

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont's **2017 IMPACT REPORT**





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ج. Welcome .ئ

Thank you for being an important part of NOFA-VT, and for your contribution to our work, on many levels. By working together, we can strengthen organic farms, make healthy food accessible to all Vermonters and nurture strong communities.

We are excited to share some highlights of our 2017 work with you. This report outlines the impact of our work in 2017 to: 1) Grow the Demand for Organic Food, 2) Grow the Supply of Organic Food and 3) Raise Our Voice. Through achievements like the number of schools we have worked with to increase access to local and organic food for Vermont's schoolchildren (Grow the Demand) or the number of farm visits we have made to provide business and production support to organic farmers (Grow the Supply) or our work to advocate for important farm and food policies (Raise Our Voice) – we are nurturing this movement.

As a membership association, our job is to elevate your voice and the voices of all of our members – whether you are a commercial farmer, gardener or homesteader. We are all eaters and we are all part of NOFA Nation, as I like to think of it, working together to build healthier soils, raise healthier animals, and provide food for all, regardless of income. Since 1971, NOFA-VT has worked to grow a robust local and organic farm and food movement in Vermont. Thank you for being an important part of making this work possible; we couldn't do it without you!

Best,

Eil Winrow A

Enid Wonnacott *Executive Director, NOFA Vermont*

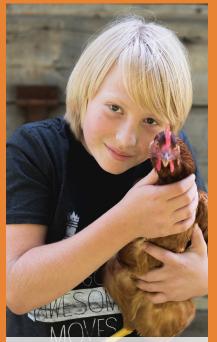






- Growing the demand for organic -

Growing the demand for organic food in Vermont means creating relationships between farmers and eaters, making farmers markets, CSAs, and farmstands more accessible to low-income Vermonters, and providing support to schools and institutional buyers to purchase local & organic foods.



"Helping the crew is fun because I get to drive tractors."

- Angus Blackwell (Pictured above, interviewed for the NOFA-VT documentary "Vermont Farm Kids: Rooted in the Land.") PROGRAM:

Farm to Community Mentors

NOFA-VT Farm to Community Mentors facilitate the web of connections between farmers, educators, and community members. They increase the economic, environmental, and physical health of communities by promoting an awareness of local, sustainable agriculture. To celebrate Agricultural Literacy Week, over 800 people attended over 30 library events, featuring our documentary Vermont **Farm Kids: Rooted in the Land** Secretary Tebbetts and Lieutenant Governor Zuckerman attended the film premiere and spoke about growing up farming.

"The film brought together many new and older farmers and helped facilitate a conversation around their Cabot food shed and education with their schools."

– Librarian, Cabot, VT PROGRAM.

VT FEED

On March 18, 2017, **Vermont Food Education Every Day** (VT Feed), a collaborative project of NOFA-VT and

Shelburne Farms, hosted the 10th annual Jr Iron Chef VT competition for middle and high school aged chefs, with 60 teams from all over the state.



Jr IRON CHEF

"We know that it's not about winning, but about

creating a love of cooking and knowing your food. This event has allowed many of our students, who don't normally 'shine' on the athletic fields or in the classroom, to shine as chefs. I have seen students work as true team members, helping one another and giving constructive feedback to each other. These are strengths that we try to instill in them in the classroom or in sports but often do not have full success with. For our children, there is no better experience."

- Keenan Haley, Sharon Elementary teacher & Jr Iron Chef VT coach

PROGRAM: Farm Share

In 2017, the Farm Share and Senior Farm Share program worked to grow the demand for organic foods by subsidizing CSA shares for limited-income Vermonters. Farm Share, by the numbers:

NOFA-VT manages the **CROP CASH**

program, a statewide incentive program that promotes the purchase of fresh

fruits, vegetables, and herbs at farmers

markets that accept 3SquaresVT benefits.

provided **CSA SHARES**















As any farmer or small business person knows, the early years are fat on expenses and lean on cash. We were willing to go a few seasons without paying ourselves as we established the farm, but the bills couldn't wait. Still, we had sowed our mission right along with our seeds, and were unwilling to uproot it. So, how to meet financial needs and work to increase local food access at the same time? The answer for us came in the form of the NOFA-VT Farm Share Program.

- Farmer Kate Spring, Good Heart Farmstead, Worcester, VT



Direct-to-Consumer Market Support

NOFA-VT supports direct farmer-to-consumer markets because we purchasing decisions that support the farming practices they value, and farmers are trusted to share their values and practices transparently with their customers. Together, consumers and food



believe in strengthening the relationships between food producers and consumers. As a result, consumers will be more likely to make producers enhance the viability of Vermont's working landscape.

- Growing the supply of organic -

NOFA Vermont works to grow the supply of organic food while maintaining the viability of organic farms and businesses. We coordinate a team of farm advisors and farmer mentors who work with growers on business, marketing and production plans, and support the next generation of organic farmers through our Beginning Farmer programs. We work to grow the supply of certified organic products, and the land being managed organically in Vermont, through the organic certification program of NOFA-VT, Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF).

Vermont Organic Farmers

Vermont Organic Farmers LLC (VOF) is the USDAaccredited certification program of NOFA-VT. VOF producers are dedicated to practices that enhance soil, plant, animal, and human health to protect the environment for current and future generations. Organic certification is needed to verify these production practices and to ensure that organic products are produced with integrity and transparency. The VOF seal provides consumers with a process and label they can trust.

Certified Organic, **Locally** Grown

ORGANIC, BY THE NUMBERS

Number of certified organic producers in Vermont

459 496 Acres of certified organic farmland in Vermont

Total gross sales of organic products



Organic dictates truly sustainable practices; from soil management, crop production, and pest control, to community relationships and social impact.

> - Andy Jones, certified organic farmer, **Intervale Community Farm**



Funding for technical assistance has helped us make big shifts in how we hire, train, and develop employees to address perennial challenges. We couldn't have implemented such a big change so quickly without this support. From the perspective of helping our farm become more efficient, the services we received were really effective!

- Ryan & Kara, Evening Song Farm

PROGRAM.

Farmer Services

NOFA-VT supports farmers as the foundation of our working lands and local economies by providing services that help farmers improve their business management practices and production systems. Through on-farm technical assistance visits and educational workshops, we support the growth of organic food production in Vermont.

87

farms supported with business planning and technical assistance services

PROGRAM

Beginning Farmers

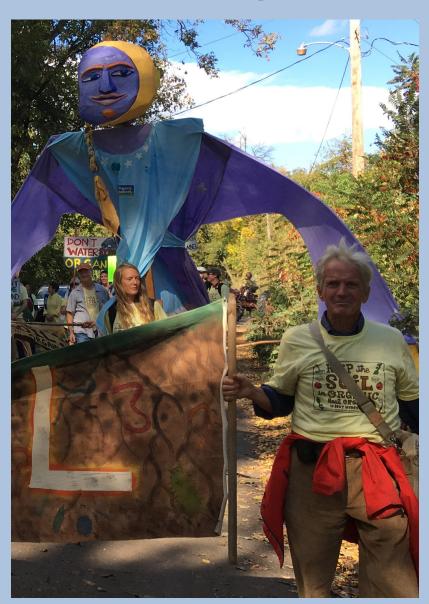
Our beginning farmer programs grow the supply of organic food by supporting the next generation of farmers with business planning assistance and educational opportunities.

13 **Journey Farmers** representing 7 start-up farm businesses received in-depth trainings, mentorships, and educational stipends.

Over 50 farm workers participated in two CRAFT groups (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) for monthly farm tours, workshops, and networking apportunities.



- Raising our voice for organic -



NOFA Vermont is committed to advocating for policies that strengthen our food system by supporting organic farming practices, improving economic opportunities for farmers, and expanding access to local and organic foods for all Vermonters.

PROGRAM

Advocacy

NOFA Vermont works on state and federal policy issues impacting organic farmers and consumers in Vermont and beyond. A few of our key issues and efforts in 2017 included:

- Working with a range of agriculture and land use stakeholders to introduce legislation supporting agricultural enterprises in Vermont
- Calling upon Congress, the National Organic Program, and the National Organic Standards Board to protect organic integrity
- * Advocating for a Farm Bill that provides support for organic and nutrition for vulnerable Vermonters
- Playing a leadership role in the the formation of the Organic Farmers Association (OFA), a national advocacy voice for organic farmers
- Protecting pollinators by advocating for stronger pesticide regulations in Vermont

Left: Agrarian elder Elliot Coleman joins organic farmers and supporters for a rally at the Intervale Community Farm in Burlington, VT, on October 8th, 2017. The rally was one of dozens held throughout the year to call on the National Organic Standards Board to protect the integrity of the organic label.

2017 FINANCIAL INFORMATION **SOURCES OF INCOME** Admin Allocation 3% Interest/Investments 8% Program Fees 5% Sales 6% - Membership & Donations 20% Certification Fees 32% - Grants & Contracts 27% **EXPENSES BY PROGRAM** Loan Fund < 1% Bulk Order 5% Farm Share 5% On-Farm Workshops & Winter Conference 8% Farm to School & Farm to **Community Mentors 9%** - Market Development & Farmers Markets 15%

Farmer Services 18%

Vermont Organic Farmers 39%

\$2,772,798 Income: **Expense:** \$2,495,819

Expenses by Category

Administration \$192,004 Fundraising \$51,695 Membership Services \$30,977 Programs (see chart) \$2,221,143

Key Cash & Investments

Beginning 2017: \$2,688,191 Ending 2017: \$3,067,052

These are unaudited numbers. A copy of NOFA's 990 tax form is available upon request.



Looking back at 2017

→ JAN 27 VOF ANNUAL MEETING

Certified organic farmers & producers met for a full day of decision-making, information-sharing, and networking.



FEB 17-19 35TH **ANNUAL WINTER** CONFERENCE

Beyond Borders: Our Role in the Global Food Movement featured keynote speakers Cuban farmer and educator Dr. Fernando Funes Monzote. and Indian scholar and environmental activist Dr. Vandana Shiva.



MARCH 6 NOFA-VT **BULK ORDER**

Pickup day! Hundreds of farmers & gardeners gathered at 5 regional sites to pick up supplies. Proceeds benefit the Farm to Community Mentor Program.



MARCH 18 JR IRON CHEF VT

Teams of skilled vouth chefs from all over the state competed in the annual timed culinary competition.



MAY 1 CROP CASH

Coupon incentive program for farmers markets kicked off 3rd vear, with \$63,746 to support farmers and 3SquaresVT recipients.



→ JUNE 3 STROLLING OF THE HEIFERS

NOFA-VT and our puppets joined the thousands of marchers and onlookers at this annual event in Brattleboro celebrating Vermont's agricultural legacy.



Heart-shaped pancakes were plated and served at the State House highlighting Vermont's farming heritage, and illustrating the idea that every school in the state should have access to pure Vermont maple syrup.





ORGANIC FARMERS **ASSOCIATION**

Sponsored by RODALE INSTITUTE

FEB 21 OFA **LAUNCHED**

A new grassroots initiative was launched to provide a voice in Washington, DC for organic producers. NOFA-VT's Maddie Kempner serves on the founding board.

MARCH 10 PRICING STUDY RELEASED

A NOFA-VT study found that, more than 1/2 the time, organic produce purchased directly from farmers is competitively priced or less expensive than comparable products purchased at the grocery store.



MARCH 29 FARMERS MARKET CONFERENCE

An array of learning and networking opportunites for market managers, board members, and organizers.



MAY 4 ACT 33

PASSED Increased funding for Farm to School grants and technical assistance. and for the first time included Farm to Early care.





→ JUNE 10 LEARNING

JOURNEY Two NOFA-VT staff, two farmers and two farmers market managers took a learning journey to Washington state to explore how their direct market farms and farmers markets are innovating and capturing direct sales.

→ JUNE 27 N.E. FARM TO SCHOOL INSTITUTE

The year-long VT FEED Northeast Farm to School institute welcomed 12 teams from VT and the rest of the Northeast and kicked off with a Summer Retreat held at Shelburne Farms.



Our annual workshops for farmers, gardeners place all summer and fall, with workshops





→ AUG 2 3RD ANNUAL FARMER OLYMPICS

Farmers from all over the state competed in unique, farm-chore challenges, at the organic farm at Green Mountain College in Poultney.

AUG 14 OPEN FARM

3rd annual week

of hands-on events

on farms statewide,

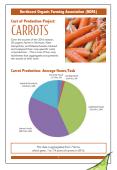
creating farmer and

consumer connections

WFFK

SEPT 15 COST OF **PRODUCTION** MFTRICS

NOFA-VT's Farmer Services program released a series of fact sheets with cost-specific cost of production metrics.





→ OCT 5 SHARE THE HARVEST

A statewide fundraiser for our Farm Share program: more than 65 businesses participated by donating a percentage of the days' profits!



OCT 31 NOSB MFFTING

VOF producers journey to Jacksonville, Florida, to be heard in front of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB).



Workshops were held that provided farmers the tools necessary to make informed changes to their businesses based on both financial viability and quality of life goals.



JULY 1 ON-FARM WORKSHOPS BEGIN

and homesteaders took across VT.



SEPT 30 PIZZA SOCIALS

NOFA-VT's mobile wood-fired pizza oven wraps up a summer of slinging 'zas across Vermoint. Final tally: 3,823 pizzas baked at 54 events!



OCT 8 & 15 RALLIES TO KEEP THE SOIL IN ORGANIC

Farmers, politicians, and advocates rallied in Burlington, VT & Hanover, NH to send a message to the National Organic Program to "Keep the Soil in Organic".



Over 800 people attended over 30 library events, featuring our new documentary: VT Farm Kids: Rooted in the Land.



┗ DEC 7 FARMER

FORUM 27 farmers who sell directly to consumers met for an afternoon of presentations, discussion, and brainstorming to inform our extensive consumer marketing campaign that aims to increase purchases at direct markets.



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ORGANIC!

NOFA Vermont would like to thank our many members and donors: all the individuals, businesses, and organizations who have supported us through your generous donations between Jan. 1, 2017 and Dec. 31, 2017.

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Members are noted with "*".

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