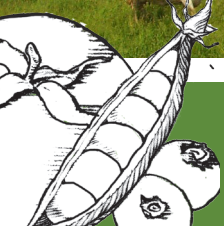
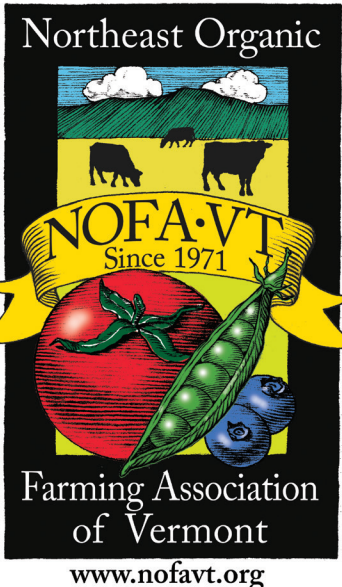


# 2014 IMPACT REPORT



*NOFA Vermont is an organization of farmers, gardeners, and consumers working to promote an economically viable & ecologically sound Vermont food system.*

# WELCOME



**NOFA Vermont Board of Directors** (left to right): Mara Hearst, Seth Gardener, Mimi Arnstein, Steve Paddock, Sona Desai, Andrew Knafel, Kate Turcotte, Deb Heleba, David Marchant. Not pictured: Ross Thurber



**People often tell me** that they have no idea that NOFA-VT is involved in so many different projects – from providing technical assistance to organic farmers and gardeners, supporting low-income access at farmers markets by equipping markets with EBT card readers, providing training to food service directors to increase the amount of local food served in school cafeterias, and working with our state legislators and Congressional delegation to maintain the voice of organic farmers in policy issues. Voice is important. As a membership association, our job is to elevate the voices of all of our members – the commercial farmers, gardeners, homesteaders and consumers. We are all part of NOFA Nation, as I like to think of it, all working together to build healthier soils, raise healthier livestock, and provide food for all, regardless of income.

I hope this annual report will provide an insight into the breadth of our work. We include the story of a farmer mentor and his mentee, and we share a letter written by a farmer to their

partnering classroom – both examples of important relationships that we have had some role in cultivating, and remind us of the generosity of people that work the land to share their stories and their knowledge with others. We appreciate the opportunity we have, and have worked on since 1971, to build a movement. It is a movement that is growing annually, thanks to the efforts of our members, volunteers, donors and friends, and the people you reach, every day, with your vision for a better way to grow food, mulch your garden, make compost, dry herbs, pasture animals and feed your children.

Thank you for your contribution to our work, on many levels!

*Enid Wonnacott*  
Enid Wonnacott  
Executive Director, NOFA Vermont



## I became a member of NOFA-VT

after attending the Winter Conference in my first year of college. The experience of being surrounded by people committed to changing the way we eat had a huge impact on my learning experience and career path. Ten years later I consider the NOFA-VT community my network and would not be where I am today without their resources and support.”

— Kate Turcotte, NOFA-VT Board Member & Head Cheesemaker at Shelburne Farms



**NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT**

PO Box 697, 14 Pleasant Street, Richmond, Vermont 05477 • (802) 434-4122 • [www.nofavt.org](http://www.nofavt.org)

# NOFA VERMONT OUTREACH & EVENTS

## WINTER CONFERENCE

1,489 people attended our 32nd annual winter conference, **“Growing Outside the Box,”** held at the University of Vermont, February 15-17, 2014. The conference—a celebration for commercial growers, gardeners, homesteaders and organic consumers—featured 85 workshops and roundtable discussions, 4 Monday Intensives, and a children’s conference.

## SUMMER WORKSHOPS

The 2014 Summer Workshop Series featured **30 on-farm workshops and socials** that provided opportunities for gardeners, homesteaders, commercial farmers and consumers to gain practical knowledge, exchange ideas, and enjoy time together. Total attendance was 693 people, who came to learn about topics ranging from grazing, seed saving, pollinators, poultry production to season extension.

*NOFA-VT thanks our 118 volunteers for working a total of 616.5 hours in 2014!*



## MOBILE OVEN

Since 2006, NOFA-VT’s mobile pizza oven has been travelling all across the state, connecting Vermonters to the local farms, local foods, and local flavors in their communities. In 2014, our oven heated up over 40 events!

## SOCIAL ACTION

NOFA-VT worked as a member of the Vermont Right to Know GMOs coalition, along with Cedar Circle Farm, VPIRG and Rural Vermont, to make history in April, 2014 with the passage of **the first in the nation GMO labeling law!**

Dave Rogers, NOFA-VT policy advisor, stated “We were successful due to our unrelenting group effort, extensive use of social media, and Vermont’s two decades of experience in resisting the use of genetic engineering in agriculture.” In other state level policy priorities, NOFA-VT worked to protect certified organic farmers and certified organic land from a gas pipeline proposed by Vermont Gas Systems.

Our national policy work focused on maintaining the



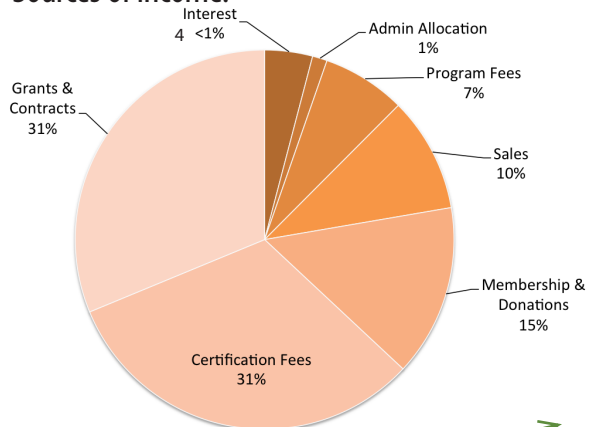
integrity of the National Organic Program and the Vermont Organic Farmers certified organic brand by organizing farmer responses to proposed standards, participating in national debates and meetings on organic regulations, and developing policy positions on regulations that affect organic farmers.

In addition, following the FDA’s release of two proposed supplemental rules under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), NOFA-VT staff studied the potential impact of the rules on Vermont’s certified organic farmers. We encouraged farmers to voice their concerns, and we submitted written comments to the FDA, recommending changes that would make the rules more practical and effective based on the realities of organic farming in the Northeast.

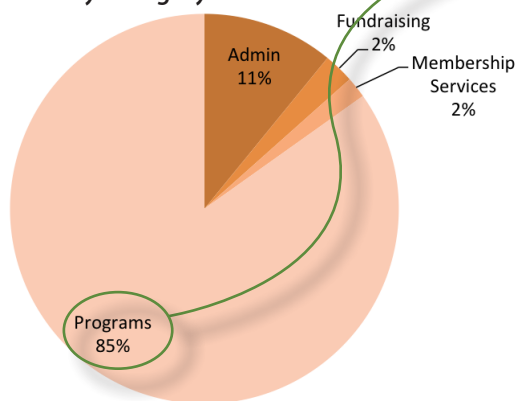


# 2014 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## Sources of Income:



## Expenses by Category:



## 2014 TOTALS

Income: \$1,736,009  
Expenses: \$1,687,954

### Key Cash & Investments

Beginning 2014: \$2,531,119  
Ending 2014: \$2,557,840

*These are unaudited numbers. A copy of NOFA's 990 tax form is available upon request.*

### PROGRAM EXPENSES

PROGRAM EXPENSES	% OF BUDGET
Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF)	37.5%
VT FEED	11.3%
Summer Workshops/Winter Conference	9.7%
Bulk Order	8.6%
Farm Share	8.0%
Market Development/Farmers' Markets	7.0%
Technical Assistance: Dairy & Livestock	6.4%
Beginner Farmer	4.1%
Technical Assistance: Vegetable & Fruit	3.8%
Farm to Community Mentor	2.3%
Loan Fund	1.3%

**TOTAL** 100.0%



## REVOLVING LOAN FUND

- 4 new low-interest loans awarded totaling \$48,500
- 6 Farmer Emergency Fund grants awarded totaling \$25,750
- 5 Farmer Emergency Fund zero interest loans awarded totaling \$14,130

# PROGRAMS: MARKET DEVELOPMENT & FOOD SECURITY

## DIRECT MARKETS

NOFA-VT has a vision of strong and dynamic direct markets across Vermont—serving as hubs of community activity, contributing to the economic viability of farms, and meeting the local food needs of their whole community. By working closely with farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms, and farmstands, NOFA-VT provides resources and information that farmers need to be successful, and builds strong relationships between consumers and those who grow their food.

*In 2014, NOFA-VT provided marketing support to 60 farmers markets and more than 100 farms.*

## VERMONT FARM SHARE

In order to meet the local food needs of all community members, NOFA-VT also has a variety of community food security programs. Our Vermont Farm Share Program links producers to limited-income consumers by providing subsidized CSA shares – increasing access to local and organic foods while making sure that farmers are getting a fair price. In addition, NOFA-VT coordinates support for over 40 farmers markets in the state that accept 3SquaresVT benefits. This allows limited-income Vermonters to use their federal food benefits at farmers markets to get local and organic foods while supporting local farmers. Our statewide Harvest Health Coupon Program incentivizes low-income customers to shop regularly at farmers markets and increases sales for Vermont producers.

*Making locally-grown and organic foods available to all ...regardless of income*



*In 2014, 48 farms provided 1,050 farm shares to limited-income Vermonters!*

**Last year, our annual Share the Harvest fund-raiser involved 72 restaurants, co-ops and stores contributing a percentage of their day's sales, raising over \$16,455 for the Farm Share Program!**

Join us for the **20th annual Share the Harvest**  
**Thursday, October 2, 2014**  
Dine or shop at a participating local business, and a portion of the day's proceeds will support NOFA Vermont's Farm Share Program, bringing the bounty of our local CSA farms to more Vermonters.  
Learn more at [www.nofavt.org/STH](http://www.nofavt.org/STH).

# PROGRAM: VERMONT FEED

Farm to School Food Education Every Day!



VT FEED, a collaborative project of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms, works with schools and communities to raise awareness and build programs supporting healthy school food, Vermont farms, and good nutrition. Our "3-C approach" (working with Classrooms, Cafeterias, and the school Communities) serves as a catalyst for rebuilding healthy food systems.

In 2014, VT FEED's on-site trainings, professional development and consultations reached more than 850 Farm to School practitioners, representing over 45 Vermont schools that serve nearly 7,100 students. In addition, in partnership with School Nutrition Association of VT and New England Culinary Institute students, we conducted 8 regional culinary workshops.

**Jr. Iron Chef Vermont** is an annual, statewide culinary competition organized by VT FEED and the Burlington School Food Project that inspires students to create healthy, local dishes.

*In 2014, there were 1,200 spectators, and 300 students on 64 teams from 58 schools who participated in Jr. Iron Chef VT!*

“The energy at the competition is amazing and students are able to see other food ideas, how other groups work together, how they perform under pressure, and deal with unexpected consequences. They inspire me.”

—Dawn Fuller-Ball, Whitcomb Middle/High School



## Now We're Cooking!

### Professional Culinary Arts Fall Workshops for School Food Professionals

Hands-on workshops taught by NEI students & a school food program director/manager

**Earn SNA credits\***

**You will...**

- Develop hands-on professional skills
- Cook with fresh, whole foods to enhance the health benefits of school meals
- Use scratch cooking techniques efficiently
- Reduce sodium in food served at school
- Create lunch and breakfast items

#### Back to Basics Cooking Techniques You Use Every Day

This culinary skills training is sure to help you be more successful with daily food preparation. You'll learn and practice professional knife skills and cooking techniques, including braising, broiling, and steaming. You'll prepare seasonal vegetables using different techniques in order to compare flavor and texture.

#### Time is of the Essence Developing an Efficient Kitchen

Kitchen efficiency is more important today than ever. Learn the skills you need to know and practice daily to make sure your kitchen runs as smooth as silk. Culinary experts will share standard operating procedures for setting up prep stations and moving through each task safely and purposefully.

DATE	LOCATION & HOST	WORKSHOP
Nov. 5	Rutland High School, Rutland Amy Gifford • 802-434-4122 x40	Back to Basics
Nov. 12	River Valley Technical Center, Springfield Jack Carroll • 802-875-2146 x271	Time is of the Essence
Nov. 19	Burlington Technical Center, Burlington Pat Teague • 802-864-8411	Back to Basics
Dec. 2	Green Mtn. Career & Technical Ctr., Hyde Park Abbie Nelson • 802-434-4132 x12	Time is of the Essence

WEDNESDAYS, 2:30-5:30 PM

FEE per workshop: \$10/SNA members; \$15/nonmembers.  
 QUESTIONS? Amy Gifford, amy@nofavt.org or 434-4122 x40  
 REGISTER NOW at: [www.snvt.org](http://www.snvt.org)  
 \*Each class earns 3 credit hours towards SNA Certification. For information on how to use your credits to become certified, visit: [www.snvt.org](http://www.snvt.org)

Presented by SNA-VT, Vermont FEED, & New England Culinary Institute



# PROGRAM: FARM-TO-COMMUNITY MENTORS

## FARM-TO-COMMUNITY MENTORS

NOFA-VT has nine mentors working in Vermont communities statewide to facilitate connections between farmers, educators, and community members. Mentors help farms and farmers become educational resources; support the viability of farmers by building awareness of and involvement in local agriculture and local food; and increase the economic, environmental, and physical health of communities by promoting an awareness of local, sustainable agriculture.

In 2014, mentors coordinated the 10th year of the **Farmer Correspondence Program** (see letter, right) where 80 farmers wrote throughout the winter to students in 90 classrooms. Of those corresponding pairs, 21 visited each other with field trips to the farms.

*In 2014, 80 farmers wrote throughout the winter to students in 90 classrooms!*



Dear Mrs. Keogh's Class,

Thank you so much for your letters and your good questions.

Right now is the very end of the quiet time for us—we ordered our seeds last week, and are planning exactly where to plant them and when. Then soon we'll start the first seedlings—tomatoes that we will graft and onions. Grafting is when you take the bottom of one plant—the roots—and combine it with top of another plant. This is done all the time with apples. You might already know that if you plant an apple seed the apples on the tree will not be like the apple you got the seed from!

So people use grafting to make sure that they get the kind of apple they want. With tomatoes, we do it to combine one variety that has really strong roots (but yucky fruit) with another that has good tomatoes but doesn't grow as well. So we chop them both in half and stick them together! We didn't have very good luck with this last year, but we're going to try again...

(excerpt from letter to class from Gildrien Farm, Leicester)



# PROGRAM: BEGINNING FARMERS

## JOURNEY FARMERS

The Journey Farmer Program is a two-year program for beginning organic farmers who are in the first few years of running their own farming enterprise in Vermont. The program is largely shaped by the farming interests and goals of the Journey Farmers, and enables aspiring new farmers to advance their farming skills and experiences, along with being a part of a learning community of other aspiring farmers and farmer mentors.

## OTHER BEGINNING FARMER OUTREACH

- **ON-LINE DIRECTORY** to help connect those looking for farming work or experience with organic farms looking for labor
- **BEGINNING FARMER WORKSHOPS** as part of the summer workshop series
- **COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL ALLIANCE FOR FARMER TRAINING (CRAFT)** project—monthly on-farm trainings for organic farm apprentices
- **BEGINNING FARMER SOCIALS** & networking events, in collaboration with the Vermont Young Farmers Coalition



Dear NOFA Vermont,

I am writing to express my gratitude for the beginner farmer mentoring program. I recently had the privilege of meeting with Adam Hausmann from Adam's Berry Farm, my NOFA-VT supported farmer mentor. I am at a pivotal stage with my farm progression. We are at the point where we can either keep falling prey to the remnants of old mistakes (e.g., planting into quackgrass) or take strategic steps to address our weaknesses and significantly gain in efficiencies (e.g., systematic whole field renovations to whack the quack). The mentoring came at a perfect time and has provided quality answers to many critical questions that have been on my mind for the past few years. I plan to implement many of the changes we discussed and am very hopeful about the positive outcomes, which I would not have planned for on my own if it had not been for this mentoring arrangement.

— Ben Waterman



# PROGRAM: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: DAIRY & LIVESTOCK

NOFA-VT provided technical assistance to over 54 dairy and livestock farmers; including business planning services to 12 farms. We organized workshops and discussion groups covering a range of species and topics including pasture and feed management, animal production and processing, and business management. We collaborated on a one day technical conference for organic dairy producers addressing current research, farm management, production practices and more. And we collaborated with state and regional organizations to strengthen the values-based meat industry.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: VEGETABLE & FRUIT

NOFA-VT provided technical assistance, enterprise analysis and mentorship to a broad range of organic vegetable, grain, and fruit producers - including business planning services for 19 farms. We helped organize vegetable, fruit, and crop workshops for the 2014 Winter Conference, as well as on-farm technical workshops for the summer workshop series.

*Farmer mentors are one of the backbones of our technical assistance program—providing one-on-one organic farming expertise.*



“The most unique aspect of the Vermont farming community is the openness and willingness of established growers to share their experiences by mentoring growers that are either starting out or at a shifting phase in their business. As a farmer mentor, I enjoy sharing what I know with beginning farmers, and appreciate learning from others. This mentorship model will keep our food system expanding; NOFA-VT’s role in linking farmers to farmers is invaluable and the knowledge passed will be seen in the next generation of farmers.”

—Adam Hausmann, Adam’s Berry Farm,  
NOFA-VT Farmer Mentor



# PROGRAM: VERMONT ORGANIC FARMERS



Vermont has 104,565 acres of certified organic farmland!

## VERMONT ORGANIC FARMERS (VOF), LLC

VOF is the organic certification program of NOFA-VT. It was started in 1985 to help growers and consumers define what it means to produce food organically. VOF is a USDA-accredited certifying agent and certifies most of the organic farmers and processors in Vermont.

In 2014, VOF certified 579 producers on 104,565 acres of certified organic farmland, with gross sales of over \$194 million dollars; organic production continues to be one of Vermont's fastest growing agricultural sectors!

VOF worked hard in 2014 to reduce the paperwork burden for organic producers, while still ensuring organic integrity. Two focused projects included the development of a database where producers can submit applications online and another to geolocate the organic farm fields in the state.

### Certifying our farm

as organic connects us to a movement of growers and consumers who are demanding a better way to produce food. The certification makes it easy for our customers to at least know a baseline for how we farm and saves us the effort of explaining the most basic details to all."

—Spencer Blackwell, Elmer Farm



# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

**NOFA Vermont would like to thank our 1,400+ members, as well as all the individuals, businesses, and organizations who have supported us through their generous donations between Jan. 1, 2014 and Dec. 31, 2014.**

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

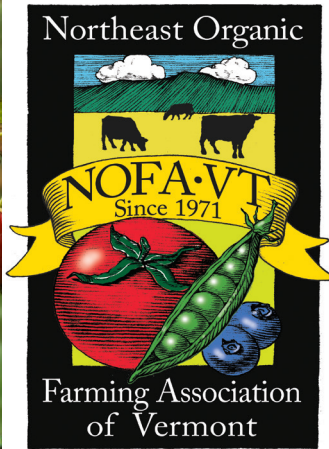
- Ben & Jerry's Foundation
- Green Mountain Coffee/Keurig
- Lintilhac Foundation
- Newman's Own Foundation
- Organic Farming Research Foundation
- The Prudential Foundation
- The Coca-Cola Foundation
- The Forrest & Frances Lattner Foundation
- The Franklin Conklin Foundation
- The John Merck Fund
- The Windham Foundation
- The Wurster Family Foundation
- Vermont Community Foundation & Funds
  - Acorn Fund, advisors Aaron J. & Barbarina M. Heyerdahl
  - Green Mountain Fund
  - Farm & Food Initiative
  - Hills and Hollow Fund
- Advisor Ronald J. Miller
- High Meadows Fund
- Johnson Family Foundation Fund
- Nouvelle Fund
- Weston A. Price Foundation, Inc.
- Wholesome Wave Foundation

## SUPPORT FROM GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND DONATIONS OF \$5,000 OR MORE

- Center for an Agricultural Economy
- Franklin County Community Development Corp.
- Kitchen Gardeners International
- Organic Consumers Association
- People's United Bank
- SHAPE Students Changing the World MMU
- Shelburne Farms
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service FMPP
- USDA AMS National Organic Program contract
- USDA NE SARE
- USDA NIFA BFRDP (prime recipient NOFA NY)
- USDA NIFA BFRDP (prime recipient UVM)
- USDA NIFA Northeast Center for Risk Management Education
- UVM Food Systems Spire
- USDA Risk Management Agency (prime recipient UVM)
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture NEBI and USDA contracts
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture subaward USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture Working Lands Enterprise Board grants
- Vermont Agency of Education
- Vermont Department of Children and Families
- Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living subaward USDA
- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Stonyfield Farm, Inc.
- Vermont Department of Health
- Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Farm Viability Enhancement Program
- Vermont Technical College
- White Wave Foods/Horizon Organic



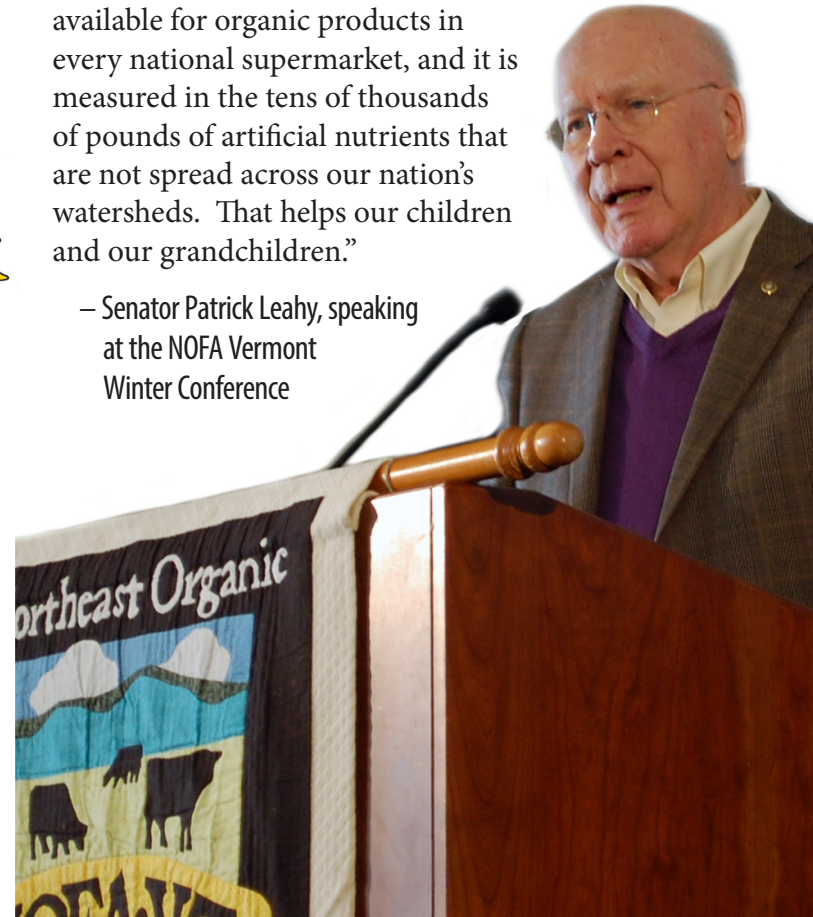
# NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT



## “The true nature

of the value of organic agriculture is not measured by money, it is measured in the inches of rich topsoil that have been returned to depleted pasture land, it is measured in lower chemical residue, it is measured in the hundreds of feet of shelf space now available for organic products in every national supermarket, and it is measured in the tens of thousands of pounds of artificial nutrients that are not spread across our nation's watersheds. That helps our children and our grandchildren.”

– Senator Patrick Leahy, speaking at the NOFA Vermont Winter Conference



Most images in this report are stills taken from NOFA-VT's video, “**Organic Matters**”, used with permission by filmmaker Michael Sacca. We invite you to watch the video at <https://goo.gl/cAFXjH>

