

2014 AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE REPORT

Introduction

This report analyses the results of a survey conducted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM), and follows work completed by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) under Act 59, where the DHCD engaged with agricultural, land use, environmental stakeholders and the VAAFMM to discuss rural enterprises. The VAAFMM will use this survey information to help continue an exploration into regulation of on-farm activities that are neither “farming” nor “accepted agricultural practices,” but still have a place in Vermont’s growing agricultural economy.

The following are the results of an online survey administered from April 21, 2014- May 11, 2014. The VAAFMM distributed the survey through various methods that reached agricultural service industries, farmers, Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies, Farm to Plate, the Zoning Administrators list serve, Vermont Planning Association, UVM Extension, and available on VAAFMM website and linked to the Vermont Food Atlas. In total, we received 322 responses. The opinions expressed in this survey represent the opinions of those who responded.

Key Findings:

1. Respondents, generally, agreed that **it is important to extremely important to keep land in agriculture** because it:

- a. Creates jobs (60%)
- b. Has scenic benefits (70%)
- c. Fosters an independent economy (73%)
- d. Promotes economic development (74%)
- e. Access to locally grown and processed food (85%)
- f. Preservation of open space (85%) received the highest support among participants.
 - i. Respondents also placed high values on agriculture’s environmental benefits, such as wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, water quality protection and storm water control.

2. Respondents **support** (74%-92% rated as *very to extremely* important) goals to:

- a. Promote local businesses and the local economy,
- b. Support local farms and their associated agricultural activities,
- c. Make farmland available to farmers,
- d. Protect and preserve agricultural soils,
- e. Incentivize development in historic downtowns, and
- f. Expand agriculture related businesses.

3. Respondents, generally, believed **current policies and programs** were *somewhat effective* (45% on average) to *effective* (28% on average) at achieving the supported goals.

- a. The survey showed a surge of respondents (21%) *not knowing* whether current policies made farmland available to farmers.
- b. Very few thought existing programs were *extremely effective* (4% on average).

4. Seventy-five percent of farmers **want to diversify their farm operation**; recognizing that some form of diversification may be necessary to thrive as a farmer, but may also complicate a farm operation.

- a. Most farmers want to sell directly to the consumer, including farmers that grow fiber and sell their products online.
- b. Farmers included hosting renewable energy generation facilities and bio-fuel production as diversification options.
- c. There was little interest in diversifying farm operations to include restaurants/cafes, or carrying out on-farm processing with products not “principally produced on the farm.”¹
- d. A little over a third of farmers want to diversify through some form of agritourism, (bed and breakfast, agricultural product tastings, and food preparation and preservation classes, and fiber arts classes).

5. Agriculture related business, such as feed/fertilizer and seed companies, farm equipment and agriculture product processors are important to the agricultural industry and 59% of respondents, other than farmers, **agree that regulation is appropriate** for these associated agriculture businesses.

6. **Knowledge of complaints about farm operations was common.** The knowledge of the types of complaints known to farmers and those known to other respondents were similar.

- a. The most common complaints were nuisance related (noise, odor, traffic) and environment related concerns.
- b. Smaller farms were aware of more complaints than larger farms (based on gross sales).

¹ “Principally produced” means that more than 50% by weight or volume of the agricultural products, which result from the “farming” as defined in the accepted agricultural practices regulations, and which are stored, prepared or sold at the farm, are grown or produced on the farm.

- c. More than three-quarters of the known complaints were in areas the respondent identified as “rural”.

7. Respondents were most likely to **support a regulatory environment** that allows “on farm” direct to consumer sales. Currently state law pre-empts municipalities² from applying land use regulations to consumer direct sales on the farm that meets the “principally produced” test. Municipalities do not regulate on farm value added agricultural product processing that also meets the “principally produced” test.

8. The survey revealed **strong support for facilitated workshops** to help municipalities plan for agricultural land uses, as well as on farm educational experiences. Respondents recommended specific topics that included:

- a. Clarifying of the application of the Accepted Agricultural Practices regulations and the municipal exemption
- b. Identifying local regulatory barriers and impediments to farms becoming viable operations
- c. Highlighting current regulation of farm operations – Water Quality, meat inspection, etc.
- d. Quantifying emerging agricultural business needs and guide municipal officials
- e. Providing information on how to support/promote urban and infill agriculture
- f. Opening up farms to the public to foster support of the industry

The Agency encourages readers to learn more about the State of Vermont’s farm economy by reviewing the USDA’s 2012 Census of Agriculture at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>.

² 24:4413(d) A bylaw under this chapter shall not regulate accepted agricultural and silvicultural practices, including the construction of farm structures, as those practices are defined by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets or the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation, respectively, under 10 V.S.A. §§ 1021(f) and 1259(f) and 6 V.S.A. § 4810.

(1) For purposes of this section, "farm structure" means a building, enclosure, or fence for housing livestock, raising horticultural or agronomic plants, or carrying out other practices associated with accepted agricultural or farming practices, including a silo, as "farming" is defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6001(22), but excludes a dwelling for human habitation.

(2) A person shall notify a municipality of the intent to build a farm structure and shall abide by setbacks approved by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets. No municipal permit for a farm structure shall be required.

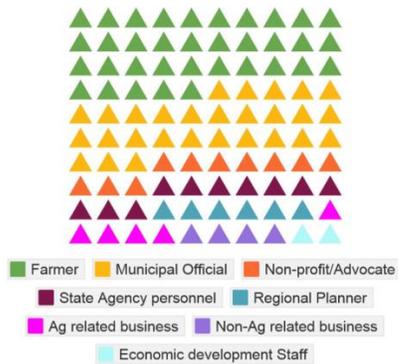
RESPONDENTS

Counties in Vermont

Who are you, where are you,
your Neighborhood and your
Values



Respondents



FARMER

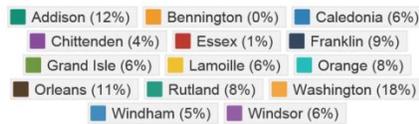
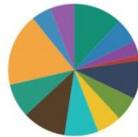
110

And

OTHER

209

FARMER by County



Neighborhood



Urban

6%



Suburban

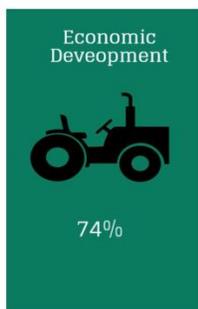
14%



Rural

80%

Values Placed on Keeping Land in Agriculture



SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY



Farmers Interested in Diversification

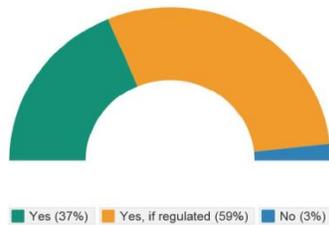
75%



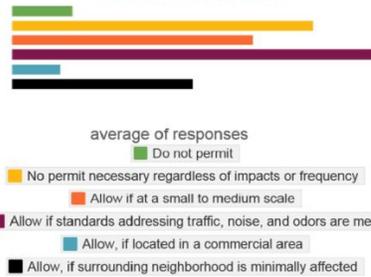
Direct to Consumer Sales	66%
On Farm Value Added Dairy Processing	31%
On Farm Value Added Meat Processing	20%
On Farm Value Added Produce Processing	27%
Off Farm Value Added Processing	19%
On Farm Value Added Processing w/ 51% of inputs coming from off the farm	6%



Support for Permitting Ag Related Business



Preferred Regulatory Framework



Success of Municipal and State Policies in Achieving Goals

Making Farmland Accessible to Farmers

21% don't know

Incentivizing development in downtowns and villages

7% Extremely Effective

Promoting Agricultural land uses

36% Effective

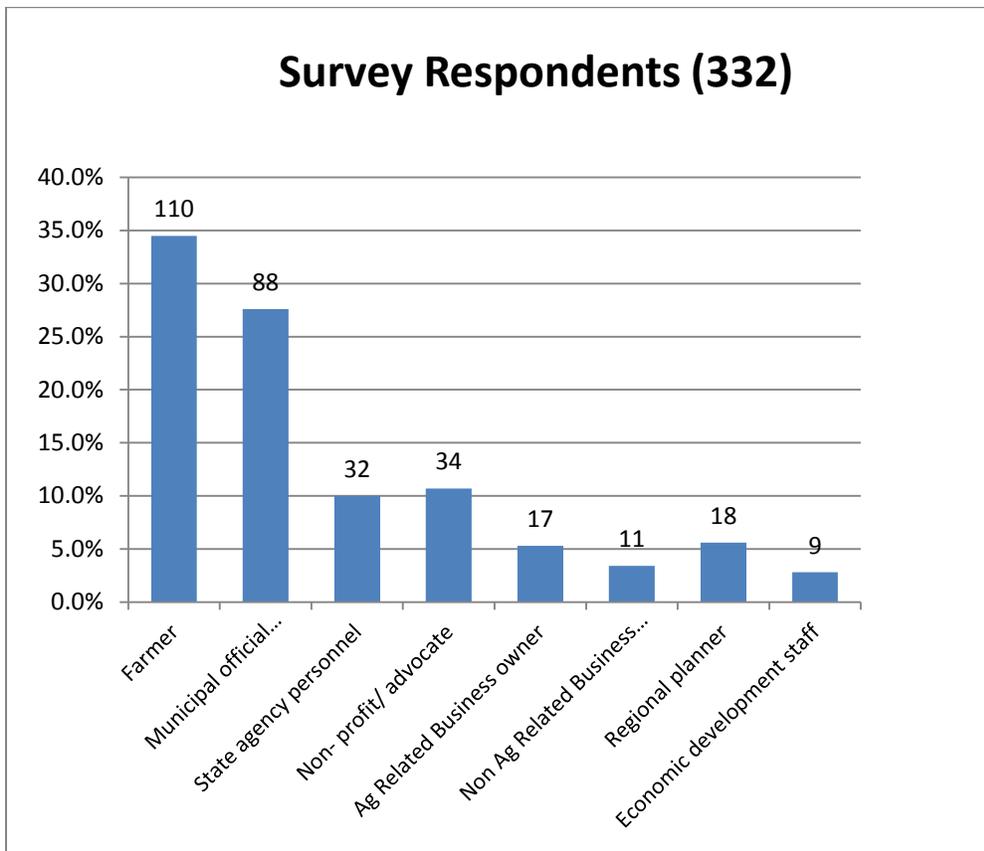
Protecting and preserving agricultural soils

19% Not effective at all

Section I

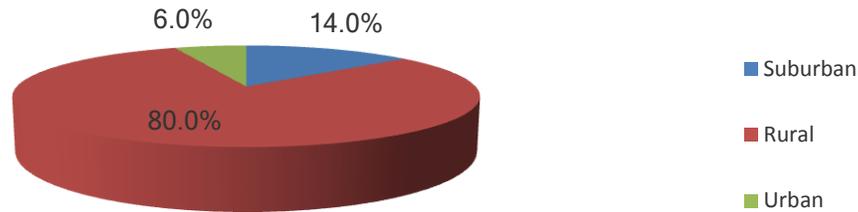
Who are you, where are you, your neighborhood, and your values?

A diversity of respondents from various interested groups participated in the survey. Greatest participation in survey was from farmers followed by municipal officials.



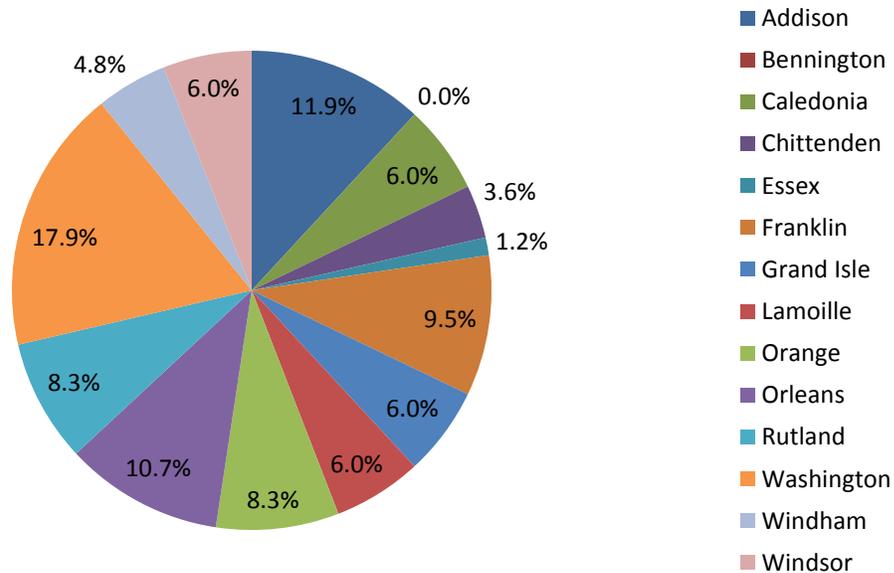
A majority of respondents, 80%, characterized their neighborhood as rural, and presumably they live in a district that allows all types of agricultural land uses except low density residential development. The AAFM did not provide a definition of “rural” to guide survey participants, but according to the Vermont Planning and Development Act, commonly referred to as Chapter 117, the Legislature enabled municipalities to create agricultural or rural residential zoning districts. These types of districts should allow “all types of agricultural uses” and prohibit “all other land development except low density residential development.” [24 V.S.A. § 4414 (1)(B)(i)]. A municipality defines what constitutes “low density,” so there can be variety in what constitutes low density residential development.

Neighborhood Characterization

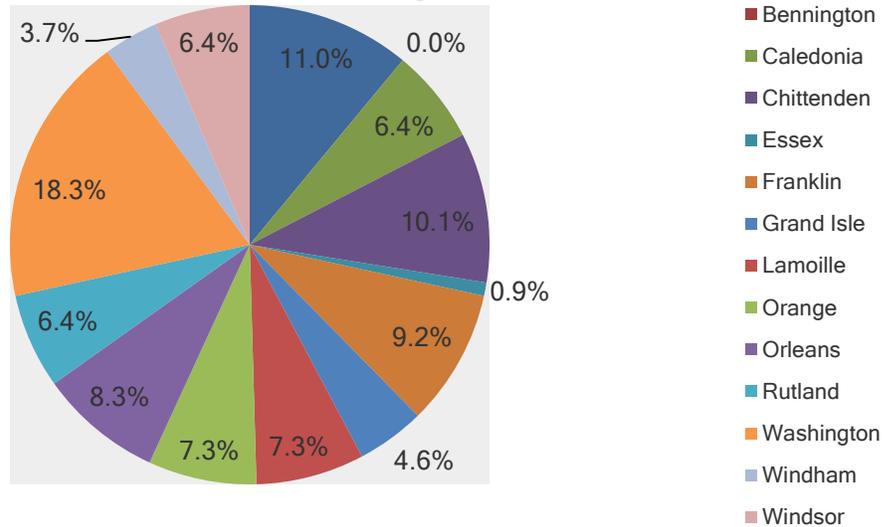


Washington County had the highest level of participation from self-identified farmers (hereafter referred to as “farmers”). After Washington County, participation by farmers was somewhat equally distributed among other counties (except Bennington, Essex, and Windham where very few farmers participated). A majority of respondents that did not self-identify as a farmer were from Chittenden or Washington Counties.

Distribution of Farmers by County



Distribution of Other Survey Participants by County



Based on the USDA's 2012 Census of Agriculture, Addison County has the most farms in the Vermont with 813; Washington County with 513, and the fewest in Essex County with 93. Total number of farms in all of Vermont in 2012 is 7,338.

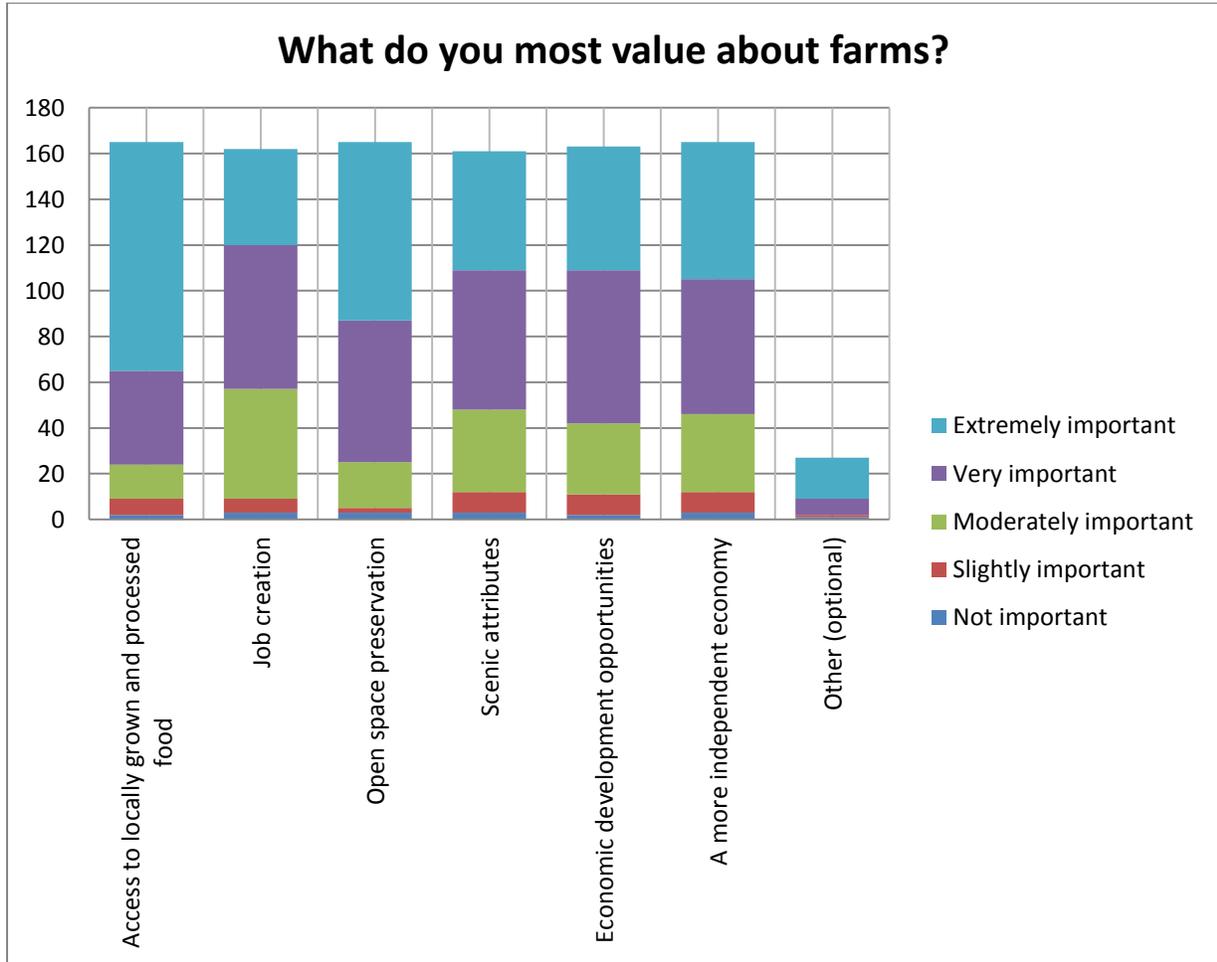
Why do you farm?

It was clear that most if not all individuals farm because they value working the land. Farmers shared strong sentiments in open-ended responses about keeping land open, the environmental benefits associated with farming, and a desire to teach others about farming.

- ❖ Almost 70% of respondents farm because it is a "way of life" and it satisfies a desire to be self-sufficient.
- ❖ Majorities of participating farmers work on family farms, and want to keep land in agricultural production to feed their communities.
- ❖ A minority of respondents count farming as a profession and making a living doing so.³

³ Only 51% of Vermont farm operators say farming is their primary occupation. 2102 Census of Agriculture-Preliminary Report, USDA, NASS, 2/2014

Values Placed on Farmland



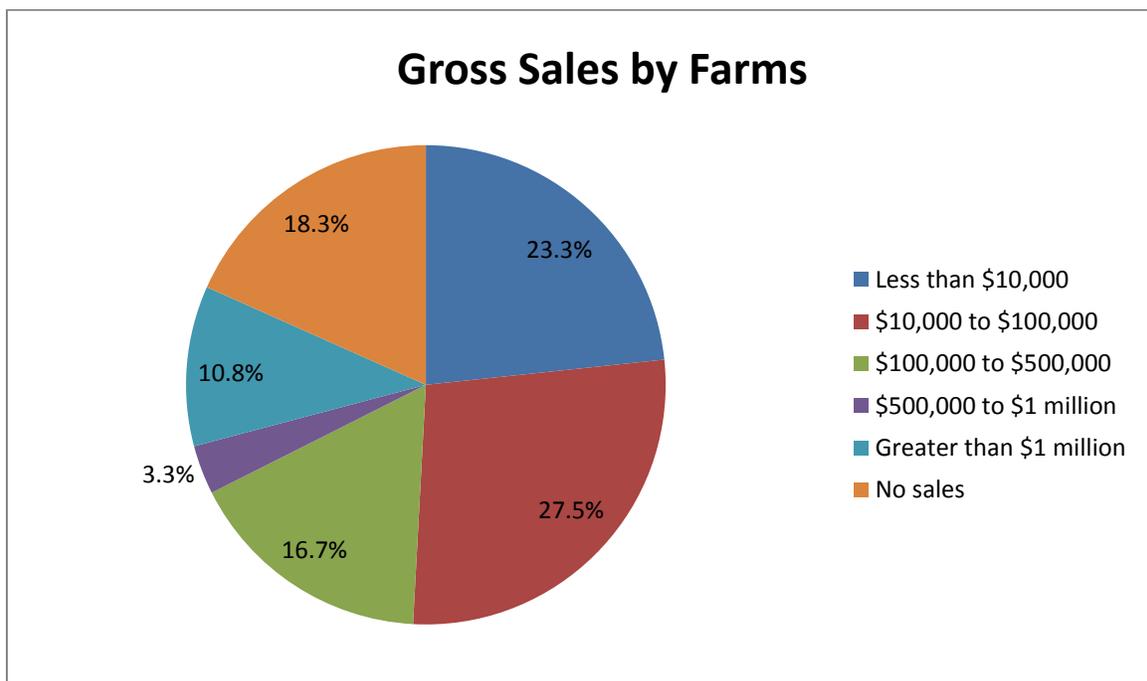
Individuals' value farmland for many reasons including flood mitigation or attenuation, storm water retention, protection of water quality, and a diversity of wildlife habitat. Other benefits include job creation due to the preservation of the working landscape, the availability of farms to those transitioning into the industry, the national and international recognition of Vermont grown products, and agritourism. Finally, farms provide educational opportunities including raising food and exploring different farming technics, crop production capability with a variety of seed types and inputs.

Section II

Diversification of Farm Operations and Regulation

Gross Sales of Agricultural Products

Dairy is Vermont's highest earning agricultural industry. Vermont agricultural crops include a wide range of products such as maple, apples, berries, meat, eggs, and a variety of vegetables, honey, fiber and Christmas trees. Almost one fifth of the farmers that participated in the survey do not sell what they grow. Sixty-eight percent of farmers that sell their products make less than \$500,000 in year in gross sales. The remaining 14 % have gross sales exceeding \$500,000 a year.



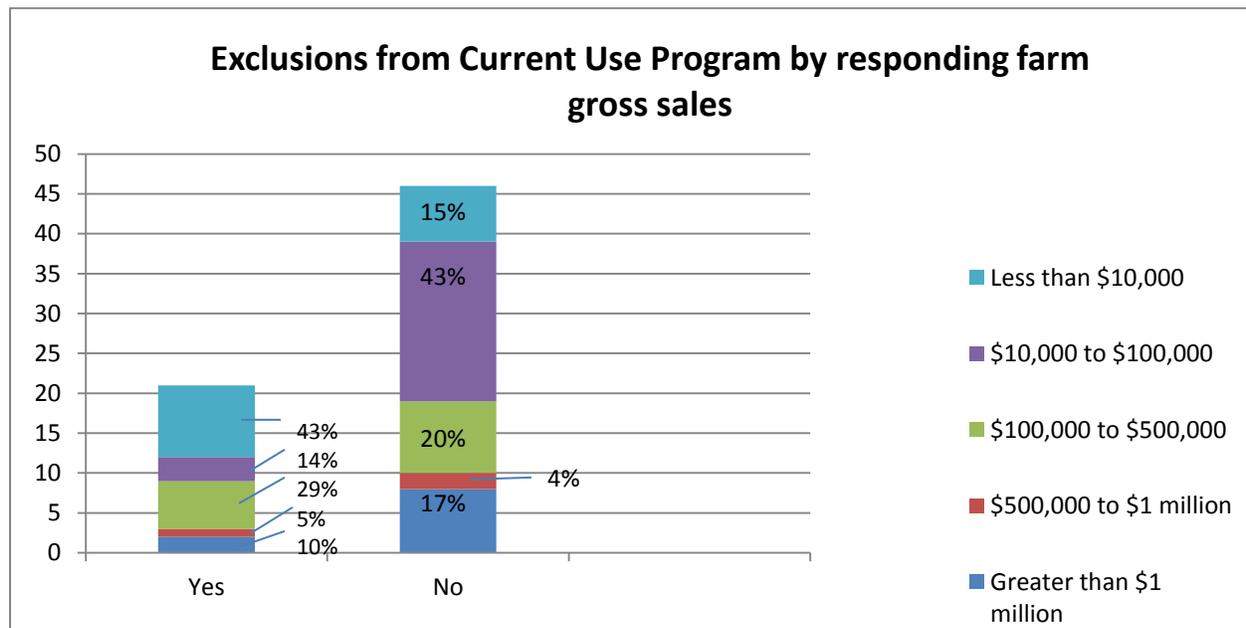
In comparison, the market value of agricultural products sold (that includes direct sales) according to the Ag Census by similar groupings are: 4,358 farms have sales of products equaling less than \$10,000; 1,871 farms between \$10,000 and \$100,000 ; 789 between \$100,000 and \$500,000; 320 farms \$500,000 and over.⁴ Total sales on Vermont farms is \$776,105,000.

⁴

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Vermont/st50_2_002_002.pdf

Current Use

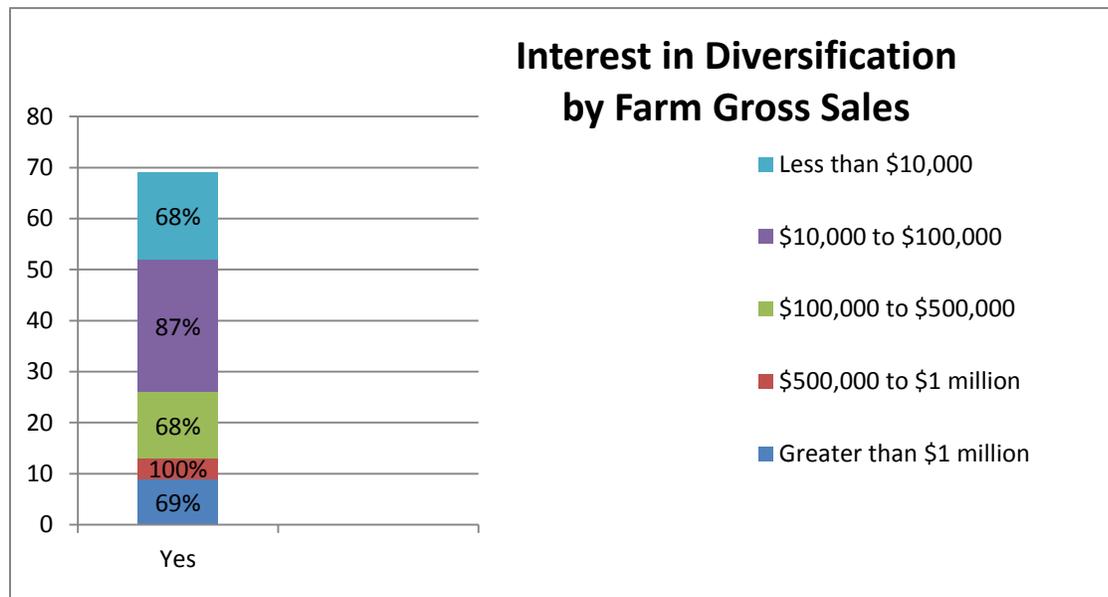
Less than three quarters of responding farmers enroll property in the Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) program. Twenty-nine percent with land enrolled, had property excluded from the Current Use program due to programmatic requirements. Reasons provided for exclusion included not meeting minimum lot size requirements, income requirements for a “farm crop,” which is specifically defined in 32 V.S.A. §3752 .⁵ A small minority of respondents chose to keep agricultural land and buildings out of the current use program for a variety of reasons that included preserving commercial development potential.



Reasons for exclusion from Current Use Program	
Answer Options	Response Percent
did not meet minimum income requirements	10.0%
not considered a farmer as defined by IRS	20.0%
mixed land use	25.0%
do not meet minimum lot size	35.0%
methane digester	5.0%
farm worker housing	15.0%

⁵ <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/fullsection.cfm?Title=32&Chapter=124&Section=03752>

Diversification on the Farm



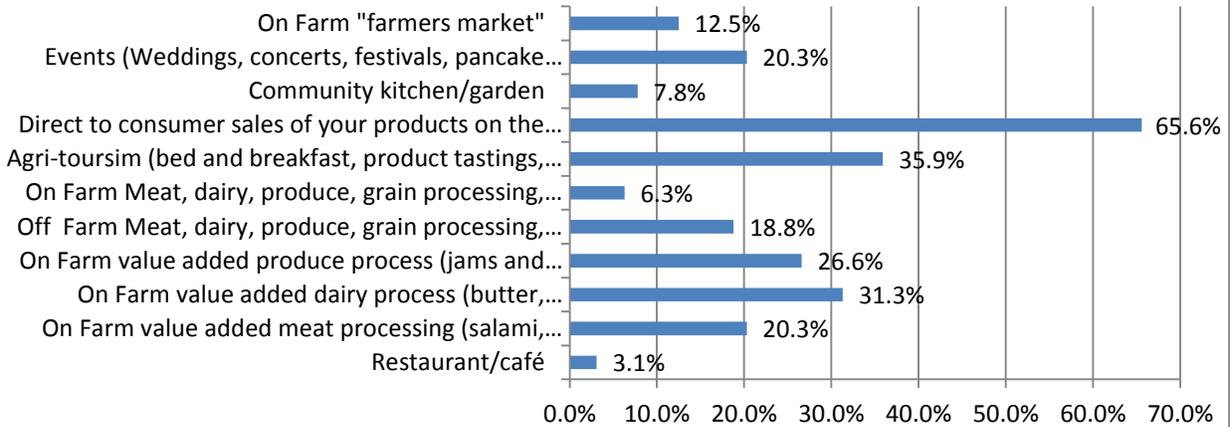
Farmers said they wanted to diversify their operations. Direct consumer sales of agricultural products grown on the farm had the greatest appeal. Direct consumer sales include farmers' markets⁶, community supported agriculture (CSA), Pick Your Own (PYO) operations, and farm stand sales. In 2012, the value of agricultural products sold directly to the consumer was \$ 2,071,000.⁷ Some farmers want to diversify by add other crops to their existing farm operations such as beef calves, grain production and production fiber,

Following direct sales, farmers are interested in opening up their farms to the public for agritourism, including bed and breakfasts and product tastings, or sharing their knowledge about farming and food processing by teaching food preparation or preservation classes, or fiber arts classes. Another form of diversification mentioned was renewable energy production consisting of solar, wind, bio-fuel production and "compost energy."

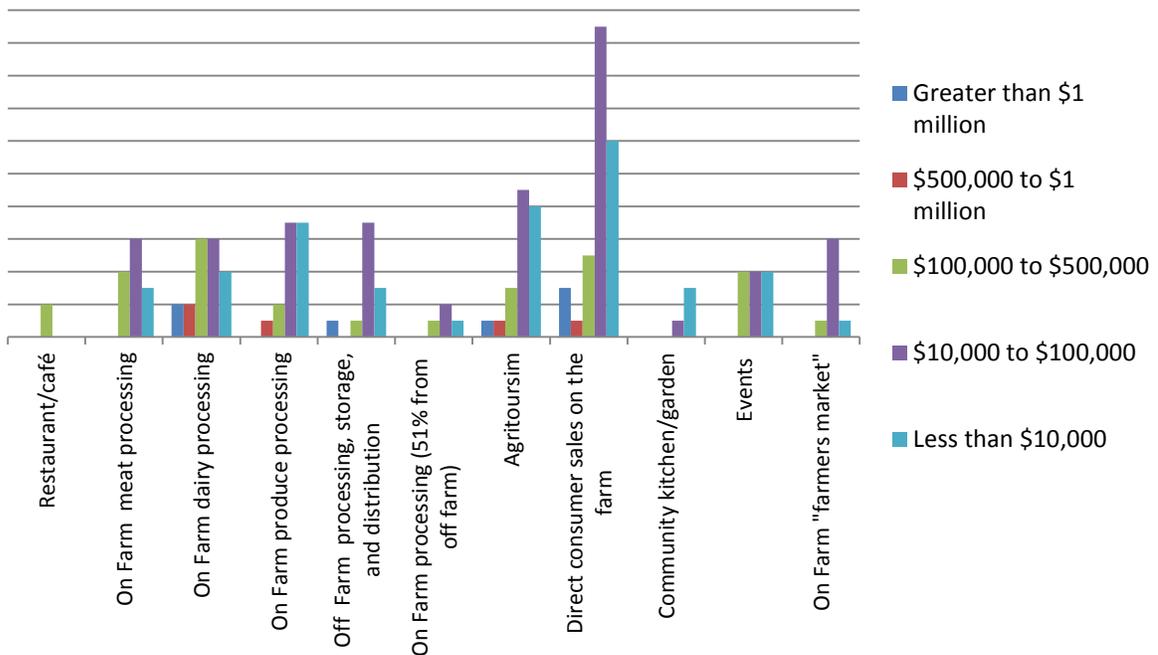
⁶ 6 V.S.A. § 5001. Definition. In this chapter, "farmers' market" shall mean an event or series of events at which two or more vendors of agricultural products, as defined in 11 V.S.A. § 991, gather for purposes of offering for sale to the public their agricultural products.

⁷ 2102 Census of Agriculture- Preliminary Report, USDA, NASS, 2/2014

Types of Diversification



Types of Diversification by Farm Gross Sales



Diversification on Farms and Regulation

All respondents generally agreed it is important to reduce negative impacts associated with on farm businesses, including on farm processing of agricultural products. The approaches outlined in the survey to address impacts included limiting the scale of an on farm operation; regulating noise, traffic and odors, known as *performance standards*; or assessing potential impacts and ensuring they are minimal to a surrounding neighborhood on a case-by-case basis, known as conditional use review. Under the current regulatory framework, municipalities are pre-empted from applying their local land use regulations to on farm processing of products principally produced on the farm; this type of use is an accepted agricultural practice and regulated by the AAFM.

- Generally, respondents other than farmers prefer regulations that address the noise, traffic and odors⁸ associated with on farm processing, farmers' market, restaurant/café, and events on a farm.
- Among responding farmers, the tendency was that regulation not be required for on farm processing, except when a majority of agricultural products came from off the farm. Farmers generally agree that impacts from on farm events or from restaurants/café should be managed.

Diversification	No	Yes, regardless of impacts or frequency	Yes, if at a small to medium scale	Yes, if standards addressing traffic, noise, and odors are met	Yes, if the surrounding neighborhood is minimally affected
Respondents, other than farmers					
On farm restaurant/café	6%	12%	21%	42%	13%
On Farm value added meat processing (salami, cured, smoked products from meat principally produced on the farm)	5%	16%	21%	38%	18%
On Farm value added dairy processing (butter, yogurt, cheese, ice cream from milk principally produced on the farm)	4%	26%	22%	35%	12%
On Farm value added produce processing (jams and jellies, pickles, relish or other prepared produce principally produced on the farm)	4%	26%	23%	32%	14%
Off Farm Meat, dairy, produce, grain processing, storage, and distribution	4%	11%	15%	37%	11%
On Farm Meat, dairy, produce, grain processing, storage, and distribution with more than 50% of the products coming from off the farm	4%	14%	18%	35%	13%
Agri-tourism (bed and breakfast, product tastings, food preparation and preservation classes)	3%	30%	19%	32%	14%
Direct to consumer sales of your products on the farm	6%	41%	20%	25%	8%
Community kitchen/garden	6%	39%	15%	23%	13%
Events (Weddings, concerts, festivals, pancake breakfasts)	4%	13%	18%	45%	17%
On Farm "farmers market"	6%	26%	19%	35%	11%

⁸ 24 VSA 4414 (5) Performance standards.

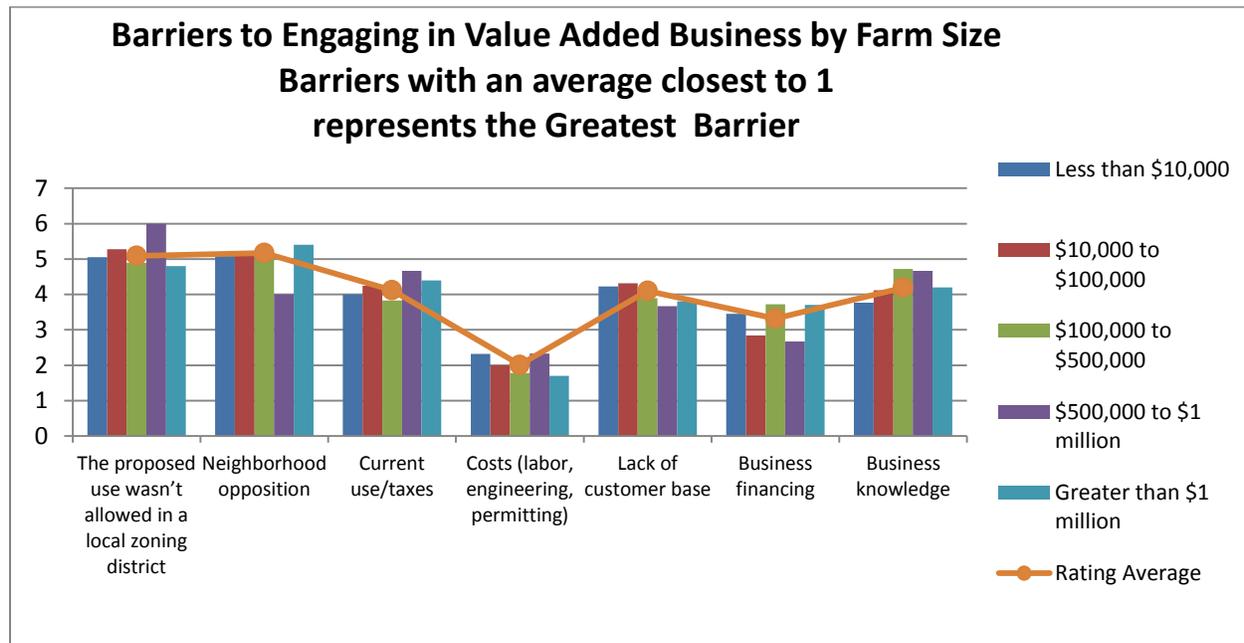
Farmers	No	Yes, regardless of impacts or frequency	Yes, if at a small to medium scale	Yes, if standards addressing traffic, noise, and odors are met	Yes, if the surrounding neighborhood is minimally affected
On farm restaurant/café	9%	18%	29%	20%	23%
On Farm value added meat processing (salami, cured, smoked products from meat principally produced on the farm)	2%	27%	30%	20%	18%
On Farm value added dairy processing (butter, yogurt, cheese, ice cream from milk principally produced on the farm)	2%	31%	30%	20%	17%
On Farm value added produce processing (jams and jellies, pickles, relish or other prepared produce principally produced on the farm)	2%	37%	26%	17%	17%
Off Farm Meat, dairy, produce, grain processing, storage, and distribution	7%	24%	15%	25%	16%
On Farm Meat, dairy, produce, grain processing, storage, and distribution with more than 50% of the products coming from off the farm	8%	20%	16%	27%	18%
Agri-toursim (bed and breakfast, product tastings, food preparation and preservation classes)	7%	32%	23%	21%	17%
Direct to consumer sales of your products on the farm	5%	51%	16%	16%	13%
Community kitchen/garden	9%	42%	18%	16%	14%
Events (Weddings, concerts, festivals, pancake breakfasts)	8%	23%	20%	23%	23%
On Farm "farmers market"	2%	35%	20%	20%	20%

The survey showed a spike in interest, however not overwhelming, in regulating the processing of agricultural products when the location is not on a farm where products are grown, or processing agricultural products not “principally produced” on the farm, just like any other municipally regulated commercial activity, as compared to other listed uses.

	Farmer Response	Other Response
On farm restaurant/café	1%	6%
On Farm value added meat processing (salami, cured, smoked products from meat principally produced on the farm)	2%	2%
On Farm value added dairy processing (butter, yogurt, cheese, ice cream from milk principally produced on the farm)	0%	1%
On Farm value added produce processing (jams and jellies, pickles, relish or other prepared produce principally produced on the farm)	0%	1%
Off farm Meat, dairy, produce, grain processing, storage, and distribution	14%	23%
On Farm Meat, dairy, produce, grain processing, storage, and distribution with more than 50% of the products coming from off the farm	10%	16%
Agritoursim (bed and breakfast, product tastings, food preparation and preservation classes)	0%	1%
Direct to consumer sales of your products on the farm	0%	0%
Community kitchen/garden	0%	4%
Events (Weddings, concerts, festivals, pancake breakfasts)	2%	2%
On Farm "farmers market"	2%	3%
	Yes, if located in a commercial area	

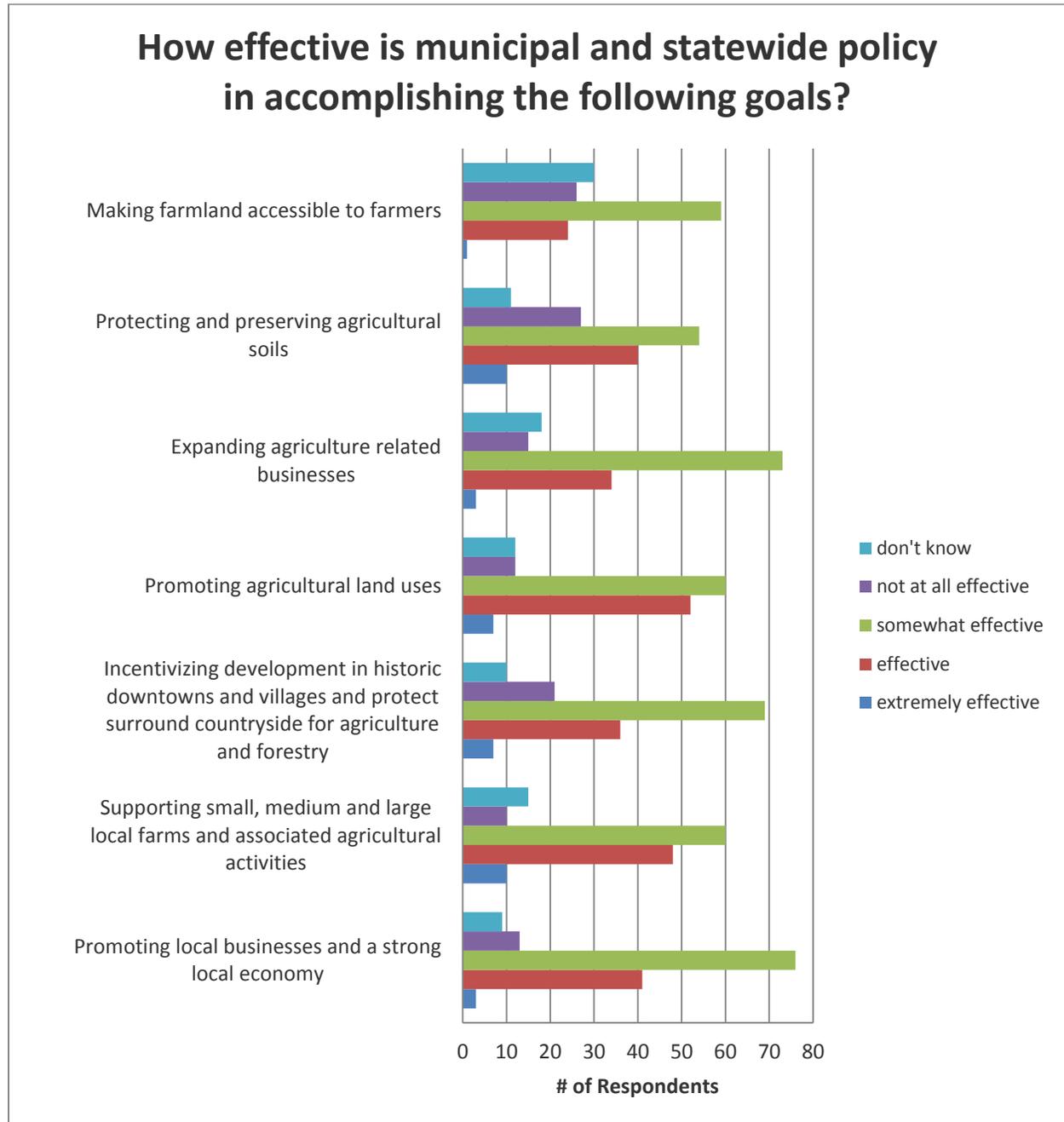
Barriers to Diversification

Farmers did not indicate local land use regulation and neighborhood opposition as barriers to their operations. Besides land use regulation and other regulations that farms must comply with, there are other barriers to diversifying an operation. As identified by participants the greatest barrier to carrying out a value added agricultural business was costs associated with permitting, labor and engineering.



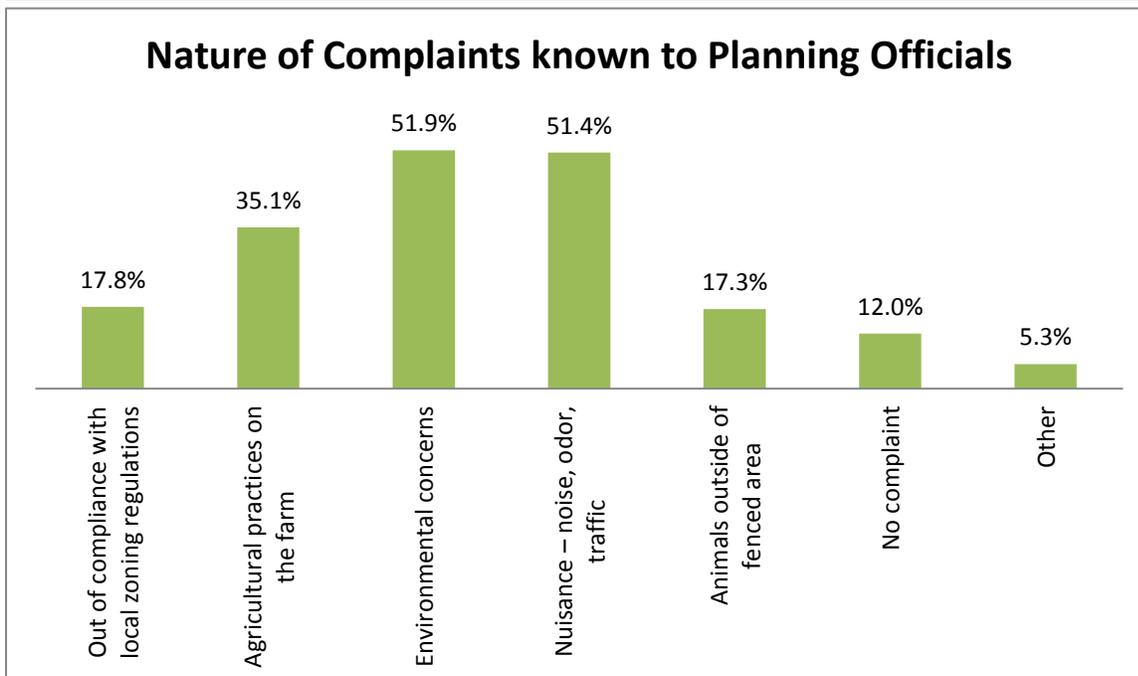
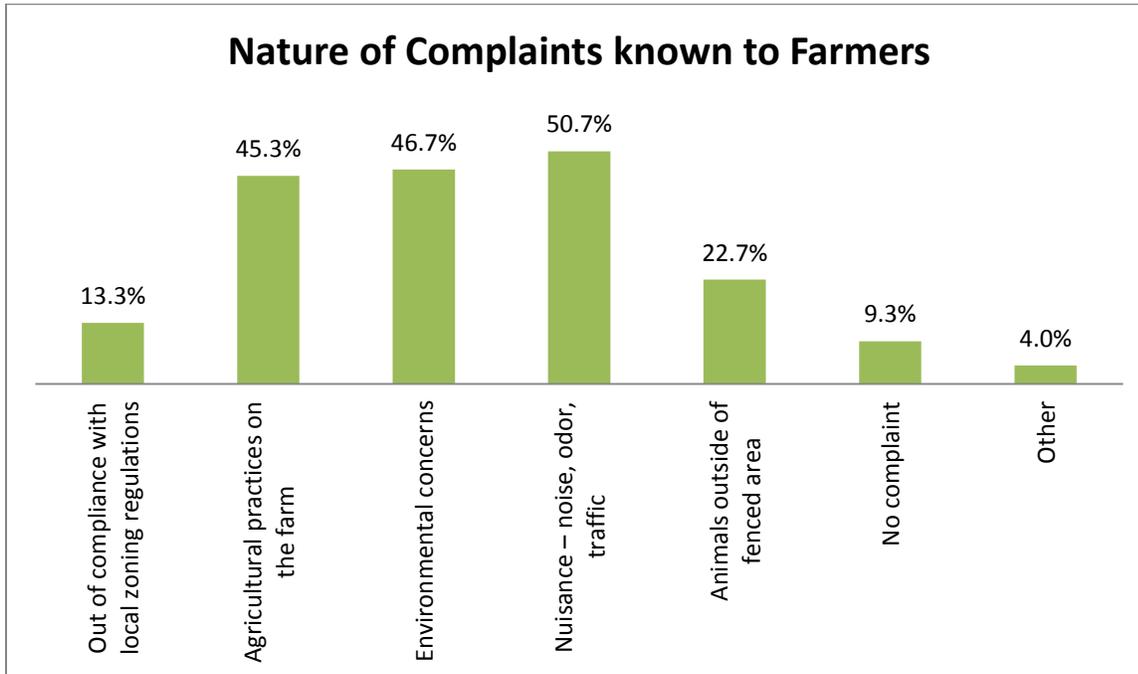
Effectiveness of Current State or Municipal Policy

Survey respondents indicate municipal and statewide policies are only marginally effective at accomplishing the goals outlined in the survey. The Agency will continue to research new ways to be more effective at accomplishing the goals including programmatic and legislative changes, technical assistance and education and working with our partners to promote the agricultural industry.

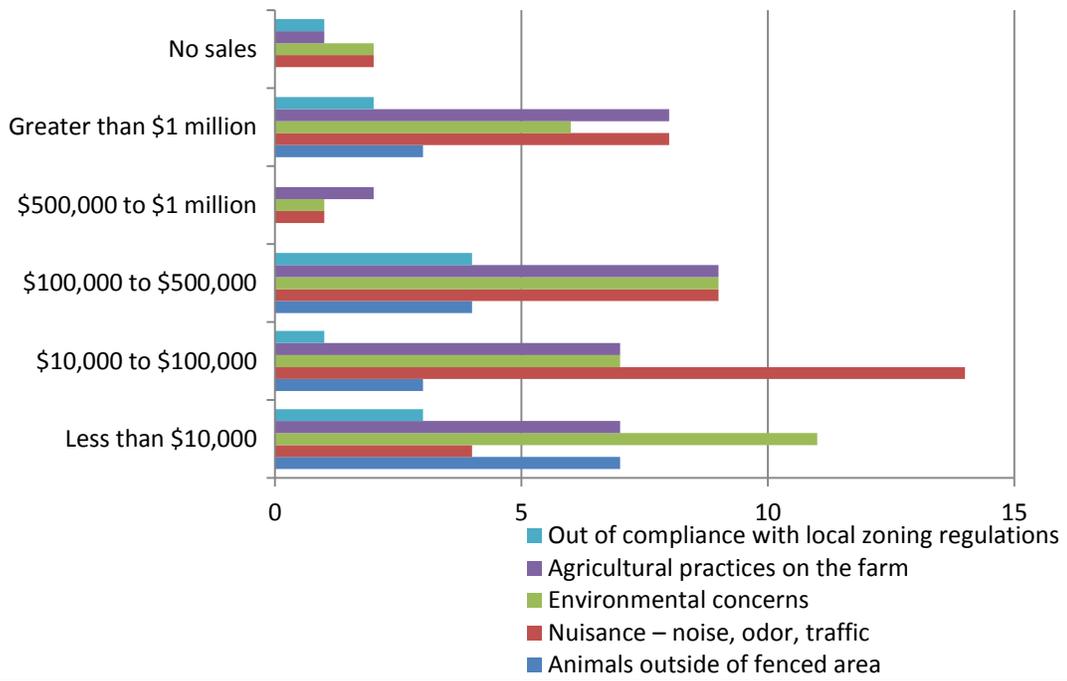


Complaints about Agricultural Operations

Seventy-one percent of all respondents are aware of complaints about farm operations. Nuisance (including noise, odor and traffic), environmental issues and agricultural practices were the greatest concern.



Farmers by gross sales and complaints



Education Opportunities and Training

Many agree that providing educational opportunities “on farms,” and opportunities for networking and relationship building are effective ways to educate people about how to plan for the agricultural industry. The gaps in knowledge about farm operations include:

- The requirements to earn a living in agricultural
- Business practices that are directly associated with farming
- What are accepted agricultural practices and the current regulatory environment for farming

In addition to the gap in knowledge about operating a farm, there was also an interest in learning how municipalities could support the industry, in rural and urban contexts, including:

- Suggestions for regulations or regulatory framework that support the industry;
- Direct assistance to municipal officials on planning for an agricultural economy;
- Training on what the VAAFM regulates through the Accepted Agricultural Practices regulation, and what municipalities may regulate;
- How to foster a more robust planning process that includes neighbors to agricultural businesses and deploying “community based value mapping” in the planning process; and
- Increasing incentives to keep agricultural land productive and working

General Comments from Participants

Don't stifle the local agricultural economic growth that is happening by saddling it with a lot of additional regulations. Define the Department of Ag exemptions, make them broad and leave them there.
It might have been nice to define local --- as specific to our towns or our county. Also defining local economy. . . could mean accepting bartering in all forms, food for trade of another commodity, food for services, food for labor OR it could have meant developing our own local loaning econ development system
Our Town Plan which was adopted stresses that we want to keep agricultural land open, but there are citizens who then complain when the farmers are trying to do their field work. You can't have it both ways
Support reasonable municipal regulation of on-farm agribusinesses (agritourism, value added production, markets) to mitigate impacts on neighborhood, community. Also understand the need to avoid regulations based on income, "principally produced" etc. that are hard to apply and administer and that change over time -- regulations should be based on physical development and related impacts.
Yes number 10 on this survey would not let me select numbers in the order I wanted to select
No structures, equipment or materials (e.g. hay bales) should be allowed in the floodplain!
nearby landowners should be able to stop the project if it will interfere with their land use
Would like to have been able to check off more than one concern in some of the columns, such as noise, odor etc. and character of neighborhood.
Mission Creep, When you want to run a commercial business in a residential area, you are creating special zoning
Stop solar on farm fields. Extremely disturbing. Seems like it's out of control.
#11 - all 'yes' responses assume that the farm is located in a suitable area, particularly for products that also include non-farm inputs.
Not a farmer, so unable to make informed comments or reply to many questions.
Question #16 should have been worded differently - the issues of noise, odor and traffic are not the only ones that should be of concern - permits, taxes and environmental issues should be addressed, too. Also, just to nitpick - agritourism is misspelled in this survey.
The program should be LEFT 'AS-IS'. Farms such as mine will have to be sold if current proposed changes are implemented.
This survey fails to get into discussions on how regulations are too restrictive and how common sense rules and regulations could help support farms in their viability without having to get big or focus on a single mono-crop.
I think this a poorly designed survey
1. Agricultural enterprises can help protect but also have the potential to negatively impact local and regional water quality; this should be included as an important component of all planning activities.
2. Forestry should be included in all discussions of agriculture; we must start including consideration of sustainably harvested lumber and lumber products in all discussions of agricultural activities in the state.
Unclear what small/medium scale means in your survey.
most legislators know nothing about agriculture
My biggest obstacle during the last 15 years on this farm is that I am afraid to hire help since I do not understand the laws/liability involved with having employees on the farm. I went to the vermont department of labor web page years ago and the only info they had was how employees could sue their employer.
Existing farm operations need to be brought into compliance with the AAPs, and as future operations incorporate more commercial activities, farms need to be regulated in just as other businesses are - and not be exempt from regulations designed to protect our common natural resources.
The strangle-hold that the current regulations have regarding meat inspection for on farm slaughter are not conducive to sales. Beef is a safe meat as long as it is butchered correctly yet the current rules force one to go to a USDA facility. And where have the scandals occurred around the country in terms of meat processing? It is not farm slaughtered meat. It is the large USDA facilities.

AAFM MUST share out the responsibilities. End the silo mentality. provide for active participation at all levels of gov....
There is a presentation by Brian Donahue who has completed a study about the theoretical production capability of food for New England if unused land is cleared for agriculture. It is a reality check of what this region could produce.
Re: Q.15 my barrier was cost of compliance with state laws in the sales of raw milk
A resource manual listing ag products in VT.
farmers start farming here as a way of life. Its different here and people understand. Federal ag laws are tough to follow here because of scale.
Excellent questions!
didn't that first one make my point?
Our experience in trying to locate a grain processing business in Addison County has shown us VT Town ordinances are inconsistent and SERIOUSLY OUT OF DATE when it comes to siting agricultural value-add businesses in agriculturally zoned districts. Thx for asking the right questions. VT needs to do better in this area; balance appropriate land use planning and regulations with the "new economy" of ag value-add that is trying to take hold in Vermont.
For municipal planners and decision-makers, need to connect healthy agricultural soils to flood resiliency - this is not being done! We need to recognize that healthy soil will help mitigate flooding and we should regulate the type of farming that happens in a flood plain.
Our region strongly supports encouraging our agricultural economy. We are a heavily tourist-dependent region and it is those pastoral, agricultural landscapes that people appreciate. But we need to balance agriculture with compact centers and protection of our forests, that other piece of the "working landscape". Forests and woodlands are often left out of the agricultural discussion when these resources are just as important to Vermont's working landscapes and agricultural viability. Also, there should be increased opportunities to provide educational and financial incentives for new and starting farmers who do not have relatives to support the capital costs. We see conversion of prime farmland to subdivisions for a number of reasons, but that includes the inability of starting farmers to acquire land. Estate planning, understanding how to implement and enforce zoning, and debunking myths of current use program are all equally as important. Also, see the work of the Farm-to-Plate Farmland Access and Stewardship Working Group. They are working to address similar issues.
I am opposed to giving farms and farm based businesses passes on regulations other businesses have to comply with. There is \$500 million or more in ag economy, the money is there for them to bear the cost associated with it. Not good enough for me to hear that the struggling low revenue farmer should get so many breaks and the low revenue home based business pay high costs. Perhaps state and local regulations for ALL businesses should be consistently applied.
I think the future of Vermont agriculture should be to promote land uses that are environmentally friendly and produce products that are safe for consumers.
Thank you for taking the time to ask. Very important to the state of VT
We need to liberalize our raw milk laws and make it legal to sell in stores.
Great survey! We must keep ag in VT profitable! Whatever is sold at farmers markets must meet ALL regulations. No sale of raw dairy products. Back yard farmers do not have a right to tarnish dairy producers image.
There are lots of efforts in communities to connect with local ag. Maybe building on existing efforts would be a good place to start (i.e. farmers markets, farm to school, CSA drop sites, farm stand, or VT fresh network)
Question 16 is exceptionally difficult to answer in a meaningful manner. Within Survey Monkey it should have been constructed using check boxes rather than radio buttons. Multiple items apply to each choice. Also choices do not differentiate between local/state options.
If you want to help them, stop writing legislation that sounds great on paper but does NOT work as a "cookie cutter".
From what I've heard, farmers need more local processing infrastructure such as slaughterhouses. I would also like policy makers and farmers to find a way for locally grown foods to become as affordable for consumers as food transported from California & other places. The cost of local food is high even without packaging & transportation costs.
had 5 farms in town now have one . taxes have killed the farms and current use is used as a tax hole for

the rich. The term current use should be just that if your currently farming the property you get a tax break , all other who can afford to pay are not and the balance of the tax burden is on the middle class
Many of these questions don't apply to us since we are the RPC.
Unfortunately, I found this survey to be rather biased that environmental, neighbor concerns are "bad" and agriculture is "good". That's too bad, because I think there could be very valuable information gleaned. Because of the wording of the questions, I'll have to discount its accuracy once it's completed.
Question 15 will not allow proper ranking. Software operation error!
If a farm wished to upgrade to value added products, he should be able to practice that on land or at a facility that is away from the home farm, as long as it is owned or leased by the farm. Should be considered part of the farm.
I am a selectboard member and a farmer
Not as supportive of farm factories or cafo's. you should have separated those out in the survey
Make it possible to grow hemp and help with the possibility of hemp manufacturing.
Questions 4 and 11 are not real clear -- do they concern possible regulatory exemptions? Supporting regulations that allow or permit agribusiness/value-added agriculture/etc., does not necessarily mean supporting exemptions from state or local regulation. Might help to clarify those 2 questions. Thanks.
Perceived impact to property values from NIMBYS from value-added farming is biggest deterrent in my town
A couple questions in the survey were asking two questions at the same time- or responses were two distinct responses. I.E: "Municipalities should not encourage farming or the creation of farm labor housing."
And a question about "...municipal and state efforts for agricultural business development..." the state and the municipality are two very different entities with much different potential outputs....
We're in favor of keeping our agricultural lands viable but if it becomes a business that generates traffic, wastewater, etc. then standards need to be developed to keep them in check.
a lot of my answers were hypothetical. It is difficult to predict what future obstructions or impacts may be to such new ventures. Hinesburg does have fairly innovative ag. zoning but no applications thus far.
While urban agriculture can be very beneficial it needs to be regulated as it can have adverse impacts on neighbors.
Question # 11 does not work. Can't check more than one line item in the same column
the ability to answer the question is limited because the computer will not allow the same answer for more than one question