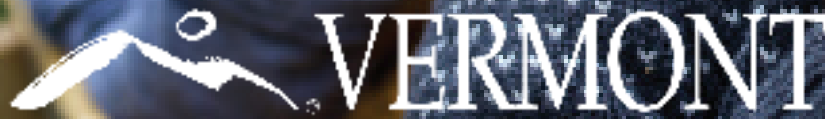


Vermont Farm To School & Childcare Program



AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

2018 Annual Report

The Vermont Farm to School Program would like to thank our partner organizations for their continued support and contributions, without which this program would not be possible:

Addison County Relocalization Network
Center for Agricultural Economy
Farm to Institution New England
Food Connects
Green Mountain Farm to School
Healthy Roots
Hunger Free Vermont
Marble Valley Grows
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Northshire Grows
Rutland Area Farm and Food Link
Salvation Farms
School Nutrition Association of Vermont
Shelburne Farms
Upper Valley Farm to School

USDA Farm to School
University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies
University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture
University of Vermont Extension
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Vermont Agency of Education Child Nutrition Program
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Materials Management Team
Vermont Community Garden Network
Vermont Department of Health
Vermont Farm to Plate Network
Vermont Farm to School Network
Vermont FEED
Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

We would also like to extend a special thank you to those that have made financial investments in the Vermont Farm to School Program, helping the program to grow and thrive:

Meadows Bee Farm & Leigh's Bees
USDA Farm to School
The State of Vermont
Vermont Community Foundation
Vermont Dairy Promotion Council

And of course, at the very heart of it all are:

Vermont farmers, students, teachers, child nutrition professionals, school staff, principals and superintendents.

Thank you to the following people who put time and effort into creating this report:

Gina Clithero
Dominique Giroux

Lastly, we would like to recognize that the Vermont Farm to School Program has been made possible by the vision and dedication of the late Representative Rozo McLaughlin.

Dear Vermonter,

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is proud to present the annual program report for the Vermont Farm to School & Childcare Grant Program, established with the passage of the 2006 Roza McLaughlin Farm to School Act. Our program supports vibrant and resilient communities and contributes to multiple goals of the Vermont Farm to Plate Strategic Plan. Since its inception, with the support of many partners in the Vermont Farm to School Network, the program has invested more than \$1 million in nearly 200 schools and childcare providers.

Each year, the Vermont Farm to School & Childcare Program continues to grow and innovate, serving our most vulnerable and enabling equitable access to healthy food, achieved through a focus on viable school meal programs and early exposure to farm to school principles. Farm to school programs not only promote healthy lifestyles in children but have also been shown to improve children's behavior and academic performance at school.

The 2018 grant round included childcare providers as eligible applicants for the first time, enabled by an update to the Roza McLaughlin Farm to School Act in 2017. Including the early care community in our program deepens the impact of this effective strategy to improve equity among Vermont's children and families.

In addition to the cumulative impacts of the Vermont Farm to School & Childcare Program, this report will highlight:

- Universal Meals pilot and Farm to Early Childcare Education
- A snapshot of the 2016 Farm To School Grant Program; and
- Exemplary grantees in Cornwall and Fairfax

We are grateful for the opportunity to share our program's successes in the following pages. We look forward to continue serving Vermont students, schools, childcare programs, farmers, and the economy with this comprehensive program.

Sincerely,



Secretary of Agriculture, Anson Tebbetts
Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Alyson Eastman

Grant Program Overview

pg 4-5

2016 Grant Program Snapshot

pg 6-11

Farm to School Impact

pg 12-17

ROZO MCLAUGHLIN FARM TO SCHOOL ACT

The Vermont Farm to School Grant Program was created 2006 with the passage by the Vermont legislature of the Rozo Mclaughlin Farm to School Act.

The act declares the purpose of the grant program is to help connect schools with local farmers and producers by:

1. Funding equipment, resources, training and materials that will help to increase use of local foods in the School Food Service Program;
2. Funding items, including local farm products, that will help teachers to use hands-on educational techniques to teach children about nutrition and farm to school connections; and
3. Providing professional development and technical assistance to help teachers educate students about nutrition and farm to school connections.

FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM STAFF

ABBIE WILLARD

Development Division Director

LAURA GINSBURG

Agricultural Development Section Chief

ALI ZIPPARO

Farm to School Program Manager



FARM TO SCHOOL & CHILDCARE GRANT PROGRAM IMPACT 2007 - 2018

Since the first round of Vermont Farm to School Grants in 2007, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has been investing state funds, as well as leveraged federal, private and foundation funds, into the creation of sustainable farm to school programs throughout the state of Vermont.

PROGRAM IMPACTS INCLUDE:

22

childcare programs

\$1,181,550

state funds invested

163

schools impacted

\$543,410

additional funds leveraged

174

total number of grants

65,785

students and children reached



2016 GRANT PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

The scope and impact of the Vermont Farm to School Grant Program is best demonstrated through a snapshot of a full grant round. Our most recent round of completed grants took place during 2016-2017. This was a very competitive round for Farm to School Grants. State funding was used to provide schools with both financial and technical assistance.

APPLICATIONS

18 Grant proposals submitted

13 Grants awarded

ALLOCATIONS

\$121,316
in funding requested

\$81,200
invested in Vermont Schools

\$116,805
leveraged in matching funds*

\$69,200 granted directly to schools
\$12,000 invested in technical assistance resources

* Grantee matching funds are not required for the Vermont Farm to School Grant Program, but they are encouraged. The matching funds leveraged by schools can be in-kind donations of time and/or resources.



2016 GRANT PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

The thirteen projects funded by the 2016 Vermont Farm to School Grants helped to build new farm to school programs across the state and strengthen already existing ones. The results of these grant projects reach beyond individual school walls and into our local communities.

2016 PROGRAM IMPACTS INCLUDE:

64 farm to school relationships established or enriched

3,368 farm to school activities* during grant period

3,357 students engaged in farm to school programming

\$248,951 spent annually on local food

Farm to school activities include: farm field trips; farmer visits to the school; cooking local food; taste tests; harvest festivals; gleaning, harvesting, weeding, or planting; school garden maintenance; nutrition, agricultural, or food systems education; and compost/food waste management.



2016 FARM TO SCHOOL GRANTEES

PLANNING GRANTEES

ESSEX TOWN DISTRICT

Chittenden County

Award: \$2,500

BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY FAIRFAX

Franklin County

Award: \$2,000

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Chittenden County

Award: \$2,500

FLOOD BROOK SCHOOL

Bennington County

Award: \$2,500

LUND NEW HORIZON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Chittenden County

Award: \$2,500

PROCTOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Rutland County

Award: \$2,500

IMPLEMENTATION GRANTEES

ARLINGTON MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE & FISHER ELEMENTARY

Bennington County

Award: \$5,000

FRANKLIN CENTRAL SCHOOL

Franklin County

Award: \$8,700

NEWPORT & DERBY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Orleans County

Award: \$9,000

PUTNEY CENTRAL SCHOOL

Windham County

Award: \$9,000

TWINFIELD UNION & MAPLEHILL SCHOOL

Washington County

Award: \$8,000

TWO RIVERS SUPERVISORY UNION

Windsor County

Award: \$9,000

VERMONT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Bennington County

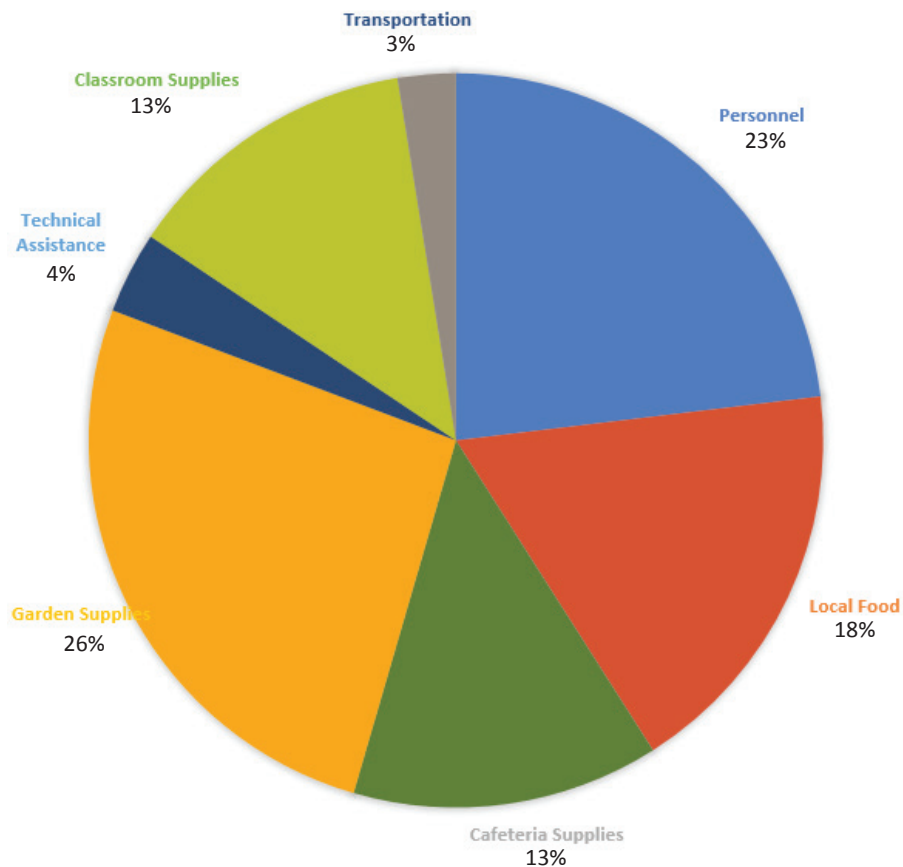
Award: \$6,000



2016 GRANTEE SPENDING

Farm to School grantees spend their grant funds on a wide range of activities, supplies, infrastructure and personnel development in order to develop their farm to school programs.

HOW DID GRANTEEES SPEND THEIR FUNDS?



LOCAL FOOD

This can include local food used for school meals, taste tests or special events, such as community meals or Harvest Festivals.

CAFETERIA SUPPLIES

This can include kitchen equipment that makes it easier to purchase, process and serve whole, fresh, local foods.

GARDEN SUPPLIES

This can include seeds, tools, and other inputs needed to grow or maintain a school garden.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This can include assistance from external partners around topics such as gardens, local procurement, menu planning, and curriculum development.

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

This can include Harvest of the Month posters and materials used for food systems, nutrition, or agricultural curriculum.

TRANSPORTATION

This can include transportation for students and staff to farm field trips, trainings, or other special events.

PERSONNEL

This can include professional development opportunities for staff, substitutes for staff to attend farm to school events, salaries for farm to school coordinators, and stipends for farmer visits or field trips.

2016 GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE

A team of farm to school partners from across the state gathered to review applications for 2016. The Review Committee included farmers, parents, school administrators, teachers, food service personnel and representatives from state agencies and non-profits.

LAUREN KASKEY

Child Nutrition Programs
Vermont Agency of Education

CHAUNCE BENEDICT

Principal
Bakersfield Elementary & Middle School

ETHAN BODIN

Farm to School Technical Assistance
VT FEED

KEENAN HALEY

Teacher
Sharon Elementary

JENNIFER WOOLARD

Chronic Disease Specialist
Vermont Department of Health

ABBIE NELSON

Farm to School & Food Service Technical Assistance
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Vermont

JULIE WOLCOTT

Dairy Farmer
Franklin County

GAIL HALL

6-12 Science Assessment Coordinator
Vermont Department of Health

MISSE AXELROD

Farmer/Educator
Washington County

ALI ZIPPARO

Farm to School Grant Program Manager
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets



GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY-FAIRFAX

2016 Planning & 2017 Implementation Grantee

Total amount granted

\$9,700

Students

880

Grades served

K-12

Bellows Free Academy (BFA) in Fairfax has taken the school garden concept to the next level, including an apple orchard, a greenhouse, 4,000 ft² of produce production, and plans for livestock and a pollinator garden. The students of the BFA-Fairfax Farm to School Club would rather call their project the school farm. BFA-Fairfax received a Farm to School Planning Grant in 2016, and is using their 2017 Implementation Grant to take their program further along. One of the major accomplishments of the 2016 Planning Grant was that a high school class collaborated to develop a School Farm Master Plan. The 17-student class split into small groups and each group took ownership to research different components of the farm of their collective vision, from a solar panel-powered greenhouse to a bee hive. With the help of their Implementation Grant, BFA is translating those visions into realities one project at a time. Additionally, the grant helped BFA launch an interdisciplinary high school course involving the school farm where students demonstrate competencies and transferable skills in both English and Science.

BFA's school farm progress is due in no small part to the program's emphasis on community engagement. 20 local farmers, experts, and town residents have volunteered to support BFA's School Farm project financially or through technical assistance. BFA has now offered two interdisciplinary farm to school classes for high school students, and is home to a 28 enthusiastic students in the Farm to School Club. Next, they intend to develop a Farm to School club for middle schoolers with this grant to further place food at the center of community and culture.



“Our students and staff are really excited to **learn, grow, and contribute** to our farm.

The Fairfax community has also embraced Farm to School and has provided their time, resources and financial support to make this initiative a success!”



2018 GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the last year, our grant program underwent a comprehensive and participatory strategic planning process, resulting in several exciting adjustments. Previously, we offered planning, implementation and universal meals grants. This year's offerings result from combining the best parts of our past grant opportunities, along with some new and exciting additions.

FARM TO SCHOOL CHILDCARE NUTRITION

Farm to School Child Nutrition grantees will receive individualized coaching, technical assistance, professional development, and \$15,000 in financial assistance to help their farm to school/childcare program move forward in the development of a robust farm to school/childcare program. Funding awarded can be used by Vermont schools and registered or licensed childcare providers for a variety of purposes, including purchasing cafeteria & garden supplies, covering personnel costs, providing technical assistance, and procuring local foods. The additional technical assistance and professional development will address child nutrition program viability, local food procurement, school gardens, and food, farm, and nutrition education integration.

FARM TO SCHOOL CHILDCARE EQUIPMENT

Farm to Childcare Equipment Grants provide a \$1,000 award to childcare providers to purchase equipment that will improve their farm to childcare programs.

MILK COOLER

Milk Cooler Grants provide a \$1,000 award to reimburse schools for the purchase of a new milk coolers to ensure students have access to fresh, nutritious dairy products.



NEW! FARM TO CHILDCARE

2018 marks the first year that the Vermont Farm to School Program has made grants available to childcare providers. These new grant opportunities, designed in partnership with Agency of Education Child Nutrition Programs, Department for Children and Families Child Development Division, and Shelburne Farms, help make farm to childcare programs accessible to our youngest Vermonters. Farm to childcare programs have the potential to support new institutional markets for producers, while providing children with fresh, nutritious local foods.

Fourteen childcare programs received Farm to Early Childcare Equipment grants, which are \$1,000 grants that support childcare programs in purchasing infrastructure and equipment to improve their farm to early childcare programs. In Addison County, a consortium of 7 different childcare programs received a \$15,000 Farm to School Child Nutrition grant, to support the development of farm to childcare programs. This cohort will also receive comprehensive coaching, technical assistance and professional development available to all Farm to School Child Nutrition grantees.

In addition to the grants, the Vermont Farm to School and Childcare Program is investing resources to help develop a network of early care and early childcare providers, through a series of 5 regional workshops taking place throughout the state in 2018-2019.

GRANTEES

Farm to School Child Nutrition Grant

1. Addison Childcare Consortium (7 programs)

Farm to Childcare Equipment Grant

2. Brattleboro Centre for Children
3. Family Center of Washington County
4. Four Seasons of Early Learning
5. Gadapee Family Daycare
6. Happy Days Playschool/Northshire Day
7. Hey Diddle Diddle Daycare
8. Just Like Home Daycare
9. Little Mountaineers Home Childcare
10. Lund's Early Childhood Education Program
11. Notch Day Camp
12. Springfield Area Parent Child Center
13. Sunny Lane Daycare Center & Preschool
14. Sunrise Family Resource Center
15. Suzy's Little Peanuts

15

Grants awarded

22

Programs funded

937

Children served

2017 UNIVERSAL MEALS PROGRAM PILOT

An update to the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act in 2017 included language that allowed the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to administer a new Universal Meals Grant Program. Universal meals, a model that allows all students to eat school meals at no charge, have been proven to (in Vermont and across the country) increase participation in meal programs, improve student health and behavior, and benefit educational outcomes. Higher meal participation rates and enrollment in new federal nutrition programs can support more financially viable meal programs, which enables schools to expand local food purchasing.

Designed to increase equitable access to nutritious, local foods and improve educational outcomes, the program provided technical and financial assistance to five schools to help schools make a sustainable transition into offering at least one new universal meal, using the federal Community Eligibility Provision, Provision 2, and the Summer Food Service Program.

Universal Meals Grants provide school administrators with technical assistance and support, provided by Hunger Free Vermont, to help launch new universal meals programs at their schools. Universal Meals Grants gave 1,700 Vermont children access to at least one new universal meals program, which include: breakfast, lunch, and summer meals.

Five schools received Universal Meals Grants, two of the Grantees also included their respective high schools in this effort, equaling seven total schools that benefited from this pilot. The two schools that implemented new universal lunch programs saw an average increase in lunch participation of 32% over the previous school year. The five schools that implemented new universal breakfast after the bell programs (a practice where breakfast is available to classrooms after the school day has begun) saw an average increase in breakfast participation of 92% over the previous school year.

Following the success of the pilot, The Vermont Farm to School Child Nutrition Grant program is now integrating technical assistance support services, in close partnership with the Agency of Education Child Nutrition Programs, related to accessing improving enrollment of any federal child nutrition program for all grantees.

GRANTEES

1. Craftsbury Schools
2. Currier Memorial School
3. Poultney Elementary School
4. St. Johnsbury School
5. State Street School

HIGHLIGHTS

5

Schools received Universal Meals Grants in 2017

\$75,000

invested have leveraged over \$90,000 in federal reimbursements

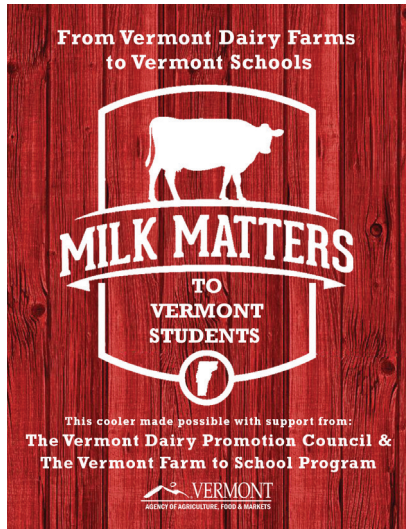
1,700

students gained access to a new universal meals program

10%

or more increase in local food purchasing by all five grantees

MILK MATTERS IN VERMONT SCHOOLS



The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) supports the dairy industry in several ways, from regulatory to market development. In Vermont, dairy farming and production is a large part of the state's cultural and economic identity, bringing \$2.2 billion in economic activity each year. Every year, more than 80,000 Vermont students consume nearly 1 million gallons of milk. Given the volume of milk consumed and the large portion of consumers drinking that milk, VAAFM has made a strong commitment to support schools in their engagement with milk.

In addition to financial support, by funding schools to purchase new milk coolers and helping fund Dairy in the Classroom, VAAFM published a guide to help schools navigate the decision-making process of whether to serve milk in cartons or with a bulk method.

Following the successful reception of the Milk Cooler Purchasing Guide, VAAFM decided to look further into how schools engage with milk, in the Milk in Vermont Schools Report. The Vermont Farm to School program hopes the report provides insights into school milk procurement practices for those producing and selling milk to schools. The report illustrates current milk serving methods in Vermont schools, evaluates their interest in changing serving methods, and provides insights into market opportunities for the market for fluid milk in Vermont schools. This report also concisely explains federal regulations surrounding school milk procurement and discusses how such regulations impact the variety of milk purchased by Vermont K-12 schools. Lastly, the report discusses ways for improving communication and information flows between schools, industry, Farm to School organizations, and the VAAFM.

OUTCOMES

Milk Cooler Grants:
\$39,410 invested
in 39 schools, serving
more than 10,000
students.

Dairy in the Classroom:
40 classrooms
per year

Vermont Milk Cooler
Purchasing Guide:
Available on Agency of
Ag's website

Coming Soon:
Milk in Vermont
Schools Report

GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Since its inception, the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Program has relied on government partners to assist the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) in administering the grants program. The Agency of Education and Department of Health assist annually with the development of the application and scoring criteria, per statute, and also participate in the grant application review team. These statutory partnerships continue today and have grown stronger and more comprehensive than ever before. These collaborations have grown to encompass new territory, allowing deeper impact across the state, through collective goals and vision.

In addition to Child Nutrition Program support, the Agency of Education helps Farm to School grantees better align their work with Act 77 goals. Beyond the grant program, the Agency of Education has also helped align Dairy in the Classroom (largely funded by VAAFM through the Dairy Promotion Program) with education standards, making the program more accessible for all teachers, while allowing those who administer the program to better measure the impact of the program on Vermont students.

Recognizing the health-related benefits of farm to school, the Department of Health has become a regular partner in many collaborative projects, including a statewide survey of all Vermont schools about their engagement in food, farm and nutrition integration. The survey, a project of the Vermont Farm to School Network, was disseminated in early 2018, with results and analysis complete by summer of 2018.

With the passage of Vermont's Universal Recycling Law, many schools are using farm to school to assist them into compliance with organics waste diversion. The Department of Environmental Conservation Materials Management team has partnered with VAAFM to better connect with grantees and farm to school partners throughout the state, to collaborate in the successful implementation of organics diversion in the waste stream.

Finally, with the inclusion of childcare programs in the Farm to School Grant Program, Department for Children & Families became a critical partner in application and review criteria development. This new partnership will continue to improve the program, helping these state investments improve the benefit to Vermont's youngest, through farm to early care.

OUTCOMES

Farm to School
Grant Request for
Applications and review
team **collaboration**

Better **integration**
of farm to school
programming with VT
education standards

Statewide **Data** Harvest
on food, farm, and
nutrition education
integration in schools

Farm to School
programs as a **tool** for
Universal Recycling

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

CORNWALL SCHOOL

2017 Implementation Grantee

Grant award

\$10,000

Students

81

Grades served

K-6

The Farm to School (FTS) committee at Cornwall received a \$10,000 implementation grant to develop stronger connections between students' curriculums, cafeteria experiences, and disparate local foods activities and events. Their primary grant objectives are to improve partnerships, integrate farm to school into written International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, invest in leadership and education, and market the project to gain sustained support from their local budget.

Cornwall is a small town with a strong agricultural history and several active farms. Cornwall is conveniently located nearby Middlebury College, and thus has partnered with their student club - Nutrition, Outreach and Mentoring - and organic farm program to work on numerous FTS projects. Cornwall School will use the grant to further develop partnerships with the Cornwall Conservation Commission to support local agriculture and improve place-based education. Through collaborating with the Town of Cornwall, Cornwall School works to integrate local foods and farming into town culture and policies for long-lasting community impact.

Cornwall teachers are working to integrate FTS in a systematic way into the curriculum at all grades, since Cornwall School is currently a candidate to become an IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) World School. The PYP requires 6 transdisciplinary units that eliminate subject silos and focuses on learning through concepts not topics. This curricular shift is a unique opportunity to integrate FTS and sustainability principles at the inception. FTS exists at the intersection of social and natural science, integrating literacy, math, technology, and social emotional skills in an authentic way. The 3rd & 4th grades piloted this work this fall, spending 6 Wednesdays outside at the Middlebury College farm and other agricultural spaces in the area. They then documented their learning in a student-created video (<https://youtu.be/dtbBBenJXaQ>).



“Farm to School is an approach that supports our transdisciplinary curriculum development, grounding the learning in concepts that transcend subject, time, and place and providing students with a chance to dig, literally, into some of their learning.”



