

# Hosting a Successful Farm-to-Table Dinner



Raising money to subsidize CSA shares for Vermont Farm Share Program participants can be challenging! The following fact sheet outlines a successful Farm-to-Table fundraiser hosted by Jericho Settlers Farm and provides inspiration and tips for hosting your own farm fundraiser.

## What is a Farm-to-Table?

At it's most basic, Farm-to-Table means the food being consumed came directly from a specific farm. When farms are hosting "farm-to-table" dinners, the menu consists mainly of ingredients produced on site by the farm (and generally any supplementary ingredients are bought locally). This can be set up in many forms: a formal catered dinner in a refurbished barn, a casual family-style meal served at a table in the field itself, etc.

## Evaluating whether Farm-to-Table is a good idea for your farm:

Do you have a wide marketing base or do you feel confident in your ability to effectively advertise? Do you know your clientele/feel able to provide the expected level of formality? Do you have a chef who is willing and able to design a menu around the seasonal crops you can provide? Do you have a good relationship with the chef and is the chef clear on his/her role in the organization of the event? Do you have a diversity of products available?

## Planning and Preparation:

The most important start to a successful fundraiser is setting achievable goals with a realistic timeframe. When starting ask yourself:

- What am I trying to achieve?
- How much time do I have?
- How much money am I trying to raise?
- What resources do I have that can help me?
- How will I communicate my goals at the fundraiser?

Once you've established that you have the resources and time to achieve a successful event, it's time to move on to the nuts and bolts of a fundraiser.

- Who is my clientele and how much will they be willing to pay?
- Will the dinner be family-style or will we need to hire waitstaff?
- Does my insurance (or the chef's insurance) cover the dinner?
- Do I want to serve alcohol? Does my chef have a liquor license? Do I want to have a cash bar, or will alcohol be included in the ticket price?
- What sort of follow-up do I want to do?

Have questions? Contact NOFA Vermont's Farm Share Program Coordinator at [info@nofavt.org](mailto:info@nofavt.org). Also, let us know what's brewing on your farm!

# Featured Farm:



JERICHO  
SETTLERS  
FARM, Inc.

## Jericho Settlers Farm-to-Table Dinner

### Fundraiser:

Number of attendees: 54

Cost of Tickets: \$50 each

**Dinner Set-up:** A formal catered dinner beneath the farm's solar array. The waitstaff were farm staff members.

**Relationship to chef:** The chef for the event was a friend who approached Jericho Settlers farm owners, Christa and Mark, and proposed hosting a dinner. The chef was willing to work with the seasonal products from the farm and to accept a nominal fee for the event.

**Where did the meal come from:** Because Jericho Settlers Farm is a large, diversified farm, the majority of the produce and meat were from the farm itself. They did purchase cheese and alcohol from off-site sources.

**Place settings:** Christa borrowed place settings, silverware, vases, and tablecloths from a friend. They rented chairs and tables from the Jericho Community Center. Decoration consisted of flower cuttings in the vases.

**Insurance:** The chef partner is a certified caterer, so his insurance could cover the event. Mark and Christa's insurance provider told them that they would only need to change their policy if they hosted regular dinners. Don't forget to check with your insurance company to make sure you're all set too!

**Outreach/advertising/tickets:** Since the event was open to the general public, not just CSA members, Jericho Settlers added the tickets as an item on the purchasing page of their website. The visibility from this page plus a short advertisement in their weekly newsletter not only filled their seats, but created so much demand there was a wait list.

*Note from NOFA: NOFA-VT can help you advertise your event! Post your event on NOFA Vermont's online calendar <http://nofavt.org/calendar>. Also, if your farm doesn't have an online purchasing option already, consider adding Paypal or Google Checkout to your website, or look into online ticketing programs such as Eventbrite or BrownPaperTickets to help you manage RSVPs and event payment.*

**Alcohol:** The chef had an alcohol license, purchased the alcohol, and kept the proceeds from the cash bar to cover his costs. This allowed them to pay the chef a minimal fee.

**Farmer's Role at the Dinner:** Mark and Christa welcomed the guests personally, explained what the dinner would be funding, and passed out brochures describing the Farm Share program, which NOFA had provided to them. Let us know and we can send some to you too!

### Funds Raised:

*Accounting:* The net profits were around \$2000. While staff was paid, Mark and Christa donated their time.

*Impact:* Christa and Mark had many more applicants apply for Farm Share through their farm than they had funds for. Raising an additional \$2000 allowed them to subsidize CSA shares for six more Farm Share participants!

**Follow-up:** Although they didn't do any formal follow-up or surveys, Jericho Settlers Farm received very positive feedback from their CSA community and many people expressed interest in attending another dinner.

**Plans for Another Dinner:** Jericho Settlers Farm will be hosting another farm-to-table dinner at the end of the summer. The only change they are considering is making it a family-style dinner instead

*Special thanks to Christa for sharing this information!*