

By Maddie Monty, NOFA Vermont Policy Advisor

**NOFA-VT in Washington** - NOFA-VT is an active member of the National Organic Coalition (NOC), a national alliance of organizations working to provide a voice in Washington for farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, consumers and industry members involved in organic agriculture.


On June 15th, as part of NOC's annual DC fly-in, I met with agriculture staffers from Senators Sanders', Senator Leahy's, and Congressman Welch's offices to discuss policy issues impacting organic farmers. We talked about the need for more targeted federal funding dedicated to organic research – a critical aspect of improving organic farmers' success rates and meeting the growing demand for organic products. We discussed the need to reinvigorate our dwindling public plant and animal breeding programs, which provide organic farmers with regionally adapted seeds and breeds that truly thrive in their particular environments. As we've done in the past, we once again emphasized the problem of GMO contamination of organic crops – an issue

that has gone unaddressed by USDA, and which new survey data proves is a real and costly problem for organic farmers. Finally, we asked our delegates to ensure that the public process around the USDA's recent Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule be allowed to move forward, despite opposition from some who would like to see the rule blocked and animal welfare standards under organic stagnate.

Each year, NOC's fly-in serves as a poignant reminder of the power of collective action and collaboration for the organic community when we embrace the inevitable points of divergence both within and outside our ranks.

**That's Not Natural** - Earlier this year, the FDA gathered public input on how and whether the term "natural" should be used on food labels. Survey data from Consumer Reports has shown that consumers are thoroughly confused about what "natural" really means – and for good reason. Most consumers believe the term



"natural" indicates that food is produced without pesticides, artificial ingredients, colors, or preservatives, or genetically modified organisms – all understandable interpretations of the phrase. In fact, most consumers view the terms "natural" and "organic" as largely synonymous when it comes to food labels. However, unlike organic, the term "natural" has little to no regulatory meaning or oversight by the USDA or FDA. Therefore, we requested that FDA use its authority to ban the use of the term "natural" under the false and misleading labeling provisions of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. In the absence of a ban, we support defining the term through formal rulemaking to make the term consistent with consumer expectations. What does "natural" mean to you? Email your thoughts and questions to [maddie@nofavt.org](mailto:maddie@nofavt.org) 

## Promoting Our Working Landscape

### New resources for "rural enterprise" development available

NOFA-VT has recently released a collection of resources for farmers and communities about land use issues for rural enterprises. Rural enterprises are businesses, often on farms, that are suited to a rural area because they are supportive of agriculture or forestry activities and provide employment opportunities.


"Understanding land use issues and how they pertain to farm businesses can be very complex," said Erin Buckwalter, NOFA-VT's Market Development Director. "These documents provide an overview of many of the issues farms and communities may encounter, as well as resources for more in-depth information."

The overview document for farmers

outlines a myriad of the land use topics and resources they should be aware of when making business decisions related to their business' land use. Additionally, two case studies of farms that have dealt with these questions are provided to share how two different farms and communities have addressed these challenges. There is also a document primarily for municipalities, which provides steps that can be taken to support and manage rural enterprises within their communities.

"At a time where many farms and communities are facing challenges around these issues, we hope this resource collection will inspire people to work together to find common solutions that promote our working landscape," Buckwalter said.



These resources were developed in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, the Vermont Natural Resources Council, Shelburne Farms and the Farm-Based Education Network. 

Read and download the documents on the NOFA Vermont website: <http://nofavt.org/resources/rural-enterprises-information>

# Easy Cheesecake Ice Cream

- 12 oz neufchâtel cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup sour cream, room temp
- Seeds from 1 vanilla bean
- 1 cup half & half, room temp
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1-2 cups shortbread or graham cracker crumbs, to taste

1. Using paddle attachment in stand mixer, mix the neuf-châtel cheese on medium speed until very smooth. Slowly add the sugar and salt while mixing continuously until fully incorporated. Add the sour cream and vanilla seeds and mix until fully incorporated. Slowly add the half & half and mix until smooth. Remove bowl from mixer and stir in the lemon zest. Cover and refrigerate until very cold (anywhere from 2 hours to overnight).

2. When ready, pour into ice cream machine and freeze according to machine's instructions. Meanwhile, make a layer of shortbread



or graham cracker crumbs in the container you'll be using to freeze the ice cream.

3. Once the ice cream is ready- it will be soft and creamy- transfer some of the ice cream to the container and spread it out over the crumbs. Repeat layering crumbs and ice cream until done.

4. Cover and freeze until firm. Top with fresh berries and devour!

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This recipe is provided courtesy of VOF Certification Program Assistant, Erin McGuire.

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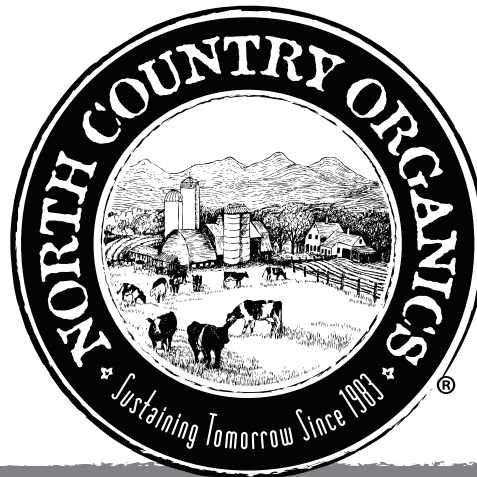


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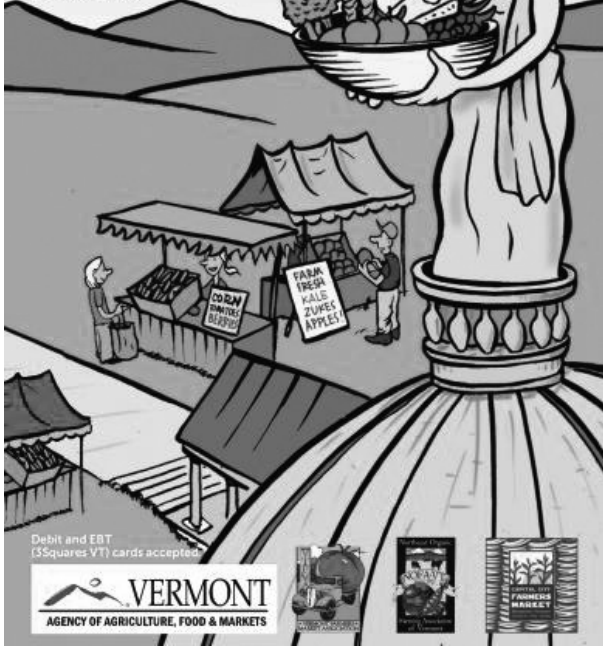
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# Grain Growing in the Northeast

By Grace Butler, NOFA Vermont summer marketing intern

In early winter in Walla Walla, Washington the wheat farmers don't have much to do out on their land. Harvest is over and planting feels far away. Long breakfasts are held in town at various cafés and diners. I was seated close to two older gentlemen, who donned matching suspenders, on a gray morning. They were heatedly arguing over tilling practices and I, being far from interested in my reading material, listened to a debate on farming methods. Wheat farming is a way of life in Walla Walla. Farms are handed down generationally and with each generation comes fresh arguments, values and ideas on the best way to work the land. Vermont's agrarian identity isn't quickly linked to the cultivation of grains in most peoples' minds, but we do have an agricultural history beyond dairy, syrup and sheep. While wheat and grain farming isn't as prevalent here as it is in Walla Walla, conversations about method are taking place in the Northeast as they are in Washington. Some conversations are questioning if we need to be making bread with wheat from places as far away as Walla Walla.

*At each workshop, a grain snack will be provided to participants, baked in NOFA's oven with the help of King Arthur Flour bakers.*



NOFA has four On Farm Workshops this summer and early fall that are focused on local grain farming. These workshops follow something of a progression throughout the summer. The first, which happened on June 21st, was led by farmers Nathan and Jessie Rogers on their land in the Dog River Valley. The focus was on starting a grain farm and business, equipment sourcing and sustainable practices.

On the 28th of June was NOFA's 2016 Grain Research Tour. This was a tour of many different plots of wheat, barley, oats and other grains. It included an in-depth discussion on grain farming methods and practices including biocontrol and weed control specific to certain crops. It also addressed challenges specific to grain farmers in the Northeast and ways in which to respond to these challenges.

Red Hen Bakery Supplier, Loic Dewavrin, will give a tour of his farm in Quebec on the 13th of July. He will speak on his own methods of organic wheat production and what goes into making quality flour. Finally, on September 9th, comes the fruition of all of this incredible labor. Join NOFA and King Arthur Flour in Norwich to bake beautiful bread with Northeastern wheat in King Arthur Flour's outdoor wood fired oven. Participants will be taught about the differences between baking with local flours

and commercially made flours. This bread making workshop will be perfect for someone who is hoping to learn more about baking with their own grains, or with locally produced grain. Farmers, bakers and flour makers alike should consider coming to Norwich to take part in the creation and consumption of a food so essential to our society.

When we gather around food, we gather around grains. They are in our breads, our comfort foods and our drafts. We make all of those things quite well up here in the Northeast. There is a place in Vermont for the growth of grains. Join NOFA, King Arthur Flour and our gracious host farms to learn how you can take part in that growth. Until then, we wish you to be well fed, hopefully with ample butter, and warm bread. ✨

---

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*NOFA welcomes the following members who recently joined us, as well as the following businesses for their ongoing support. Thank you for supporting Vermont organic agriculture!*

## New NOFA Vermont Members

- Tori Ames, Hancock, NH
- John (Andy) Andrew, JASA Farm, Newport, VT
- Eric Bean, MacBain Homestead, West Danville, VT
- Wendy Buhner, Wood Heart Farm, Wells River, VT
- Chandler Bullard, Bean Mountain Maple, Hyde Park, VT
- Henry Carr, Riversong Farm, South Newfane, VT
- Larissa Cleary, Airmont, NY
- Ryan Demarest, Naked Acre Farm, Waterbury Center, VT
- JoAnne Dennee, Charlotte, VT
- Stefan Faville, Burlington, VT
- Josh Fitzhugh, Tether Loop Farm LLC, Berlin, VT
- Leslie & Robert Gensburg, E Burke, VT
- Lorelei Westbrook, Giddings Hill Forest Products, Enosburg Falls, VT
- Rick Marsh, Marsh Family Sugarworks, Jeffersonville, VT
- Kris Mitchell, Oxbow Maple, LLC, Meredith, NH
- Diane Parton, Brattleboro, VT
- Gary Rapanotti, Hawks Mountain Sugarhouse, Springfield, VT
- Matt Reeve, Kirby, VT
- Sara Rutter, Honolulu, HI
- Alyson Smith, Cricketslopefarm, Danby, VT
- Ginny & Harold Welch, Heavenbound Farm, Bridport, VT
- Doug Wighton, Minister Maple, Franklin, VT
- Ben Williams, Moo Acres, Fairfield, VT

## New & Renewing Business Members

- Albert Lea Seed House, Albert Lea, MN
- American Flatbread, Waitsfield, VT
- Bellows Falls Farmers' Market, Swanzey, NH
- Bingham Farm, Fountain Hills, AZ
- Blair Farm Maple Products, Richford, VT
- Brookwood Community Farm, Milton, MA
- Dealer.com, Burlington, VT
- Essex Farm, Essex, NY
- Footprint Farm LLC, Bristol, VT
- Golden Well Farm and Apiary, New Haven, VT
- Goss Farms, Rutland, VT
- Hanover Co-op Food Stores, Hanover, NH
- Hazen Monument Farm, East Hardwick, VT
- Hollow Hill Farm, S Royalton, VT
- King Arthur Baker's Catalogue, Norwich, VT
- Kreher Enterprises, LLC, Clarence, NY
- Myers Produce, Hardwick, VT
- North Spore LLC, Westbrook, ME
- Northshire Grows, Peru, VT
- Northwoods Maples, Derby, VT
- Orchard Valley Waldorf School, E Montpelier, VT
- PHS City Harvest Program, Philadelphia, PA
- Plainfield Co-op, Plainfield, VT
- Putney Farmers Market, Putney, VT
- Shadow Creek Farm, Milton, VT
- Ski Hearth Farm, Sugar Hill, NH
- TAM Organics, Shaftsbury, VT
- UVM Medical Center FM, Burlington, VT
- VBW Inc., Colchester, VT
- Vermont Land Trust, Montpelier, VT
- Willow Brook Farm, West Danville, VT
- Willsboro Farm, Willsboro, NY

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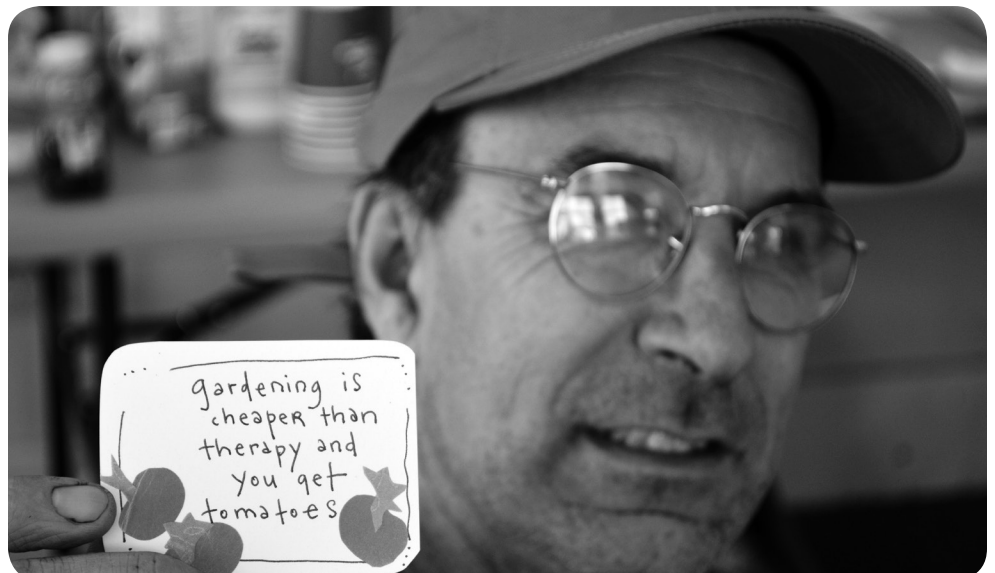
- City Market, \$5,135.10 from Rally for Change to support NOFA Vermont's work for local food systems
- Will Rapp, \$1,000 to support the organic medicinal herb education and certification in Vermont
- Vermont Coffee Company, \$400 to support NOFA Vermont's Farm to Community Mentor Program
- Green Mountain Feeds \$500
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture \$1,500

The following businesses have donated financial support for the Organic Dairy Study:

- Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative \$1,000

## Program grants

- Vermont Community Foundation from the Hills and Hollows Fund advised by Thomas P. Johnson, \$5,000 to support regional agriculture education including curriculum development, expansion of the Oral History Project, outreach to non-school based programs, and the annual Agricultural Literacy Week
- The John Merck Fund, \$70,000 to build momentum for institutional local and regional food purchasing in Vermont and around New England
- Dr. Bronner's/ Organic Consumers Fund, \$4,093.38 to support GMO policy work in collaboration with Vermont Public Interest Research Group
- Farm Aid, \$1,450 to support policy work in collaboration with the NOFA Interstate Council





# New VOF Certifications



*Vermont Organic Farmers would like to welcome the following new producers who have recently obtained organic certification for all or a portion of their operation, joining the nearly 600 organic farmers and processors throughout the state.*

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- Adams Turkey Farm and Maple Products, Westford
- Backwoods Alchemy, Enosburg Falls
- Baird Farm, North Chittenden
- Bates Family Maple, Enosburg Falls
- Bean Mountain Maple, Hyde Park
- Beloin Maple Products, Westfield
- Bertrand Family Maple, Swanton
- Black Sheep Sugarhouse, Orleans
- Blair Farm Maple Products, Richford
- Boney Woods Maple, Barnet
- Bonneau's Vermont Maple, Lowell
- Botanical Springs, Richford
- Bourdon Maple Farm, Woodstock
- Boyden Maple, Cambridge
- Breezy Valley Farm, Irasburg
- Choice Life Farms, LLC, West Dover
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- Gray's Sugar Shack, Newport
- Green Valley Organic, Derby Line
- Happy Hollow Sugarworks, Huntington
- Hawks Mountain Sugarhouse, Springfield
- Hemond's Sugar Shack, Richford
- Henninger Hill Maple Works, Jeffersonville
- Hillside Farm, Randolph Center
- Hollow Hill Farm, South Royalton
- Idle Hour Maple Farm, Rutland
- Independence Farm, Orwell
- Jacobs Family Sugarhouse, Bakersfield
- Jean's Family Maple, Colchester
- Lamb Family Maple, Waterville
- Larivee's Maple, Franklin
- MacBain Homestead, Peacham
- Manchester Farm, Johnson
- Mayo Bros, North Troy
- Minister Maple, Franklin
- Mountain Main Vermont, Underhill Center
- Mountain Meadow Maple, Washington
- Naked Acre Farm, Waterbury Center
- Norris Sugarworks, Starksboro
- Northwood Maples, Derby
- NPC Processing Inc, Shelburne
- Olyvia Fortin, Newport
- Oxbow Maple, LLC, Meredith
- Poulin and Daughters Family Farm, Brookfield
- Putnam Farm, Cambridge
- Ride Line Maple Works, Jeffersonville
- Robert Adams, Williston
- Stewart Maple, Cuttingsville
- Sweet Stone Maple Farm, Hardwick
- Terrance & Juliette Rice Farm, Swanton
- The Elmore Sugarhouse, Lake Elmore
- Tiffany Brothers, Enosburg
- Twin Maple Sugarworks, Lincoln
- Two Brothers Maple, LLC, Richford
- Unity Farm, LLC, Charlotte
- VBW Inc., Colchester
- Vermont Maple Sap Tappers, LLC, Wolcott
- Walden Mountain Maple, East Hardwick
- Westford Stone Walls Sugarhouse, Georgia
- Westford Sugarworks, Westford
- White Family Maple, Enosburg Falls
- Woodpecker Ridge Farm, East Fairfield

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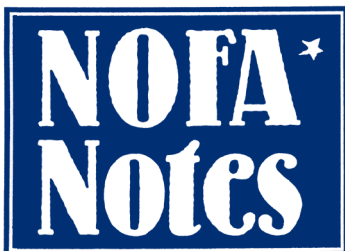
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## Upcoming On-Farm Workshops

- 7/7 Getting Off the Ground: Small Scale Direct Market (Putney)
- 7/12 Organic High Tunnel Tomatoes at Cedar Circle (E. Thetford)
- 7/13 Organic Wheat Production & Processing (Quebec)
- 7/19 Raspberry & Blueberry Varieties for VT Growers (Charlotte)
- 7/23 Small Scale Regenerative Ag. & Forest Farming (Bristol)
- 7/27 Farmers Market Displays & Sales Techniques (Middlebury)
- 8/4 Organic Dairy: Irrigation and Cropping (Shoreham)
- 8/11 Pollinator Plants and Buffers in the Northeast (Fairfax)
- 8/16 Wholesale & Direct Market Flower Production (Roxbury)
- 8/16 Organic Dairy Field Day with Dr Guy Jodarski (Guilford)
- 8/17 Organic Dairy Field Day with Dr Guy Jodarski (Enosburg Falls)
- 8/26 Growing & Caring for Elderberries (Greensboro)
- 8/30 Healthy Brassicas w/ Biocontrols & Rotation (Shaftsbury)
- 9/8 Organic Dairy: Infrastructure & Pasture Management (Washington)
- 9/9 Baking with Local Grains & Flour (Norwich)
- 9/13 Post-Harvest Process: Wash Station Design (Fairlee)
- 9/21 Learning Journey to Massachusetts' Farms (Granby, MA)

**Details & registration at**  
**[nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops](http://nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops)**



## Celebrate Your Farmer at a Pizza Social!

- 7/14 **Celebrate Your Farmer Pizza Social** (Norwich)
- 7/21 **Celebrate Your Farmer Pizza Social** (Wolcott)
- 7/31 Farm to Ballet & **Pizza Social** (Manchester)
- 8/3 Young Farmers Coalition & **Pizza Social** (Peacham)
- 8/9 Farmer Olympics & **Pizza Social** (Vershire)
- 8/18 **Celebrate Your Farmer Pizza Social** (Rupert)
- 9/1 **Celebrate Your Farmer Pizza Social** (Cambridge)
- 9/15 Farmer Veteran Coalition & **Pizza Social** (Putney)
- 9/20 **Celebrate Your Farmer Pizza Social** (Barnard)