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The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

The Power of Co-ops

by Eric DeLuca, NOFA-VT member

Cooperative organizations, or co-ops, are an old idea that has taken root all around the world: a business model in which the business is owned and operated by the people who use its products or services. And yet, each co-op is unique, based on the needs of its member-owners. That usually means addressing markets of one kind or another: Some kind of economic activity isn't quite working for a group of people; that's how they know they need a co-op. Small farmers can't reach retail outlets or afford to market their goods; employees feel like they can do a better job without a boss; consumers don't feel like waiting 30 years for Walmart to carry organic brown rice. The needs vary; the satisfaction in meeting them is universal.

So what does all this look like in our backyard? It is not uncommon for someone to be familiar with their local co-op—of whatever kind—and to feel affection for it. Sometimes it takes a while to connect the dots and see the common thread that unites co-ops of all stripes.

Let's check-in with some of the co-ops in our Vermont food system neighborhood and see how they understand their role in the NOFA community and their "co-opness." You'll notice these examples include a farmer, a processor, and a retailer—providing a glimpse of how co-ops can be solutions from farm to plate. Some are old; some are new. Some are big;

some are small. But all exist to meet the needs of their member-owners, and to benefit the community.

Real Pickles: Brand New Co-op Has a Long History with NOFA

Newly minted worker cooperative Real Pickles has a long history with NOFA. Real Pickles founder Dan Rosenberg became interested in making fermented pickles after attending a 1999 NOFA Summer Conference. Dan says,

Real Pickles "went co-op" this year in order to grow without losing its place as a community asset. Photo courtesy Real Pickles.



"My understanding of the food system – and how it needs to change – has been greatly informed by my involvement in NOFA, and that in turn impacted how Real Pickles got started and the philosophy behind it." Today, one of Real Pickles' key contributions as a food company is strengthening of regional connections between New England farmers, processors, and retail markets. Rosenberg thinks it makes sense to source as much of our food regionally as possible, and to have local or regional ownership.

Real Pickles' transition to a cooperative was about solidifying its status as a long-term community asset. Rosenberg explained, "We have set up our cooperative to benefit both its workers and our larger community. Also, in order to finance the transition to cooperative, we sold (non-voting, preferred) equity shares to nearly 80 residents of Vermont and Massachusetts – so, in this way, as well, our move to a cooperative structure has been about reinforcing the reality of Real Pickles as a community asset." A commitment to remaining a small business has always been a central part of Real Pickles' social mission, and the founding worker-owners

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Summer Thoughts from Enid

As we come into our most productive growing season of the year, it is a good time to ask, “Who is Your Farmer?” Of course, many of you reading this are farmers, but even you rely on other farmers for at least some of your sustenance. What if we all committed to answer that question and really got to know more of the food producers who feed us? In our work, we have found that the choice to support local and regional food producers is generally driven by two factors: knowledge and relationship.

We are hosting a series of Celebrate Your Farmer socials this summer (see the back cover for dates!), largely because we believe in the power of direct farmer-consumer relationships. Indeed, one of the predominant reasons for the success of farmers’ markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms is the creation and enhancement of that consumer-farmer relationship.

Of course, many Vermont farmers rely on local or regional wholesale markets (especially dairy farmers), and some consumers prefer to shop in grocery stores rather than at farmers’ markets. In those scenarios, information is important for driving demand, and so we also work to educate consumers on the real costs of their food, and the real benefits of choosing local and organic.

It was with this cost-benefit question in mind that I attended the Seven Days Restaurant Week salon on the “Real Cost of Local Food” in May. The panelists were Sean Buchanan from Black River Produce; Christa Alexander, certified organic farmer from Jericho Settlers Farm; Chef Michael Clauss of Bluebird Tavern; and Allison Hooper from Vermont Butter and Cheese.

Sean expressed what a complex topic the panel had to address: for one example, grass (of which Vermont has in abundance)

is not subsidized, but corn is – this greatly impacts meat prices. Farmers in Vermont face higher costs for land, goods, and processing, all of which factor into competitive food pricing. Sean commented that, “farmers can scale up to produce food more efficiently to meet greater demand, but if you are a new producer coming to the marketplace, where is that new consumer you are bringing to the marketplace? We need to ask, who is the new consumer?”

We will need new consumers coming to the local, organic food table, as well as increased local purchasing by those already on board, to meet the goals of the Farm to Plate Plan, a 10-year strategic plan for Vermont’s food system that was passed by the legislature in 2009. One of the plan’s 25 high-priority goals is to double local consumption of Vermont-produced food by 2020, from five percent of total food purchases to ten.

I will be meeting with other regional leaders at the Food Solutions New England summit this week to discuss how we can best work together to meet their bold vision of our region producing up to 70% of its own clean, fair, just, and accessible food by 2060. Suffice to say, NOFA-VT is currently involved in a lot of discussions about driving demand to reach new consumers, and driving supply to meet demand. It is a fascinating time.

As we move into strawberry picking, snap peas, and fresh pastures, I am reminded of how fortunate we are to be eaters in Vermont, that we even can develop relationships with our food producers.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Celebrate Your Farmer pizza socials this summer, and celebrating our relationships together over good, local food.

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

Farm to Community Mentors at Work: The Community Agriculture Project in Underhill

By John Connell, NOFA-VT Farm to Community Mentor for Chittenden County

In December of 2012, I was fortunate to join NOFA as a Farm to School Mentor. There are 10 of us, facilitating links between farmers, teachers, and community members throughout Vermont. We hope to expand and create opportunities for food and farm education throughout the state.

I live in Underhill Center right on the northeastern edge of Chittenden County, where we still have a few active dairy farms of long standing as well as all sorts of new and diverse small farming operations. The folks of this town and neighboring Jericho still maintain a strong interest in agriculture, gardening, and the rural activity that is our heritage.

In the spring of my first year as a NOFA mentor, I started paying better attention to facilitating the links between farm, school, and community here in Underhill/Jericho. I discovered so very many groups, committees, and the like that were, in one way or another, related to agriculture here in my own community. We have a sustainable agriculture committee, a town energy committee, a school garden group of parents, a conservation committee, a trails committee, and so on.

Soon I realized that the new and the established farmers did not know each other, and that few of these wonderful groups seemed to be talking with each other, despite sharing the same audience and the same general goals. So, I started what I called the Community Agriculture Project or CAP.

I thought that perhaps this simple, grassroots, roll up your sleeves, get it done effort might help facilitate the connections we NOFA mentors were hoping to nourish. After a

period of experimenting, we have settled on a monthly potluck. This effort has thus far brought us closer together in real support of all local agriculture. The connections between agriculture, schools and the community at large seem stronger.

The Potlucks

A real face-to-face, meet each other, sit down with someone whom you don't know, monthly dinner gathering; just show up, BYO drinks and dish to share. No costs. Simple. Easy.

After we have finished eating we all take turns introducing ourselves. This simple introduction facilitates so many connections. One person says she needs more basil for the salad dressing she is marketing. The next person says he is growing too much basil. Another person says he would love to become a grower for the salad dressing venture, and so on and on.

To spread the word about these gatherings, we make use of our local Front Porch Forum and Two Towns online message boards. We also reach out to families who don't use the computer via the phone, notes at local business, etc.

CAP Education

We offer a variety of "workshops" on a whole range of topics. These workshops are informal, free, and open to all. They are organized depending on interest. People come forward at the pot lucks with an interest (raising rabbits, shearing sheep, growing hops, etc.) they would like to share.

This gesture of sharing leads to an



evening workshop. CAP promotes and structures the workshop of a community member with the knowledge that everyone has something to offer.

The promotion and marketing of these workshops is accomplished just as we do with the pot lucks; computer forums and reaching out personally.

We have tried to keep CAP sane and manageable as a real community volunteer effort. It actually takes little time to organize a pot luck. In the end, the responsibility is on the group and not one individual.

I hope this story may grow more local grass roots organizing on the behalf of Vermont agriculture. Simple, face-to-face gatherings seem to be the key. 🌱

For more information:

- NOFA Vermont Farm to Community Mentor Program: <http://nofavt.org/programs/farm-community-mentors>
- John Connell, Greenmont Farms, Underhill Center: jc6greenmont@gmail.com, 802-899-5141



GMO Labeling Update

By Dave Rogers, NOFA Vermont Policy Advisor

Two Steps Forward

What a difference the last few weeks of the legislative session made! After years of grassroots action and political organizing across the country, efforts to enact state laws to require labeling of foods produced with genetic engineering are beginning to bear fruit.

As most readers of *NOFA Notes* are aware, Vermont became the first state to advance GMO labeling legislation when the Vermont House passed H.112 on May 10th by a vote of 99-42. The vote followed two days of intense debate on the House floor and many months of grassroots action by thousands of Vermonters who made their voices heard in the statehouse and Governor's office. The bill has been referred to the Senate, where the Senate Agriculture Committee will take it up when the legislature reconvenes in January. Governor Shumlin, who had repeatedly voiced his opposition to the bill, now supports the legislation and says that he is "looking forward to signing it" when it reaches his desk.

In Connecticut, a last minute compromise among legislative leaders, GMO labeling advocates and the governor cleared the way for final passage of similar legislation and the governor's signature. Connecticut became the first state in the nation to enact GMO labeling legislation. Congratulations and well done!

The GMO labeling bills in Vermont and Connecticut are substantially the same, with one important difference: Connecticut's contains a "trigger clause" that will delay implementation until four other states, one of which must adjoin Connecticut, and with a combined population of at least 20 million, pass similar



legislation. Vermont's H.112 does not include such a trigger. ("Brave little Vermont," one national organization observed.)

These successes have bolstered efforts to advance labeling legislation in over twenty other states where labeling bills have been introduced. For information about labeling legislation around the country, visit the Right to Know Coalition of States webpage: righttoknow-gmo.org.

In Congress, Senator Boxer (CA) and Congressman Defazio (OR) introduced the Genetically Engineered Food Right-to-Know Act in both houses of Congress on May 24th. The bills require the FDA to clearly label GMO foods. Dozens of co-sponsors, including Bernie Sanders and Peter Welch, have signed on, and scores of national organizations, including the National Organic Coalition, of which NOFA Vermont is a member, strongly support the legislation. These bills have been referred to House and Senate legislative committees.

One Step Back

On May 22rd, Senator Sanders proposed an amendment to the Farm Bill that would affirm states' right to enact GMO labeling legislation and protect states from lawsuits by food and biotechnology corporations who

oppose labeling. (He had introduced and argued for a similar amendment last year.) During the floor debate Bernie said that "Monsanto and other major corporations should not get to decide this; the people and their elected representatives should." The amendment failed by a vote of 27-71. Senator Leahy voted in favor. We can be sure that the Senate has not heard the last from Bernie on this issue.

Moving Ahead in Vermont

The Vermont Right To Know Coalition (NOFA Vermont, Rural Vermont, the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, and Cedar Circle Farm) is now working to build support for labeling legislation in the Vermont Senate. Grassroots organizing and media outreach continue. This summer dozens of VPIRG field canvassers will be knocking on the doors of 70,000 Vermonters to inform them about Vermont's GMO labeling bill and of the importance of contacting their Senators with a message of support for it.

Despite any setbacks, there is a strong feeling around the country that GMO labeling is an idea whose time has finally come. "I have not the slightest doubt that the momentum is with us" Bernie said in an interview after the defeat of his amendment. But we will all need to keep working to maintain that momentum and to make GMO labeling a reality in Vermont next year. Please visit the Vermont Right To Know GMO's webpage (vtrighttoknow.org) to learn how you can help make that happen. 🌱

For more information:

- VT Right to Know: www.vtrighttoknow.org
- National Right to Know Coalition of States: www.righttoknow-gmo.org
- Find your Senator: www.leg.state.vt.us

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Arethusa Farm, Burlington, VT

photo by J.Silverman

Current local food sourcing needs at the Co-op:

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Dried Beans	Nuts	Season-Extended Greens
Dried Herbs	Oats	Single-Source Butter
Fruit Juices	Peaches, Plums	Tortillas
Herbal Teas	& Pears	Venison
Grains	Popcorn	

For a full list, visit www.citymarket.coop/local-products-gap or contact David Anderson, Merchandising Manager at 802-861-9722 or danderson@citymarket.coop



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of the cooperative have committed to this guiding principle. The community gains a business that is dedicated to serving as an effective model for how businesses can make choices that help move our society toward a vibrant organic, local/regional, low-carbon, non-corporate food system.

The Bottom Line is Principles, Not Profit

Some say it is the grounding in consistent principles that sets co-ops apart as a business model. For example, it is not difficult to see how, as a mandate, Concern for Community (one of seven internationally recognized co-op principles—see sidebar) would drive different outcomes from the legal

obligation to maximize profit.

For example, at City Market (Onion River Cooperative) in Burlington, “The local food system is strengthened” is part of General Manager Pat Burns’ job description. “If a producer hasn’t thought of being a vendor at City Market, they should come talk to us. We have 4,500 people a day wander through the store. It’s a good showcase. We’ll always work with someone to balance what works for them with how it can continue to support us. My decision doesn’t have to be bottom-line driven totally.”

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon summed it up well in

declaring 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives: “Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility.”

Pat Burns recognizes that “some small food co-ops may look at City Market and think that we’re too ‘big business’ because we have receiving hours, and things that we have to do to survive as a business. We have to be careful that we’re not excluding anyone.”

Challenges: What’s Up with Scale?

As the organic community is well aware, it’s not always easy to parse success: Is big organic a victory, or a

Continued next page »

Co-op Principles & Identity

The International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as: an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Co-ops are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

The following principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6. Co-operation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

For more on the cooperative identity, values & principles, visit <http://s.coop/1fdzc>

liability, or not really organic at all? As noted above, these same conceptual, identity, and tribe issues arise in the co-op community.

Gary Hirshberg, chairman of Stonyfield Farm and former Executive Director of The New Alchemy Institute, is fond of cautioning the organic community against forming a “circular firing squad,” pitting big organic v. small organic—while in the meantime millions of acres of arable land are degraded. The same advice applies in the co-op world.

For example, Organic Valley (CROPP Cooperative) is a national-scale co-op with 1,834 members (including almost 1,500 dairy members with the remainder divided between meat, juice, eggs, produce, feed, and soy pools). It can be perceived as “big” or “corporate” but when you look at the way OV engages with communities and manages its milk pool at the regional level, it quickly becomes evident that they are a positive force for sustainability.

At the end of the day, the farmer-owners at Organic Valley call the shots, and OV involves farmers well beyond just having a farmer board of directors. Farmers participate in over 20 separate committees addressing everything from on-farm sustainability issues to farmer pay price for the food they’re producing.

An Organic Farmer’s Perspective

Beidler Family Farm is an Organic Valley New England farm in Randolph Center, VT. Regina Beidler shared the context of her farm’s relationship with OV: “When Brent and I started our own farm in 1998, statistics in Vermont showed just over 1,800 dairy farms in the state. Now there are just over 900—half of what there were 15 years ago. Over 200 of the remaining farms are certified organic and 138 of those are OV



Brent and Regina Beidler believe in the power of co-ops and organics to work together for farm success. Photo by Maria Reade

farms (up from the original 5 who signed on when we did in late 1999 and early 2000). I credit OV with giving opportunity to small family farms who may have decided to go out of business, but instead found the benefit of a market that gave them a fair and sustained pay price—and the opportunity to profit and to pass farms on to future generations.”

A New Way of Thinking about Transparency

One of my favorite co-op thinkers is Brett Fairbairn, from Saskatchewan, Canada. He talks about the popular term “transparency” in an interesting way. He says that when a co-op works well, its member-owners see through the co-op into the market that the co-op helps them address. Co-ops are always about a relationship between people and markets. When that relationship works well, you see ongoing dialogue among the member-owners about what the co-op is today, where it’s headed, and why. You also see constant engagement with the market in which the co-op functions.

Community Vision in the Marketplace

Economic impact data can often be an eye-opener for folks who haven’t had a chance to think directly about the powerful and constructive role cooperative enterprises play in our lives. Take a look at “Co-ops: By the Numbers” sidebar (below) for some straight-ahead economic and triple-bottom-line numbers. Many co-ops arrive at

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Co-ops: By the Numbers

Food Co-ops Nationally

- Represent 1.3 million consumer members
- 89% of meat is sustainably raised
- 82% of produce is organic
- 48% of groceries are organic
- The average food co-op sources from 51 local farms and 106 local product producers
- 20% of products sold are local—3x more than privately or investor-owned groceries
- Recycling: 81% of plastics, 96% of cardboard, 74% of food waste

Where does the money go?

- 38% of revenue is spent locally
- For every \$1000 spent at a food co-op, \$1,600 is generated in the local economy
- 19% of revenue is spent on local wages & benefits
- 13% of profits are donated to charity

Source: National Cooperative Grocers Association (2012).

Co-ops Around the World

- 1 billion members worldwide
- 100 million jobs worldwide – more than all multi-national corporations put together
- The largest 300 cooperatives have revenue equal to the world’s 9th largest economy (\$1.6T)


Source: International Co-operative Alliance (2010)

The US Cooperative Economy

- 29,284 cooperative firms (businesses)
- 72,993 establishments (storefronts)
- 2 million plus jobs
- \$652 billion plus in revenue
- \$133.5 billion in income
- \$3 trillion in assets

Source: University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (2009)

Watch a 2-minute animated video:
<http://s.coop/1pfku>



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Farmers' Markets for Everyone

by Erin Buckwalter, NOFA-VT Community Food Security and Direct Marketing Coordinator

Fresh produce, local meats, artisan cheeses – oh my! Farmers' market season is upon us with all its bounty. At your local farmers' market, you'll find a delicious variety of fresh local and certified organic foods, and purchasing from farmers' markets is a great way to support local farm businesses and the working landscape. Farmers' markets also are a great place to socialize with your neighbors and learn new skills – with frequent how-to demonstrations, music, and other special events.

Sixty-three of Vermont's farmers' markets are now members of the Vermont Farmers' Market Association (VTFMA), which is overseen by NOFA-VT. Markets take place all across the state, and on every day of the week. Visit your local market each week or take a tour around the state visiting different markets along the way.

To find a market near you, check the listing of VTFMA member markets on www.nofavt.org under

"Find Organic Food." Here you'll be able to find information about each market including location, days and times, and contact information. A new feature of our farmers' market directory is the ability to search for markets by county, day of the week, and whether they accept debit and EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer, for 3SquaresVT benefits).

As part of the effort to ensure that all Vermonters have access to local and organic foods at farmers' markets, and to ensure farmers a bigger customer base, 45 farmers' market sites in Vermont now accept 3SquaresVT benefits EBT cards.

In addition, most of these markets will also be offering "Harvest Health" coupons beginning in July. For every \$2 EBT customers spend at the market, they will receive a \$2 match in coupons up to \$10 per market day.

These initiatives to provide EBT access and Harvest Health coupons at farmers' markets are key ways that NOFA-VT is working to increase

food access for all Vermonters.

We look forward to seeing you out at your local market this summer – enjoy the bounty! 🌱

This year's Harvest Health incentive project is funded by the Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and the Vermont Legislature through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, along with Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and the Wholesome Wave Foundation.



Farmers' markets are great gathering places and fun places to shop!

Many markets now accept EBT cards, making the bounty of Vermont's farms more available to all.



Ask Cally



Dear Cally,

I heard through the grapevine that biodegradable mulch is going to be approved for use on organic farms! Does this mean I can use BioTelo this season?

Sincerely,

Plastic Free in Pownal

Dear Plastic,

Well, the short answer is “no,” but the long answer is important, so keep reading!

The review and approval of biodegradable mulch is a good example of how important it is for farmers to participate in the national conversation about the organic standards. The organic regulations are not static; they are constantly under revision to reflect the changing needs and innovations in the organic community.

Agricultural plastic mulch is commonly used on organic farms for soil warming and weed control. However, the downsides to the use of agricultural plastic include labor and equipment expense to apply and remove the plastic, as well as disposal costs. Biodegradable mulch, such as the brand BioTelo, is tilled into the soil at the end of the season and thus saves time in labor and disposal. Philosophically, the use of a biodegradable alternative to plastic also appeals to many organic farmers.

However, all synthetic materials are prohibited for use on organic farms unless specifically reviewed and recommended for use by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Biodegradable mulch is considered a synthetic material; although these products are derived from natural materials like corn starch, there are some synthetic additives to help the films hold together and add pigment. Additionally there were concerns about how completely the mulch would biodegrade under field conditions.

For many years farmers in Vermont have been advocating for the use of biodegradable mulch as a preferred alternative to the use of plastic mulch, but it wasn't until 2012 that manufacturers of these products were willing to disclose their ingredients and manufacturing process to be scrutinized and evaluated by the NOSB. In October, 2012, a petition for the approval of this material was finally discussed at an NOSB meeting.

Many Vermont farmers as well as staff from NOFA and Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) submitted comments to the NOSB advocating for the use of biodegradable mulch on organic farms. The NOSB members took these comments seriously and voted at the October meeting to recommend its use, with detailed requirements to ensure that the material would indeed biodegrade.

However, NOSB recommendations are not official policy until they are approved and adopted by the National Organic Program (NOP). At this stage, we are waiting for the NOP to propose a new rule. The proposed rule will then have a timeframe for accepting public comments; when that time has expired, a final rule will be published.

It may feel like a long time when you are pulling up black plastic in the field, but it is this process that ensures a transparent system that everyone can participate in.

Sincerely,

Cally

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NOFA-VT's New Journey Farmers

By Caitlin Jenness, VOF Office Assistant

NOFA-VT would like to introduce you to 2013's Journey Farmers!

NOFA-VT's Journey Farmer program is a two-year program that offers farmer-to-farmer mentoring and access to technical assistance with NOFA-VT staff, free admission to NOFA-VT educational offerings, tailored business planning support, a \$500 educational stipend, and access to NOFA-VT's Revolving Loan Fund.

During the application period this winter, we received over 40 applications from beginning farmers interested in the program. It was exciting and inspiring to hear about the burgeoning new agricultural enterprises that are in motion all over the state.



Jake Torrey of Honey Locust Farm in Bradford is one of NOFA-VT's 2013 Journey Farmers.
Photo courtesy Jake Torrey.

2013 Journey Farmer applicants were evaluated on three main criteria for the program:

- A commitment to live and farm in Vermont,
- At least one year managing an agricultural enterprise, and
- Commercial intent and/or the intent to make a living from farming.

It was no easy process to narrow down such a talented and diverse pool of applicants to a select few. This group of Journey Farmers represents a diversity of backgrounds, interests, and skills with the common theme of a commitment to sustainable agriculture in the state of Vermont.

The 2013 Journey Farmers

Ben Crockett & Ashlyn Bristle are partners in Wild Carrot Farm. This diverse, "almost full diet," enterprise is located in Brattleboro, VT. There they sell raw goat & cows' milk, and raise beef, pork, lamb, and pastured poultry to accompany the vegetable CSA offered by their partners.

Kara Fitzgerald & Ryan Wood-Beauchamp run Evening Song Farm located in Cuttingsville, VT. They currently have 4 acres of diverse vegetable production, which supports a 75 member CSA, wholesale accounts, and two farmers' markets.

Aliza Pickering grew up on her family's farm, Pickering's Greenhouse and Landscaping, in Arlington, VT. There, she is in her second year running her own CSA, growing mixed vegetables as well as meat birds.

Jesse Ruocco, of Ruocco Family Farms, is located in Sandgate, VT. Jesse is currently growing 2 acres of certified organic seed garlic, and focusing on other storage crops as well.

Jake Torrey owns and operates Honey Locust Farm in Bradford, VT. He grows mixed vegetables for a CSA, as well as pastured pork and chicken. Plans for the future include hops and turkeys.

Ben Yuris & Nicole Duch, of Seedfolks Farm, are in their third season of business. They recently relocated to Calais, VT where they market through a 50-member free-choice CSA, the Montpelier Farmers' Market year-round, and several local wholesale accounts. 🌱

For more information:

- www.nofavt.org/beginning-farmer/journey-farmer
- Or contact Caitlin Jenness at caitlinjenness@nofavt.org.
- The next round of applications will begin in November of 2013.

The Journey Farmer Program was started in 2011 with funding from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Agricultural Innovation Center, and is currently supported by the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.



The Brattleboro Food Co-op's new storefront is part of their 100-year vision. Photo courtesy Brattleboro Food Co-op.

their decisions by asking the question: “What’s different at the end of the day?” In the case of the Brattleboro Food Co-op, that is a “100-year” day.

The co-op makes investment decisions today—like the construction of its mixed use, very green storefront that is designed to enhance the vitality of downtown Brattleboro—as one step along the path outlined in their 100-year plan. In 2012, the co-op

received the EPA’s National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. But today’s demonstrated leadership is built upon the willingness to develop that 100-year vision, as a community taking ownership of its destiny.

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For more information:


- International Co-operative Alliance: www.ica.coop
- Real Pickles: www.realpickles.com
- Organic Valley: www.organicvalley.coop
- Brattleboro Food Co-op: www.brattleborofoodcoop.com
- City Market/Onion River Co-op: www.citymarket.coop

NOFA-VT member Eric DeLuca is developing a higher ed certificate program focused on food hub management. He serves on the VT Working Lands Enterprise Board and previously managed the US program for the International Year of Cooperatives.



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Summer Workshops!

NOFA-VT's annual summer workshop series will begin in mid-July and continue through October with offerings for farmers, gardeners, homesteaders, and local food lovers. We will also be hosting several "Celebrate Your Farmer" pizza socials on farms throughout Vermont.

For a full listing of workshops and social events, please visit www.nofavt.org/sws.

2012 Workshop Highlights



Welcome to our 2013 Summer Interns!

We're pleased to welcome our five summer interns!

Each year we host several interns, usually students at local colleges. They work on projects that relate to their interests or careers, and help staff our events. We are excited about the quality of this year's interns and look forward to spending our summer with them!

Jacob Wollman will be working on creating and improving NOFA's video offerings.

Kristin Blodgett is working with the Farmer Correspondence program with our Farm to Community Mentors.

Annalise Carington will be working with Vermont Organic Farmers on research projects and the marketing campaign.

Emily Hill (pictured right) is our garden intern and will also be working on the Vermont Farm Share program.

Lauren Lenz will be helping with direct marketing projects.

In addition to their individual project focus, interns also help staff mobile oven events throughout the summer, so say hi when you see them! 🌱



Emily with an armload of scallions from the NOFA office garden. Photo by Nicole Dehne.

NOFA summer interns shown at right are learning to stretch pizza dough. They are critical to the success of the mobile wood-fired pizza oven, which serves crowds at over 50 events each summer.

Photo by Enid Wonnacott



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Food Service Recipe Book

by Abbie Nelson, NOFA-VT Agriculture Education Coordinator and Director of VT FEED

What do you get when you combine stylish cookbook aesthetics, local and seasonal recipes, and the rigor of school food nutritional guidelines? A cookbook BY Vermont school food chefs FOR school food chefs!

For 12 years, Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED, a collaboration of Food Works at Two Rivers Center, NOFA-VT, and Shelburne Farms) has engaged school food programs around the state to prepare delicious, nutritious food using from-scratch cooking techniques and fresh, local, and healthy food.

In order to meet the nutritional guidelines for school meals, school cooks often use recipes created by the USDA, which may use fresh products and be healthy, yet are presented in an institutional way, without those mouthwatering pictures, chef hints and anecdotes that are enticing in cookbooks. Creating this cookbook has been an exciting opportunity for school cooks to share their creativity and passion.

Through a USDA Team Nutrition Grant, the Vermont Agency of Education's Child Nutrition Program, VT FEED, and School Nutrition Association of VT have partnered to develop a school food service cookbook highlighting recipes from schools throughout Vermont, all of which are in compliance with the new federal Child Nutrition Guidelines for school meals.

All the recipes in the book were tested three times for taste and accuracy. First, a team of 14 school food chefs donated their time to be part of this project. They submitted 85 kid-tested recipes from their repertoire, were trained on standardization of recipes, and conducted the first test at their schools. Thanks to the generosity of the New England Culinary Institute (NECI), the second round of testing was done by student chefs in the NECI Service Learning Class. Then the 14 school chefs accomplished our final testing during a 2-day recipe test-a-thon at the NECI cafeteria. All sorts of vegetables, fruits, grains, and

dried beans were highlighted in the recipes.

The cookbook has been brought to new heights aesthetically with the enthusiastic guidance of a food writer and tester, a food educator, and a food designer and photographer, all from Eating Well magazine. In order to support the professional writing and photography, local sponsors have chipped in to help, including VT Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets; the VT Department of Health, the Northeast Dairy and Food Council; and Cabot Creamery Cooperative.

This recipe book will be distributed to all 50 state Child Nutrition Programs and made available on-line, with an official unveiling intended for August 14th at the Vermont Child Nutrition Summer Institute. We are currently looking for someone to help with publishing, so that we can make hard copies of the book available for our VT schools. Please let us know if you have any publishing ideas! 🌱

Gingered Cabbage Salad

*Recipe by Kathy Alexander
Makes 40 ½ cup servings*

4 lbs red cabbage
2 lbs green cabbage
4 each apples
¼ cup lemon juice
½ cup cider vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon ginger, fresh, minced
1 tablespoon honey
1½ teaspoons garlic, minced
½ cup olive oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 cups dried cranberries
1 cup sunflower seeds

1. Trim outer leaves of cabbage and cut in half. Cut out core. Cut each half in 6 to 8 wedges. Shred the cabbage in a food processor fitted with a shredding disc, emptying into a large bowl as it fills. Set aside.
2. Core and peel apples; cut into 6 wedges. Thinly slice the apple wedges. Toss with lemon juice in a small bowl.
3. Whisk vinegar, mustard, ginger, honey, garlic, oil, salt and pepper in a small bowl until well combined.
4. Add the apples and lemon juice to the cabbage. Drizzle with the dressing and toss to coat. Add cranberries and toss again. Sprinkle with sunflower seeds. Cover and let stand for 15 minutes before serving. If preparing more than 30 minutes before service, refrigerate.

Summer 2013 New Members

NOFA welcomes the following members who recently joined through VOF certification applications, workshops, and other events. Thank you for supporting Vermont organic agriculture!

New and Renewing Business Members:

- Adam's Berry Farm, Burlington
- Anjali Farms, S. Londonderry
- Balla Machree Farm, S. Royalton
- Bouchard Farm Inc., Franklin
- Corner Rail Fence Company, Tunbridge
- Deep Root Organic Farmers Co-op, Johnson
- Dow's Crossing Farm LLC, E. Hardwick
- Field House Botanicals of VT, Jericho
- Fire Hill Enterprises, Florence
- Five Corners Farmers' Market, Essex Jct.
- Full Moon Farm, Hinesburg
- Full Sun Company, E. Middlebury
- Garden Art LLC, Addison
- Grafted Branch Timberframing, Jeffersonville
- Green Wind Farm, Enosburg Falls
- Hanover Co-op Food Stores, NH
- High Ponds Farm, Montgomery Ctr.
- Highfields Center for Composting, Hardwick
- Hill Top Farm, Pownal
- Hillcrest Foods, NY
- Hinesburg Lions Club, Hinesburg
- Houde Family Farm, St. Johnsbury
- Law Offices of S.M. Buckholz, Quechee
- Long Wind Farm, E. Thetford
- Minor Family Maple LLC, Cambridge
- Olivia's Crouton Company, New Haven
- Putney Farmers' Market, Putney
- Quarry Road Farms Inc., Middlebury
- Rutland Area Food Co-op, Rutland
- S&N Family Farm, Newport
- Solari Inc, TN
- Stowe Maple Products LLC, Stowe
- The Carrot Project, MA
- Vermont Food Venture Center, Hardwick
- Vital Living, Shelburne
- VT Agricultural Credit Corp, Montpelier
- Wild Branch Botanicals LLC, Craftsbury
- Willsboro Research Farm, NY

New Members

- Meg Brancaccio, Burlington
- Melanie Brotz & Family, Burlington
- Donner Carr, Fast Hitch Farm, Whiting
- Karen Claxton, Shelburne
- Janice Dinsdale, Herland Herbs, Greensboro
- Matthew Eldred, MN
- Ginny Flanders, Danville
- Sue & Lee Gardner, Washington
- Hadley, Beth & Connie Gaylord Jr, Gaylord Farm, Waitsfield
- Leslie Gensberg, E. Burke
- David Howe, Elm Brook Farm LLC, E. Fairfield
- Charles Hubbard & Alessandra Rellini, Agricola Farm LLC, Hinesburg
- Walter Jeffries, Sugar Mountain Farm LLC, W. Topsham
- Jennifer Judkins, Danby
- Anthony Kessler, Burlington
- Leo Ladouceur, Jr. & Maxine Ladouceur, Bowman Road Farm, Barnard
- Zelma Lisah Loseko, Brooks Farm, E. Corinth
- Deborah Lowd, Salisbury
- Emily Maheux, S. Hero
- Gayla & Willis Mayo, Foxfire Farm, Irasburg
- Wayne & Jan Ohlsson, E. Calais
- Derek O'Toole, Braintree
- Ansel Ploog, Flywheel Farm LLC, E. Montpelier
- Dr. Earl Rosenwinkel, MN
- Charles & Olga Salmon, Raven Ridge, Richford
- Jane Sayner, S. Newfane
- Gretel Schuck, VT State of Mind Organics, Brownsville
- Doug Swanson, Orleans
- Michael Waters, Farm at the Barn, RI
- Barbara Wilson, Shoreham



Summer 2013 Program Supporters

Thank you to our recent donors:

- Jerusalem Gathering \$100 for Vermont Farm Share Program
- Main Street Landing, \$500 corporate contribution for general support
- Town of Williston, \$300 for Vermont Farm Share Program from Brick Church Music Series
- Vermont Coffee Company, \$465.44 proceeds from sale of coffee at winter conference for Vermont Farm Share Program
- Vermont Gas, \$1,636 cost share attic insulation

Program Grants:

- Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement, \$2,000 for Farm to Community Mentor Program and the Farmer Correspondence Project and Agricultural Literacy Week outreach
- Forrest & Frances Lattner Foundation, \$50,000 for program support
- Franklin County Community Development Corp., \$4,480 for FINE FEED Farm to Institution Task Force
- Organic Valley/CROPP, \$9,000 for Dairy Economic Study
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, \$11,150 Scaling-Up New England's Value Added Meat Industry and \$5,000 for Increasing the amount of New England ground beef entering regional institutions and increase farm viability by offering access to a large-scale marketing stream
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, \$5,705 USDA federal grant for FEED to develop trainings and resources for farmers, school food service, and food hubs/centers on food safety and school food procurement
- Vermont Agency of Human Services, Dept of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, \$49,250 for Community Supported Agriculture component of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.
- Vermont Community Foundation, Nouvelle Fund, \$5,338 for general support
- Vermont Community Foundation, \$16,500 subcontract with Vermont Housing Conservation Board/Vermont Farm Viability Program, to collaborate with VHCB to increase institutional procurement of local foods and provide technical assistance to farmers interested in scaling up to sell to institutions
- Vermont Department for Children & Families, \$3,000 for Harvest Health Coupon reimbursement
- Vermont Housing Conservation Board/Vermont Farm Viability Program, \$85,750 for business planning, transfer planning, cash flow or enterprise planning
- Wholesome Wave \$7,900 for Double Value Coupon Program
- Donations to support the Farm to Community Mentor Program and school field trips to farms in their communities:
 - Eric Hanson \$500
 - Buffalo Mountain Co-op \$250
 - Hunger Mountain Cooperative \$250
 - Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative \$2,000
 - Neat Repeats Resale Shop Inc. \$100
 - Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital \$250
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River Berry Farm in Fairfax, VT hosted one of our spring High Tunnel and Greenhouse Tours on April 3, 2013. The tour featured David Marchant, VOF certified organic producer since 1992. Photo by Lynda Prim.



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Harvest Hill Farm, Walden

August 22, 5:30 – 7:30pm
Someday Farm, Dorset

September 5, 5:30 – 7:30pm
Kimball Brook Farm, Ferrisburg



Learn more about the Celebrate Your
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