Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont’s
Impact & Gratitude Report 2021
Our mission is to promote organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things.
Dear Friend,

NOFA-VT was founded by a group of farmers who believed that farming could be done differently—in a way that nourishes people and the land.

In 2021, we celebrated fifty years as an organization—fifty years of living this belief. We’re proud to look back and see these founding values of centering people and the planet, and of helping to tend community and hope. Looking ahead to the next fifty years, the challenges before us can feel daunting: a changing climate, fraying social fabric, increasing land costs, economic disparity, and corporate takeover of food. And yet, the values we’ve cultivated together—of people, land, community—remain more vital than ever, and themselves offer the solutions we need. Rooting into the fertile soil of these values will nourish us towards a climate-resilient, community-based, socially just, and economically thriving organic agriCULTURE.

Environmental activist Joanna Macy writes that our challenging time can perhaps be reframed as a hopeful “great turning;” a moment of turning from old systems towards those emerging. As we stand between the last half century of work and look to the next, this sense of change feels particularly relevant.

We are deeply grateful to you for helping grow such healthy soil for this movement. In this report, we share highlights from 2021 that you helped make possible. Please reach out if you have questions, feedback, hopes, or ideas. Thank you.

Grace Oedel, NOFA-VT Executive Director
I took it for granted that I could call [Jack Lazor] anytime and ask him anything. It’s so great to have this group of farmers to ask questions of and who ask questions I didn’t even know I had.

**Mara Hearst**
Levy Lamb LLC, Soil Health Stewards cohort participant

Soil Health Stewards cohort members on one of several on-farm visits. Honoring the legacy of farmer Jack Lazor, the central goal of this cohort is to share his passion for building soil health and educating the farming community about soil health practices that contribute to long-term resilience of farms and farmland.
Growing farm & community resilience

In 2021, we turned our attention from short-term pandemic pivots to longer-term investments in resilience.

- We awarded 35 farms and 41 farmers markets with Resilience Grants as well as 11 farms with Vermont Family Farmer of the Month Awards, investing over $300,000 to improve resilience on farms and in communities.

- We provided a wide range of farmer services to over 120 farms, including 61 farms that received in-depth one-on-one business development services, 11 farms enrolled in Farm Beginnings, 6 farms in our Journey Farmer Program, and 21 farms that received production or marketing technical assistance.

- 10 farmers participated in Soil Health Stewards, a new cohort program created to honor the legacy of farmer Jack Lazor. The program nurtured farmer-to-farmer education and relationship building with soil health at the center.

- Through organic certification, we supported market-based incentives for farms to adopt and utilize organic practices. Vermont Organic Farmers certified 790 producers and processors committed to soil health, biodiversity, and animal welfare, representing 154,600 acres and more than $307 million in sales.
It’s heartwarming to watch young kids marvel at vegetables they may have never seen or eaten before. For this small farm, it’s a way to pay it forward to the next generation of healthy, vibrant adults.

Lara Dickson
Next Chapter Farm, a This Farm Feeds Vermont Kids participating farm

Farmers from Heartwood Farm in South Albany, Vermont show off their “This Farm Feeds Vermont Kids” lawn sign alongside an autumn harvest.
Throughout the pandemic, we’ve remained committed to getting creative about building community and sharing gratitude through joy, learning, and of course, good food!

- We celebrated our 39th annual Winter Conference. Nearly 700 people came together virtually to learn about organic farming and the food system, hear innovative speakers from around the country, celebrate, and deepen community connections.

- With the return of warmer weather, we welcomed the opportunity to gather, build community, and look to exemplary farms for the future we want to see while celebrating on farms. We brought together over 300 people through on-farm pizza socials, the 6th annual Farmer Olympics, and our on-farm workshops series.

- More than 200 people attended the 12th annual Agricultural Literacy Week, to learn about and build community around our connections with agriCULTURE and land.

- We celebrated over 100 farms around the state that sell their products to schools and early childhood programs with the “This Farm Feeds Vermont Kids” campaign, a collaboration of Vermont FEED (a partnership of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms) and the Vermont Farm to School & Early Childhood Network.

“Whenever I attend a NOFA-VT conference, I always come away feeling so grateful to be a part of this community that NOFA supports, nurtures, and holds together.”

2021 Winter Conference attendee

Photo: Maire Folan/Green Mountain Farm to School
My feelings about land ownership are fraught and complicated; I deeply and fiercely love this land, and I know I can only “own” it because long ago it was stolen. I am grateful to this project for the opportunity to put some of my labor and the bounty of this soil into the hands and bellies of Vermont’s Native people.

Caitlin Gildrien
Gildrien Farm, Abenaki Land Link grower
Increasing food access & inclusivity

Food insecurity remains extremely high. Our commitment to win-win programs that ensure all may be fed while farms have the resources to thrive is stronger than ever.

- Over 1,700 people received subsidized CSA shares through our Farm Share and Senior Farm Share Programs. These win-win programs grow food access and ensure that farms earn the full value, accounting for more than $180,000 of economic impact for 56 farms.

- 32 farmers markets matched over $75,000 in 3SquaresVT/SNAP transactions through our Crop Cash program, ensuring limited-income Vermonters have increased access to local farm products.

- We partnered with the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation and Abenaki Helping Abenaki on the second season of the Abenaki Land Link Project, coordinating farmers and gardeners to grow Indigenous food for Abenaki tribal citizens. Nearly 4,000 pounds of food was processed and given back to the Abenaki community.

“The quality and quantity of food we get through our CSA is incredible. There is just no way we’d be able to afford to eat this well without NOFA-VT’s Farm Share Program. It makes being healthy possible for my family.”

Farm Share Program participant
To know that there are hundreds if not thousands of people around Vermont who also care about healthy soil, justice, equity, and healthy places for us all to live . . . that’s what sustains us. We’re all part of something that’s really powerful, we’re part of NOFA-VT.

Peter Forbes
Knoll Farm, NOFA-VT Board President
Working for systems change

We are laying the groundwork for a healed food system with ecology and justice at its heart.

• We successfully advocated for Act 67, which established the “Local Foods Incentive Grant” program for Vermont schools and allocated $500,000 to fund the pilot year to advance local purchasing in schools while increasing the viability of farms and sustainable livelihoods for farmers.

• We collaborated with Rural Vermont and Action Circles to train farmer advocates and bring farmer voices to the Legislature through Small Farm Action days.

• As part of the Vermont Cannabis Equity Coalition, we advocated for a just and equitable cannabis marketplace that treats cannabis as an agricultural product and ensures farmers are not left out.

• We continued to support the advancement and integrity of the National Organic Program and back policies that support small, diversified and organic farms.

• We advanced policies that support viable farms, ecological health, and climate solutions through the Vermont Soil Health Policy Network and the Vermont’s Soil Health & Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group.

“The support that NOFA-VT provides is an invaluable resource and could be the difference to creating a sustainable farm that will support you and your family’s farming business for years to come.”

Farm Beginnings participant
NOFA-VT 2021 Financial Overview

In 2021, we continued fundraising and ultimately spent down our COVID-19 Response Fund while simultaneously creating a new Resilience Fund. In 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 Response Fund supported $270,000 in direct investments in our community’s short-term needs as well as fueling longer-term systems change. In 2021, we also raised $150,000 for our Resilience Fund, which will continue to be passed directly to farms through our ongoing Resilience Grants to improve resilience on farms and for our broader communities, with a focus on the social, environmental, and economic impact of the project. Thank you for supporting a more just and resilient food system!

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**INCOME**  $3,309,286  
**EXPENSE**  $3,008,535

**Key Cash & Investments**
- **Beginning 2021**  $4,213,597
- **Ending 2021**  $4,565,725

**Sources of Income**
- Certification Fees 31.4%
- Membership & Donations 29.8%
- Grants & Contracts 27.5%
- Interest/Investments 7.2%
- Admin Allocation 2.2%
- Program Fees 1.8%
- Sales 0.1%

**Expenses by Program**
- Vermont Organic Farmers 45.3%
- Farmer Services 20.5%
- Food Access 10.1%
- Market Development & Direct Markets Support 8.9%
- Farm to School 4.8%
- Membership Services & Engagement 4.1%
- Advocacy 3.2%
- On Farm Workshops & Winter Conference 3.1%

(Loan Fund 0.01%

These are unaudited numbers. A copy of NOFA’s 990 tax form is available upon request.
Thank you for supporting our work!

We are so grateful for YOU—our many members, donors, farms, businesses, and organizations who supported us in 2021.

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To look back through 50 years of NOFA-VT is to be reminded that we’re all part of a community that has shown up again, again, and again during trying times to creatively and collaboratively build a more economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just future.

Our members are farmers, homesteaders, gardeners, engaged eaters, and food system enthusiasts who believe that a better food and farming system is possible. Your participation adds power and momentum to the movement and is an investment in a thriving agricultural future for all in our communities. nofavit.org/join