



Fall 2017

Enid's Thoughts	2
Ask Callie	5
A Call to Farms	6
Cost of Production Project ..	9
Policy Update	10
Free Summer Meals	13
#rootedinvermont	15
Supporters	18

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Serendipity Brings Young Farmers to Stowe

By Katy Lash, VOF Certification Assistant

Nestled into the foothills of the iconic town of Stowe is Long Winter Farm. It is located in the Nebraska Notch Valley, which as Annie says is the “Stowe that isn’t Stowe,” and naturally the views are fantastic. It is a quiet neighborhood on the outskirts of the bustling town. As I walked into their house, I was greeted enthusiastically by their dog, Waffles. They bought the property from Catherine Kaiser, in partnership with the Stowe Land Trust and Vermont Land Trust. The property used to be a dairy farm owned by the Kaiser family for 70 years. They were renting an apartment just down the road while they searched for farmland throughout the area, and Andrew started helping Catherine with haying the property. They never thought they would find property in Stowe, but when Catherine decided to retire, she asked them if they wanted it and they were excited to jump on the opportunity.

“It was really serendipitous. We are very lucky,” said Annie as we stood in the front yard watching their livestock graze. In addition to certified organic vegetables, the Paradees also have pasture raised laying hens, meat



Visitors tour Long Winter Farm at the NOFA-VT Pizza Social in July 2017.

birds, turkeys, pigs and two calves. “The turkeys are new this year. There’s definitely a market for it.”

Andrew grew up on a dairy farm in Sheldon and speaks of farming as a lifestyle. Annie grew up in the Stowe area and has always been an avid gardener. They began their farming adventure traveling to Zambia to serve as agricultural volunteers in the U.S. Peace Corps for two years. They describe their work as farmers as “such tangibly rewarding work.” Since they are new to the community, they speak highly of the support they have received from their neighbors since moving onto the property last year. They have a small self-serve farm stand, which is a converted shed at the edge of the lot, that serves

passersby as well as the members of their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, which is set up as a credit system.

While we stood outside the farm stand, one of their members stopped by with his reusable bag to pick up his weekly produce. Another neighbor pedaled up on her bike to pick up her weekly share; most of their customers are their neighbors. “I love having a farm stand,” said Annie. “It makes it easy for us, and it creates that connection to the farm that people crave.” Some of the other properties they looked at would not have made it feasible to have

It worked out perfectly that they found this sweet spot.

(Serendipity, continued on page 3)



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Fall Thoughts from Enid

If you attended one of our on-farm pizza socials this summer or fall, you heard that we have a goal of raising 100 new members this season. At the social at Good Heart Farmstead in Worcester on September 6, I explained that members are critical to growing our base – NOFA's voice is important and the more people we have contributing to our collective voice, the stronger we are. And we need all people who care about a strong food movement (whether your focus is local and/or organic and/or regenerative) to come to the table. Whether you are a gardener, homesteader, commercial farmer, farmers market shopper, or just plain enthused eater – everyone matters.

There are many issues that we are speaking up about, and we hope you will join us! Coming right up, NOFA-VT is collaborating with farmers Dave Chapman and Davey Miskell to organize rallies to Keep the Soil in Organic and preparing to testify at the fall National Organic Standards Board meeting in Florida (see page 10 for more details). And we are also organizing a statewide fabulous "eat out for a cause" event called Share the Harvest to support our Farm Share Program which provides subsidized Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares for limited-income Vermonters (see insert).

Farther afield, NOFA's voice will be represented by NOFA Interstate Council member Liz Henderson at the General Assembly of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM North America) in Baltimore and then at the Organic World Congress in India in November. Liz recently commented on the importance of being at the table and speaking up, "the National Organic Program is a market-based approach to organic agriculture. Under the conditions of globalized, industrialized capitalism, the grassroots organic movement in this country has always been swimming against the stream with the risk of being swept up by commercial success - or swept away. Globally, organic farming is a way of life rather than a marketing angle, and organic farmers are allies of the peasant movements that represent the majority of food

producers on the planet. We will have to be very creative in implementing Organic 3.0 (the new stage of organic agriculture internationally), though it is already underway. There are obvious pitfalls – the domination of the market by large corporate entities, temptations to cheat, rampant unbridled greed. And important attractions – this should be inspirational – a way to unite disparate efforts that currently compete for scarce resources and speak at cross-purposes, or do not even connect well at all. Agroecology, urban agriculture, food sovereignty, certified organic, biodynamic, regenerative organic, domestic fair trade, soil and

health – we must all come together. The struggles of farm workers and other food chain workers, of Black Lives Matter and Cosecha for justice and equity must be our struggles too if we hope to realize our dreams of a world of peace, security, health and

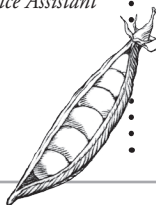
abundance for all."

We heard this sentiment echoed by a consumer member at our most recent social. At each social, we have asked for someone who is willing to provide a testimonial about why they are a NOFA member. Helen Spring stated, "We need organizations like NOFA so people can understand the importance of organic farming. And it's going to become more and more important because of issues like climate change and food access. NOFA-VT is a key educator."

So, with my thinly veiled membership pitch in mind, please help us reach new members by sharing this copy of NOFA Notes with your family, friends and neighbors. Invite people who may be interested to the Winter Conference. Eat out on October 5th to Share the Harvest and bring a friend. And please share your creative membership outreach strategies with us! Thanks for being members and for helping us spread the word!



Enid Wonnacott
NOFA-VT Executive Director



a farm stand because of the location, so it worked out perfectly that they found this sweet spot in Stowe. They have hosted a few community events, including a NOFA Pizza Social in July, and plan to host more in the future.

Their first year on the land was spent diligently getting the farm established and their house built. “The house was one of the biggest challenges,” said Annie. They entertained many different options, but ultimately they decided to go with a modular home to stay within their budget and get it built quickly and efficiently. We discussed housing and access to property as being the biggest challenges for beginning farmers. They are very grateful to have been able to work with the Land Trust to gain access to affordable land in a prime location. They are excited to be cultivating land that is protected forever.

Next to their house is the “starter house” where all the magic begins—it was hot inside and filled with fall baby greens (and some asparagus that just can’t seem to make it into the ground)! We continued down the hill into the field below their house where they grow most of their vegetables. It had just rained and the mist rose slowly off the field as the sun peaked out from behind the clouds, illuminating the rows of veggies. They have one high tunnel that went up last year, and are preparing to put up a second before the end of this year, with the help of a grant from The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). With the weather being as unpredictable as it is, they find it valuable to have space to control the climate. They have about an

acre and a half where they grow a variety of vegetables, with cucumbers, squash and tomatoes growing happily in the high tunnel. Their most popular crop is salad mix. They mentioned some pest problems this year, which they have dealt with by rotating crops. Prior to them cultivating the land last year, the field was being used for hay. They also put in a few rows of blueberry bushes this year, which they have mulched with landscaping fabric and wood chips. It is absolutely amazing how much Annie and Andrew have been able to accomplish in just a year’s time! It is inspiring and reinforces the notion that anything is possible.



*Long Winter Farmer Annie Paradee
(Photo from the Farm’s Instagram feed.)*

Around the corner from the vegetable beds is the pig pen, located on the hillside next to the barn, full of wild apple trees and brush for the pigs to forage. I would have to say the highlight of our tour around the property were the pigs. As we walked up Andrew started calling, “Piggies! Piggies!” to try to rally them up. We eventually found them foraging under one of the larger apple trees with shiny, plump apples on it. “They’ve been climbing on each other to get to the apples out of the trees lately, it’s so funny,” Annie laughed as they snorted and squawked at us. The hillside is full of Japanese knotweed, an invasive species, which the pigs are great at uprooting!

When asked why they decided to get their vegetables certified organic, which they did this year, Annie said it was mostly political reasons. “After the election, we wanted to join this tribe of people who value food safety and it seemed like a great way to do it,” she explained. “We are on board with people who have similar values.” Their livestock is

not certified organic, but they are fed organic feed. Currently they don’t do any additional marketing to sell their meat and vegetables, with the exception of maintaining an Instagram account. Last year they had a wait list for pigs! Originally, they wanted to be an organic sheep dairy and produce sheep’s milk yogurt, but in the unpredictable spirit of life, they were led down a different path, and they like growing vegetables. “We’re pretty content with the niche we’ve found here in Stowe. We will probably focus on more in the future, but we are trying to figure out what works best for us, and we think of this property as a mini-ecosystem.” They are working towards creating a closed-loop system on their farm, which is much of what being organic is all about.

It is exciting, especially for beginning farmers, to see farming as a viable business venture in Vermont. That’s not to say it doesn’t come without its challenges! There are still lots of hoops, especially with regards to land and infrastructure, that beginning farmers have to jump through to get established. Annie said it’s important to have a wide range of skills, and mentioned that Andrew does most of the construction on the farm, including building the starter house and putting in a cement tunnel under the back driveway for the pigs to access their pasture without having to cross the driveway.

In addition to farming, Andrew also works full time at a surveying company. “It compliments farming well,” he said, but he stays busy 7 days a week. In the winter, they both work as ski instructors at Stowe Mountain Resort. There aren’t many vegetable farms in the area anymore so they feel pretty fortunate to be where they are.

The main thing I took away from my visit with Annie and Andrew, is that perseverance and commitment are what make a successful farmer. Where there’s a will, there’s a way! ✨

Vermont Open Farm Week 2017

August 14-20th, Vermont's 3rd Annual Open Farm Week kicked off with nearly 50 farms hosting over 100 events open to the public around the state. From dinners on farms to poetry readings in the field and workshops galore, visitors were treated to a behind-the-scenes view of what happens on working farms. Below are a couple of images of some of the great events that happened that week! Open Farm Week is a collaborative statewide agritourism project organized by members of the Vermont Farm to Plate Network including NOFA-VT, Vermont Fresh Network, City Market, UVM Extension, Shelburne Farms and Farm-Based Education Network, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, and the Vermont Department for Tourism and Marketing. *Photos: Open Farm Week participants learn how to make garlic braids with Eugenie Doyle at Last Resort Farm in Monkton.*



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Bless up the Earth.

Ask Callie

Dear Callie,

We were definitely affected by the cool and rainy spring this year and we were at least 6 weeks late with our first cut of hay. I've started to worry about not having enough feed this year and as an organic dairy producer, I am concerned about where I will be able to source quality organic hay. Can I add on a neighbor's hay field to my application at the end of the season if need be? I know he only applies manure.

Sincerely,
Agitated in Addison

Dear Agitated,

It's true that organic dairy farmers face special challenges when it comes to sourcing feed for their animals. The organic regulations require that organic dairy producers feed their animals 100%


certified organic feed and there is no variance or exception from this requirement. During a difficult cropping year like this one, sourcing certified organic, quality feed can be a serious challenge.

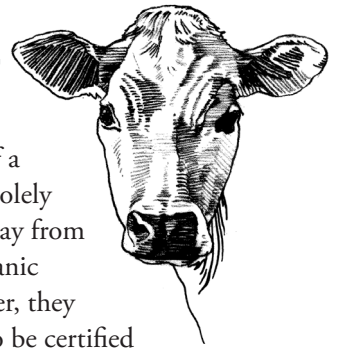
Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) publishes an organic forage guide annually to help compile a listing of who has feed for sale, the type of feed being sold and the location of the seller. This list is compiled as part of the information collected at the beginning of the year from the organic application—so it isn't perfect, but it can be a good start. Please call the VOF office if you are interested in receiving a copy of this year's forage guide.


As for the question regarding your neighbors hay, VOF cannot certify a crop after it has been harvested. In addition, you cannot add a field to your certification if you are not the manager of that field and its crop. Cutting hay alone does not make you the manager of the hay field.

Another source to look out for when going outside of your normal purchasing

practices is hay brokers. If a hay broker is solely transporting hay from a certified organic seller to a buyer, they do not need to be certified themselves. In this example, the receipt for the purchased hay will come directly from the certified producer and there will be a separate charge for transportation costs. If a hay broker is combining or splitting loads they need to be certified themselves, and should therefore have their own organic certificate. In this example, the receipt for the hay will come from the hay broker directly.

As an organic dairy producer concerned about sourcing organic feed, it is important to remember to obtain the proper documentation (a receipt and current organic certificate) before the hay is delivered to your farm. The business on the receipt for the hay purchase and certificate should match. If you ever have any questions about the validity of a purchase, don't hesitate to call the VOF office to talk to our staff. 






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Beyond the Circular Firing Squad: A Call to Farms

If you're involved with the organic farming community in Vermont or elsewhere, chances are good that you've heard the term "regenerative" being used a lot lately. You may have also heard this term if you were around several decades ago when Bob Rodale, son of organic pioneer J.I. Rodale (of the Rodale Institute), coined the term.

Specifically, Rodale described a system of "regenerative organic agriculture" as being "marked by tendencies towards closed nutrient loops, greater diversity in the biological community, fewer annuals and more perennials, and greater reliance on internal rather than external resources." [1] Perhaps with the exception of "fewer annuals," some would say this description is fitting of organic farming, or at least the way organic was envisioned by its earliest practitioners many years ago.

Today, as we all face increasingly challenging times environmentally and economically, many are saying we need to do better. We need farming systems that actively reverse climate change rather than contribute to it, that foster thriving human and microbial communities, and that regenerate rather than degenerate natural systems.

In many conversations about regenerative agriculture,

Dear David, and 62 other friends,

We think it is important to get beyond this circular firing squad portion of the Regeneration revolution. The upshot of all these dialogues is that very few are at the level of farming that we all would agree is regenerative, whether vegetable, fruit, nut, grain, dairy, or meat producers. So, let's put down the guns.

We worked for years on farms where chemicals were the norm and we farmed with chemicals. It was hard learning not to depend on them, since they make a complex and difficult life easier. Lots of quality researchers and farmers helped us make the conversion to organic, including ag extension and NRCS—but they didn't have a road map either. It was a collaborative process with lots of failures before successes.

When we first started converting to organic 50 years ago, there were no rulebooks, very few mentors, and literally no organic seed. Our first efforts were focused on: how can we do this without chemicals and still get yield and quality? To replace plowing we subsoiled, disced, and harrowed; to replace herbicides we did close cultivation; to replace pesticides we learned biological IPM (Integrated Pest Management); to replace fertilizers we grew cover crops and composted our manures and processing waste.

however, there sometimes seem to be more questions than answers. What does "regenerative organic agriculture" look like in practice? Exactly what are its goals and who are its practitioners? For some, answering these questions means admitting where we're falling short, and that can be a hard pill to swallow.

In an exchange earlier this year, which he shared with us, Will Allen of Cedar Circle Farm and Regeneration Vermont wrote the following message to David Bronner (of Dr. Bronner's Soaps) and a small community of other organic farmers and supporters. In it, Will responds to instances of in-fighting or finger pointing that often occur in changing times among passionate and well-intentioned people. The "circular firing squad," as he calls it, only serves to slow down progress our planet so desperately needs.

We are thankful to Will for providing a hard look at the origins of the organic farming movement, his take on where we find ourselves today, and his advice for how we should move forward – together.

*— Maddie (Monty) Kempner
NOFA-VT Membership & Policy Coordinator*

All of these changes were improvements over our previous practices, but not all were regenerative—as we would define them today—especially our organic land management strategies. Many of our organic colleagues used spaders, rototillers, a mixture of plows, and a variety of other tillage tools, which had been sold to them as conservation upgrades from traditional tillage.

When we raised animals (goats, cows, pigs, and chickens), all were on pasture; only the billy goats were confined in large pens. Now we know that even these were not the best regenerative animal management practices, since our grazing paddocks were too large, and we didn't move our animals often enough.

We were not much focused on climate change and carbon loss in those days; we were more concerned with pesticide and fertilizer elimination and convincing customers that they should buy our crops because they were "safer". We always religiously planted a variety of cover crops, including cowpeas, clovers, vetches, crotalaria and several grasses, and tried to limit our soil disturbance practices by sub-soiling every other year and cutting our cultivations—in California that was doable since we controlled the irrigations, in Vermont that is tougher, but doable even though the rainfall is frequent and capricious.

(continued on next page)

After I was appointed to the Montreal Protocol Technical Committee on Ozone Depleting substances in the 1990s, I realized, from associating with climate scientists, that climate change was often a bigger concern of theirs than ozone holes. Many were already thinking about agricultural greenhouse gas emissions as being unrecognized for their magnitude. That led us to be even more careful on the farm of keeping the ground covered with either a crop or a cover crop and prompted an even further reduction of our tillage.

Five or six years ago, after I read Rattan Lal's research on tillage and tractor emissions, we started trying to figure out how to reduce our tillage and learn how to do minimum-till and no-till without the herbicide burn-down. Thanks to the University of Vermont, we got a roller crimper, and with Dr. Bronner's assistance, we were able to buy a no-till transplanter, and a no-till grain drill.

Thus far, we have made some progress on vegetables and grains and killing the cover crops we plant into. We are expanding our efforts to more acreage and more crops. We are collaborating with other farmers, with UVM, and we picked the brains of the Rodale Institute. But no one on medium scale farms, at UVM or Rodale, has reached the point where they could say, "voila, we have organic no-till figured out." On smaller scale farms (3-8 acres), many farmers are having no-till success with layers of hand applied mulch and large amounts of compost and labor. But we farm 60 acres of mixed vegetables, melons, berries, beans, and grains, so we are trying to duplicate their success using mechanical techniques on larger acreages.

We are experimenting with no-till organic pasture and grain management along with our vegetable, fruit, and berry trials. We are doing them side-by-side with conventional tillage to get a real data set for comparison. So, we would love to collaborate, instead of shooting at each other.

The point of this message is that during this transition we should be supportive of each sector's efforts. It doesn't help to attack organic farmers for their tillage transgressions, and it doesn't help to point fingers at husbandry farmers for clinging to chemical tools. Few, if any, could meet a real regenerative organic litmus test today. Besides that, there isn't one! We are in a transition period to Regenerative Organic farming. Few farms could be certified Regenerative Organic today.

As organic growers, we all know that several of our organic brothers and sisters are not where we would like them to be with respect to land management, animal welfare and treatment of labor. There are regulations in every state and national set of organic certifying rules that carbon soil organic matter has to be maintained or increased. Does every organic grower adhere to that set of rules? No. That is what needs to be enforced! What also needs to be changed and enforced is animal treatment and limiting confinement to animal welfare and weather concerns,



Save the Date for the organic no-till workshops planned for September 25 & 26, which we're sponsoring along with Soil Carbon Coalition, Regeneration Vermont, Soil4Climate, UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture.
More information at nofavt.org/events

not convenience of management.

Like organic, in its early days, Regeneration has no handbook, no restricted practices, no board of inquiry, no label, no market, and almost no producers. We have hardly anything to sell but an idea. Bob Rodale's idea. Our job is to make his idea a reality. We should be collaboratively developing and enhancing systems that regenerate farm and forestlands and backyards. Our job is trying to figure out how to increase the number of regenerative practitioners and the customers that demand their products.

Regenerative conversions are and will be similar to the organic conversions—difficult! While change is hard, government agencies, NGOs, community groups, and some corporations have already expressed interest and support. Regeneration has become a minor buzzword. NRCS is our ally, since they know that carbon is not only important for their soil conservation efforts but because there will be federal money for carbon sequestration in one form or another. We have already hooked up with some of them at the national and state level. We have a lot more potential allies than we think, and we need to find supporters wherever we can.

We have a lot of carbon to put back in the soil. It is an exciting time for the soil—and for us.

One of the strategies that helped us increase our organic farming skills was collaboration. We shared in the belief that if we shared our successes, we would not all have to reinvent the same wheel.

Stop the firing squads! Let's have a good time figuring out TOGETHER how to do this better!

Love and Struggle,
Will Allen

Four Farms; Four Farmers Markets; Three Days

Photos & Story by Erin Buckwalter, NOFA-VT Market Development Director

In late June, a six-person delegation from Vermont took a learning journey to Washington state to explore how direct market farms and farmers markets there are innovating and capturing direct sales. On the trip were Erin Buckwalter and Michael Good of NOFA-VT; Corie Pierce of Bread and Butter Farm in Shelburne; Taylor Hutchinson of Footprint Farm in Starksboro; Charlotte Roozkrans, manager of the Waitsfield Farmers Market; and Sherry Maher, manager of the Brattleboro Winter Farmers Market. The crew spent the first day in the Olympia area, the second day in Port Townsend, and the final day exploring farmers markets in Seattle.

Overall, the group toured four farms and four farmers markets over the three

days, and logged over 350 miles! From the $\frac{3}{4}$ acre Little Big Farm in Olympia, cultivating on their two small parcels tens of thousands of pounds of food for their CSA and local farmers market to the much larger Finnriver Farm and Cidery in Chimacum, a multi-venture farm and agritourism destination, the group explored innovation production and marketing practices, and techniques for engaging customers. In addition, at the farmers markets the group learned about the internal structures, opportunities and challenges at the different farmers markets, as well as observed the displays and marketing styles of the many vendors—getting both a behind-the-scenes and customers view.

We all came back with many new ideas and lessons learned, but we all agreed

that one of the greatest learning opportunities of the trip happened in the car in between visits when our mixed group of service providers, farmers and farmers market managers were all able to share and discuss our different perspectives and takeaways. It was amazing the variety of questions that came up during our tours and how differently each of us interpreted the information. Because of these differences, the discussion was much richer and broadened our perspectives.

Funding for this learning journey was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant 16FMPPVT0023. These contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA. ✨



Below: Lotty and Erin talking with the manager of the Ballard Farmers Market in Seattle and Will O'Donnell, Executive Director of the Washington State Farmers Market Association.

Left, top: The crew visiting Little Big Farm in Olympia, Washington

Left, bottom: Learning about the history and current ventures of Finnriver Farm & Cidery from owner, Crystie Kisler.



Organic Vegetable Cost of Production

It costs how much to produce those carrots!?

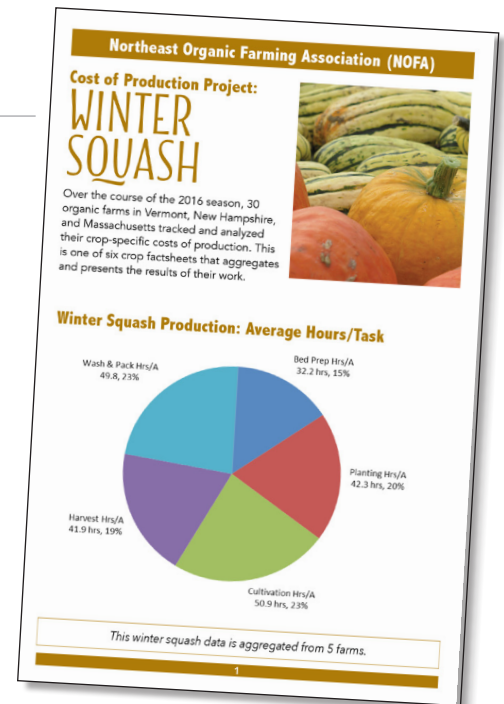
By Jen Miller, Farmer Services Coordinator

Though most organic vegetable farmers did not start farming for the money, the reality is that they cannot continue growing food if their farm is not profitable. The list of expenses that were part of producing each carrot sitting on your plate is extensive—seed, labor, tractors, packaging supplies, marketing, overhead, and more. In order to not only be profitable but to maximize their profitability, farmers need to determine which crops are worth growing and which crops are not pulling their weight. A profitable crop is one that covers all business expenses with some money left over to pay the farmer.

NOFA-VT, in partnership with NOFA Mass and NOFA-NH, is currently wrapping up a multi-state Specialty Crop Block Grant project designed to support farmers in calculating their crop-specific costs of production. Over the past two years, we have worked with 30 organic vegetable farmers in our three states to

select, track, and analyze data for one to three crops commonly grown in the Northeast. Looking at their numbers at the end of last season, one farmer participant noted: “Some crops that seem intuitively profitable are actually not that much better and sometimes worse than others that seem more onerous. And some aspects of a crop production that seem onerous actually don’t cost that much at all.”

Five factsheets are now available that present cost of production data aggregated from participating farms; these provide metrics to guide farmers’ crop and production planning for winter squash, potatoes, onions, carrots, and head lettuce. Supplemental factsheets present tips for cost of production analysis, crop profitability comparisons, and whole farm financial metrics. The workbook used to gather this information is also available for use. Using this combination of tools, resources, and available technical



assistance, farmers can strategically increase the profitability of their farm businesses.

Check out the factsheets and workbook at: www.nofavt.org/cost-of-production

Vermont Farm Kids Share their Stories

New documentary premieres during Agricultural Literacy Week



During Vermont’s 5th annual Agricultural Literacy Week, November 13-18, 2017, the NOFA-VT Farm to Community Mentor Program will premiere a documentary we are creating: **Vermont Farm Kids**. This documentary will celebrate the lives of a diverse array of children and young adults who have grown up as part of a farming family on a variety of Vermont farms. Children and young adults have shared their stories about what it means to have grown up on their own farm and how those experiences have cultivated them as a farm child or young adult and farm entrepreneur. his project is in partnership with Vermont Department of Libraries, with funding support from Farm Credit Northeast Ag Enhancement, so be sure to check with your local libraries to see if they will be showing it!

MORE INFO: nofavt.org/ag-lit-week • **QUESTIONS?** Call (802) 434-4122 or email abbie@nofavt.org

Fall Policy Update

By Maddie Kempner, NOFA-VT Membership & Advocacy Coord.

Fall NOSB Meeting & Vote on Hydroponics in Organic

The fall meeting of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), scheduled for October 31 - November 2 in Jacksonville, Florida, might just be one to remember. Over the course of the three-day meeting, the board will discuss and, we hope, take its final vote on whether hydroponics and certain container growing systems should be certified as organic. Other topics for the fall meeting are yet to be announced, but after years of debate, members of the organic community will be watching the hydroponics issue closely.

There are three ways to submit a comment to the NOSB on hydroponics or another topic:

1) In person. The fall NOSB meeting will take place at the Omni Jacksonville Hotel, 245 Water St., Jacksonville, FL 32202. Sign up for an oral comment slot online at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/event/2017-national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting>



2) Via webinar. The USDA is accepting comments during two webinars, on October 24th and 26th from 1pm-4pm EST. Visit the link above to sign up to comment via webinar.

3) In writing. Written comments will be accepted through Regulations.gov (Docket ID: AMS-NOP-17-0024) until 11:59pm on October 11, 2017.

Save the Date! Keep the Soil in Organic Rallies Oct 8th (Burlington) & 15th (Hanover)

Join fellow organic farmers, eaters, and movement leaders at the Intervale Center in Burlington on Sunday, October 8th and/or on the green at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH on Sunday, October 15th. These are two of 17 rallies happening around the country ahead of the fall NOSB meeting in solidarity with organic producers growing in, and caring for, the soil. Tractor parades at each rally will start rolling at noon, followed by brief speeches, food, music, and celebration! Stay tuned for more details.

Stakeholders Convene to Discuss Ag-Enterprise Legislation

Given the challenges faced by today's rural communities, and the dynamic nature of Vermont's working landscape, agritourism and on-farm businesses have come to play an important role in Vermont's agricultural economy. Enterprises that operate in conjunction with working farms such as farm dinners, tours, and educational events increasingly serve critical roles for many of Vermont's farmers, by providing additional income, and by educating community members about the role of agriculture in Vermont's culture and economy.

Recognizing these realities, a group of key agricultural stakeholders gathered in early September to discuss opportunities to support such agricultural enterprises by reducing regulatory restrictions and incentivizing the development of innovative farm-based initiatives. Stay tuned for more details ahead of the 2018 legislative session, and, as always, email maddie@nofavt.org to share your thoughts! ✨

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Save the Date

For Junior Iron Chef Vermont's competition March 17th, 2018!

Jr Iron Chef VT is a statewide culinary competition organized by VT FEED (a partnership of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms) that challenges teams of middle and high school students to understand how they can affect change in the food system by creating healthy, local dishes that inspire school meal programs.

This year, we are collecting stories from past participants who found that Junior Iron Chef affected their life in a positive way. Know someone who had a leadership role or above-average participation on their team? Know someone whose life was affected by JIC outside of the competition itself, in their community, garden, career, or family? Are you that person?

If so, please contact: jrironchef@nofavt.org with the name, phone number, and email of the person who is willing to speak on-camera about their experience.



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Want to know more? Stop in at your Neighboring Vermont Food Co-op, or visit www.nfca.coop/members.

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Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op, Hardwick
City Market, Onion River Co-op, Burlington
Co-op Food Stores, White River Junction
Granite City Co-op Grocery, Barre (Start-Up)
Hunger Mountain Co-op, Montpelier
Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Middlebury

Morrisville Food Co-op, Morrisville (Start-Up)
Plainfield Food Co-op, Plainfield
Putney Food Co-op, Putney
Rutland Area Food Co-op, Rutland
Springfield Food Co-op, Springfield
Stone Valley Community Co-op Market, Poultney
Upper Valley Food Co-op, White River Junction



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Farmers and farm crews used their agricultural talents to go for the gold at the 3rd Annual NOFA-VT Farmer Olympics at the Cerridwen Farm of Green Mountain College in Poultney. Individual farm teams showed off their finely-honed skills in events ranging from physical to cerebral to plain ridiculous. This mid-season extravaganza was a chance to unwind, celebrate the season, and kick back before the heavy fall workload begins.

SIMPLE PRETZELS

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tsp. active dry yeast
- 1 tsp. white sugar
- 1 ¼ c. warm water
- 5 c. all-purpose flour
- ½ c. white sugar
- 1 ½ tsp. salt
- 1 T vegetable oil
- ¼ c. baking soda
- 4 c. hot water
- toppings: sea salt flakes, herbs, anything else craved or enjoyed

DIRECTIONS:

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast and 1 tsp. sugar in 1 ¼ cup warm water. Let stand until creamy, approx. 10 minutes or so. Use this time to mix together flour, ½ c. sugar, and salt in a different, larger bowl. Make a well in the center; add both the oil and the yeast mixture. Mix joyfully with a wooden spoon until a dough begins to form, then dive in with your hands and knead until smooth, approx. 7-8 minutes. Listen to the dough, it will tell you if it needs more water or flour. Lightly oil the dough ball and place back into bowl. Cover bowl with cloth and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, approx. 1 hr. Preheat oven to 450° F. Grease two baking sheets (I use room temperature salted butter). Dissolve baking soda in a bowl of 4 cups hot water. Set aside. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and divide into 12 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a rope and twist into a pretzel shape (or whatever shape you are feeling). Carefully dip each pretzel into the baking soda/hot water solution, and place on baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt. Bake in preheated oven until brown and delectable, approximately 8 minutes.



Enjoy with others or indulge independently.

This recipe was adapted by Phoebe Tucker, NOFA-VT Mobile Oven Baker!

Summer Meals Feed Kids 12 Months of the Year

By Marissa Watson, NOFA-VT School Food Programs Coordinator

Vermont's Summer Meals program feeds kids at 293 sites across the state to ensure kids under 18 have access to healthy food twelve months of the year, decreasing the likelihood of a break in their nutrition and healthy development outside the school months. VT-FEED, a project of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms, partnered with the Agency of Education and Hunger Free Vermont to support five summer meals programs purchase local fruits and vegetables and provide nutrition education. These programs were chosen to receive mini-grants based on their location, population, and commitment to serving kids local, scratch-cooked meals with a nutrition education component. These are their stories:

Boys and Girls Club of Brattleboro

The Boys and Girls Club of Brattleboro served lunch and dinner throughout the summer in downtown Brattleboro. Their location places them next door to the Tuesday Farmer's Market, to which their chef, Shantell Rizziano, takes kids once a week. Shantell and the kids pick out local vegetables and head back into the kitchen to cook dinner together, learning knife skills and culinary tricks of the trade.

Winooski's Farmers Market

The Winooski's Farmers Market provides kids 18 and under with free meals at the Sunday Winooski Farmers Market. Winooski's partnership is unique for two reasons: first, a diverse collection of community united to create this wonderfully educational and nutritious program; second, it's a summer meal offered on a Sunday – something we piloted last year and was continued by the Winooski Community Partnership. A UVM student club, The POP (Power of Produce), provide nutrition education and activities to kids during the markets, and the meals are prepared through the Winooski School District and the Abbey Group Management Company.

Camp Hochelaga

Camp Hochelaga is situated on Grand Isle's beautiful shore of Lake Champlain. At capacity, their camp houses 120 day and overnight campers. Scholarships and transportation to and from

Downtown Burlington are available to day campers to make the camp more accessible. Hannah Bogard leads children in nutrition activities, tying them into the mealtime experience. When they're interested, she leads groups of campers into the garden, noting that sometimes the girls need a little nudging to weed an existing plot instead of planting a new one... we can all relate.

Albany Community School

Albany Community School's Nancy Miller feeds summer program kids daily with locally grown and harvested products. Meanwhile, Rochelle Miller staffs the Summer Meals program, ensuring that the kids engage in nutrition education each day before mealtime. Children particularly enjoyed the 'Colorful Plate' activity (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate>), which had them placing fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains into a well-balanced meal.

Highgate Apartment Complex

The Rainbow Flatbread Project is a collaboration of Doug Hemmings, Resident Activities Coordinator for Highgate Apartment Complex in Barre City, and

Craig Locarno, Food Service Director with Fitz Vogt. Together, they created two make-your-own pizza lunches for kids and their families at Highgate. Before assembling colorful pizzas with tomatoes, peppers, and greens harvested from Bear Roots Farm, Joanne with Good Food Good Medicine took the kids, ages 6-10, into the garden to show them where their food comes from.

Mini-grants to each site were made possible by the Vermont Community Foundation. For more information about VT-FEED's summer meals work, please contact Marissa Watson at marissa@nofavt.org.



Volunteers and children at the Winooski Farmers Market enjoy a craft sponsored by VT FEED.





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What is “#RootedinVermont”?

The Rooted in Vermont grassroots movement celebrates how all Vermonters acquire and enjoy local food and intends to increase consumer demand so more Vermont food can be available and accessible where most Vermonters shop. This article was contributed by Rachel Carter of the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

Vermonters were farming, gardening, fishing, and hunting long before there were craft beers and gourmet burgers. Traditions like these are as core to Vermont's local food movement as purchasing local food from farmers, restaurants, schools, and stores.

“Vermonters are proud of tradition and our way of life. Local food connects us to the land, to our history, and to our communities. Rooted in Vermont is a movement to help all Vermonters see local food as their own—not because it is a trend, but rather a part of our history and who we are as Vermonters,” says Rachel Carter, communications director for the Vermont Farm to Plate Network—a network of over 300 organizations who are nurturing the Rooted in Vermont movement as a component to implementing Vermont's Farm to Plate food system plan.

Rooted in Vermont Celebrates How Vermonters Acquire & Enjoy Local Food

Growing and foraging; purchasing directly from a farmer or at the store; hunting or fishing; eating at schools, institutions or restaurants serving local food; picking up food at a food shelf; or just sharing Vermont food and drinks with friends and neighbors—these are all examples of being ‘Rooted in Vermont’ and can be experienced in any Vermont community or online by following or using the hashtag #RootedinVermont.

“Our family has been hunting, making maple syrup, and growing our own veggies for years and that's how we eat local food. When more Vermonters can

see their own values and traditions being celebrated and recognized, they will be more likely to seek out and purchase local foods—especially when they understand how it will benefit our state,” shares Liz Perreault, a Plainfield resident who follows Rooted in Vermont on Facebook.

Rooted in Vermont has followers from all over the state on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In fact, Vermonters from all regions of Vermont, and how they enjoy local food, are featured on the Facebook page every Wednesday.

Increasing Consumer Demand

As more Vermonters engage in the movement, grassroots outreach efforts will encourage ways to demonstrate increased demand in local food.

“Cost, convenience, availability, and different food preferences all come into play when Vermonters make decisions about food purchases,” says Carter. “But a little goes a long way! The power really lies with Vermonters to change the system by demanding more local food where we shop so that we have more in-state control about the food available to us and more economic opportunities for our families.”

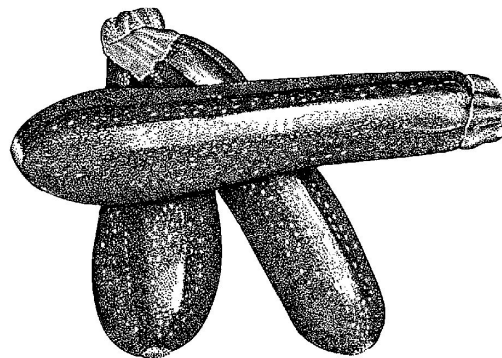
Increased consumer demand sends a signal to the marketplace for more local food to be produced, distributed, and available to Vermonters. Local food sales currently account for 6.9% (\$189 million) of total food sales in Vermont. If 10% of the food purchased in Vermont was locally produced, it would equate to \$300 million staying in the Vermont economy. Purchasing local products keeps more money here in Vermont, in

turn creating jobs, supporting the in-state supply chain, protecting our family farms, and making local food more accessible to more Vermonters.

Join the Rooted in Vermont Grassroots Movement

- Follow the Rooted in Vermont social channels on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Share your Vermont Food roots and tag us in your posts on Facebook; use the hashtag #RootedinVermont on Twitter and Instagram.
- Like, share, comment, retweet, and repost our content with your friends and followers.
- Participate in local food activities and purchase local food—then share with us on social media.
- Businesses, organizations, and Vermont communities can get involved too. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/RootedinVermontMovement>.

The Rooted in Vermont movement is being nurtured by the Vermont Farm to Plate Network as a strategic effort to help implement Vermont's Farm to Plate food system plan to increase economic development and jobs in Vermont's farm and food sector and improve access to healthy local food for all Vermonters. ✿





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Permaculture Workshop: Designing an Edible Landscape

NOFA-VT staff Katy Lash and Maddie Kempner both attended the August 23rd workshop in Jeffersonville. Here's a little of taste of the things they saw, and learned.



On a gorgeous day in mid-August, we began the Permaculture workshop at Keith Morris' village homestead in downtown Jeffersonville (pictured upper left). Keith shared with us how he has designed his small urban yard using principles of permaculture. He had a variety of perennial fruits growing in his front yard, including peaches, red and black currants and green grapes (pictured upper right). We then traveled to his farm, Willow Crossing Farm, a short drive up the road in Johnson. They have a full outdoor kitchen (partially pictured middle left) where we all ate lunch. Then we took a full tour of the property. We checked out some of Keith's sustainable building ventures, like the house pictured (lower left and right). The attached greenhouse is where he keeps all of his nursery plants before his early spring sale. He has a surprisingly vast variety of perennial fruit and nut trees growing on the farm, including hazelnuts, heartnuts, butternuts, and more!



Thank you for supporting sustainable agriculture!

NOFA Vermont welcomes the following members who recently joined us, or provided support, during the third quarter of 2017.

NEW MEMBERS:

Gene Cesari, So. Ryegate, VT
Chuck Collins, Jamaica Plain, MA
Kathy Donegan, South Burlington, VT
Elizabeth Feinberg, White River Jct, VT
Marcie Gallagher, Madison, CT
Diane Gayer, Burlington, VT

Carly Monahan, Stowe, VT
Angela Neilan, Charlottesville, VA
Mary Beth Poli, Center Rutland, VT
Matthew White, St. Albans, VT
John Van Dijk, Burlington, VT

NEW & RENEWING BUSINESS MEMBERS:

Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op
Dobra, LLC, Burlington, VT
Resource Management Inc., Holderness, NH
True North Granola, Brattleboro, VT
Small Batch Organics, LLC, Manchester Center, VT
Sarah Flack Consulting, Enosburg Falls, VT
Franklin Foods Inc, Enosburg Falls, VT
Highland Sugarworks, Websterville, VT
Gardner Family LLC, Pownal, VT
Red Hen Baking Company LLC, Middlesex, VT
King Arthur Baker's Catalogue, Norwich, VT
O Bread Bakery, Shelburne, VT
Depot Farm Supply, Whiting, VT

Ismael Imports, LLC / Boswellnes, Burlington, VT
Snowcap Brewing Company, LLC, Montpelier, VT
Stowe Ice Cream, Stowe, VT
Vermont Tortilla Company, Burlington, VT
Vermont Soap, Middlebury, VT
Green Mountain Spinnery, Putney, VT
Plainfield Co-op, Plainfield, VT
Morrison's Custom Feeds, Inc, Barnet, VT
Back Roads Food Company, LLC, Brattleboro, VT
Blissful Dairy, LLC, Bridport, VT
Rhapsody Natural Foods, Cabot, VT
Addison County Commission Sales Inc., Middlebury, VT
WREN - Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network, Bethlehem, NH



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A loan from the Vermont Farm Fund helped Seedfolks drill a well to wash & cool vegetables, as well as irrigate our high tunnel and water plant starts. The loan offered us the ability to farm on this property efficiently and provide high quality produce to our customers who always remark how clean our veggies are.

-Nicole, Seedfolks Farm



www.VermontFarmFund.org

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT SUPPORTERS:

Leland Alper, \$10 general support
Mary Berlejung, \$200 Farm Share Program
Albert Fischer, \$300 Farm Share Program
Matt & Brittany Witt, Red House Design, \$156 Farm Share Program
Kristen Brassard, \$25 general donation
King Arthur, \$180 for general support
Anne Langevin, \$45 general support
Main Street Landing, \$500 corporate contribution for general support
Ronald Pogue & Mary Cochran, \$135 general support
Angela Russell, \$50 to support the NOFA pizza oven at the 4H horse clinic in Tunbridge
Skinny Pancake, \$45 for general support
Ann Vanneman, \$100 general support
West Hill Energy & Computing, \$1,000 for Farm Share Program
Gay Whieldon, \$25 in memory of Bev Gideon Gardner
Wrenegade Sports LLC, \$200 for Farm to Fork Fondo event

In Kind:

The Final Connection, 4 headsets for the NOFA Vermont office
Green Mountain College, facility for the Farmer Olympics
Vermont Law School, facility for the Farmers Market Conference

PROGRAM GRANTS:

- City Market, \$250 for Farm to Community Mentor Program farm fieldtrips
- Hunger Mountain Cooperative, \$500 for Farm to Community Mentor Program farm fieldtrips
- The John Merck Fund, \$50,000 to Increase Local Food Purchased by Vermont Institutions While Supporting the Economic Viability of Food Producers
- Middlebury Natural Foods Coop, \$750 for Farm to Community Mentor Program farm fieldtrips
- Northern Border Regional Commission, \$54,958 for Vermont Organic Dairy: Strengthening and Growing the Industry in the Northern Border Region
- Organic Valley/CROPP, \$3,500 to support the 2017 Winter Conference, On Farm Workshops, and Vermont Organic Farm & Food Guide
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, \$1,195 for Farmers Market Promotion
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, \$25,000 Working Lands Grant for Technical Assistance Provisions to Organic Dairy Transition Loan Recipients
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, \$20,886 Working Lands Service Provider grant for Farm Scale Decision Making for Profitability and Quality of Life
- Donations to support the 2017 Dairy Econ Study:
 - Green Mountain Feeds, \$500
 - Lakeview Organic Grain, \$1,000
 - Morrison's Custom Feeds, \$500
 - Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative, \$1,000
 - WhiteWave Food/Horizon Organic, \$1,000

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 700 organic farmers and processors throughout the state.

**Fast Hitch Farm
Long Winter Farm
goodMix Foods
Montpelier Vineyards, LLC
Winter Green Mountain Farm
Mud Creek Angus
Vermont Tortilla Company LLC**

**Learn more about
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www.nofavt.org/why-organic**



Young farmers competed in the "Blind Seeding" event at the 3rd annual Farmer Olympics, held in August at Cerridwen Farm in Poultney, VT.





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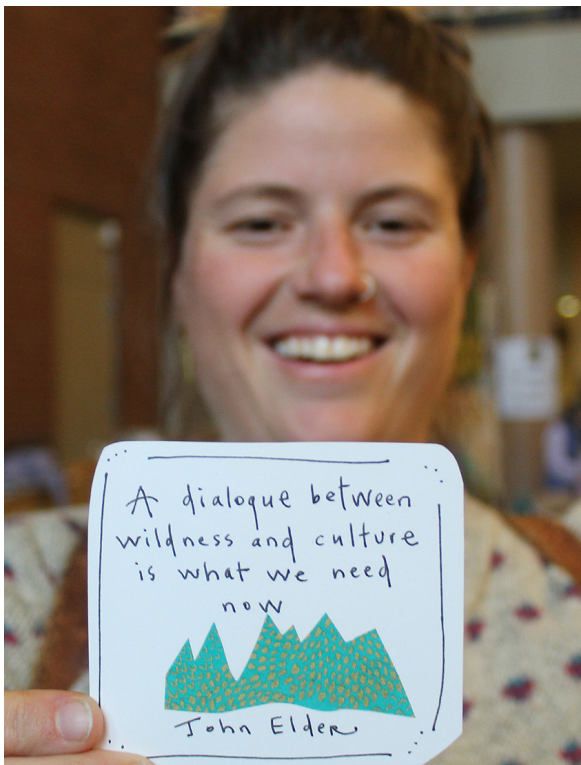
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