NORA Notes



Quarterly newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Summer 2022



NOFA-VT

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Dear friend of NOFA-VT,

Vermont's most glorious time of year has returned again, and with it, gathering season: on farms, at markets, in U-pick rows, and more. Whether sitting on a back porch, sharing a quart of sun-warmed berries, or by the river with a wedge of Vermont cheese and fresh loaf of bread, this is the season for coming together with our loved ones and greater community, sharing the bounty and delighting in the fat of the land and the joy of being together—and oh, how we need it!

As we move out of one pandemic phase and into a new, unwritten chapter of our communal life, I've been gathering inspiration and guidance from Priya Parker's book, "The Art of Gathering." We have the opportunity, and the challenge, of evaluating how and why we gather—of choosing what to make of our togetherness and how not to waste it. Now more than ever we feel how precious the gift of being together is. What should we make with the time we have? What is our gathering for?

Parker offers, "We gather to solve problems we can't solve on our own. We gather to celebrate, to mourn, and to mark transitions. We gather because we need one another." I'd add: we gather to build community. We gather to build a movement.

As the season of summer events arrives, we at NOFA-VT are inviting you with purpose: help this movement grow. We need you! We all need each other. Nothing can substitute for relationships tended in person, through conversation, laughter, learning, and connection. We need that now, to help us heal, and we need it moving forward, to build collective power and momentum.

We invite you to share your precious time to be with us, with each other, and with the land, in order to re-weave our connections and re-energize our shared movement for a thriving, just, and ecological agriculture for Vermont. We invite you to join us on farms to connect with the farmers who grow our food, at workshops to learn from other growers and teachers, at silly, fun events to laugh together (we're looking at you, Farmer Olympics), and at events all over the state to strengthen and expand this community.

When we gather, we make space for the unexpected, some seed of a new idea or connection: a project, a growing technique, a campaign, a friendship, a mentor. These seeds are the magic beans of a movement: shooting up into a thriving, verdant, powerful garden. Let's make the most of our gathering time and space for our movement to flower and bear the fruits of a thriving agricultural future.

I hope to gather with you this summer,

Grano Ondol

Executive Director, NOFA-VT

2022 On-Farm Summer Events

Workshops, Pizza Socials, & more!

We're thrilled to present another summer of community-building events!

Join us on a farm near you to dig into exciting food-system topics at an on-farm workshop or enjoy wood-fired pizza and a farm tour at a pizza social.

> Pre-registration is required for all events. To register, visit NOFAVT.ORG/SUMMER22



Dealing with Pests: Tips and Tricks for the Advanced and Novice Gardener The Garden at 485 Elm. Montpelier | 4-6 p.m. | \$25 NOFA-VT members/\$35 non-members



On-Farm Pizza Social: White River Land Collaborative | Tunbridge | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



Climate Smart Farming Practices | Cedar Circle Farm, East Thetford 4-5:30 p.m. | Free!



On-Farm Pizza Social: Sunrise Farm | White River Junction | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



On-Farm Pizza Social: Nitty Gritty Grain Company | Charlotte | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



DIY Herbal Tea | Hillside Botanicals, Randolph | 10 a.m.-12 p.m. | \$25 NOFA-VT members/\$35 non-members



On-Farm Pizza Social: Wilson Farm | Greensboro | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



Farmer Olympics | Cate Farm, Plainfield | 4-8p.m. | Register your farm team!



On-Farm Pizza Social: High Meadows Farm | Putney | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



Raising Goats & Small Ruminants | Ice House Farm, Goshen | 1-3 p.m. | \$25 NOFA-VT members/\$35 nonmembers



On-Farm Pizza Social: Anjali Farm | South Londonderry | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



Farm-to-Pizza Family Fun Drift Farmstead, Roxbury 10 a.m.-1 p.m. | \$15



Organic and Eco Apple Certified: Orchard Walk & Tasting | Sunrise Orchards, Cornwall | 4:30-6:30 p.m. | \$25 NOFA-VT members/\$35 non-members



The Basics of Seed Saving Bone Mountain Farm, Jericho | 2-4 p.m. | \$25 NOFA-VT members/\$35 non-members



Experience a Bird-Friendly, Organic Sugarbush Summit Maple Farm, Fairfax 9-11 a.m. | \$25 NOFA-VT members/\$35 nonmembers



Abenaki Land Link Harvest Celebration | The Farm at VYCC, Richmond | Details & Times TBD

To see more details and register for events, please visit **NOFAVT.ORG/ SUMMER22**





Thank you, Kirsten!

Longtime NOFA-VT Finance Director Retires after 32 Years

By Nicole Dehne, Vermont Organic Farmers Certification Director and Becca Weiss, Office Assistant

It is with heavy hearts and much gratitude that we announce the retirement of Kirsten Bower, NOFA-VT's current Finance Director. Kirsten has worked for NOFA-VT for 32 years and has been our behind-the-scenes pillar of support and consistency. Kirsten has worked many different roles and positions at NOFA-VT. Before becoming our Finance Director, she was an organic inspector and office manager, managed the farmer bulk order, and more! Chances are, if you ever called NOFA-VT throughout the years, you got to speak with Kirsten on the other end of the line.

Kirsten was hired as NOFA-VT's second employee by our former Executive Director, Enid Wonnacott, when NOFA-VT consisted only of a milk crate of files and a strong vision for a better food and farming system. Kirsten and Enid worked together for the next 29 years, shaping and growing the organization into what it is today. Over the years, Kirsten has worked with an open heart, always putting our farmers and staff first while ensuring that our finances are well managed and that details are not forgotten. Will we be lost without her? Perhaps a little. But we wish her the best of luck as she looks forward to spending more time with her grandson, tending her garden,

bicycling, kayaking, and enjoying time with her family and friends.

If you want to send Kirsten a love note, please email them to info@nofavt.org or send them to our office (address below), and we will pass them along.

In honor of Kirsten's 32 years of service to NOFA-VT, we have also established the Kirsten Bower Fund to support work that increases the effectiveness and sustainability of NOFA-VT. If you would like to make a gift in Kirsten's honor, please visit nofavt.org/donate and choose 'Kirsten Bower Fund' from the drop-down campaign menu or mail a check to NOFA-VT with 'Kirsten Bower Fund' in the memo line.

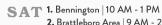
To mail well wishes and/or donations, please send them to: NOFA-VT, PO Box 697, Richmond, VT 05477. Thank you!

Thank you, Kirsten, for all of the time and love you have given to NOFA-VT, our members, our farmers and processors, and our staff. You've made an immense contribution to the organic food and farming community and movement. We wish you all the best in your retirement. \Diamond

VERMONT SUMMER **FARMERS MARKETS**



FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE VTFMA MEMBER MARKETS, PLEASE VISIT: NOFAVT.ORG/VTFARMERSMARKETS



2. Brattleboro Area | 9 AM - 2 PM

3. Burlington | 9 AM - 2 PM

4. Caledonia Farmers Market - St. Johnsbury | 9 AM - 1 PM

5. Capital City Farmers Market - Montpelier | 9 AM - 1PM

6. Champlain Islands Farmers Market - Grand Isle | 10 AM - 2 PM

7. Craftsbury | 10 AM - 1 PM

8. Middlebury | 9 AM - 12:30 PM

9. Montgomery * | 9 AM - 12 PM

10. Morrisville | 9 AM - 1 PM

11. Mt. Tom Farmers Market - South Pomfret * | 10 AM - 1PM

12. Newport | 9 AM - 2 PM

13. Northwest Farmers Market - St. Albans | 9 AM - 2 PM

14. Norwich | 9 AM - 1 PM

15. Randolph | 9 AM - 1 PM

16. Rutland | 9 AM - 2 PM

17. Shelburne * | 9 AM - 1 PM

18. Waitsfield | | 9 AM - 1 PM

19. West River Farmers Market - Londonderry | 9 AM - 1 PM

20. Richford * | 9 AM - 1 PM

SUN 21. Dorset | 10 AM - 2 PM

22. Glover | 11 AM - 2 PM

23. Newfane Flea and Farmers Market * | 9 AM - 2 PM

24. Putney | 11 AM - 2 PM

25. Stowe * | 10:30 AM - 3 PM

26. Winooski | 10 AM - 2 PM

TUES 27. Isham Family - Williston* | 5 PM - 8 PM

28. Northfield | 3 PM - 6 PM

29. ONE Burlington | 3 PM - 6:30 PM

WED 30. Barre * | 3:30 PM - 6:30 PM

31. Caledonia Farmers Market - Danville | 9 AM - 1 PM

32. Champlain Islands - South Hero | 3 PM - 6 PM

33. Jeffersonville Farmers and Artisan Market * | 4:30 PM - 7:30 PM

34. Market On The Green - Woodstock | 3 PM - 6 PM

12. Newport | 9 AM - 2 PM

16. Rutland | 9 AM - 2 PM

THURS 35. Fair Haven Market | 3 PM - 6 PM

36. Jericho | 3 PM - 6:30 PM

37. Manchester | 3 PM - 6 PM

38. Peacham * | 3 PM - 6 PM

39. Royalton * | 3 PM - 6 PM

40. St. Albans Bay Market | 4:30 PM - 7:30 PM

41. Vergennes * | 3 PM - 6:30 PM

42. Waterbury | 4 PM - 7 PM





43. Arlington Village | 4 PM - 7 PM FRI

44. Brandon * | 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

45. Chelsea | 3 PM - 6 PM

46. Greater Falls | 4 PM - 7 PM

47. Hardwick | 3 PM - 6 PM

48. Hartland | 4 PM - 6:30 PM

49. Killington * | 3 PM - 6 PM

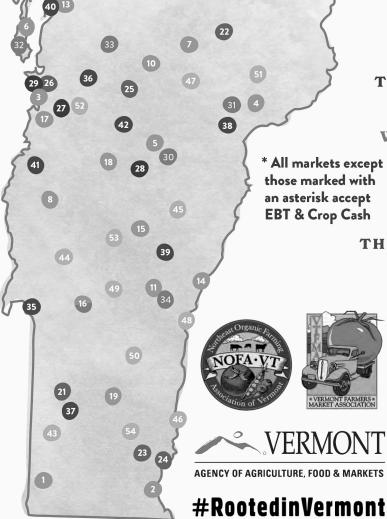
50. Ludlow | 4 PM - 7 PM

51. Lyndon - Lyndonville * | 3 PM - 6 PM

52. Richmond | 3 PM - 6:30 PM

53. Rochester Farmers Market and Exchange * | 3 PM - 6 PM

54. Townshend | 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM





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Accessing the Harvest

A CSA member's perspective on NOFA-VT's



How do we make local organic food more affordable and still run a viable business? That was one of our big questions when we started Good Heart Farmstead back in 2013. As a certified organic vegetable farm growing on just 1.5 acres, our mission is to increase local food access. Our small size means we don't often have the surplus to open up for gleaning like many larger operations do. Then there's the sticking point of creating a viable business — how do we increase food access while still being paid a fair price? That's where the NOFA-VT Farm Share Program comes in.

The Farm Share Program is a win-win for eaters and farmers. Through it, low-income

Vermonters are able to get CSA shares for half off, while farmers are paid the full price. Beyond making local food more affordable, the program lays the foundation for more connections between eaters and farmers. Since 2013, we've seen our farm community grow through fundraisers for the Farm Share Program; we've received private donations to help fund the program from CSA members and community members alike; and we've fed many individuals and families who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford a CSA.

With the help of the Farm Share Program, we've been able to take meaningful steps to increase food access while growing deeper

relationships with our community. To learn more about the program through an eater's perspective, I recently talked with a longtime CSA Member, Jodi, who shared how meaningful the program is for her.

Katie: What are the most meaningful aspects of the CSA for you?

Jodi: It's more effective for me to buy through you than the coop. For me, the price point is the most important thing when I'm worried about how I'm going to eat well, and how I will pay for that. And value. The good value I'm getting for something that I know

that you and Edge and Waylon have worked so hard to do all year long.

- **K:** You've been a CSA member with us for a long time and have really seen us grow through so many things. Were you a member of a CSA before that, too?
- J: I was. I've been part of the CSA world for a long time. As soon as I became aware of it here in Vermont, and I've been in Vermont now for 17 years. I've been a CSA member for close to that.
- **K:** Do you remember what the initial thing that drew you to a CSA was?
- J: I remember going to the farmers market and looking through all the vendors there and finding a specific farm that I was drawn to the most, and then someone mentioned to me that I could get a CSA for this. Then they explained to me what that meant, and I thought, 'Wow, that's great, that's what I'm going to do.' And I love going to the farm. Part of the whole CSA experience for me was going to the farm. So that's how it all began for me. I wanted to see where my vegetables are really coming from and how it was being done.

Growing up, I was a city kid. I didn't see how things were grown. I did spend a summer in Minnesota on a farm when I was 11, so I did get to see things grown then because the family I was with had a beautiful garden and chickens. So I was exposed to that for a summer, but to reunite with that again as an adult like 20 years later, that was important for me.

- **K:** One of the reasons I started farming was to have that understanding, too, and the relationship between us and our CSA members is a big reason we chose this model.
- **J:** I've seen how invested you are in the relationships you've created over the years. For me, other ways of buying food felt anonymous. With the CSA, it's the

intimacy for me of knowing who's really doing the work. My relationship with you and Edge is one of the priorities for me

- **K:** We look forward to seeing people at pick-up, too. Some people come and grab their stuff and go, but it's often a deeper interaction for us, too. It feels nice to know that people appreciate the food, but it's also more than just the food.
- **J:** Absolutely. I remember meeting your parents through a mutual friend, so I know your family not well, you know, but I've met them and I've run into your mom at the farm.
 - **K:** The CSA becomes an extended community.
- J: Absolutely. I get to know you and Edge, and now I'm watching Waylon grow up. Even though I'm picking up off the farm now, I do get the newsletters, and I see the changes in him and his size and you know what I mean?
- **K:** I love that you get to see Waylon growing up. We started the farm the year he was born, so this is our 10th year.
- **J:** I remember you pregnant, so I was there your first summer! Oh this is exciting to realize we've known each other this long now.
- **K:** It is! Before we go, my last question is if someone asked you why you should join a CSA, what would you tell them?
- J: You're going to get way better value, and you're going to get to know the people that are growing your food. Those two things together are what makes me want to do it year after year after year. ◊

In the 2022 summer CSA season, 57 farms will provide over 300 households with half-priced CSA shares through our Farm Share Program. That's more shares than the program provided in last year's summer and winter CSA seasons combined!

We have been able to grow this much-needed program thanks to many of you who have contributed, in combination with generous support from:

City Market | King Arthur Baking Company | Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op | People's United Community Foundation | Skinny Pancake | VT State Employees Credit Union

...and the incredible restaurants and food businesses that participate in our annual Share the Harvest fundraiser. **THANK YOU!**

In addition, 1,097 seniors and individuals with disabilities living in low-income housing sites around the state will receive small, free shares through our Senior Farm Share Program. The Senior Farm Share Program is funded through a Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture that is administered by the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living.

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\$158,000 in Resilience **Grants** Awarded to 65 **Farms Around** Vermont

By Jennie Porter, Resilience Grant Coordinator

This spring, NOFA-VT awarded our third round of Resilience Grants to fund projects that will improve long-term resilience on farms and in communities across Vermont.

We received 151 applications from farmers around the state and awarded 65 grants, totaling over \$158,000. These grants were for up to \$2,500 each. Twenty-five of the grants went to farm businesses that are BIPOC-led, LGBTQ farmer-led, and/or disabled farmer-led.

Some of the recurring themes for this year's round of grants were infrastructure improvements, water and irrigation

investments, soil health, biodiversity, and food access efforts. Other themes present in several awards included building a local economy through farm stands, reducing fossil-fuel use across farm systems, and education for the public. For the first time, collaborative applications (ranging from two to seven farms in each set) sought communal resilience, supporting efforts beyond the nuclear farm family towards collective thinking.

We've highlighted a few of the projects here to give you a sense of the range of projects that the review committee decided to fund:

This year, we have been excited to develop and learn from a participatory grantmaking process for these grant awards. This winter we convened a farmer and farmworker grant review committee to make the funding decisions. Our goal with this participatory, democratic model was to shift power away from the organization and into the hands of those we are in service to—and for those people to ultimately determine what projects had the biggest potential to bolster resilience on farms and in communities.

The Farm Upstream, Jacqueline Huettenmoser, East Montpelier

This farm is a collective of four young farmers leasing three separate plots while facing land access barriers. They will use grant funds to build a mobile cold storage unit, which will expand the crops that they are able to grow while they search for a permanent

Boreas Ventures, Malcolm Greene,

This hemp and cannabis farm will use grant funds to test a variety of edible companion

plants for their ability to reduce pest and blight pressure on hemp and cannabis crops while increasing pollinator-friendly plants.

Cloud Water Farm, Racheal Ouellette and Joseph Bossen, Warren

This farm will use grant funds to establish diverse varieties of basketry willow as strip crops lining fields of fruits and vegetables. The willows will create diversified income streams, meet the demand for local weaving willow supply, serve as riparian buffers, and provide wind protection.

Ishtar Collective, Henri June Bynx, Montpelier

Liz Echeverria of Hawthorn Meadow Farmstead in Craftsbury looks over

the farm's new solar-powered wash station purchased with a 2021 Resilience

This mutual aid project that produces food for free distribution in the community will use grant funds to purchase hand tools to increase volunteer capacity and a farm vehicle to widen their distribution range.

Naga Bakehouse, Julie Sperling, Middletown

This farm will use grant funds to create a regional flour mill that will enable them to purchase grains from local farmers for their bakehouse.



Chief Shirly Hook and Doug Bent of Abenaki Tribal Garden in West Braintree stand inside the new shelter, used as a class room, purchased with a 2021 Resilience Grant.

Does' Leap, George van Vlaanderen, East Fairfield

Larson Farm and Creamery, Richard Larson, Wells

Maplemont, Amber Reed, Barnet Meeting Place Pastures, Marc and Cheryl Cesario, Cornwall

Pigasus Meats, Phelan O'Connor, South Hero

Robinson Hill Beef, Graham Unangst-Rufenacht, Marshfield

SVTFarm, Laura Ann Burch, Wells

Two Worlds Farm, Diane Imrie, North Ferrisburgh

These seven member-farms of the Land Care Cooperative will use grant funds to cooperatively purchase and use the "Vermont Ripsower," a subsoiler with a seeder and liquid applicator. The Ripsower interplants diverse, deep-rooted flowering mixes, decompacts soils, triggers and aids the topsoil-formation processes, and applies farm-brewed biostimulants and minerals to seeds during planting. As a result, the tool will help build soil health, improve water quality and increase carbon sequestration potential.

Retreat Farm, Katie Paolizzi, Brattleboro

This farm will use grant funds to host a community dinner for the 200+ stakeholders of their Community Food Project, which makes local farm products available to all community members regardless of their financial means through its pay-what-you-can farm stand and sliding scale CSA. The dinner will allow stakeholders to deepen personal connections and engage in constructive dialogue to inform future programming decisions.

This year's Resilience Grants were funded in part with donations to the NOFA-VT Resilience Fund as well as generous support from Ben & Jerry's Foundation, Chelsey Ring Giving Fund, Justin Reidy and Meaghin Kennedy, People's United a division of M&T Bank, Raven Ridge Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, Sustainable Future Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont Community Foundation COVID-19 Fund, and WaterWheel Foundation. ◊



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Vermont Farms & Schools Win With the Vermont Local Foods Incentive Program

By Helen Rortvedt, Farm to School Program Director

It's not news that school meal programs are often strapped for cash. When asked, "what barriers do you face to purchasing more local foods for your school meal programs," most school nutrition professionals respond with "cost." In recent years, schools and Farm to School advocates have looked to the state government for support.

Vermont lawmakers heard this call to action and made a commitment to supporting farmers and schools by establishing and funding a Local Foods Incentive Program, providing \$500,000 for the program in fiscal year 2022 and now, again in 2023. This new grant program provides a direct incentive to schools that meet local purchasing targets in their school meal

programs, allowing

them to serve more

fresh Vermont food

on their menus. The program not only increases student's access to local foods, but also creates a reliable market for Vermont farmers and other producers. The Vermont Local Foods Incentive is a win for Vermont farmers, the economy, and our kids!

In the first year of the Local Foods Incentive Program, we have worked closely with school nutrition professionals, farmers, and other Farm to School stakeholders across Vermont to support the successful roll-out of this groundbreaking program. We reached out to every school district and supervisory union in Vermont to encourage and support their participation. We also developed a local foods tracking tool, a list of foods that meet the required "VT Local" definition, and a resource website. While the work itself wasn't

often glamorous (lots of spreadsheets were involved), the initial result was that nearly half (23 out of 51) of Vermont's school districts and supervisory unions applied for the grant this year, with even more poised to do so next year!

So, how does the Local Foods Incentive Program "pay off"? We know that when

school meals improve, more students choose to eat the meals. When student participation increases, more revenue is generated for the program, which can then be reinvested in buying more fresh, local ingredients from Vermont farmers, setting off what we like to call, "The Virtuous Cycle of Farm to School"! And, when national supply chains break down like they did during the pandemic, we've seen many Vermont school nutrition programs rely on purchasing directly from local farmers and producers in their communities and through our network of regional food

hubs. Supporting schools to buy more local foods isn't just a nice idea—it is a concrete way to create sustainable food systems within our school communities, support our farmers, keep more of our money local, and build up the localized alternatives that are critical during times of crisis.

School Nutrition Professionals have so much on their plates. Between paperwork, ordering food, making and serving meals, and navigating ever changing COVID safety requirements, it is essential to offer support so that they don't miss out on opportunities like the Local Foods Incentive. The weight of the work that goes into building an economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just Vermont agricultural system cannot fall on the shoulders of individuals. A

systems approach to change calls for a system of support.

The success of the first year of the Vermont Local Foods Incentive Program has been a collaborative effort. This program has been supported by the Vermont Agencies of Education and Agriculture, Food and Markets, farmers and food producers, food distributors and food hubs, school nutrition professionals, and many other food system organizations and partners. We are grateful to be a part of a network that is working hard to ensure children in Vermont have nutritious foods available to them every day and farmers are able to be a part of the solution.

Providing supervisory unions and school districts with this grant opportunity is essential for feeding more Vermont kids with fresh, local food and directing more dollars to Vermont farmers. In conjunction with other Farm to School programming, we're excited to see the Local Foods Incentive Program accelerate the transformation of cafeterias, classrooms, and communities in Vermont

Onward! ◊

Are you a Vermont farmer or food producer interested in working with schools?

Please reach out! In particular, schools are looking for more local, lean meat proteins like ground beef and chicken. We're here to make sure you have the tools to connect with school nutrition programs and help increase Vermont kids' access to nutritious, local masks

Helen Rortvedt: helen@nofavt.org or 802-434-7166

Kayla Strom: kayla@nofavt.org or 802-434-7176

Your Neighboring VERMONT FÖOD CO-ÖPS

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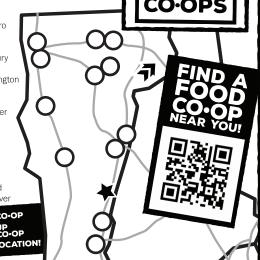
Food co-ops across the Northeast are working together to ensure access to healthy food, build good jobs and a just & sustainable food system for everyone!



VERMONT

- O Brattleboro Food Co-op, Brattleboro O Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op, Hardwick
- ♣ Caledonia Food Co-op, St Johnsbury O City Market, Onion River Co-op,
- Downtown & South End, Burlington O Co-op Food Stores, White River
- Junction
- O Hunger Mountain Co-op, Montpelier
- O Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Middlebury
- O Morrisville Food Co-op, Morrisville O Plainfield Food Co-op, Plainfield
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Policy Update

Maddie Kempner, Policy Director

On May 12, the Vermont State Legislature officially wrapped up another session, ending the 2021-2022 biennium. In this legislative recap, we'll share updates on several of NOFA-VT's priority issues this session, including some major wins, some disappointments, and as always in policymaking, plenty of incremental progress. This update was accurate at the time of writing in late May. Check out our blog for the most up-to-date information: nofavt.org/blog.

FOOD ACCESS & SCHOOL MEALS

Perhaps the most resounding successes of this legislative biennium came through in the form of unprecedented funding for various school meals and food security initiatives, the first three of which have been championed as three prongs of a collective goal known as "Farm Fresh School Meals for All". The upcoming food access and school meals funding includes:

Universal Meals: Facing the expiration of pandemic-related federal waivers that have allowed schools to serve meals at no cost to students since March 2020, the legislature passed S.100 to continue providing free breakfast and lunch every school day to every student. The bill explicitly calls for this to be a permanent program, and funding has been appropriated for next school year.

Farm to School & Early
Childhood Grants: After many years
of steadfast advocacy by Vermont's
Farm to School & Early Childhood
(FTSEC) Network partners, the
legislature agreed for the first time to
fully fund Vermont's FTSEC Grants
program at advocates' requested level
of \$500,000.

Local Food Purchasing Incentive

Program: For the second year in a row, the budget passed by the legislature includes \$500,000 to incentivize schools to purchase Vermont local food for their school meals. (Read more about this important news on p. 10).

Finally, the budget as passed by the House and Senate included a one-time appropriation of \$200,000 aimed at expanding two of NOFA-VT's food access programs: Crop Cash and the Farm Share Program. These programs help limited-income Vermonters access local and organic food at a reduced cost at farmers markets and through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares, and have experienced record demand since the beginning of the pandemic.

H.466 (SURFACE WATER)

H.466 is a bill that will establish new reporting requirements for farmers and other users of surface water (meaning water withdrawn directly from rivers, streams,



ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and the like), as well as a permitting system for certain users. After passing through the House without farmer testimony, H.466 was taken up by the Senate where a substantial amount of farmer input was heard by the Natural Resources and Agriculture committees. In the end, the bill will require farmers who withdraw 10,000 gallons or more of surface water in a 24-hour period (or 150,000 gallons or more of surface water over any 30-day period) to report that usage to the Secretary of Agriculture, Food & Markets annually. The final version of the bill does not require farmers to have a permit for surface water withdrawals, while it will establish a permitting system for other users. H.466 passed both the House and Senate,

and was signed into law by the Governor on May 24.

H.626 (SALE, USE, OR APPLICATION OF NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES)

Neonicotinoids are a class of pesticides widely used in conventional agriculture that are known to be highly toxic to bees and

other pollinators. After substantial testimony from researchers, beekeepers, farmers, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM), and seed manufacturers and dealers, the final version that passed both chambers requires VAAFM to develop best management practices for the use of neonicotinoid treated seeds, in consultation with the Agricultural Innovation Board, and to work with farmers, seed companies, and other relevant parties to ensure that farmers have access to appropriate varieties and amounts of untreated seed or seeds not treated with neonicotinoids. However, before the rules can go into effect, they will have to be presented to the agriculture committees in the House and Senate on or before March 1, 2024. The bill also requires VAAFM to monitor managed pollinator health in order to establish pollinator health benchmarks. H.466 passed both the

House and Senate, and was signed into law by the Governor on May 27.

H.273 (BIPOC-LED LAND ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY ACT)

H.273 was introduced in 2021 with the aim of creating a representative body to distribute funding to promote and support land access and opportunity for BIPOC and other marginalized groups in Vermont. While H.273 itself did not pass, language establishing the Land Access and Opportunity Board was successfully added to another housing bill, S.226. The Board will be tasked with putting structures in place

to move money directly into communities of marginalized folks to purchase land and housing, by:

- gathering legal experts to advise on constitutional avenues for granting money to marginalized communities for home ownership and land access;
- advising state-led housing organizations such as the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), the Vermont State Housing Authority, and others on mechanisms to more effectively serve historically marginalized communities; and
- defining internal Board infrastructure, roles, decision-making frameworks, methods for ongoing operation, and granting and other external programmatic structures.

While funding has not yet been allocated directly to the Board to distribute as grants, this is an important step to ensure that substantial funding for housing in S.226 is distributed equitably.

SOIL HEALTH & PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (PES) WORKING GROUP

The Soil Health & PES Working Group continues to work on developing a pilot program to pay farmers for ecosystem services. The group has until January 2023 to bring its program recommendations to the

legislature and plans to roll out a pilot next year. NOFA-VT continues to advocate for a program that includes "early adopters" of ecological practices (such as many organic farmers), and to work directly with farmers to ensure their perspectives are included as the program is developed. The FY23 budget also includes \$1 million for the PES program to fund facilitation, research, pilot program development, and deliver payments to farmers for quantified ecosystem services.

S.148 (ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE)

S.148 is Vermont's first environmental justice bill and has been signed into law by Governor Scott. S.148 will:

- codify the definition of environmental justice, making it the state's policy that no segment of the population should, because of its racial, cultural, or economic makeup, bear a disproportionate share of environmental benefits or burdens;
- create an Environmental Justice Advisory Council, comprised of key community stakeholders with real power to influence decision-making and best practices for environmental justice, through meaningful public engagement processes and analysis of cumulative environmental burdens;
- build a statewide environmental justice mapping tool as a visual

- assessment for navigating environmental justice issues across Vermont;
- require state agencies to adopt formal community engagement plans to ensure every Vermont resident has the opportunity to participate in decision-making that impacts their health and wellbeing; and
- set a target for investment in environmental justice populations, encouraging the state to proactively deliver environmental benefits to communities most impacted by historic injustices.

UPCOMING: FORUM ON FOOD & FARMING WITH CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES

Save the date! On Monday, July 18th, NOFA-VT is co-hosting a forum for candidates for U.S. House along with our partners at 350VT, ACORN, Center for an Agricultural Economy, Healthy Roots, Rural Vermont, Vermont Grass Farmers Association, Vital Communities, and Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District. Join us to get to know the candidates and hear their perspectives on policies that can support a thriving agricultural future for Vermont. ◊



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Farming from the

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By Kayla Strom, Farm to School Coordinator & Vermont Family Farmer of the Month Award Administrator

The Vermont Family Farmer of the Month Award provides grants between \$10,000 and \$12,000 to a family farm each month to support an innovative project that will improve the farm's viability. Award recipients are farm businesses that contribute to a more resilient agricultural landscape and demonstrate environmental stewardship through their sustainable practices.

We are honored to present the most recent recipients of the award and share a bit about their farms and projects. Congratulations to Harrison's Homegrown, Milkweed Farm, and Footprint Farm for their excellence in environmental stewardship and the work they do to build social and economic resilience in Vermont.



Harrison's Homegrown - February 2022

Melanie and Patrick Harrison are the owners and operators of Harrison's Homegrown in Addison, Vermont and have dedicated the last 15 years to stewarding the land and adding value to Vermont's organic agricultural community. At Harrison's Homegrown, Melanie and Patrick manage livestock, a dairy operation, and farm education programs.

This February, the Harrisons received \$12,000 to help cover the cost of installing a net-metered, roof-mounted photovoltaic system on their barn. The energy produced from their new solar array will offset the farm's electricity usage in the first year and is anticipated to exceed the farm's future electric needs, providing additional energy that can be sent back into the grid to provide power for other Vermonters.



Milkweed Farm - March 2022

Jonah Mossenberg started Milkweed Farm in Southern Vermont in the spring of 2017 after a decade of working on small diversified farms and gardens across the country. Over the past five years, Milkweed Farm, now run by Jonah and his wife Emily, has become an integral part of Windham County. This year, Jonah and Emily begin a new chapter by moving the farm from land with a short-term lease to a 10-acre parcel owned by Westminster's Earth Bridge Community Land Trust where they have long-term land tenure.

Milkweed Farm was awarded \$12,000 to purchase a pre-cut 24'x24' simple garage kit to build as a barn that can house their wash and pack facility and a cooler, and provide some storage for equipment and tools. As Milkweed Farm moves to its new permanent land base, Jonah and Emily can now make infrastructural investments to scale up their farm business.



Footprint Farm - April 2022

Taylor and Jake Mendell started farming as a way to connect children and families in their community to nutrition. In their previous careers in nutrition education, Taylor and Jake witnessed firsthand the positive long-term health outcomes that result from access to fresh, local food and a relationship with the people who produce it. In 2013, Taylor and Jake started Footprint Farm in Starksboro, Vermont to feed and nurture their community.

Footprint Farm was awarded \$12,000 to construct a new propagation greenhouse closer to their home. With this new greenhouse, Taylor and Jake will be able to monitor the temperatures through Wi-Fi sensors and tie into the house's electricity (thus enabling them to use their generator in the case of a power outage). Daily maintenance and weekly seedings will be exponentially easier, eliminating the February and March ski commutes out to the current propagation greenhouse's location. Increasing the ease of their seedling care will also lead to reduced stress, financial savings, and higher quality seedlings for Footprint Farm. \Diamond

The next round of applications will open in September. To learn more, visit vermontfamilyfarmeraward.org

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Final Origin of Livestock Rule Levels the Playing Field for Vermont's Organic Dairy Farmers

By Maddie Kempner, Policy Director

In a long-awaited and hard-won victory for organic integrity, the USDA has finally passed the Origin of Livestock Rule this April, closing the loophole that some certifiers previously interpreted to allow dairy farmers to consistently raise livestock conventionally (i.e. more cheaply) and transition them to organic later in life. The ability to continuously transition conventionally raised livestock into an organic operation has put some farmers at an economic advantage over others, like those here in Vermont, who were following the original intention of the rule.

Vermont Organic Farmers LLC (VOF), the organic certification agency owned by NOFA-VT, interprets USDA organic regulations with the input of organic farmers, historically leading to high-integrity interpretations. VOF, and many other certifiers, have interpreted the rules around livestock transition to mean that conventional dairy farmers converting their operations to organic have a one-time opportunity to transition their whole, distinct herd to organic

production. After that original transition, VOF has required that farmers raise all animals organically from the last third of



gestation (meaning before birth).

The final Origin of Livestock Rule released by USDA in April clarifies that VOF's interpretation is the correct one, and ensures our local organic dairy farmers are competing on a more level playing field, while also improving the integrity of the organic system nationwide

Specifically, the rule includes the following important clarifications:

A dairy livestock operation transitioning to organic, or starting a new organic farm, is allowed to transition non-organic animals one time.

Organic dairies are prohibited from sourcing any transitioned animals. Once a dairy is certified organic, animals must be managed as organic from the last third of gestation. Variances may be requested by small businesses for specific scenarios.

The finalized rule was first proposed by USDA in 2015 and has been stalled since, despite widespread agreement and advocacy from the organic community that it was needed. Specifically clarifying that dairies are prohibited from purchasing or selling transitioned animals as organic is a critical piece of closing this loophole, and something NOFA-VT and VOF have advocated for. We hope you'll join us and organic farmers everywhere in celebrating this big win! ♦



A Warm Welcome to our New Staff!

The NOFA-VT and Vermont Organic Farmers teams keep growing! Welcome, Kristin and Aaron!



Kristin Freeman

Finance Director

Kristin came to Vermont in 2006 to work on an organic vegetable farm and has called this state home ever since. She is thrilled to join NOFA-VT and dedicate her financial and operational skills in support of local farmers.

Most recently, Kristin served as the Director of Finance and Administration for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR). Prior to joining FPR, Kristin worked in finance at the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, an experience that inspired her to dedicate her accounting skills to Vermont-focused mission-driven organizations. At home, Kristin loves to laugh and play with her two children, listen to music, cook, and explore the outdoors.

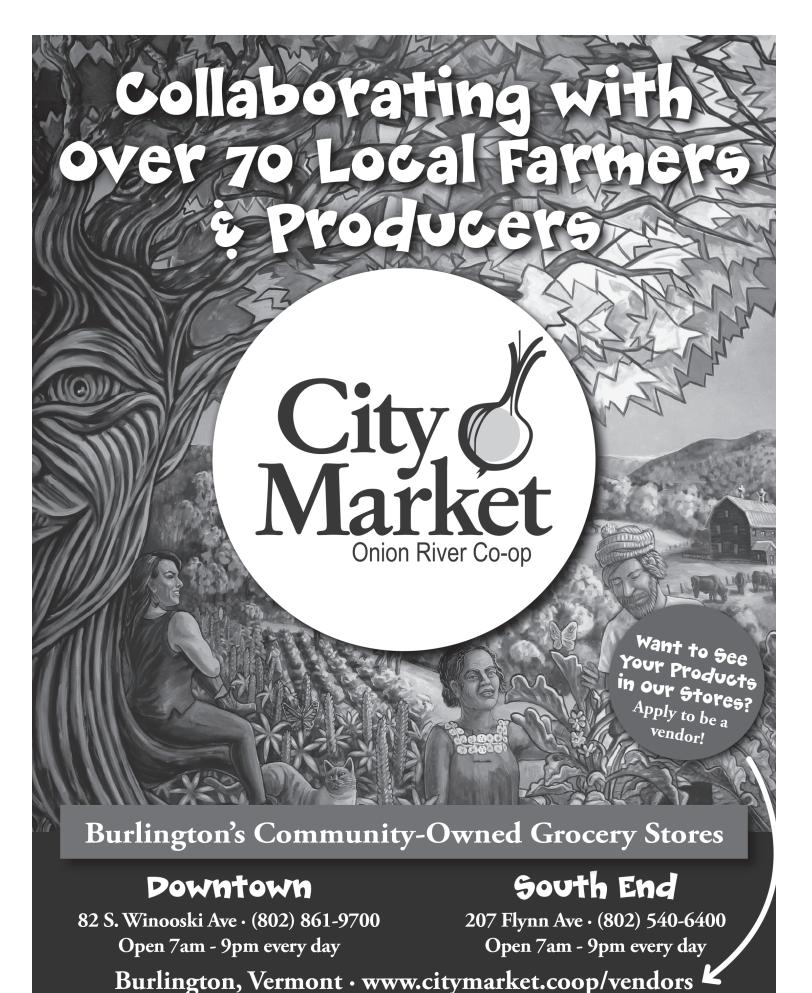


Aaron Guman

Farm Resilience Specialist

Aaron has been serving as the Program Coordinator at VHCB's Farm and Forest Viability Team since 2020, managing VHCB's grant programs for farmers and helping coordinate the Food Hub Collaborative,

as well as contract and financial management. Prior to VHCB, Aaron worked in affordable housing, grew grassfed beef, and ran an edible landscape services company. Aaron lives in East Calais with partner Monica and gray tabby Moona (or "Bob"). He is passionate about perennial and regenerative food systems, and enjoys cooking and exploring the woods, fields, and waterways of Vermont.



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NOFA-VT Members: Thank you for supporting organic agriculture and a just and ecological food system!

A warm welcome to the following members who joined us or renewed their membership in the second quarter of 2022:

NEW MEMBERS

Jim Ryan & Katie Black, Wolcott, VT Georgette & David Huffman, Cambridge, VT

Deyo Household, Underhill, VT Jane Diefenbach, Brattleboro, VT Michelle Cataldo Favaloro, Lincoln, VT Stone Household, Tinmouth, VT Kate Mendenhall, Spirit Lake, IA Aaron Guman, East Calais, VT

Kenya Lazuli, Corinth, VT Hayley Jones, Burlington, VT Jessica Rubin, Burlington, VT Adam Wilson, Huntington, VT

Ellen Ogden, Manchester Village, VT Caroline Gordon, Montpelier, VT Daniel Smith, Montpelier, VT

Jeffrey Sherwin, N Ferrisburg, VT Jesse Marksohn, White River Junction, VT

Kristin Freeman, Middlesex, VT

Michelle Eddleman McCormick, Marshfield, VT

Chris Comishock, Enosburg Falls, VT Miriam Horowitz, Norwich, VT Kim Young, Tinmouth, VT Adrian & Jessica Fortin, Holland, VT Gary Caron, S Royalton, VT

Gary Caron, S Royalton, VT Mary Whitcomb, Williston, VT Dorie Seavey, Woodstock, VT Grace Mooney, Athens, VT

Joel Page & Donna Dupray, Jeffersonville, VT

Luke Leopold, Saint Johnsbury, VT Paul Franklin, Plainfield, NH Joey Klein, Plainfield, VT Mark Montalban, Burlington, VT Dave Morley, Amherst, NH

Doug & Margaret Becker, Montpelier, VT

Clark O'Bryan, Warren, VT Hope Haumesser, Vergennes, VT Roo Slagle, Belvidere, VT

NEW & RENEWING BUSINESS MEMBERS

1000 Stone Farm, Brookfield, VT 47th Avenue Farm, Portland, OR AC Dairy, St Albans, VT

Adam's Berry Farm, Charlotte, VT

Addison County Commission Sales Inc., Middlebury, VT

Allwinds Farm, West Townshend, VT
Alston Farm, Williamstown, VT
Ananda Gardens, Montpelier, VT
April's Maple, Canaan, VT
Aurora Farms, Charlotte, VT
Back Beyond Farm LLC, Chelsea, VT
Basin Farm, Bellows Falls, VT

Bear Roots Farm, LLC, Williamstown, VT Birdsong Herb Farm, Cornwall, VT Blackbird Organics, Plainfield, VT

Blue Heron Farm, Grand Isle, VT Boltonville Dairy, Wells River, VT Bone Mountain Farm, Jericho, VT

Boondoggle Farm, Putney, VT Boyce Family Sugary, Richford, VT Bravo Botanicals LLC, Guilford, VT

Bread & Butter Farm, Shelburne, VT Breezy Valley Farm, Irasburg, VT

Butterworks Farm, Troy, VT

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Camp Merrishko, East Randolph, VT

Cattis LLC, Hardwick, VT Cedar Acres, Fair Haven, VT

Chambers Farm, North Clarendon, VT

Champlain Acres, Bridport, VT

Champlain Valley Compost Company, Charlotte, VT

Choiniere Family Farm, Highgate Ctr, VT Common Roots, South Burlington, VT Creative Windrows, Landgrove, VT Cross Road Dairy, Newport Ctr, VT

Curcubita Pumpkin Seed Oil Farm, Starksboro, VT

Deep Meadow Farm, Windsor, VT
Does' Leap Farm, East Fairfield, VT
Dog River Farm, Berlin, VT
Donegan Family Dairy, Charlotte, VT
Dry Brook Farm, West Pawlet, VT
Earthkeep Farmcommon, Charlotte, VT

Eastview Farm, East Hardwick, VT Elmer Farm, Middlebury, VT Elmore Roots Nursery, Wolcott, VT Engelbert Farms, Nichols, NY Evening Song Farm, Cuttingsville, VT

Fairy Tale Farm, Bridport, VT

Farm at Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Richmond, VT

Farm Craft VT LLC, Shelburne, VT Fat Rooster Farm, S Royalton, VT Fibonacci Acres, Waterbury Ctr, VT

Firefly Farm at Burke Hollow, West Burke, VT

Flack Family Farm, Enosburg Falls, VT

Flag Hill Farm, Vershire, VT Flywheel Farm, E Montpelier, VT Foote Brook Organic Farm, Johnson, VT Footprint Farm LLC, Starksboro, VT

Forrest & Frances Lattner Foundation, Boynton Beach, FL

Foster Farm Botanicals LLC, East Calais, VT

Franklin Farm, Guilford, VT

Friends & Neighbors Organic Farm, LLC, Marshfield, VT

Full Moon Farm, Inc, Hinesburg, VT Gagne Maple LLC, Swanton, VT Giroux's Poultry Farm, Chazy, NY GMG Farms, Charlotte, VT Golden Russet Farm, Shoreham, VT Good Heart Farmstead, Worcester, VT Grateful Greens Vermont, Brattleboro, VT

Great River Farm, Hebron, CT Green & Gold CSA, Sudbury, VT Green Valley Organic, Derby Line, VT Hall & Breen Farm, Orwell, VT

High Meadows Farm & Greenhouses, Putney, VT

High Mowing Organic Seeds, Wolcott, VT Highfields Farm, Randolph, VT Hill Section Farm, Hyde Park, VT Hillside Lane Hemp LLC, Randolph, VT

Houde Family Farm, St Johnsbury, VT Howmars Farm, Franklin, VT Howvale Farm, Tunbridge, VT Hoyt Hill Farmstead, Tunbridge, VT Hunger Moon Farm, Enosburg Falls, VT Hunger Mountain Farms, Waterbury, VT

Hurricane Flats, South Royalton, VT Intervale Community Farm, Burlington, VT Jesse Soule, Montgomery, VT

Joe's Brook Farm, Barnet, VT

Johnson Family Foundation Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, Poultney, VT

Kettle Song Farm, Worcester, VT

Killdeer Farm, Fairlee, VT

Kimball Brook Farm, North Ferrisburgh, VT Kingsbury Market Garden, Warren, VT Kiss the Cow Farm, South Royalton, VT

Larson Farm LLC, Wells, VT
Last Resort Farm, Bristol, VT
Leaping Bear Farm, Putney, VT
Lewis Creek Farm, Starksboro, VT
Lewis Creek Jerseys Inc, Danville, VT
Lilac Ridge Farm, Brattleboro, VT

Lilly Farms at Marshall Park, East Dover, VT

Long Wind Farm, East Thetford, VT Long Winter Farm, Stowe, VT Lost Barn Farm, Putney, VT

Love Your Mother Farm, Hinesburg, VT MacBain Homestead, West Danville, VT Maple Wind Farm, Richmond, VT Marble Rose Farm, Middlebury, VT Martin Family Farm, Williamstown, VT Meadow Brook Farm, Irasburg, VT

Merck Forest & Farmland Center, Rupert, VT Metcalf Pond Maple LLC, Jeffersonville, VT Mettowee Valley Maple, Pawlet, VT

Michelle & Irving Mossey, Fairfax, VT
Milkweed Farm, Guilford, VT
Miller Farm, Vernon, VT
Moksha Farm, Roxbury, VT
Molly Brook Farm LLC, Cabot, VT
Mount Hunger Jerseys, East Burke, VT
Mountain Meadows Farm, South Newfane, VT

Mountainyard Farm, Ripton, VT

New England Farmers Union, New Boston, NH

New Leaf Organics, Bristol, VT North Country Organics, Bradford, VT Northeast Kingdom Hemp, Barton, VT Nutrapath Labs, LLC, Lyndonville, VT Old Friends Farm, Amherst, MA Oliver Hill Farm, Leicester, VT Opera House Farm, LLC, Vershire, VT Organic Valley/CROPP, La Farge, WI

Paul Rainville, Swanton, VT
Philo Ridge Farm, Charlotte, VT
Pigasus Meats, South Hero, VT
Pleasant Mount Farm, Huntington, VT
Proctor Maple Research Center, Underhill, VT

Purple Lark Farm, Richmond, VT
Putney Farmers Market, Putney, VT
Quarry Road Farms, Middlebury, VT
Quill Hill Farm, Poultney, VT
Ramblebramble, Huntington, VT
Reap & Sow Farm, N Ferrisburgh, VT
Pod Hop Baking Company LLC Middle

Red Hen Baking Company LLC, Middlesex, VT Rene J Fournier & Sons Farm Inc., Swanton, VT

Rhapsody Natural Foods, Cabot, VT Rise Sugarworks, Lincoln, VT River Berry Farm, Fairfax, VT Root 5 Farm, Fairlee, VT Rural Vermont, Montpelier, VT Savage Gardens, North Hero, VT Schoolhouse Farm, LLC, Plainfield, VT

Seven Days, Burlington, VT Severy Farm LLC, Cornwall, VT Simplicity Farm, Brookfield, VT Small Axe Farm, East Ryegate, VT Stannard Farm, East Hardwick, VT

NEW & RENEWING BUSINESS MEMBERS CONT.

Stone Hollow Farm, Enosburg Falls, VT Stony Pond Farm, Enosburg Falls, VT Sugar Moon Hill LLC, Woodstock, VT Sunrise Orchards, Cornwall, VT Sunrise Organic Farm, Hartford, VT Sweet Roots Farm LLC, Charlotte, VT Taconic End Farm, Leicester, VT Tamarack Hollow Farm LLC, Barre, VT Taylor Valley View Farm, Washington, VT The Corse Farm Dairy LLC, Whitingham, VT The PlantDoc LLC, South Burlington, VT The Sayre Fields LLC, Hinesburg, VT Thistle Hill Farm LLC, North Pomfret, VT Thornhill Farm, Greensboro Bend, VT Too Little Farm, Barnet, VT Trillium Hill Farm, Hinesburg, VT Triple J Pastures, Irasburg, VT True Love Farm, N Bennington, VTUVM Horticulture Research and Ed, Burlington, VT Vermont Farm to Plate, Montpelier, VT Vermont Grass Farmers Association, Barre, VT ${\sf Vermont\ Soap,\ Middlebury,\ VT}$ Vermont Trade Winds Farm, Shoreham, VT Von Trapp Farm, Waitsfield, VT Walker Farm, E. Dummerston, VT Wayside Farm, Randolph Ctr, VT West Farm, Jeffersonville, VT Whitetail Acres, Williamstown, VT Wild Hill Organics, Fairlee, VT Willsboro Farm, Willsboro, NY Woodstock Resort Corporation, Woodstock, VT Yellow Birch Farm LLC, Peacham, VT

Zack Woods Herb Farm, Hyde Park, VT

New Organic Certifications

Vermont Organic Farmers
welcomes the following new producers
who have recently obtained organic
certification for all or a portion of their operation, joining
the almost 800 organic farmers & processors throughout
the state.

Boneyard Farm LLC
Carman Brook Farm LLC
Chelsey and Mark Lawyer
Couture Trucking Inc.
Elmore Mountain Maple Works
Glinnis Hill Farm LLC
Green Mountain Animal LLC
John Hayes
Leaping Bear Farm LLC
Lilac Ridge Sugarworks LLC

McAllister Home Farm LLC
Morley's Cold Spring Maple Sugar
LLC
Mountain Road Farm Sand &
Gravel
Opera House Farm LLC
Ramblebramble Farm LLC
Tom Reed
Wild Earth Farm LLC

Learn more about the benefits of certified organic, locally grown at NOFAVT.ORG/WHY-ORGANIC



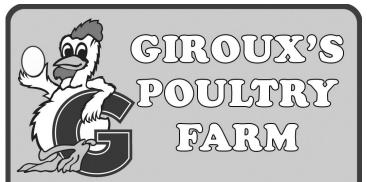
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- Adds microbes to your soil
- Helps to suppress plant pathogens
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- Increases organic matter
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Wishing you summer sweetness!

May this season bring you abundance, connection, and freshness.

NOFA-VT 2022 On-Farm Summer Events





On-Farm Pizza Social: White River Land Collaborative | Tunbridge | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



Climate Smart Farming Practices | Cedar Circle Farm, East Thetford | 4-5:30 p.m. | Free!



On-Farm Pizza Social: Sunrise Farm | White River Junction | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-



On-Farm Pizza Social: Nitty Gritty Grain Company | Charlotte | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20



DIY Herbal Tea | Hillside Botanicals, Randolph | 10 a.m.-12 p.m. | \$25 NOFA-VT members/\$35 non-members



On-Farm Pizza Social: Wilson Farm | Greensboro | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | suggested donation \$10-\$20