



Summer 2017

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The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Making a Home for Pollinators

By Maddie Monty, NOFA-VT Membership & Advocacy Coordinator

Don't let the cheerful red barn or the brightly painted honeybee hives fool you: The Farm Between – a certified organic fruit farm and nursery in Jeffersonville, Vermont – is not cutesy. In fact, John and Nancy Hayden, the farm's long-time owners, are in a fight. They explained this to me when I visited their farm on a cool, cloudy morning in early June, when summer seemed to be dragging its feet.

The fight John and Nancy are in is one that impacts all of us, whether we're aware of it or not. It's the crisis they see unfolding all around them, where pollinators and many other forms of biodiversity are in serious decline. Some aspects of this decline have been well documented, such as the fate of the rusty-patched bumblebee, which recently became the first bee on the federal endangered species list. Other signs of this biological slump, John told me, while not as well researched, are obvious to those who are paying attention.

At The Farm Between, not only are John and Nancy observing the



ecological goings-on with rapt attention, they're getting involved. Running along the driveway, what was once a muddy ditch is now a verdant streambed that slows and filters runoff and provides diverse habitat for insects, birds, and aquatic life. A flood-prone area of the farm that was never quite right for vegetables is now home to several different varieties of aronia and elderberry: species that can tolerate saturated soils and provide forage for pollinators and healthy food for people.

John and Nancy make every effort to farm in cooperation with nature and

they avoid the use of chemicals altogether, so the entire farm provides habitat and floral resources for pollinators. On the day I visited, the sun was struggling to shine through the clouds, the wind was blowing, and it was a cool 55 degrees. Despite less than ideal conditions, dozens of bumblebees were busily foraging on the blueberry bushes and the chatter of songbirds was loud enough to drown out passing cars.

When John and Nancy bought the farm in 1992, they started out focusing mostly on

(Pollinators, continued on page 3)



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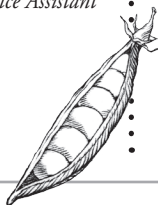
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Summer Thoughts from Enid

Although we experience weather extremes in all seasons, we don't normally think of summer as being so cantankerous. I know that many farmers, gardeners and homesteaders have been struggling with the rain, rain, rain, hail, high winds, disease etc... cuttings of hay have been delayed and entire crops have flooded; it makes me increase my reverence for farmers committed to producing food under increasingly difficult weather extremes. So, thank you to the food producers!

There are many opportunities for us to visit farms this summer and thank our farmers in person – consider participating in the Tour de Farms bike

ride in Addison County August 6th, the Open Farm Week statewide August 14-20 or one of our on-farm socials (held statewide July-September). At each social this year, we will ask the host farmer to share why “Organic Matters” to them.

Consistent with the title of our 2016 annual report, we are discussing Organic Matters from the perspective of both the value of quality soil to quality food production and the role of organic production in addressing critical issues such as climate change. In a 2014 white paper entitled *Regenerative Organic Agriculture and Climate Change: A Down-to-Earth Solution to Global Warming*, the Rodale Institute stated we could sequester more than 100% of current annual CO2 emissions with a switch to regenerative organic agricultural practices, such as crop rotation, compost application, and reduced tillage. There has been a lot of discussion about regenerative agriculture this year, a term coined by Rodale in the 1980's, and we will continue to discuss these themes – at the NOFA Summer Conference in August and our 2018 Winter Conference, in addition to our on-farm pizza socials.

One of the reasons I love our on-farm workshops and socials is the opportunity to make our work more visible, and as corny as it sounds, to “be in community” with others. We have been having conversations as a board and staff about how to communicate the value of our work to consumers, in order to build a broader base for

our movement. We want everyone to know that we serve a broader base than just farmers and that you do not have to be a farmer to be a member. Collective voice is valuable, and the more voices we have contributing to important discussions, the stronger our movement will be. Yet, I recognize that so much of our work is hidden from the consumers who choose to purchase organic food but do not recognize our role in supporting their access to that food – like the on-farm technical assistance to producers in business planning, supporting farmers markets and farm stands to be able to accept 3squaresVT benefits, the

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administrative team running the organic certification program, or advocating for farm and food policies that support healthy food production. That is why I like the term “co-producer” coined by Slow Food to mean “a conscious consumer who goes beyond the passive role of

consuming and takes an interest in those who produce our food, how they produce it and the problems they face in doing so.”

Every time I pull a pizza out of our mobile oven and feed people, I feel as if I make an important connection with an eater/co-producer who cares about taste and place. As a member, you play an important role in helping us to make our work less hidden. Are their friends and neighbors who you think might be interested in attending one of our on-farm socials? Will you please invite them to come with you? Or you can share a copy of NOFA Notes with them or The Natural Farmer... you get my point. Thank you, in advance, for being an important and invested member! I look forward to seeing many of you at an upcoming workshop, social or cheering on a farm team at the Farmer Olympics! Until then, I hope just the right amount of rain and sun finds you.

Enid Wonnacott
NOFA-VT Executive Director

(Pollinators, continued from page 1.)

livestock production and then transitioned to growing vegetables for several years. These days they grow and sell fruit, fruit products, and nursery plants at the farm and occasionally sling their famous snow cones at farmers markets. Their farm's deeper raison d'être, however, is to create a truly regenerative system by farming in ways that foster biodiversity and promote ecological balance for the long term. In doing so, they told me, their goal is to develop a model to guide and inspire others while staying inspired themselves.

While the whole farm provides resources and habitat for pollinators, John and Nancy are in the midst of creating a dedicated pollinator sanctuary on 14 of the farm's 18 acres, complete with walking paths, a sensory garden, a sharing amphitheater and a sunflower maze. The goal of the sanctuary is to allow the farm's visitors (adults and kids alike) to get up close and personal with native pollinators they may not be familiar with. By letting the grass grow tall aside from the mowed walking paths, John says visitors will be able to be at eye level with a lot of the pollinator activity that often goes unnoticed on pasture plants like milkweed, asters and goldenrod.

With close to 40% of the planet's total land base in agriculture, farming can be part of the problem or part of the solution. Farms both provide and depend on critical ecosystem services like nutrient



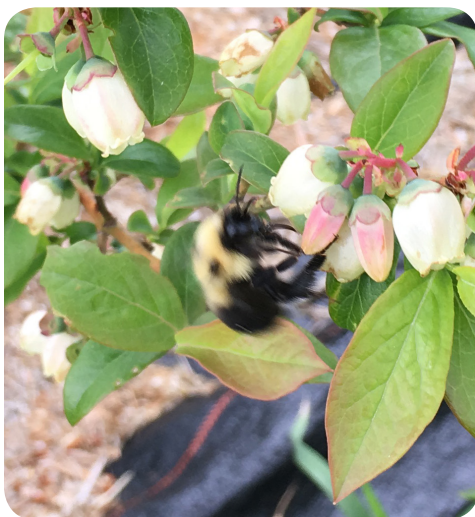
cycling, flood and drought mitigation, erosion control, climate regulation, and pollination. In the past, John says, farmers have been able to take pollination services for granted, but with signs of declining biodiversity in recent years, it's time to be proactive.

As a farm services provider, we often tend to think of farm viability in terms of business planning, markets, labor and other (largely financial) considerations. At The Farm Between, providing for pollinators is a major part of John and Nancy's farm viability plan. They make a pretty convincing case that it should be part of our viability plan for the planet, too.

Learn more about The Farm Between in the Summer 2017 issue of *The Natural Farmer* (NOFA's regional quarterly newspaper) and on their website at www.thefarmbetween.com.



SAVE THE DATE! ON AUGUST 27TH, JOHN AND NANCY WILL BE HOSTING A KICK-OFF PARTY AT THE FARM IN JEFFERSONVILLE TO OFFICIALLY INTRODUCE THEIR "POLLINATOR PATHWAY" TO THE PUBLIC AND BEGIN HOSTING EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS, TOURS AND WORKSHOPS.



Vermont Open Farm Week

Do you love local food and farms? Want to get to know your farmer better -- and to get a behind-the-scenes look into Vermont's vibrant working agricultural landscape? Mark your calendar for Vermont Open Farm Week: August 14-20, 2017 taking place at farms across Vermont!

During Vermont Open Farm Week, NOFA-VT and partners are working with farms and farmers markets around the state so you can meet the farmers, plants, and animals that bring your favorite high-quality Vermont products to your plate.

What's the greatest part about Open Farm Week? 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. Find up-to-date lists of participating farms and search by location or product at DigInVT.com, your portal to Vermont's agriculture and culinary experiences.

With so much happening all around the state, it might seem overwhelming to plan out a fun week. To make it easier on you, there's also a list of events happening on each day of Open Farm Week on DigInVT.com.



Frequently Asked Questions:

What can I do at the farms?

The activities from farm to farm will vary. Some farms might have scavenger hunts or wagon rides. Others may have tours, pick-your-own crops, produce for purchase, or animals that you can meet. And other farms might have farm dinners! When you arrive at a farm, check in with a farm employee to see what will be offered during your visit.

What should I wear, and what should I bring to the farm?

Weather in August can be unpredictable! Dress in layers and wear close-toed shoes that can get muddy. Bring along a water bottle, bug spray, rain gear, sunscreen and a camera! You may also want to bring a cooler, in case there are items you'd like to purchase during your visit.

Will there be food at the farm?

Some farms will be serving food, but look at each farm's listing to confirm what they are offering.

Open Farm Week is a collaborative statewide agritourism project organized by members of the Vermont Farm to Plate Network including NOFA-Vermont, University of Vermont Extension, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Vermont Fresh Network, Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, Shelburne Farms and Farm-Based Education, and City Market. We can't wait to see you at Vermont Open Farm Week!

Events are listed at: <https://www.diginvt.com/search-results/category/open-farm-week>



Please check out NOFA-VT's Annual Report online!

To save paper and mailing costs, we've posted our 2016 Impact Report on-line instead of mailing copies to all of our members. However, if you'd like a hard copy, we'd be happy to send you one. Just call our office at (802) 434-4122 or email info@nofa-vt.org. The report details the impact of our programs in 2016, and provides a financial overview for NOFA-VT. 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 2016!

Find it: www.nofavt.org/about or scan the code with your smart phone.



Ask Cally

Dear Cally,

I remember a discussion at VOF's Annual Producer Meeting about new animal welfare rules that were coming down the pike. Since then, I have not heard any information about how the rules are changing and how my farm and management of my livestock might be affected. What's happening with these new animal welfare rules?

Sincerely,
Farmer Brown

Dear Farmer Brown,

This has been a long journey. For many years, consumers and farmers have been discussing the need for more specific regulations to protect animal welfare and assure consistency among organic livestock producers and how they manage their animals. Starting in 2011, the National Organic Standards Board outlined animal welfare rules that included specific recommendations for practices like dehorning, beak trimming and giving animals access to the outdoors. In 2016, the National Organic Program (NOP) published a proposed rule for animal welfare

requirements on organic farms. In response to this rule, the NOP received close to 7,000 comments. Incorporating and evaluating those public comments took time, but the NOP published the final rule on January 19, 2017.

The final rule does the following:

- Establishes minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for poultry,
- Clarifies how producers and handlers must treat livestock and chickens to ensure their health and well-being throughout life, including transport and slaughter, and
- Specifies which physical alterations are allowed and prohibited in organic livestock and poultry production.

Although there was some disappointment that the final rule did not require larger stocking densities for poultry, overall the industry and consumers support the rule and recognize the efforts and involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders.

So what's the problem? The rule should have gone into effect in May of this year. Under the new administration however, the USDA is delaying the effective date of the final rule for at least six months and asking for more public comment to decide whether to suspend the rule indefinitely, delay it further, or withdraw it altogether. How about implement it? VOF, NOFA and the overwhelming majority of the organic industry would like to have this rule implemented immediately. What's at stake here is consumer confidence in the organic label. Some conventional farm groups are not in support of a new animal welfare rule for organic farms because they fear that this rule may have an impact on conventional production, putting pressure on conventional producers to adopt similar practices. But the organic regulations are voluntary, and do not have any impact on conventional producers.

So this is where things currently stand. VOF would like to start preparing to adopt the rule but we are somewhat in limbo as we wait to see what happens next. NOFA and VOF submitted public comments asking the USDA not to delay implementation of these important new regulations any further, and encouraged our producers to send in comments as well. We hope USDA will listen to the voices of organic farmers and consumers in this important fight to improve the organic rules.

To read an excerpt from VOF and NOFA-VT's comments on the OLPP rule, see the Summer Policy Update on page 10.



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Capital City Farmers Market's 40th Anniversary

By Lauren Young, NOFA-VT Office Manager

Farmers markets in Vermont *are as diverse as our landscape; they are places where you can find agricultural products like fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, cheese, eggs and maple syrup and often offer baked goods, prepared foods, and art. The markets' seasonality means market customers can always look forward to new products as spring turns to summer and then to fall. Winter provides the opportunity for several year-round markets to move indoors to a quieter atmosphere.*

This year the Capital City Farmers Market in Montpelier is marking its 40th Anniversary! A celebratory market on August 19th is planned this year to highlight the anniversary. John and Marge Butterfield will provide the music and several vendors will have demos for the day.

For the past forty years, the Capital City Farmers Market has been at the heart of Montpelier. Although it has migrated from its original location on Langdon Street to the Courthouse parking lot to its present location at the corner of State and Elm Street, the Market has always been downtown. Ashton Kirol, the Capital City Market Manager, explains, "As far as I know, the outdoor Market has always been downtown. The indoor market has moved around but returned to the downtown area last year. We are focused on keeping both markets there."

As the location has changed over the years, the Market has also seen many faces come and go. Yet, two notable vendors have been around from the beginning. LePage Farm, located in Barre, is a fruit and vegetable farm that has been family-owned and operated since 1865. Owner Alan LePage was the primary founder of the Capital City Farmers

Market back in 1977- and he is still a vendor today. Additionally, Ellie's Farm Market, a diversified crop and cider producer in West Berlin, has been at the market for the last 39 years. Bill and Karen Moynihan, the farm owners, are taking this summer off for the first time since the Market began.

According to Karen, "In 1977, Billy & I drove past Langdon St. on a Saturday 'peddling' extra shell peas. We looked down the street & saw a few vendors selling at the farmers market. After a so-so day at selling surplus peas we decided to accept an invitation to join the market. From there it's history." They have only missed six outdoor market vending days since they started.

Today the Capital City Farmers Market is host to over 50 daily vendors and 80 seasonal vendors-all Vermont producers. They provide a wide selection of fresh, local produce as well as prepared foods



For the past forty years, the Capital City Farmers Market has been at the heart of Montpelier.

The Market runs every Saturday from May through October on the corner of State and Elm Streets from 9 am to 1 pm. During the winter, the market moves indoors and runs 10 am to 2 pm on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month. The busiest market of the year is the Thanksgiving market on the Saturday before Thanksgiving at Montpelier High School.

New to the Market this year are a handful of farms from the Montpelier region selling fresh produce. "This year the Market has several new and returning woodworkers," noted Ashton. "Vermont Coffins will be back with their urns and coffins as well."

While each week brings something new to the Capital City Farmers Market with rotating vendors, live music, and always-changing seasonal produce, there are a few notable markets throughout

and crafts such as herbal soaps and cutting boards; Mandarin dim sum and wood fired pizza; and special drinks such as maple rum.



(continued on next page)



to have parents reach out to the market to register for Youth Market Day. Additionally, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture has partnered with the Market to host “Buy Local Markets” that bring the fresh taste of the Capital City Farmers Market to the week days. Look for forthcoming details about a few designated

including corn roasting in the fall.

As the Capital City Farmers Market celebrates its 40th Anniversary this year, Ashton explains that, “Right now, one of the Market’s biggest areas of focus is on increasing community access. Currently our strongest community partnership is with Community Harvest of Central Vermont. We have several vendors who participate in their gleaning program.” He continues, “Looking forward, we hope to strengthen our involvement with Washington County Hunger Programs and we hope to continue to offer Crop Cash coupons to 3SquareVT customers.”

the year. Youth Market Day, on August 5th this year, provides an opportunity for kids (age 5-18) to sell garden produce, baked goods, flowers, and artwork that they have grown or made as part of the market. There will be live music, youth-oriented demos, and games for the day as well. Children are welcome

days this year. For culinary inspiration, the Farmers’ Market also hosts food tastings in collaboration with the New England Culinary Institute (NECI) to showcase seasonal produce and provide recipes to customers. This year seasonal activities can also be found at the market,

The Capital City Farmers Market accepts EBT and debit cards as well as Crop Cash coupons. Visit <http://www.montpelierfarmersmarket.com/> for more information. 

Visit the Vermont Farmers Market Association website at vtfma.org to find a market near you and read more about other farmers markets around the state.

NOFA Summer Conference



Celebrating Our Interconnectedness

August 11-13 in Amherst, MA

From generations of past cultures that established the sustainable production systems upon which we base our modernized techniques, to our immediate relationship with neighbors and the global community of conscious minded producers and consumers, to the microbial life that supports our bodies and our environment, we exist within a vast web of interconnectedness.

Simply put, we are better together. We are stronger together. Inseparable, in fact, from each other and the systems that support our lives and our food. If we work to ensure a harmonious relationship with ecological and social systems, we can cultivate fair and thriving production and consumer models to live within.

We’re grateful to have Dr. Don Huber and Michael Phillips as 2017’s keynote speakers! We are also excited to host an amazing collection of organic minded professionals that will enliven our potential to create robust, healthy food systems that provide real food for all.

NOFA-VT members receive 20% off!

For more information, visit www.nofasummerconference.org

Summer Meals Mini-Grants Awarded

By Marissa Watson, NOFA-VT School Food Programs Coordinator

NOFA-VT, as a partner with Shelburne Farms on the VT Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) project, has focused on expanding Farm to School programming beyond the school year and into the summer: Farm to School 12 Months of the Year!

This year we created a Summer Meals mini-grant program to support Summer Meals sites' capacity to start or expand their local purchasing and provide nutrition education activities.

The Summer Meals program, which includes 288 sites, ensures that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. In Vermont, Summer Meals sites have grown from serving 408,000 meals in 2014 to serving 480,000 meals in 2016!

This summer, Vermont FEED has

awarded five Summer Meal sites with mini-grants of \$800 each. Funding is provided by the Vermont Community Foundation and administered by Vermont FEED. Programs awarded funding will use it to purchase Vermont fruits and vegetables, provide nutrition education, and receive technical assistance from the Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Program, Hunger Free Vermont, and Vermont FEED.

The Summer Meals site awardees this summer are:

- The Highgate Apartment Complex and Fitz Vogt in Barre, serving two hands-on meals as part of the Rainbow Flatbread Project on July 21st and August 11th
- The Winooski Community Partnership at the Winooski Farmers Market, serving meals every Sunday from 10 am – 2 pm, May 28th –

October 8th

- The Albany Community School's Wolf Camp, serving breakfast, lunch and two snacks daily Monday thru Thursday, July 10th – August 3rd
- The Boys and Girls Club of Brattleboro, serving lunch and dinner Monday thru Friday June 26th – August 18th
- The YWCA's Camp Hochelaga, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner Monday thru Friday June 25th – August 13th

Congratulations to all our award-winners!

For more information about where to find Summer Meals in your area, please contact Jamie Curly: Jamie.Curley@vermont.gov. For more information about VT-FEED and Farm to School in Vermont, please contact Marissa Watson: Marissa@nofavt.org. ✿

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Bless up the Earth.

On-Farm Workshop Series & Pizza Socials

By Serena Baldwin, NOFA Vermont summer communications intern

Another beautiful Vermont summer is upon us. Longer days and warmer weather means gearing up for a productive farming season, enjoying time outdoors, and community gatherings galore. NOFA-VT's On-Farm Workshops and Pizza Socials provide opportunities to embrace all that summer has to offer, in diverse locations across the state.

Want to learn how to get rid of pests organically? We've got you covered. How about best practices for produce safety? We'll catch you up to speed. Improving production efficiency and productivity? That's our middle name. NOFA will offer a variety of workshops to appeal to vegetable growers, dairy producers, gardeners, homesteaders, and curious eaters to make the most of this stunning season.

"Farm smarter not harder" is an overarching theme in several workshops this summer. Hurricane Flats Farm will host a lively discussion on production efficiency for onion and potato crops, allowing for the exchange of ideas on how these crops are grown, how to determine precise costs of production, and suggestions for improvements to

increase profitability. A workshop at Jericho Settlers Farm will focus on harvest efficiency for carrot and beet crops, including a discussion on the most effective equipment to invest in to improve yield before root crop harvest kicks into gear.

Produce safety will also be highlighted in two of this year's summer workshops at Foggy Meadows Farm and Root 5 Farm. We'll address growers' concerns associated with the passing of FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act) relevant to compliance, regulations, and qualification. The workshop will demystify the FSMA and have a dual focus on bringing the farm's CAPS (Community Accreditation for Produce Safety) plan to life. Additional topics covered include selecting harvest containers, pack shed design, produce-washing set ups, wash water testing & changing protocols, labeling of produce containers to customers, recordkeeping and traceability.

As always, discussing innovative solutions in organic farming and production will be at the forefront of NOFA's summer workshop content. Join us at Catamount

Farm and Bear Roots Farm to learn about novel research based solutions to keep leek moths and cabbage root maggots at bay. Molly Brook Farm began the organic dairy transition this past January and therefore will provide a renewed perspective on

developing a grazing system and seeding and converting cornfields to pasture.

And, especially designed for homesteaders and gardeners, join Keith Morris for a hands-on exploration of whole-system ecological design beginning at Prospect Rock Permaculture's downtown homestead and apothecary, and then traveling down the street to Willow Crossing Farm- Vermont's longest running permaculture research and education site.

What's 11 years old, 800 degrees, and connects communities with food system participants across Vermont?

NOFA-VT's mobile pizza oven of course! Oven bakers and NOFA-VT summer interns are geared up for another busy season of pizza socials. Nothing brings communities together quite like wood-fired pizza topped with organic toppings plucked from the nearest farm field. "The oven helps introduce eaters to the farms, foods, and flavors of their communities," proclaims NOFA-VT Executive Director Enid Wonnacott. Once your appetite for pizza and engaging conversation is satiated, a behind the scenes glimpse of each farm will be provided with a farmer-led tour. They're scheduled across the state, July through September, providing ample opportunity to connect with your farmers and neighbors.

Remember, this is just a taste! For the full line-up of workshops and socials go to <http://nofavt.org/farm-workshop-series> or look for the On-Farm Workshop Series brochure in your mailbox. We'll see you on the farm! ✨



Summer interns Sarah Jean Whelan, Serena Baldwin, and James King are a tremendous addition to Team NOFA! They are working on a number of projects this summer - gardening with kids, communications, and helping to make pizza at our events!

Summer Policy Update

By Maddie Monty, NOFA Vermont Membership & Advocacy Coordinator

NOFA-VT Urges USDA to Implement Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) Rule

After gathering input from organic farmers, researchers, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), and the public over the past ten years, the National Organic Program (NOP) rolled out its Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule (OLPP) in January. The OLPP or “animal welfare” rule would allow the NOP to consistently enforce stronger animal welfare standards on organic farms and remove loopholes being taken advantage of by some large operations.

However, rather than allowing the OLPP or “animal welfare” rule to take effect this month, the USDA has delayed implementation of the rule until November 14th and in June held a public comment period asking whether it should be implemented at all. On June 9th, NOFA-VT and VOF submitted comments urging USDA to allow the proposed rules to take effect without further delay.

Our comments stated, in part, that participation in the National Organic Program (NOP) is voluntary. Producers who are certified organic opt in to adhering to strict standards in exchange for market opportunities and other benefits of the organic label. If producers are unwilling or unable to adhere to the full letter and spirit of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) and NOP regulations, they should not be marketing their products as organic. In our comments, we concluded, “Consistently enforced standards are critical to maintaining consumer trust in organic, and the OLPP rule is necessary to bring

about greater fairness and consistency across the organic sector. Further delay or withdrawal of the proposed rule does damage to the organic industry and the families and rural communities it supports.”

For more about the animal welfare rules, check out the “Ask Cally” column on page 5.

USDA Solicits Input on GE Labeling Implementation

On June 27th, USDA posted 30 questions for the public to guide its decisions around the labeling of genetically modified (or “bioengineered”) foods. Some of the questions posed include: Which terms should be considered interchangeable with “bioengineering” (the terminology used under the federal labeling law passed last year); whether labeling should be required for food containing highly refined ingredients derived from GMO crops; what language or symbol should be required for disclosures on packaging; and, what considerations and specific requirements should be included regarding electronic or digital disclosures, among others.

USDA is planning to release proposed rules in late fall or early winter, according to an official with the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the agency charged with crafting labeling regulations.

Share your thoughts on these or other GE labeling questions with Maddie Monty at maddie@nofavt.org.

National Organic Coalition Fly-in Recap

As a member of the National Organic



Coalition (NOC), each year a NOFA Vermont representative travels to Washington, D.C. to meet with our elected officials about issues impacting organic farmers and consumers. This year’s NOC fly-in took place from June 6-8 and focused on priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill, funding requests for key organic programs, and ensuring consistent enforcement of organic standards by the National Organic Program (NOP). I met with each of our Congressional delegates’ offices (including Senator Leahy himself) to discuss the need to increase funding and support for key organic programs in the 2018 Farm Bill and Appropriations cycle. Read more about the NOC fly-in and find infographics on the growth of organic on our blog! ✨

Meet a Journey Farmer: Ananda Gardens

by Jen Miller, Farmer Services Coordinator

NOFA-VT's Journey Farmer Program is a two-year program for beginning farmers who are in the first few years of running their own farm business. Each Journey Farmer is paired with a farmer mentor, receives an educational stipend as well as free admission to NOFA workshops, and has access to NOFA's business planning and technical assistance services. This comprehensive approach enables each Journey Farmer to tailor the program to meet their specific needs during their critical start-up phase of business development.

Patrick Sullivan and Melisa Oliva own and operate Ananda Gardens and are part of the 2017 Journey Farmer cohort. We caught up with them recently to learn a bit more about their farm and their experience in the program.

Q: Can you describe your farm?

A: Ananda Gardens is located just a few miles from downtown Montpelier. We are starting our second year of growing vegetables, herbs, flowers, and grafted fruit trees. We sell our produce at the Capital City Farmers Market, through a CSA serving the Montpelier area, and through an online farmstand and home delivery service. Our growing practices reflect our dedication to care for the earth and our community. We focus on providing exceptional quality, great

service and value to our clients, and home delivery.

Q: What is your favorite part about growing food for people?

A: Our favorite part is that it contributes to the health and happiness of our customers and community. We have such a direct interaction with our physical environment through what we eat, as it literally becomes us. So it is a great responsibility and honor to offer to others the same quality of food that we grow to feed our own daughter. This is why it feels so good to do this work.

Q: Why did you want become a Journey Farmer? How has your farm benefited from the program so far?

A: When we learned about the Journey Farmer program it was immediately appealing to us. Starting a farm is not easy work, so having the NOFA community as a support network has been a great opportunity for us. We are able to work with a

mentor, have an education stipend, and be part of a community of other Journey Farmers. This past winter we made full use of the education stipend and learned lots that we have put into practice. We have been working with Richard Wiswall of Cate Farm as our mentor, had marketing help from Rose Wilson, and we are having a more successful year so far than we could have hoped for.

Q: Please provide a fun fact about your farm!

A: Ananda means absolute bliss. Growing food for our community, taking care of our earth, and sharing this as a family fills us with absolute bliss. Ananda is also our daughter's name, and we refer to her as "la jefa" (the boss). 🌸



More information about our Journey Farmer Program can be found on our website on the Farmer Education & Services-Beginning Farmer page. The deadline for applications for next year's Journey Farmer Program is November 30, 2017.

Get ready to strut your stuff at the 3rd annual NOFA-VT

FARMER OLYMPICS

Wednesday, August 2, 2017, 4-8pm

Cerridwen Farm, 1 Brennan Circle,
Green Mountain College, Pultney, VT

You work hard, now play hard! Calling all finely trained farmers for a competition that will go down in the annals of history. Fast and furious, technical and serious, slow and silly – these events will make you laugh while testing your farm team's skills & pride. Take a mid-season break with other farmers! Enjoy treats baked in the the NOFA-VT Pizza Oven.



REGISTER YOUR TEAM: nofavt.org/events/farmer-olympics • **QUESTIONS?** Call (802) 434-4122 or email kyla@nofavt.org

Savory Sausage Pot Pie

The beautiful design of this recipe is that you can add any vegetables or meat cuts that are sitting in the root cellar, refrigerator, or pantry; feel free to substitute or add any vegetables that are hanging around. Pot pie is a hearty meal that sticks to your ribs after a day of farming or gardening, and the dilled biscuit crust adds a light, summery flavor.

For the filling:

- 1 lb. sausage links, maple breakfast
- 5 tbsp. butter
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic
- 8 oz. baby bella mushrooms, quartered
- 4 carrots, cut into coins
- 2 small red potatoes, chopped
- 3/4 cup diced red pepper
- 8 oz. baby peas
- 8 oz. spinach
- 5 tbsp. unbleached all purpose flour
- 2.5 cups chicken stock
- 1/3 cup whipping cream

For the crust:

- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 egg
- 5 tbsp fresh, minced dill
- 2.5 cups flour
- 2 tsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 7 tbsp. unsalted butter, very cold cut into pieces



Filling: Heat skillet and cook sausage until browned on the outside and brownish-pink in the middle. Transfer sausage links to a plate to cool, then chop into bite-sized pieces. Add butter and a splash of chicken stock to the skillet to deglaze the pan and reheat. Add onions and garlic, sauté on medium heat until tender, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, carrots, potatoes, and red pepper to the onions and garlic. Sauté on medium heat for another 5 minutes. Sprinkle vegetables with flour and sauté for 2 minutes. Turn heat down to medium-low, add chicken stock gradually and sausage and let simmer for 10-15 minutes, until sauce thickens and potatoes and carrots soften. In the last five minutes of simmering, add peas and spinach. Take mixture off heat and mix in whipping cream. Pour mixture into greased 4-qt. rectangular casserole dish. Preheat oven to 450°F.

Crust: Whisk together buttermilk, egg, and dill in a bowl until mixed. In a second large bowl, combine the dry ingredients: flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Cut butter chunks into the dry mixture with a pastry knife or fork until mixture resembles a coarse meal. Add buttermilk mixture to dry mixture and combine until moist dough forms. Using floured hands, knead dough on a well-floured work surface until dough holds together. Roll out dough to 3/4 inch thickness to fit rectangular baking dish. Position dough on top of vegetable mixture in the rectangular baking dish. Bake until biscuit is golden-brown on top and vegetable mix is bubbling, about 12 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Enjoy!

This recipe was adapted by Marissa Watson, NOFA-VT School Food Programs Coordinator

Vermont Maple in Every School

By Marissa Watson, NOFA-VT School Food Programs Coordinator

Let's get Vermont maple syrup in every school! Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day) has partnered with the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA) and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets (VAAFM) to connect schools with their sugar makers. Conversations are taking place in Lamoille, Bennington, and Orleans counties to get Vermont maple on the table in schools, and to get kids excited about sugaring through field trips and hands-on education activities. Community partners have expressed enthusiasm at the possibility of making this a statewide reality.

"We are thrilled to be working with our partners to help make connections between students and local sugar makers," said Matt Gordon, executive director of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association.

"Maple syrup is a part of Vermont's identity and showcasing that heritage with young students will keep that legacy

alive in coming generations," Gordon said. "Our members could not be happier to help provide maple syrup at a reasonable price so that our state's school food programs can offer pure Vermont maple syrup. We are excited to assist in providing Vermont's children with an understanding of where their food comes from."

The Vermont Maple in Every School project, which has long been brewing with sugar makers and food advocates alike, is a shining example of how state and non-profit organizations are partnering to connect the community, the cafeteria, and the classroom to promote place-based education and locally-sourced ingredients for students.

We are excited to move forward with this project and are currently seeking funding. If you have funding opportunities or ideas that may apply to this project, or if you would like information about how to get maple in your school, please contact Marissa Watson at VT FEED: Marissa@nofavt.org.



Left: Vermont Maple Syrup with heart-shaped pancakes were plated and served by the State House Abbey Group Management Company's chefs and partners, highlighting Vermont's farming heritage, and illustrating the idea that every Vermont school should have access to pure Vermont maple syrup. "We are thrilled to be working with our partners to help make connections between students and local sugar makers," said Matt Gordon, executive director of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association, seen above (left) with NOFA-VT's Abbie Nelson (right).

Welcome New Staff Members!



KYLA BEDARD, EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Kyla graduated from UVM in 2008 with a B.S in Environmental Science, focusing on Conservation Biology. After graduating she apprenticed on an organic vegetable farm which sparked her passion for sustainable agriculture. Kyla spent the last 5 years in California working for a large organic dairy and smaller family owned farms as a farmer, administrative assistant and event planner. She currently lives in Salisbury, is excited to be back in her home state and is looking forward to networking with local farmers and using her dairy experience to assist Vermont organic dairy farmers.



LAUREN YOUNG, OFFICE MANAGER

A native of Colorado, Lauren came to New England in 2014 to help organize the Common Ground Country Fair. She received her BA in Environmental Science at Carleton College and has worked on a handful of organic agriculture operations in Maine including a seed garlic production, a dairy specializing in sheep blue cheese, and a u-pick blueberry farm. She currently lives in Burlington and is enjoying the perks of “urban” living.



PHOEBE JUDGE, MATERIALS REVIEW SPECIALIST/STAFF INSPECTOR

Phoebe grew up on a dairy farm in Addison County and spent many years working on nearby Golden Russet Farm. She studied physics and geology, studying the development of mountain ranges in the southern hemisphere in grad school at Cornell University. She has taught middle school science in Montpelier and, most recently, started her own gardening-landscaping business in the Champlain Valley. She currently lives in Shelburne with her family and tends to large vegetable and fruit gardens.



KATY LASH, CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Katy joins the VOF certification staff with technical skills and computer systems expertise. She has worked in several administrative roles and most recently as an HR specialist with a focus on system management and optimization. She is excited to bring these skills and her interest in Vermont’s local food movement to NOFA. In summer 2016 she completed a community herbal apprenticeship program with Spoonful Herbs and is on staff at Railyard Apothecary in Burlington, helping to manifest their vision of providing high quality, locally grown and affordable herbs and herbal education to the community. She is a foodie with a passion for organic, sustainable agriculture and is inspired by the local farming community. An aspiring homesteader living in Fletcher, she can often be found playing in her garden, exploring the woods or reading books!



Share the harvest!



Do you work with a restaurant, market, co-op, brewery, or other food business? Please join us for the 23rd annual Share the Harvest fundraising event!

On Thursday, October 5th, 70+ generous businesses throughout Vermont will participate in Share the Harvest by donating a portion of their day’s sales or a donation to the NOFA Vermont Farm Share Program, which provides subsidized CSA shares to limited-income Vermonters. We provide Share the Harvest participants with printed and social media promotional materials as well as a lot of online publicity!

Please join us and support this program. Sign up your business by contacting Share the Harvest coordinator Becca Weiss at (802) 434-4122 or becca@nofavt.org. Or visit www.nofavt.org/sth.



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Rare Crops with a Story

THE SLOW FOOD USA ARK OF TASTE GARDEN CHALLENGE

Photos & story by Mara Welton, Slow Food Vermont Board Chair

In Slow Food communities, we talk a lot about the Ark of Taste – Slow Food’s catalog of delicious foods facing extinction. It was identified early in the history of Slow Food that biodiversity is essential to a healthy environment and to defending our future against climate change. Each of the foods on the Ark are adapted to their landscape and have a viability that no genetically modified or hybrid creation can even compete with. In addition to creating a living catalog, the Ark of Taste creates a space where communities can champion foods that are culturally significant to them, and create a platform for preservation by educating why these crops are worth saving. This catalog is truly a who’s who of the most delicious foods in our country’s culinary canon.

As a farmer, I was drawn to Slow Food because of the emphasis on biodiversity, and identified it as the way to truly experience the world through taste while experiencing the rich storytelling landscape of our world’s foods. Each of the crops boarded on the Ark of Taste must have a significant narrative and play an intrinsic part in cultural identity. In addition, all Ark of Taste crops are heirloom or heritage, so anyone who chooses to grow them can save the seeds and perpetuate their existence in their own gardens. The Ark also includes livestock breeds, seafoods and fishes.

Since 1996, the Ark of Taste has become home to more than 4,400 products from over 150 countries. Over 340 of these foods are from the USA, and nominations for more edible treasures are always being sought. The Ark of Taste is a tool for farmers, ranchers, fishers, chefs, grocers, educators and consumers to seek out and celebrate our country’s diverse

biological, cultural and culinary heritage.

How to participate in defending and preserving our culinary future is something that seems challenging, but Slow Food USA has made it easy by creating a limited-edition garden kit. Seed Savers Exchange, Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, Terroir Seeds, and Pure Potato have donated seeds for this campaign, and each garden kit includes seeds for Aunt Molly’s Ground Cherry, Early Blood Turnip-Rooted Beet, and Amish Deer Tongue Lettuce; a limited-edition poster and stickers; a Slow Food field notebook with recipes; engraved plant markers; and a beautiful cedar sign for your garden. I can personally attest to the viability of these important and culturally significant foods – they are hearty and delicious crops that have always performed well on our Burlington, Vermont farm in the Intervale. A word on some of the varieties included in this year’s Garden Challenge:



Aunt Molly’s Ground Cherry: This heirloom is not actually a cherry, but rather a small ground tomato. The fruits were recorded in horticultural literature as early as 1837 in Pennsylvania and are still common today at roadside stands in late summer. This outstanding Polish variety is prized for its clean flavor. This tomato has pineapple and vanilla flavor.



Early Blood Turnip-Rooted Beet: This is one of the oldest surviving varieties of table beet, having been introduced in America by 1820. One of the most popular beets of the 1800s in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, it is an all-purpose variety, round root 4 to 4.5 inches in diameter with 48 to 68 days to maturity from seed.

The beet has very dark, violet-red flesh with lighter zones. The leaves are dark with bright red petioles. The dark red flesh remains flavorful, tender and juicy even when the beets attain large size. It has a slight clove-like aroma and a wonderful sweetness, light like a carrot but without the intense sweetness of a carrot. Raw it has an apple-like slightly astringent flavor. Its complex taste starts with a cinnamon flavor and a hint of heat followed by a tartness and a rich earthy finish. Its flavor has also been described as sour and tangy. The beet is good both boiled and baked and the leaves are an excellent cooked green.

It is a superb winter storage variety, keeping well in root cellar storage for 8 months or more. It’s variable rate of maturity may make this beet less desirable for commercial harvest (and this may explain its disappearance from seed catalogs in the latter 20th century), however

this characteristic is a plus for the small farmer and home gardener. It is a highly endangered variety.



Amish Deer Tongue Lettuce: Deer Tongue lettuce, also known as Matchless lettuce, dates back to the early 1740s, whereas the Amish Deer Tongue lettuce is a variety from a later era – circa 1840. The name, deer tongue, comes from its pointed leaves that are triangularly shaped with green straight edges.

Because of its heat tolerance, it is said to be less prone to bolting under high tem-

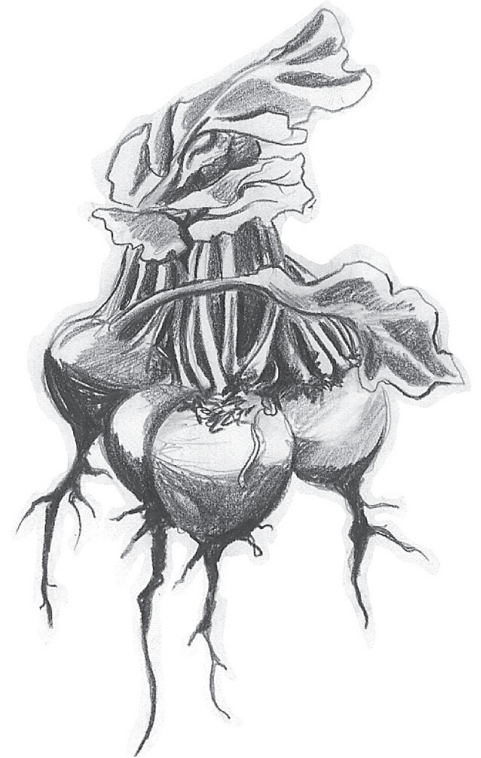
peratures. The lettuce has a thin midrib, good texture and wonderful flavor that is pleasantly sharp. This plant is great for home gardeners as it is tolerant of different climates.

In Vermont, the NOFA Vermont garden, the Charlotte Library and the Veteran's Garden supported by the Vermont Community Garden Network and HANDS (Helping and Nurturing Diverse Seniors) will be growing out Ark of Taste Crops from the "Plant a Seed, Defend the Future" initiative if you'd like to see the plants and even taste some of these special varieties midsummer!

Growing a garden is not just an ancient human act of self-preservation and sustenance, but it can also be an act of participation in a global effort to preserve the story of culturally significant American foods while simultaneously defending our future against climate change. Please consider joining the Slow Food community in this delicious effort this summer!



Find out more at
www.slowfoodvermont.org



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Golden Russet Farm, Shoreham

photo by J. Silverman

Current local food sourcing needs at the Co-op:

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Thank you for supporting sustainable agriculture!

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

NEW MEMBERS:

Sally Ayers, Lower Waterford, VT
Bill Cavanaugh, Waitsfield, VT
Phyllis & Andy Chambers, Chambers Farm, North Clarendon, VT
Alexis Chesney, Brattleboro, VT
Allie Clarke, Bangor, ME
Patty Collins, Derby, VT
Eric Duncan, Revolution Farm LLC, Northfield, VT
Hans Estrin, UVM Extension Brattleboro, Brattleboro, VT
Steve Fortmann, Fortmann Farm, Hardwick, VT
Caroline Gordon, Royalton, VT
Marcella F. Guillette, Sugar House Farm, Newport, VT
Todd Hardie, Thornhill Farm, Greensboro Bend, VT
Jared Herman, Minnetonka, MN
Dillon Klepetar, Echo Farm, Essex, NY

Richard Kussel, From the Ground Up, Rutland, VT
Jonathan Lambert, Cornell Institute for Climate Smart Solutions, Ithaca, NY
Candice Leblanc, Leblanc Farm, N Troy, VT
Louisa Moore, Richmond, VT
Robin Morris, Waitsfield, VT
Tobin Porter-Brown, South Albany, VT
John Rainville, Rainville's Custom Crops, Franklin, VT
Paulette Riendeau, Riendeau Farm, Albany, VT
Shaun & Lauren Riordan, Grateful Morning Farm, Shaftsbury, VT
Sarah Seidman, Pease Farm Stable, Middlesex, VT
Basil Tangredi, Poultney, VT
Louise Terwilliger, Newfane, VT
Katie Traub, Wolcott, VT

NEW & RENEWING BUSINESS MEMBERS:

Colene Reed, Bob-White Systems, Royalton, VT
Richard Dreissigacker and Judy Geer, Craftsbury Outdoor Ctr/Concept 2, Morrisville, VT
Louis & Jennifer Hall, Hall & Breen Farm, LLC, Orwell, VT
Tammy Anderson, Harris Seeds, NY
Anderson Family, High Ponds Farm, Montgomery Ctr, VT
Mary & Eric Skovsted, Joe's Brook Farm, St Johnsbury, VT
Sara Newmark, New Chapter, Brattleboro, VT
Chuck Conway & Carla Kevorkian, O Bread Bakery, Shelburne, VT
Francie Caccavo, Olivia's Crouton Company Inc., New Haven, VT

Marisa Miller, Putney Farmers Market, Putney, VT
Marty Bell & Cathy Gianfranceschi, Smith Hill Farm, Barnard, VT
Susan Smereka & Heather Belcher, Sweet Clover Market, Essex, VT
Christine Flynn, The Alchemist, Waterbury, VT
Molly Willard, Vermont Tech Applied Ag, Randolph Ctr, VT
Erin Tortora, WhatsGood, North Kingston, RI
Jayne SullyCole, Wild Roots, Royalton, VT

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT SUPPORTERS:

Amazon Smile Foundation, \$20.75
Daniel Boomhower, \$15 in memory of Beverly Gardner
Norman & Sharon Bruce, \$40 general support
City Market, \$5,197.67 Rally for Change donations
Elizabeth Craft, \$10 general support
Elizabeth Dezon-Gaillard, \$70.50 general support
Rachel Doran, \$50 general support
Judy Geer & Richard Dreissigacker, \$250 general support
William Gefell, \$160 general support

Andrew Knafel, \$200 general support
Ann Langevin, \$15 general support
Gail Lerner, \$10 Farm Share Program
Cara Maggioini, \$15 general support
Merchants Bank, \$1,000 to support the 2017 Jr Iron Chef Vermont
The Final Connection, in-kind donation of headsets
Susan Williams, \$100 in memory of Beverly Gardner
Matt Witt, \$160 Farm Share Program

PROGRAM GRANTS:

Donations to support the 2017 organic cost of production study
Vermont Agency of Agriculture \$1,500
Yankee Farm Credit \$1,000
The Forrest C. and Frances H. Lattner Foundation, \$25,000 for program support
Senior Farms Market Nutrition Program, Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, \$50,055
Vermont Coffee Company, \$650 to support NOFA Vermont's Farm to Community Mentor Program
Vermont Community Foundation, Peter Backman & Annie Christopher Fund, \$1,000 for general support



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.



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 Currier Family Sugar Shack
 Ellie's Sugarhouse
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 Hayward's Sugarhouse
 Heritage Holsteins
 Judd View Dairy
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Larson Farm
 Longest Acres Farm
 McBride Family Maples
 Mead Brothers Dairy LLC
 Needham Family Farm
 Nelson Hill Maple
 O'Hearn Maple LLC
 Olmstead Family Farm
 Page Mansion Maples
 Paine's Christmas Trees INC
 Parent Boys Sugaring, LLC
 Plouffe Family Farm
 Pulp Kitchen

Rainville's Custom Crops
 Roland Smith
 Roots Too Farm
 Rugged Ridge Forest LLC
 Sheldon View Maple
 Shumway Sugarworks
 Small Axe Farm
 Stoney Meadow Maple
 Sugar Hill Maple Farm
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www.nofavt.org/why-organic*



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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



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**FARMERS: Strut your
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(Information on page 12)

2017 On-Farm Workshops & Pizza Socials

Join us!

Learn more & pre-register:
www.nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops

- 7/19 Organic Pest Control: Leek Moth (S. Burlington)
- 7/19 **PIZZA SOCIAL** with Young Farmers Coalition at Long Winter Farm (Stowe)
- 7/26 **PIZZA SOCIAL** at Stone Hollow Farm (Enosburg)
- 7/26 Farm Smarter Not Harder: Production Efficiency for Onion & Potato Crops (South Royalton)
- 7/31 Organic Dairy Transition: Developing a Grazing System (Danville)
- 8/2 3rd Annual Farmer Olympics & **PIZZA SOCIAL** (Poultney)
- 8/7 Produce Safety: Best Practices from Field to Consumer (Benson)
- 8/9 Farm Smarter Not Harder: Harvest Efficiency for Carrot & Beet Crops (Jericho)
- 8/10 **PIZZA SOCIAL** at Wild Carrot Farm (Brattleboro)
- 8/17 **PIZZA SOCIAL** at Health Hero Farm (South Hero)
- 8/17 Grass-fed Beef Intensive: Optimizing Productivity & Profitability with Jim Gerrish (Hardwick)
- 8/23 Produce Safety: Best Practices from Field to Consumer (Fairlee)
- 8/24 **PIZZA SOCIAL** at Sunrise Farm (White River Junction)
- 8/26 Permaculture Design for Your Yard, Homestead & Farm (Jeffersonville)
- 8/30 Pasture Management: Recovery After a Drought (Randolph Center)
- 8/31 **PIZZA SOCIAL** at Blackwell Roots (Cabot)
- 9/12 Organic Dairy Forage Management: Corn Silage & Weed Control (Vernon)
- 9/13 **PIZZA SOCIAL** at Mighty Food Farm (South Shaftsbury)
- 9/23 **PIZZA SOCIAL** & Hoe Down with Farmer Veteran Coalition of Vermont at Wild Roots Farm (Bristol)

Sponsored by:



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Dates & locations are subject to change. For up-to-date information, visit www.nofavt.org/onfarmworkshops, or call (802) 434-4122. Additional support by: Farmer Veteran Coalition of VT, UVM Extension Northwest Crops & Soils Program, UVM Plant & Soil Science Department, VT Vegetable & Berry Growers Association, and Vermont Young Farmers Coalition. NOFA-VT is an equal opportunity provider.