

Local Foods Market Develop Grant Program Summary 2012-2014

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Agricultural Development Division

Program Overview

Farms across Vermont are working to sell local food in institutions. Colleges and universities, pre K-12 schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and correctional facilities are interested in supporting Vermont's agricultural communities and serving healthy, locally-grown food to their constituents. Vermont and New England have successfully created many of these relationships; however, many more opportunities exist for encouraging local food market development in institutions.



Expansive vegetable production, Green Heron Farm

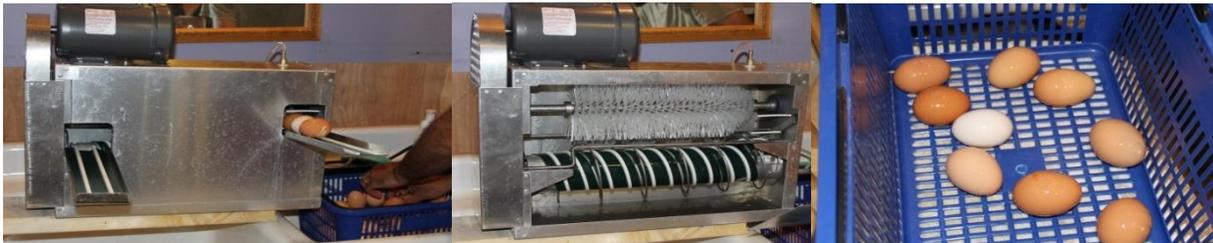
Over the past three years, the Vermont state legislature has appropriated \$120,000 to support the development of institutional markets and to help ready producers meet those market demands. These funds were managed by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets as part of the Vermont Local Food Market Development Grant Program. **Matching grants of up to \$7,500 have been awarded to thirteen producers, six food-focused community groups, two processors, and one composter** to support the development of these institutional market relationships.

Producers frequently use these funds to expand on-farm capital infrastructures to increase their production capacity and improve efficiency. Occasionally funds are granted to food-focused community groups, which we call food system support organizations (FSSOs). These organizations work to educate consumers and connect buyers and producers to create new markets for producers, while increasing communities' access to local food.

Each year, the Agency receives around **25 applications requesting upwards of \$150,000 in grant funds. However, only 9 applications are regularly awarded funds.** These awards range from \$2,000 to \$7,500, with an **average grant award of \$4,296.** Grantee matches range from \$775 to \$8,600, with an **average match of \$3,424.**

Program Outcomes

Over the years, both producers and food system support organizations have been successful in expanding institutional access to healthy, locally grown food. Producers tend to focus on on-farm capital improvements, such as the construction of washing stations or coolers. These infrastructures allow producers to wash and store larger crop volumes, which will ultimately allow them to sell product at larger volumes. It also addresses a food safety component, ensuring that products are handled more efficiently.



Cleary Farm's new egg washer

Food system support organizations often develop outreach materials, help producers distribute their product, and provide producers assistance with production planning.



Distribution at Kingdom Creamery of VT

Since 2012, these projects have **contributed to the development over 130 new institutional markets for local food products, helping a total of 88 farmers find new customers for their products.** Moreover, the Local Food Market Development grant funds have helped facilitate upwards of \$750,000 in gross local food sales, over 50% of which was **to institutions and wholesale markets.** In the process, grantees created **seven new full-time and thirteen new part-time seasonal jobs** to help meet the growing demand for local food.

Grant funds also reduced on-farm labor inputs, as many grants helped producers purchase time-saving equipment and allowed farms to focus on increasing production and yield. The Agency had the pleasure of awarding funds to a composter, Grow Compost, who was able to divert over **500 tons of organic waste** from landfills with the **addition of 35 food generator** sites to its normal pick-up route. Grow Compost's work helps address the standards for universal recycling and organic waste diversion outlined in Act 148.

LFMD Grant Recipients

2012 Grantees	2013 Grantees	2014 Grantees
Alchemy Gardens (Shrewsbury)	Association of Africans Living in Vermont (Burlington)	Bella Farm, LLC (Monkton)
Green Mountain Farm- to-School (Newport)	Cleary Farm (Plainfield)	Green Heron Farm (Richford)
Greenfield Highland Beef (Plainfield)	Evening Song Farm (Cuttingsville)	Green Mountain Organic Creamery (Hinesburg)
Grow Compost (Waterbury)	Green Heron Farm (Richford)	Harvest Hill Farm (Hardwick)
Harlow Farm (Westminster)	Green Mountain Farm-to- School (Newport)	Intervale Center (Burlington)
Joe's Brook Farm (St. Johnsbury)	Kingdom Creamery of Vermont (East Hardwick)	Joe's Brook Farm (St. Johnsbury)
Kingdom Creamery of Vermont (East Hardwick)	Pitchfork Farm (Burlington)	Radical Roots Farm (Rutland)
Mad River Food Hub (Waitsfield)	Rockville Market Farm (Starksboro)	The Tutorial Center (Bennington)
The Tutorial Center (Bennington)	The Tutorial Center (Bennington)	Vermont Fresh Network (Richmond)
Vermont Technical College (Randolph)	Vermont Bean Crafters (Rutland)	