



SUMMER 2015

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The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Putting Beans in the Center of the Plate

By Amy Gifford, NOFA Vermont FEED Staff

My conversation with Joe Bossen, owner of Vermont Bean Crafters, begins with him drawing a diagram of the process involved in getting beans from plant to plate and ends with a tour of his new seed cleaning facility, a rustic barn filled with used equipment he has gathered from as far afield as Pennsylvania and Illinois. In between, we cover a wide range of subjects—from water conservation to pre-Columbian tree crops, from agronomics to political science.

Vermont Bean Crafters, founded by Joe in 2010, sources Vermont and New England-grown beans—Black Turtle, Marafax, Soldier, Yellow Eye, and at least a dozen other heirlooms in more limited quantities—to sell, either by the pound or in value-added products such as bean burgers and *hummish*, the company's take on the traditional chickpea-based hummus (see recipe, page 18). According to Joe, "Everything that we make is at least 90% locally grown and organic by weight, with some products being 99%. Outside of cumin and curry, the furthest we go for any ingredient is our sea salt." Scratching the surface that's what the company looks like but a more detailed look—or a conversation with Joe—reveals that they are up to so much more.

I first met Joe



when I was a Farm to School Coordinator at Richmond Elementary School several years ago. With the help of Abbie Nelson, Project Director of VT FEED (a project of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms), he had figured out how to navigate the complex child nutrition program requirements in order to supply his value-added products to school meal programs. By adjusting his recipes to accommodate child nutrition labeling, developing a second tier of pricing for schools, and getting carried by Reinhardt, a major school foodservice delivery company in Vermont, Vermont Bean Crafters found its way into the mainstream public school system. Joe

The beans are a means to an end...but not in the way you might think.

traveled the state, offering taste tests of his products. As a next step, he collaborated with USDA to set up a system where schools could divert the canned beans they received from the government to Vermont Bean Crafters to be combined with locally-grown organic crops and turned into, for example, bean burgers. This lowered the price point even more, making it possible and desirable for schools to serve beans as the protein in school lunches.

The beans are a means to an end, but not in the way you might think. As Joe explains "the value-added products we make are just a reason to grow the foods that we should be growing anyway just so that they exist in our society." His vision is to put beans not just at the center of the plate but at the center of an accessible local food system that thrives on the principles of a sustainable working landscape. Somewhere along the way—from outside Philadelphia



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Summer Thoughts from Enid

The NOFA-VT Board of Directors and staff have spent a lot of 2015 to date thinking about membership development and membership engagement. In fact one of the goals of our current five-year strategic plan is to Provide effective leadership to grow the organic movement through adequate staffing and a strong and engaged membership. Starting in January, 2015 with the NOFA-VT board and staff retreat, I started by asking all of the board members why they first became members. For many of the commercial organic farmers on our board, they joined NOFA-VT when they became certified organic, for one it was because of her introduction to the organization at the winter conference, and for another, because she had just moved to the state and wanted to be part of a community of like-minded individuals.

Over the course of two days together, we discussed: Why are members important to NOFA-VT? How do we serve our members and why do they value membership? What are our goals of membership? How can we increase member engagement? One of our strategies for answering this question was to add some questions about membership to the Winter Conference evaluation. Not surprisingly, many people who responded value NOFA-VT

Most people want to be part of something important, part of something that is good.

membership because of the discount to the Winter Conference, but of the 339 people who answered the survey, 61% were current NOFA-VT members (thank you!) and 39% were non-members.

We learned that you are NOFA members because you “love the organization and its mission,” because you “value healthy food production and environmental protection,” “to meet other farmers,” or “because your husband told you to!” For all of those reasons, and more, thanks for being a part of NOFA Nation, as I like to think of it. Over the next year, we will analyze our membership a bit more to get a clearer understanding of the membership benefits and services that you currently value and what additional benefits we can offer.

We have also been looking at how other organizations articulate membership. The NOFA Interstate Council invited a speaker from the Land Stewardship Project in Minnesota to speak to us about membership and member engagement, and what stood out to me about his talk is his statement, “As we moved forward, we became more clear that our work is about societal impact and social change. Why we want members became less about a transaction and more about social change and being part of a movement.” I have been thinking about this a lot, as I think about NOFA-VT and our important contribution to the good food movement in Vermont.

Most people want to be part of something important, part of something that is good, and we want to continue to build this movement in Vermont. As NOFA-VT members, you are a critical part of this movement. How can you, as a member, help grow our movement? One great opportunity to introduce new prospective members to NOFA-VT is at our “Celebrate your Farmer” socials this summer.

We are hosting 9 socials at organic farms around Vermont – as far south as Brattleboro at Lilac Ridge Farm, and as far north as the Flack Family Farm in Enosburg Falls and Berry Creek Farm in Westfield - and at many organic farms in between. Socials are a great opportunity to bring your neighbors or friends, share dinner with other community members and enjoy a post-dinner farm walk. We always bring our mobile oven to the farm, and top pizzas with whatever is in season on the host farm. The socials were all listed in the On-Farm Workshop Series flyer you should have recently received and listed on our web-site. Please RSVP in advance so we know how much dinner to make! And if you need any information about NOFA-VT’s work in 2014 to share with your friends, or to familiarize yourself more with the details of our work, please reference our 2014 Annual Report. It is posted on our web-site as a viewable document, or we are happy to send you a hard copy if you would like. Enjoy!

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

Continued from page 1 »

in Riverton, NJ where he grew up to Poultney where he went to college—Joe “bumped into” the idea that a cultural shift is possible. He also understood early on that a “cultural shift couldn’t happen if it’s just me talking about the things that I’m interested in.” So he started by talking about taste and price points which is paving the way for a dialogue about



soil health and conservation. “Taking an approach that has intention behind it and joy at the forefront is the most effective way to proliferate a cultural shift,” he explains.

How he goes about it is both inspiring and exhausting. By operating within their means, (translation: not relying on investors for financial security) Vermont Bean Crafters has been able to make every decision with intention and without compromising, from where they source their beans—like Morningstar Farm in Glover—to how they market their products—to businesses, individuals, and schools. But that means that every decision, small or large, demands thoughtful deliberation and, often, extra elbow grease on the part of Joe and his colleagues. At each decision point Joe asks himself “how much agency or regional self-determination can we reclaim in our lives?”

As Joe explains, “a solution isn’t a solution if it isn’t accessible to everyone.”

Take, for example, the way that Joe has gone about outfitting both the seed cleaning barn and Vermont Bean Crafters’ new production kitchen, both located at the Kingsbury Market Garden in Warren. Having recently outgrown the Mad River Food Hub, Joe decided it was time to find a more permanent home for Vermont Bean Crafters. When space became avail-

able at the Kingsbury Market Garden, run by Aaron Locker, a farmer-friend of Joe’s, he jumped at the opportunity. Like the seed cleaning equipment, the kitchen equipment is used and hails from here and there: a stove from since-closed Three Tomatoes, work tables recently retired from the Mad River Food Hub, a steam kettle from Sugarbush rescued on route to the scrap heap. Joe’s frugality, a deep-seated trait that forces him to regularly ask “How much can I do without?,” directly translates into savings for the consumer. By striking a balance between doing everything by hand and using new, large-scaled, expensive equipment, Joe has been able to keep the price point reasonable, making his beans accessible as a main source of protein for more people. “Because,” as Joe explains “a solution isn’t a solution if it isn’t accessible to everyone.”

Although Vermont Bean Crafters is Joe’s

brainchild, he would be the first to recognize the importance—no, the necessity—of organizing collectively to accomplish what needs to get done. This is emphasized by his ongoing attempt to never be the smartest person in the room but rather to surround himself with other talented, knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate people who can help him bring the Vermont Bean Crafters’ vision to life. A board of advisors helps steer Bean Crafters through annual meetings and periodic check-ins, while a wide range of mentors provide context for the challenges—and opportunities—perpetually at hand in a start-up.

In return, Vermont Bean Crafters is building a viable market for bean farmers. By processing between 400 and 1,000 pounds of beans a week, and supporting farmers who couldn’t otherwise bring their beans to market, Vermont Bean Crafters is increasing the amount of land being used to grow beans. When the company started in 2010, around 30 acres of *Phaseolus vulgaris* was being grown in Vermont. When asked, Joe lists all the farmers growing beans this summer and calculates on the spot that at least double that will be growing around the state next summer. Although this fact pleases him, he’s got a much larger vision. In fact, he’s in the process of creating a “road map” for what it would look like to grow 1,000 acres of beans in Vermont, for “having plant-based staple foods play a central role in our food system and food culture in New England.” What does it mean to grow 1,000 acres of beans in Vermont? What kind of infrastructure is needed? How many seeds would it take? Is there a market for it? These are the questions that tumble around in Joe’s mind when he has the chance to think about it.

Joe has been seeking answers to these questions from farmers and experts around the country. A Farm Viability Grant provided him with the opportunity to travel to New York, Maine, and Ohio to study seed growing, harvesting, and processing. This experience helped him understand

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just how much he needed to learn. Additional funding secured from the Vermont Community Loan Fund made it possible for him to attend Seed School, Native Seeds' flagship educational program in southern Idaho, where 90% of our bean seed crop is grown. It's not hard to imagine how strongly their mission—to truly save seeds by saving their place among us—in our fields, our gardens, at our tables, in our bellies—resonated with Joe. Every time he peels back a layer of our complicated food system he finds more reasons to keep doing what he wants to do, and he feels driven to see not only what the marketplace can tolerate, but what it can foster.

He plans to test the marketplace with new tortillas made from local, open-pollinated, heirloom corn that he's producing with All Souls Tortilleria, a business venture with NOFA-VT's very own Sam Fuller and Hubert d'Autremont, who grew up with Sam in Arizona. With the intention of integrating tree crops into mainstream agriculture, Joe plans to experiment down the road with replacing a certain percentage of the tortillas' corn with tree crops, like acorns. Be it baked goods, burgers, or tortillas, he's not sure yet how much our Northeast food culture will embrace tree crops in our cuisine, but he's excited about the challenge.

Because Joe wants his "August and September to smell like roasting peppers," this summer he'll once again be roasting, smoking, and drying chili peppers, and creating fermented sauces from them in collaboration with Kingsbury Market Garden. And

come fall, Vermont Bean Crafters will find themselves operating a café in the Living/Learning Center on the University of Vermont Campus. They've been invited by Sodexo, the university's food service management company, to operate the café 5 days a week, offering their fare to students for lunch and dinner. Serving approximately 200 people a day will give the company a chance to test out new recipes and concepts while demonstrating that real food can be made accessible—and profitably—in all venues where people need nourishing.

Whatever comes after that from Joe and Vermont Bean Crafters it's a pretty safe bet to say that it will be done with resourcefulness, intention, and collaboration. ✨

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This article was submitted by Efficiency Vermont, an organization which was created by the Vermont Legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to help all Vermonters reduce energy costs, strengthen the economy, and protect Vermont's environment. For more information, contact Efficiency Vermont at 888-921-5990 or visit www.efficiencyvermont.com



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Ask Callie

Dear Callie,

For years we've had trouble with carrot germination. We generally seed with planet Jr. seeders, though we've tried the Earthway and even hand seeding. We keep things well watered, use fresh seed, and still have consistent trouble. One hunch is that our sandy soil makes consistent moisture difficult. Any other ideas or suggestions? Thanks!

— Anonymous Organic Farmer, Southern Vermont



Dear A.O.F.,

You are right to suspect your sandy soil as the potential culprit in your problem with inconsistent germ. Maintaining consistent moisture is indeed the number 1 problem in establishing a good stand when growing carrots and could possibly be your problem, especially considering that you have sandy soil. There are a couple of well worn methods that could help in this case.

The first one is to cover the planted row with a small, but consistently applied, amount of mulch. My first choice is a fairly fine grade of screened, high-quality compost. If this is applied evenly and is not too thick right on top of the planted row in a narrow strip it will keep moisture in the soil below it more uniform. But the grower must still check the moisture below the furrow to make sure it is adequate. Alternately, on a smaller scale some growers have used some type of fine chopped hay or even grass clippings that can have the same benefit. In either case the grower must make sure that the mulch isn't too deep ($\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ in) and it may need to be moved at or near the time of emergence. This is dependent on the depth and type of material and on the vigor and even the size of the carrot seedling and the size of and ability of the first true leaves to establish in the first 14 to 21 days of growth after emergence (something the Organic Seed Alliance and the University of Wisconsin are researching at present – no definitive results as of yet!). We know for sure that not all carrot varieties are created equal in this regard.

The second method for getting a good carrot stand under excessive drying that is used in the arid western states is called Solid Set Watering. In the west, freshly planted carrot seed is often irrigated daily for one to two hours during the driest times of the year until emergence. This is only attempted when the ground is excessively well-drained and the irrigation time varies in daily duration due to a combination of temperature, humidity, and soil type. It is dangerous in the wetter eastern USA and can certainly lead to damping off or other seedling maladies, but I include mentioning it here as an instructive example of the kind of solutions that commercial carrot growers use to achieve that all important “good stand.”

I am always interested to hear of other creative solutions to this problem and I am always interested in learning which carrot varieties are the most vigorous and grow foliage the fastest in my breeding work with carrots here at Johnny's. Let me know how it works out this year!

Reprinted with permission by John Navazio (Root crops and leafy greens breeder, Johnny's Selected Seeds)

A black and white photograph of a man with a beard and a knit hat, smiling warmly at the camera.

“We were able to focus on recovering from the flood, thanks to Vermont Farm Fund’s simple application and speedy approval process.”

—Aaron Locker,
Kingsbury Market
Garden

The logo for Vermont Farm Fund, featuring a circular design with a house and a plant, surrounded by the text "Vermont Farm Fund" and "Borrower".

VermontFarmFund.org

On-Farm Workshop Series Preview

Rachel Fussell, NOFA-VT Education Coordinator

Are you interested in joining a feast that celebrates community, good food and farming? How about participating in a workshop that shows you how to grow currants in your backyard or delicious organic strawberries for your farm or CSA?

NOFA-VT's 2015 workshop series has all this and more for the summer season. Our workshop series lineup features more than two dozen on-farm opportunities like these where gardeners, homesteaders and commercial farmers can gain practical knowledge, exchange ideas and get to know your neighbors.

We have a diverse group of workshops for every background this summer. For commercial vegetable and fruit growers we have several workshops aimed at providing new knowledge and techniques for your operation. These include a workshop on caring for older tractors and maintenance with Hank Bissell at Lewis Creek Farm in Starksboro, an on-farm value-added tour of Pete's Greens and the Vermont Food Venture Center in Hardwick, and a vegetable tunnel production workshop with Andy Jones at the Intervale Community Farm in Burlington.

For commercial dairy and livestock farmers we have an assortment of workshops that provide technical knowledge and new strategies for your farm. Among the lineup includes a workshop on herd management, grazing and other practices to best manage nutrients at Spring Brook Farm in Westfield, as well as a workshop on strategies for evaluating feed stock needs and land improvements with McKnight Farm in East Montpelier.

And for all the homesteaders, gardeners, and plant enthusiasts we have an exciting array of workshops that cover a variety of subjects. Topics include permaculture with Nicko Rubin of East Hill Tree Farm, place-based herbalism with Kate Westdijk,

uncommon fruits with John and Nancy Hayden of The Farm Between, and gardening tips and techniques with Charlie Nardozzi.

Our "Celebrate Your Farmer" Socials brings everyone in the food system together and is a place to establish connections within your community, all while enjoying farm-fresh, wood-fired pizza baked in NOFA-VT's mobile oven. And after your appetite is satisfied, you'll be able to enjoy a farm tour and get a behind the scenes glimpse of each farm. Nine farms across the state are planning to host these special gatherings, including Adam's Berry Farm, Lilac Ridge Farm and Flack Family Farms, just to name a few.

For the full line-up of workshops and socials go to www.nofavt.org/ows or look for the On-Farm Workshop Series brochure in your mailbox in mid-June. We look forward to seeing you out on the farm this summer! ✨



NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT

2014 IMPACT REPORT

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

Please check-out NOFA-VT's Annual Report On-Line!

We decided to save paper this year, and make our 2014 Impact Report available on-line instead of mailing paper copies to all of our members. That said, we are very happy to send you one if you would like - please contact our office if you prefer a hard copy mailed to you. The report details how many people our programs reached in 2014, a financial review, and even a special quote from our own Senator Patrick Leahy. Please take the time to review the work that so many of you participated in and/or helped make possible. Thanks for working with us to grow the organic movement in 2014!

Find it: www.nofavt.org/about
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FAQ: Labor Regulations for Farmers

Kenneth Miller practices law at Law for Food, LLC, a law office dedicated to providing legal support for sustainable food businesses. His area of expertise includes contract drafting, business and estate planning, and regulatory compliance. Please send any of your burning labor and management questions to rachel@nofavt.org and we will do our best to answer some of your common concerns. Below is a smattering of some of the questions we have already received from our friends and neighbors around the state on human resource issues.

How is “agricultural work” defined? Is retail, value-added or sales work “agricultural”?

Agricultural work is defined in two parts: primary and secondary. Primary agriculture means farming in all its branches and is “agricultural.” Think of milking cows, harvesting or cultivating crops, beekeeping. Primary agriculture entitles employers of these workers to certain exemptions. For example, the 500 man-day exemption discussed below applies only to “agricultural” labor.

Whether retail, value-added, or sales work is agricultural depends on a variety of factors. They may fall under the secondary definition of agriculture. Secondary agriculture means work performed by a farmer, or on a farm as incident to or in conjunction with such farming operations. That includes preparation of crops for market, delivery to storage or market, or to transportation carriers.

Retail generally would not likely fall under the secondary definition, but it’s possible if the work is conducted on a farm, or possibly even a farmers market, if supervised by a farmer.

Value-added or processed agricultural products may not be considered “agricultural”. The answer whether any of these tasks would qualify depends on the circumstances. So, unfortunately, the response can only be given with that notoriously favorite qualifier of attorneys: it depends. Consult a lawyer or the VT Dept of Labor at 802-828-0267.

What is “500 man-days”?

For agricultural workers, Vermont does not have a minimum wage. That means the federal minimum wage applies. However, the federal minimum wage and overtime only apply to agricultural work (see definition above) after the 500 man-day threshold is crossed.

A man-day is any day in which an

employee works one hour or more of work during a day. One worker who works 8 hours in a day has worked one man-day. Three individuals who work 8 hours in a day constitute three man-days. For instance, if a farm is employing 7 full time people (working 8 hours/day, 5 days/week) the farmer-employer would just exceed the 500 man hour threshold and would be subject to Wage and Hour laws including the federal minimum wage.

The federal minimum wage and overtime exemption is written to include those farms that used less than 500 man-days of agricultural labor during each calendar quarter of the previous year.

What are the labor regulations rules regarding interns and apprentices?

“Apprentice” refers to an employer-sponsored worker under a state program. The same laws applicable to employees apply also to apprentices. For example, Wage and Hour laws require minimum wage compensation and records maintenance. Payroll taxes are also due in proportion to the apprentice’s compensation. Though exemptions for small farms may exist, workers compensation (which should be provided even if there is an exemption, given the inherent risks of farming) and unemployment insurance laws apply. Additional laws may also include Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Protection Act, OSHA, and Parental or Family Medical Leave Act.

Take a look at the VT Department of Labor’s website for further information about apprenticeship programs in Vermont. <http://labor.vermont.gov/workforce-development/apprenticeship/>

An “intern” is a legal status of a worker who is working to learn a particular occupation. Interns are protected under the same laws as employees. However, there is a minimum wage exemption available to interns. Interns are defined to include those workers who

receive a substantial training. The criteria that must be satisfied are:

1. The training received must be similar to what would be part of a vocational training program.
2. The experience is designed to benefit the intern.
3. The individual does not perform work otherwise be performed by an employee.
4. The business does not receive an immediate advantage. Operations may actually be impeded.
5. Employment does not necessarily result for the trained individual at the end of the training period.
6. The intern understands s/he is not entitled to wages for the time period of the training.

All of these criteria must be met to qualify as an internship. The way to look at an internship is, if it is educational, not a functionally necessary part of a business. Aside from minimum wage and overtime exemption, the same laws such as workers compensation and unemployment insurance apply to interns as to employees.

Note that if an employer does not meet the 500 man hour day rule they are exempt from paying minimum wage regardless of whether the employee meets the 6 criteria for interns. ✨

One-on-one assistance on labor management issues is available to qualifying farmers from NOFA-VT. Contact sam@nofavt.org for information.

For more information on the legal side of farm employment, see:

- Vermont Farm Worker Wage, Hour and Housing Fact Sheet at <http://labor.vermont.gov/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Vermont-Farm-Labor-Wage-and-Hour-and-Housing-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Farm Commons webinar series on employment law <https://farmcommons.org/>
- VT Dept of Labor, Dirk Anderson, General Counsel, dirk.anderson@state.vt.us



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A Profile of NOFA-VT's Journey Farmer Program

The Journey Farmer Program is a two-year program for beginning 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. NOFA-VT Journey Farmers receive an educational stipend, farmer-to-farmer mentoring, free admission into NOFA-VT's workshops and Winter Conference, business planning support and access to technical assistance by the NOFA-VT staff.

Ivy Pagliari: Grex Eggs

Ivy Pagliari is the owner of Grex Eggs, an organic egg farm in Morrisville, Vermont. She was an English teacher in China before she came to Vermont to farm. She loves chickens and cows. When not cultivating delicious dairy products, she likes playing the accordion and knitting, although not simultaneously.



Taylor Hutchison & Jake Mendell: Footprint Farm

Taylor Hutchison and Jake Mendell run Footprint Farm in Starksboro where they produce organic vegetables, flowers, and eggs for their CSA, farmers markets, and local weddings. They also produce small-scale pastured pork that is sold as whole shares, and maple syrup just for fun. In 2015 they are looking forward to hosting mushroom forays, herb walks, and homesteading workshops for the public as well as farm tours. This will be Footprint Farm's third season in production, and the farmers are looking forward to the next two years of growing with their fellow Journey Farmers.



Kalyn Campbell: Family Cow Farmstand

Kalyn found her passion for farming as a student at the Dickinson College Farm. She started dairy farming and making cheese soon after college and fell in love with the process. Kalyn is grateful for the opportunity to continue the Family Cow Farmstand and provide people with healthy, nutritious food.



Ryan Demarest: Elephant in the Field Farm

Ryan came to Vermont for college and always seems to return to the state after time away. He began his farming career in Oregon while living and apprenticing at an organic CSA farm in Corvallis. After interning at an educational and production based farm in Eugene, Oregon, Ryan made the eastward trek back to Vermont to participate in the Farmer Training Program at the University of Vermont. The following season he began a small-scale vegetable operation in Waterbury. He is pleased to be expanding his operation in 2015 for his second year in agriculture.



Molly Willard and Nattie Emmons: Willow Brook Farm

Willow Brook Farm is a family operated farm owned by Molly Willard and Nattie Emmons with their two daughters, Elizabeth and Elsie. Their mission is to produce high quality fresh food for the local and surrounding communities. They offer CSA memberships, a winter share, and sell wholesale to various businesses throughout the Northeast Kingdom. They use organic practices and are working toward certification.



Eli Hersh: Shadow Creek Farm

Raised in the liberal backwoods of western Massachusetts by vegetarian social workers, his first word was "kale." Since his inspiring introduction to agriculture as a seasonal intern on an organic veggie farm near Seattle, WA, he has worked with raw milk production, diverse pastured livestock and poultry, and endless fields of product. Running a successful one-season experimental farm business in 2011 gave him the confidence to seek out self-employment as a long term goal, and the focus to learn as much as possible from his elders and mentors in the community. Eli is currently working at River Berry Farm in Fairfax, while leasing land on the property for his small vegetable operation, Shadow Creek Farm. He is excited to work with NOFA-VT to reach his goal of diversified production on permanent property.



Nicole Burke & Ryan Miller: Golden Well Farm & Apiaries

Ryan Miller and Nicole Burke co-founded Golden Well Farm & Apiaries in New Haven, Vermont in 2012. Since they first began keeping bees and growing food, their vision has always been to create a model farm where they could share their love of sustainable agricultural with others. They've been steadily working towards this vision and began growing on their neighbor's land and selling vegetables as well as honey products at markets for the last few years. Last year they started a successful CSA and are working to expand their membership as well as enter into the wholesale market. In addition to farming, the pair also owns and runs 2 Wolves Center in Vergennes, a wellness center where they host yoga, martial arts, and community classes and events. ✿



VERMONT OPEN FARM WEEK

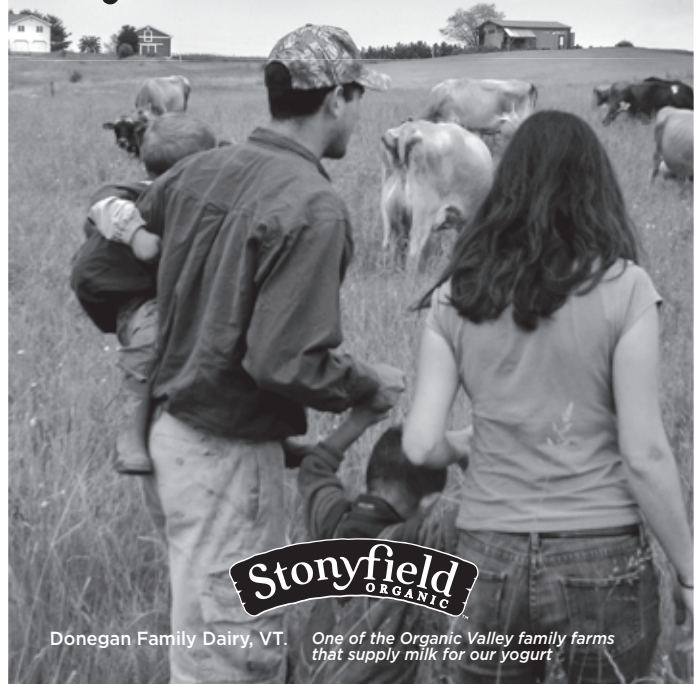
August 3-9, 2015

Do you love local food and farms? Want to get to know your farmer better—and get a behind-the-scenes look into Vermont's vibrant agricultural landscape? Meet the farmers, plants, and animals that bring your favorite high-quality Vermont products to your plate. Every farm is unique! Milk a cow and harvest a carrot at one farm, sit on a tractor and take in the smell of freshly cut hay at another.



More information at www.nofavt.org/openfarmweek

To organic farmers everywhere for treating their animals and earth with care and treating us with some of the finest organic ingredients around, thanks.



Donegan Family Dairy, VT. One of the Organic Valley family farms that supply milk for our yogurt

Garden Tips: The Right Plant in the Right Place

This article was contributed by Charlie Nardozzi, well-known to Vermont gardeners for his helpful and cheerful garden tips, and a 2015 NOFA-VT On-Farm Workshop presenter. This article is an excerpt from his new book, "Edible Landscapes". You can learn more, or order a copy of Charlie's book, on his website: www.gardeningwithcharlie.com.

Probably the simplest way to start with foodscaping in your yard is to substitute plants. Look at the ornamental flowers, shrubs and trees in your yard and consider similarly sized and shaped alternatives that are edible as well. With the advent of so many new plants that blur the line between edible and ornamental, it's not so hard anymore to find the right substitute for your yard.

This process may start simply because a plant has died, died back significantly or outgrown its location and has to be removed. When looking for a substitute plant use your filter of edibility to find just the right candidate. Of course, if you're really gung ho on foodscaping you might start pulling out healthy plants and giving them away or landscaping areas that have been neglected!

There are many possibilities when substituting edible plants for purely ornamental ones. The key is remembering the mantra,

select the right plant for the right place. For example, you might think a blueberry is a good substitute for burning bush in your foundation planting (and you're right it is!), but you also have to remember that blueberries need a lower pH than the burning bush so you'll have to adjust the soil acidity when planting and keep it low afterward.

Below, I offer some common landscape plants and possible foodscape substitutes you might try.



Ornamental Trees	Foodscape Substitute
Crabapple, Flowering plum, Flowering cherry	Apple, Cherry, Plum
Camperdown elm	Weeping mulberry
Redbud	Serviceberry

Ornamental Shrubs	Foodscape Substitute
Burning bush	Blueberry
Dwarf Spirea	Currant or gooseberry
Panicle hydrangea	Elderberry
Hybrid roses	Rosa rugosa
Privet hedge	Asparagus

Flowers	Foodscape Substitute
African daisy	Calendula
Shasta daisy	Bee balm
Bidens	Signet marigold
Profusion zinnia	Mounding nasturtium
Zinnia	Tall marigold
Mounding artemisia	Alpine strawberries
Flowering allium	Chives

Vining/Creeping Plants	Foodscape Substitute
Trumpet vine	Hardy kiwi
Wisteria	Grape
Ajuga	Mint
Morning glory	Scarlet runner bean

NOFA-VT in DC: June 16-18


National Organic Coalition (NOC) Annual Meeting

From June 16th to 18th of this year, the National Organic Coalition (NOC) held its annual meeting and hill visits in Washington, D.C. NOC, of which NOFA-VT is an active member, is an alliance of organizations working to provide a united voice in Washington for the organic community and to maintain the integrity of organic food and farming nationally. This year, NOC's annual fly-in brought national stakeholders together to strategize on key issues like advancing organic integrity, growing domestic organic supply, and preventing genetic contamination on farms. While in DC, Maddie Monty, NOFA-VT's Policy Advisor, met with USDA officials and Vermont's Congressional delegates to discuss current issues that impact Vermont's organic farmers and eaters. She thanked our federal representatives for the difficult work they do and asked them to continue to stand up for policies that work for Vermont's organic food and farming community.



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Summer Policy Update

By Maddie Monty, NOFA Vermont Office Manager and Policy Advisor

Water Quality

Just before the close of the 2015 session, both chambers of the legislature voted overwhelmingly to pass H.35 – a bill aimed at improving water quality in Lake Champlain and other Vermont waterways. After much debate among legislators and stakeholders, especially over funding, the bill provides around \$7.5 million toward implementation and enforcement of new water quality regulations. Some primary funding sources include a surcharge on the state's property transfer tax, fees on medium and large farm registrations, and fees on the sale of non-agricultural fertilizer and pesticides. In part, these funds will be used to pay for enhanced education, outreach, enforcement, and inspections by creating 8 new positions at the Agency of Agriculture and 13 at the Department of Environmental Conservation.

While passage of H.35 set the stage for changes to Vermont's agricultural and stormwater management practices, many details of the clean-up initiative will be fleshed out through a rulemaking process over the coming year. For example, one key provision of the bill calls for the State to develop new regulations for reducing pollution from farms, changing accepted agricultural practices (AAPs) to "required agricultural practices" (RAPs) since they will be mandatory under the new legislation. What exactly those practices will include has yet to be determined. As the State works toward implementation of the law, NOFA will be working to ensure that organic farmers are aware of any new requirements they may face, while also working with State partners to ensure that implementation is as practical and effective as possible.

GMO Labeling Update: David vs. Goliath? Let's Hope So

The legal battle to uphold Vermont's GMO labeling law has often been described as a classic David and Goliath-style battle, wherein our small but mighty state is pitted against the gargantuan likes of the Grocery Manufacturers

Association (GMA) and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA). As the legal challenge brought by the GMA and others begins to move through the courts, members of the VT Right to Know GMOs coalition are working to ensure that our battle ends with the same happy result as that famed parable.

On April 27th of this year, the first significant blow was dealt to the GMO giants in the form of a ruling by the U.S. District Court for the District of Vermont. In the ruling, Judge Christina Reiss soundly rejected plaintiffs' attempt to halt implementation of Vermont's GMO labeling law (Act 120), dismissing claims that the law is unconstitutional and preempted by federal law. On May 6th, plaintiffs appealed the District Court's decision, though a schedule for the next steps has not been set as of this writing.

In the meantime, Act 120 is set to go into effect on July 1st of 2016, giving food producers, distributors, and retailers just over a year to prepare to put GMO labeling into action in the Green Mountain State. For more information and ongoing updates on the GMO show-down, you can visit the website of the VT Right to Know coalition (vtrighttoknowgmoms.org) or Attorney General Bill Sorrell (ago.vermont.gov).

USDA Accepts Proposals for an Organic Check-Off Program

Whether you know it or not, you have probably seen marketing campaigns run by commodity research and promotion or "check-off" programs. Remember "Got milk?" and "Beef – It's what's for dinner"? Each of these marketing campaigns was created through what is commonly called a commodity check-off program. Currently, there are check-off programs in place for all sorts of commodities, from pork to popcorn, which



are funded by producers and run by boards made up of industry stakeholders. In May, USDA began accepting proposals for a check-off program that would cover all organic commodities and require organic producers, importers, processors, and handlers above a certain income threshold to pay in to fund the program. The first proposal, called GRO Organic, was submitted by the Organic Trade Association (OTA) on May 12th of this year. It would raise an estimated \$30 million annually for organic research and promotion. While \$30 million per year sounds like a boon for the organic community, the idea has been met with resistance by some stakeholders. For example, some organizations claim that conventional check-offs have disproportionately benefitted large processors and manufacturers at the expense of small and mid-sized farms. In fact, some feel that check-offs have directly contributed to the decline of small farms. Ineffective marketing is another concern. Because they fall under the USDA's umbrella, check-off programs tend to restrict the language and claims used in promotion, which can result in painfully generic marketing. On the other hand, more funding for organic research is sorely needed and a check-off program could help increase the capacity for domestic organic agriculture. Will an organic check-off prove to be a blessing or a burden for Vermont's organic farmers? If you have thoughts, please be sure to share them with us. In the meantime, we will be following the process every step of the way and will be asking for your input to help us inform our actions on this and other key policy issues. ✨

What is Crop Cash?

By Michael Good, NOFA-VT Community Food Security Program Assistant



This summer, there will be a new currency circulating through farmers markets in Vermont. This currency, called Crop Cash, is the new name for the double value incentive coupon program promoting the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at the farmers markets with 3SquareVT benefits, while stretching monthly food budgets. This summer, NOFA-VT will make Crop Cash available at all 42 farmers markets in the state currently authorized to accept EBT and Debit cards.

For a complete list of participating farmers markets, please visit <http://vermontfoodhelp.com/where-can-i-use-3squaresvt/farmers-markets>.

More than 85,000 Vermonters currently receiving 3SquaresVT funds can benefit from the program by using their monthly food assistance dollars at the farmers markets. After swiping their EBT card and receiving the usual \$1 wooden tokens, which can be used on any SNAP eligible food, users will automatically receive matching Crop Cash (up to \$10 per market day), which can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables only (e.g. when \$15 in 3SquaresVT benefits are used, an additional \$10 in Crop Cash will be given).



More information at <http://nofavt.org/cropcash>

NOFA Summer Conference

August 14-16th • University of Mass, Amherst, MA

Join the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) for three days with 150+ workshops on farming, gardening, nutrition, land care, food politics and much more.

This year's theme is *Healing the Climate, Healing Ourselves: Regeneration through Microbiology*. Keynote speakers are Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride, medical doctor and nutritional consultant, and Ronnie Cummins, consumer activist and regenerative agriculture advocate.

This is an event for the whole family: with music, dance, films, games, animal rides and meet-ups. While you attend great educational workshops, your children get to experience age-appropriate and fun workshops about these same topics, with tracks for children 5-12 and teens 13-17, as well as childcare for children 2-4. 100+ exhibitors offer unique products and services throughout the weekend.

Dr. Campbell-McBride presents Friday's keynote address and pre-conference, "Healing the Gut." Ronnie Cummins presents Saturday evening keynote, "Reversing Global Warming & Rural Poverty through Regenerative Organics." Dr. Campbell-McBride offers a Friday all-day seminar.

There are 5 pre-conferences on Friday: Herbal Remedies for Digestive Wellness with Brittany Nickerson; Regenerative Agriculture for the Climate with Connor Stedman; Pastured Poultry with Ken Gies; Healing Your Body with the GAPS Nutritional Protocol with Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride; and Backyard Beekeeping with Sanne Kure-Jensen.

Modest registration, inexpensive dorm rooms, camping, and delicious organic meals are available. Group registration discounts and limited scholarships and work exchange opportunities are available. Registration early bird pricing through July 17.

Find out more at www.nofasummerconference.org





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Recognizing participants in the Farmer Correspondence Program

By Abbie Nelson, NOFA-VT Education Coordinator

“Greetings from The Last Resort Farm in Monkton! As my old friends know, my name is Eugenie Doyle. I am excited to be your farmer pen pal again this year. I look forward to getting to know all you new friends through your letters....So I will hope to help you know more about farming. For us, dear pen pals, this will be more than an agricultural literacy week; it will be an agricultural literacy year! Starting now.” This is how the relationship began with Ruth Beecher, teacher at Robinson Elementary School in Starksboro.

Eugenie has been corresponding with a classroom for many years. Because of this devotion to agricultural education and her community, the NOFA VT Farm to Community Mentors wanted to honor her, and the 24 other farmers across Vermont, for 3 or more years of service. We decided a farmer correspondence plaque to put on their barns, with their farm name on it, would show our appreciation.

These farmers write four letters annually, between November and May describing what they are doing on their farms during the winter and spring. Many of these farmers also host their classroom pen pals on their farm to show them what they were writing about.

The Farm to Community Mentors thank all the farmers who take the time to be involved in their communities and, particularly, with those young people who are learning the importance of sustainable and organic farming and sharing the many facets of agriculture. ✨



Eugenie Doyle (pictured above), of Last Resort Farm in Monkton, is an enthusiastic participant in the Farmer Correspondence Program.

Dear Ava, Laura, Latham, Isabella, Parker, Ms Beecher, and many new friends,

Right now at the Last Resort Farm we are finishing the growing season and selling the last of the food we grew this summer. We still have potatoes, sweet potatoes, red and yellow onions, carrots, garlic, dried beans, peppers, cabbage, salad greens, brussels sprouts, tomatoes, winter squash, and pie pumpkins. Can you find some food you like on that list? Have you eaten any of those foods in your school lunch? We send many kinds of vegetables to Robinson School and I always wonder what Emily cooks them into. What are your favorite lunches?

Besides selling veggies, we also sell eggs and have been busy getting the chickens ready for the winter. We set up lights on a timer in the chicken coop so the chickens will think the days are longer than they are. Chickens need 12-14 hours of daylight in order to keep laying eggs. How many hours of daylight do we actually have? At my house the sun has been rising at about 7 AM and setting at 4:30 PM or so. How many hours is that? Can you see why we need to give the ladies extra light?

By the way we have 30 hens and one rooster. No, I'm afraid the rooster is not Prince Charming. We have a new young rooster named Pebble. Our beloved Prince had a bad foot, so we gave him to a nice family from Bhutan, refugees living in Burlington, who love to eat fresh organic chicken. I know, this is a sad end to a wonderful bird. But look at it this way: he had a wonderful life and now is giving nutrition to a family living far from their homeland. Prince Charming and some of our other old hens brightened the day of that family.

Here's another chicken story. As some of you know, we had some baby chicks here last spring. They were supposed to grow up and start laying eggs this fall. Well, all 20 of them started crowing at the age of 2 or 3 months. Do you know what that meant? They were all roosters! And roosters will never lay eggs because that is not their job. The job of a rooster is to fertilize the eggs so the eggs can hatch into chicks, and to protect the hens. So, you might think, great! You have 20 protectors and fertilizers! Hmmm... Can you imagine what the problem was? Roosters fight! One rooster per flock is enough unless we wanted injury and vicious squawking and that is not our idea of farming. So, after thanking them for their food we slaughtered 19 of them quickly, quietly, plucked the feathers, washed them, and put them in the freezer for our customers.

We are also planting garlic this time of year, and tending new salad greens in the hoop house. I'm sending you photos of all our projects. I'm also sending you a story I wrote about putting a farm "to bed" for the winter.

I guess that's about it for now. Please send me your questions about farming and I'll do my best to answer. Send me your ideas about farming so we can all learn together! Study hard and have fun.

From your farmer friend,
Eugenie

Recipe: Everyday Hummish

by Joe Bossen

Ingredients

1 lb (16oz) cooked beans (or about 1/2 lb dry), any will do really, but soldier beans are particularly good in bean spreads
1 T sunflower oil (consider gently simmering a few sprigs of aromatic herbs in the oil before combining)
2 t apple cider vinegar
2 t salt (add more to taste)
water or cooking liquid (add until you get smooth consistency)

...to this add up to 1/2c (4oz) of pretty much anything:

- Roasted mushrooms and garlic
- Minced alliums
- Root vegetable puree

...and/or add 2 t of most any spices or flavorings you're fond of:

- Smoked paprika
- Chili powder
- Fennel seed
- Fresh herbs (particularly aromatic, ie rosemary & thyme)
- Boiled cider or maple syrup

What to do:

Beans --

- Rinse the beans in a colander under running water, then leave them to soak overnight or for a couple hours—be sure to use a vessel that will allow them to expand to double, up to two-and-one-half times, their volume when dry.
- Once the beans have become saturated, cook on medium heat with a lid slightly ajar (if you leave the lid on tight, they'll likely boil over) until the beans become easily crushed into a smooth paste between your fingers. Once the beans can be easily pressed against the roof of your mouth with your tongue with the gritless texture of a well-cooked potato, you're set!




- Drain off the water, but save it to thin out the hummish to your desired consistency (saving the cooking liquid will allow for a much richer hummish at the end).

Everything else --

- Prepare and portion out the rest of your ingredients while your beans cook. Stir them together so you get an even distribution of flavor through the spread.
- Once you've drained the beans stir in these other ingredients while the beans are still hot.
- Blend the sum of all parts in either a food processor or with an immersion blender, adding back in the cooking liquid (called bean liquor down South) until you get a smooth, almost creamy texture. The hummish will continue to evaporate off some water while it cools, so consider making the hummish a bit wetter than you think you might have to, or else just wait to see the texture of it once it's cooled and blend in a bit more liquid if necessary.

SAVE THE DATE! The NOSB meeting is coming to Stowe, VT!

Calling all certified organic producers and interested consumers! This is your opportunity to get your voice heard. The fall National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting will take place on October 26-29 at the Stoweflake Conference Center, in Stowe, VT. Public comments from the organic industry are requested. If you would like to submit written comments or attend the meeting, please contact Nicole Dehne at nicole@nofavt.org. 



Spring 2015 New Members

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

New & Renewing Business Members

- 1000 Stone Farm, Brookfield, VT
- Brandon Farmers Market, Brandon, VT
- F.W. Cobs Company, Inc., St. Albans Bay, VT
- Farm and Wilderness Foundation, Plymouth, VT
- Farmstand at the Cobble, Hinesburg, VT
- Fire Hill Enterprises, Florence, VT
- Garden Art, LLC, Addison, VT
- Gardner Family, LLC, Pownal, VT
- Green Mountain Compost, Williston, VT
- Hanover Co-op Food Stores, Hanover, NH
- Houde Family Farm, St. Johnsbury, VT
- Laraway Youth & Family Services, Johnson, VT
- Olivia's Crouton Company, New Haven, VT
- Quarry Road Farms, Middlebury, VT
- Rosalie J. Wilson Business Development Services, Norwich, VT
- Taylor Valley View Farm, Washington, VT
- Valentine Farm, East Montpelier, VT
- Vermont Poultry LLC, Bennington, VT
- Vermont School of Herbal Studies, Greensboro, VT
- Whitetail Acres, Williamstown, VT
- Willsboro Farm, Willsboro, NY

New Members

- Peter Backman, Foster Hill Farm, East Calais, VT
- John and Brent Brigham, Holyoke Farm, St. Albans, VT
- Susan and Dan Foster, White River Junction, VT
- Leslie Gensburg, East Burke, VT
- Rika Henderson, Cambridge, MA
- Larry and Mary Beth Keefe, Westerly, RI
- Stephen Kellert, New Haven, CT
- Christopher Kirby, Kirby Farm, Whiting, VT
- Sophia Kruszewski, Burlington, VT
- Paul Lahar, Lahar's Maple Ridge, Newport, VT
- Patrice Maloney, Riverhill Farms, Inc., Williston, VT
- Stephen Mayer, Shelburne, VT
- George and Mary Osgood, Osgood Farm, Corinth, VT
- Linda Ward, Waterville, VT

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.

- April's Maple, Canaan, VT
- Baker Family Maple, Wallingford, VT
- Farm at VYCC, Richmond, VT
- Good Earth Farm LLC, Brandon, VT
- Greens Corners Maple Products, Saint Albans, VT
- Hidden Mountain Maple, Lincoln, VT
- Maple Sugar Mountain, Waterville, VT
- Marsh Family Sugarworks, Jeffersonville, VT
- Metcalf Pond Maple, LLC, Jeffersonville, VT
- Moose Mountain Maple, Underhill, VT
- Perron Maple, Glover, VT
- Pure & Simple Organic Farm, Johnson, VT

- Robbin's Mountain Enterprises, Bolton, VT
- Shadow Creek Farm, Richmond, VT
- Small Batch Organics LLC, Peru, VT
- Steven Rogers, Bradford, VT
- Sweet Tree Holdings 1, LLC, Island Pond, VT
- The Vermont Maple Farm, West Topsham, VT
- Toad Squeak Farm, Putney, VT
- Umbrella Hill Maple, Morrisville, VT
- Vermont Livestock Slaughter and Processing, Ferrisburg, VT

Learn more about the benefits of certified organic, locally grown at www.nofavt.org/why-organic.

Thank you to our recent supporters:

Birdseye, Huntington, a beautiful handmade conference table

The family and friends of Peter Watson who donated to NOFA in memory of Peter Watson: Celeste & Eric Grace, Gretchen Howard, John & Anne Huenemoerder, Maureen Kingston, John Steinmetz, Ellen Zapf, Edward & Martha Edmonds, Jane Wilson, Suzanne Walton, Dr. Kristy Hendricks & Dr. Jason Weisfeld, Joseph Slisz

For general support

- Susan Cross, \$500
- Elizabeth Dezon-Gaillard, \$100
- Susan & Don Foster, \$500
- Lisa Nash, Rainbow Serpent, \$250

Program Grants:

- Farm Aid, \$2,000 to support policy work
- Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement, \$1,000 to support the 2015 Beginning Farmer Workshops
- The John Merck Fund, \$75,000 to support NOFA Vermont's project "Farm to Institution in Vermont: Adapting and Expanding Best Practices"
- USDA Risk Management Agency, \$20,000 subaward through the University of Vermont for Risk Management Education in Vermont 2014-2015
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, \$2,000 to support swine education workshops

Support for the Organic Dairy Economic Study

- Green Mountain Feeds \$500
- Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative Inc. \$1,000
- Stonyfield Farm, Inc. \$2,500
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture \$1,500
- Yankee Farm Credit, \$1,500

Support for the NOFA Vermont Farmer Correspondence Program

- Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Inc., \$500 to support work in Windsor County
- Eric Hanson, \$500 to support work in Chittenden County
- Sugarbush Resort, \$500 to sponsor Fayston Elementary School fieldtrips



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JULY EVENTS:

- 7/7 • Place-based Herbal Medicine
- 7/9 • Celebrate Your Farmer Social
- 7/14 • Value-added Processing Facility Tour
- 7/15 • Managing Cows, Pasture, and Nutrients
- 7/15 • Keeping Old Tractors Alive and Well
- 7/16 • Social & Beginning Farmer Gathering
- 7/21 • Organic Strawberry Production
- 7/23 • Celebrate Your Farmer Social
- 7/28 • Emerging New Fruits



VISIT WWW.NOFAVT.ORG/OWS for a complete listing, and to register online!