

AGRiVIEW



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Can New England Feed Itself in the Years to Come?

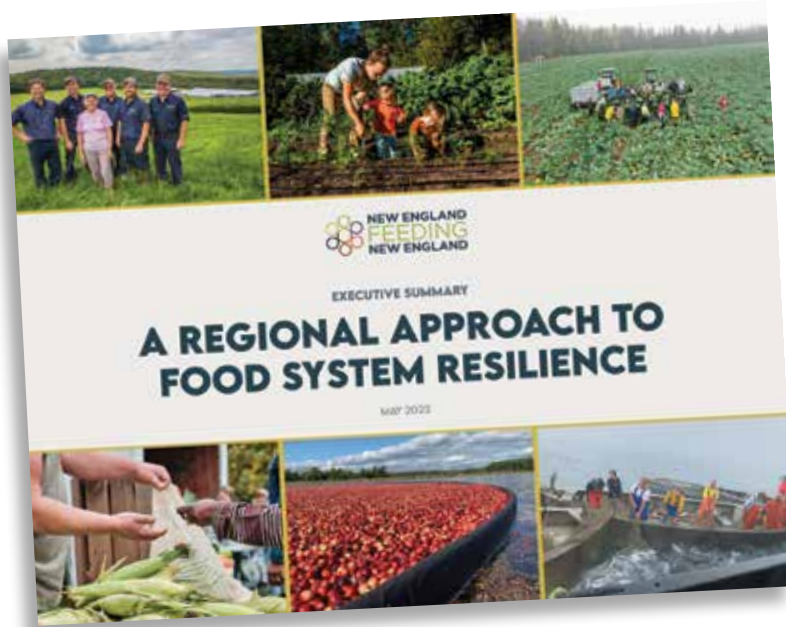
New England food advocates release new research on the state of the region's food system

By Kelly Nottermann, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

A new report puts forth a regional goal of producing and consuming 30% of New England's food needs in the region by 2030. Commissioned by the New England State Food System Planners Partnership, a collaboration between Vermont Farm to Plate, five other state-level organizations and Food Solutions New England, it outlines the role New Englanders can play in making the region's food system stronger and more self-reliant. The report — *A Regional Approach to Food System Resilience* — is a product of 16 researchers exploring the opportunities and needs along the

food supply chain in New England, and highlights the land, sea, and labor needs of the region, consumer purchase metrics, distribution trends, and population projections that will affect the region's ability to feed itself in the coming years.

"Becoming more self-reliant requires expanding our food supply chains, building up our infrastructure, and retaining control of our land resources," said Ellen Kahler, Executive Director of the Vermont



rely on their neighbors where production is more plentiful. With additional private and state investment, much of the infrastructure needed to reach regional long-term goals could find a home here in Vermont, especially in the areas of vegetable and fruit production and meat processing. That means more food production, jobs, and farm and food businesses here."

Sustainable Job Fund. "For our New England neighbors to be less reliant on a global food supply, they must

The report, released publicly on June 5, 2023, illustrates that opportunity. Vermont is home to

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Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

One day and night in May was not kind to many farmers. On the early morning of May 18, The Green Mountains and neighboring states experienced a freeze event which decimated the apple, grape, and other fruit crops for the season.

According to the US National Weather Service in Burlington, many below freezing temperatures were recorded overnight May 17th into the early morning hours of May 18th, including a record low of 25 degrees in Montpelier while Burlington tied its record low of 28 degrees.

After the freeze, with the help of UVM researchers we toured the Shelburne Vineyard in Shelburne. The losses caused by the late Spring frost is heartbreaking for those who produce fruits, produce berries and

wine. The hard freeze will mean significant losses for our growers and those who make their living off fruits and vegetables. The extent of the damage may not be known for months but early indications are discouraging.

We heard from Kendra Knapik, President of the Vermont Grape and Wine Council: "We will need to wait and see how this event will impact the industry statewide, but with so many farmers being affected it's likely to have deleterious economic ramifications for many of these small businesses," Knapik said. "This is a setback we will overcome, but it is a harsh reminder that we are at the whim of Mother Nature, and there are some parts of farming we cannot control. Most vineyards in Vermont do not have frost mitigation infrastructure like wind turbines and the tools to light vineyard-wide fires that many more established vineyards outside of Vermont had to soften the damage."

On the tour was Dr. Terry Bradshaw of the University of Vermont. Dr. Bradshaw has been working with farmers and collecting information about the extent of the damage. "In my 25 years of working with fruit crops in Vermont,

I have never seen frost or freeze damage this extensive. My team is systematically collecting damage data across the region to help inform next steps to respond to this event. We expect a difficult season for growers and appreciate the continued support that our community provides to these vital operations that are so important to the Vermont agriculture community."

Any affected farmer in our region is encouraged to report their losses to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through their local Farm Services Office (FSA). It is unclear whether those who sustained losses will be eligible for financial relief assistance but it's important to document and report any damages as soon as possible.

You can find your local Vermont FSA County Office here: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>

We will continue to support those growers who were hit by this

USDA Farm Service Centers

Vermont Main Office
802-658-2803

Addison County	802-388-6748
Bennington County	802-775-8034
Caledonia County	802-748-2641
Chittenden County	802-288-8155
Essex County	802-748-2641
Franklin County	802-527-1296
Grand Isle County	802-527-1296
Lamoille County	802-888-4935
Orange County	802-295-7942
Orleans County	802-334-6090
Rutland County	802-775-8034
Washington County	802-288-8155
Windham County	802-254-9766
Windsor County	802-295-7942

hard freeze. This includes working with our Congressional delegation, Vermont lawmakers and neighboring states but this will be a difficult year for many of our apple, grape and fruit crop growers.

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This Month's Recipe

Blueberry Salsa



Ingredients

- 2 medium heirloom tomatoes
- 1 cup fresh or frozen wild, or not, blueberries
- 3/4 cup chopped sweet onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 Hungarian hot pepper, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons chopped Italian flat leaf parsley
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Score the skin of the tomatoes by slicing an X into the skin on the bottom. Immerse the tomatoes in boiling water for about 15 seconds. Remove and place into a bowl of cold water. The skins should slip

off easily. Peel the tomatoes, cut in half and remove the seeds. Chop the tomatoes and discard the seeds.

2. In a medium bowl, combine the tomatoes, blueberries, onion, garlic, jalapeno pepper, Hungarian pepper, cilantro, and parsley. Pour in the rice vinegar and olive oil and stir gently to mix. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and store in the refrigerator overnight to allow the flavors to blend. You may wish to drain the salsa slightly before serving, depending on how juicy your tomatoes are.

Vermont Ag Hall of Fame Announces 2023 Inductees

The Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame is excited to announce the 2023 inductees. For more than 20 years, over 95 contributors of Vermont agricultural have been celebrated with the Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame honor. A celebratory luncheon is scheduled during the Champlain Valley Fair on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, at 12pm.



are stepping up to become the next generation of agricultural leaders in Vermont. Age 40 or younger (born after June 1, 1983), these individuals demonstrate a deep commitment to Vermont's working landscape and are poised to lead our Ag community into the future. They are remarkable for their service, youthful energy, and dedication to Vermont agriculture.

Andy Birch, Farmer, Derby, VT

2023 Ag Innovator

Those in consideration for this category have demonstrated a fresh and forward-thinking approach to agriculture. They are making or have

made a significant, positive impact on Vermont, in areas such as but not limited to growing the local economy, promoting stewardship and conservation, improving community health and nutrition, developing new tools and practices, and using alternative models in business and land ownership. They are notable for their unique perspective and unconventional approach. (Age is not a factor for consideration in this category.)

Jed Davis, Agri-Mark VP Strategic Engagement & Sustainability, South Burlington, VT

2023 Lifetime Achievement

This category recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to the advancement, improvement, or development of Vermont agriculture over the course of their long career. Nominees shall have played an active role in Vermont agriculture for at least thirty years.

- **Richard Lawrence, Legislator, Farmer, Lyndonville, VT**
- **Diane Bothfeld, Former Director of Administrative Services IV and Dairy Policy Cabot, VT**
- **Jake Guest, Organic farmer, Fairlee, VT**

2023 Emerging Leader

This category highlights those who

Can New England Feed Itself?

continued from page 1

only four percent of the region's population, but more than 30% of its agricultural land. As a result, despite its small proportion of New England's population, Vermont is home to more than six percent of food system employment and 7.5% of its sales, a \$3.3 billion economic industry for Vermont. This could grow even larger. In contrast, a state like Connecticut is home to 24% of the region's population but only 10% of its farmland, ensuring that in order to make its food system more reliant on local food, it must capitalize on available production capabilities of nearby states – such as Vermont.

“The gap between what Vermont produces and what it consumes can be exported to support our economy, jobs, and our communities. We can rely on an unstable and unpredictable global supply chain or feed our neighbors right next door here in New England,” said Jake Claro, Vermont Farm to Plate Director. “Together, we can

implement the 2021-2030 *Vermont Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan* and continue strengthening local farms and food businesses, be less dependent on a global food supply, and expand access to agricultural land so more of the food consumed here and across New England is produced here.”

New England states had a total food expenditure of over \$87.1 billion in 2019, or about \$5,868 per person in the region. In order to ensure that 30% of New England's food needs are met with New England products, the average New Englander would have to spend about \$1,760 of that total food expenditure on regionally-produced food. By 2030, total food expenditures are projected to reach \$98.4 billion, or about \$1,890 per person to reach the 30% goal.

The New England State Food System Planners Partnership is a collaboration among six state-level food system organizations and Food Solutions New England who are mobilizing their networks to impact local and regional food supply chains, and strengthen and



grow the New England regional food system. The Partnership disseminates information on trends, challenges and opportunities to hundreds of groups across the region that connect with our individual state initiatives. The Partnership works in collaboration with the regional Food Solutions New England network and in alignment with its New England Food Vision, and also in collaboration with state governments and groups supporting local and regionally-based food supply chains.

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) is a nonprofit organization committed to nurturing

the sustainable development of Vermont's economy. At the request of the Vermont Legislature, it developed and administers Vermont Farm to Plate, the state's food system plan being implemented statewide to increase economic development and jobs in the farm and food sector, improve soils, water, and resiliency of the working landscape in the face of climate change, and improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters.

For more information, contact Ellen Kahler by email, ellen@vsjf.org or by phone, 802-828-5320.

DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Announcing the Dairy Farm Innovation and Alternative Management Grantees

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation is excited to announce 24 recipients of the Dairy Farm Innovation & Alternative Management Grant. With a focus on climate and community-forward production strategies, this grant offers funds for farmers to implement projects that enhance the resilience of our Northeast regional food system.

Awards ranged from \$16,000 to \$75,000, with a total funding of \$1,076,940. The grantees include 13 Vermont farms, along with farms in Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania. Farm innovation projects run the gamut from studying and promoting extended lactation on goat dairy farms, to creating a silvopasture grazing system, to managing herds with geofencing.

Four examples across the region show the breadth of projects:

In New York, Lee Hennessy of Moxie Ridge Farm is developing skills-based digital classes on small ruminant dairy farming to support workforce development, with a particular emphasis on outreach and engagement with the LGBTQ+ community.

In Massachusetts, Gould Maple Farm is replacing a diesel skid-steer with electric



robotic manure scrapers in their cow dairy barn to improve barn cleanliness, positively impact animal health, and decrease fuel use and emissions. In addition to this project, they're installing

solar panels to create a closed-loop energy system on the farm.

In Vermont, two farms participating in NE-DBIC Dairy Cohorts are implementing new

technologies: Molly Brook Farm is purchasing a collar monitoring system for their organic grazing herd of 85 cows to increase their cow pregnancy rates and their ability to detect illness early. This is expected to both increase milk production per cow and reduce culls due to reproductive issues.

Richville Farm, a woman-owned 870 cow dairy, has a four-pronged improvement project that includes purchasing and installing a New Holland Near Infrared Spectroscopy (NIR) Crop Analysis System on their existing harvest equipment, which will generate real-

time data on feed quality, yield, and moisture. They'll also install feed testing equipment to reduce feed loss and spoilage, add rumination monitoring collars on their cows, and purchase an ultrasound machine to support their embryo and in-vitro fertilization services.

These projects represent investment in innovative and alternative management systems across the Northeast. Look for updates on the NE-DBIC blog to learn more about how the grants are benefiting dairy farms as they get underway. <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/press>

Current Grants for Dairy Processors Across the Northeast

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The NE-DBIC announces two upcoming grants for cow, goat, and sheep dairy processors. Find the Request for Applications for the grants below, plus our full funding calendar, on our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants>

Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant

With a goal to diversify and strengthen the supply chain for dairy farmers and

consumers, this grant offers existing dairy processors across the Northeast funding to acquire specialized equipment needed to increase the processing capacity of regionally produced milk and other activities to support expansion and meet demand.

The RFA for the single-stage Tier 3 application for smaller processors whose volume of milk utilized on an average production day is under 1,000 pounds, is available until the application closes on August 24, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET. Awards for Tier 3

will range from \$25,000 to \$250,000, with a 25% match requirement.

Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant

Northeast dairy businesses looking for sustainable product packaging solutions can now apply for the Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant. This program provides funding to support modernized, climate-forward dairy packaging initiatives that prioritize sustainability, scalability, and marketability.

The RFA for the first round of this two-phase application process is

available now and pre-applications for the first round are due by August 24, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET. Following the review of pre-applications, a subset of applicants will be invited to submit a full application beginning in mid-September to mid-November. Awards will range from \$75,000 to \$350,000 with a 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment required.

For more information about these grants, contact the NE-DBIC team at agr.dairyinnovation@vermont.gov

Northeastern Dairy Product Innovation Competition Announces 10 Finalists

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

Here at the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), our goal is to increase the resiliency of regional dairy. The most obvious way we do that is through grants for dairy farmers and processors, but we also partner with organizations to leverage our collective capacities.

Take the Northeastern Dairy Product Innovation Competition. Produced by Cornell's Center for Regional Economic Advancement in partnership with the Northeast Dairy Foods Research Center and funded by a \$1 million grant from the NE-DBIC, the competition supports food innovators in launching products made from dairy ingredients produced in the

Northeast.

Out of over 50 applicants, 10 finalists will receive early-stage incubation assistance from Cornell's food processing and business experts, access to the university's food processing facilities, industry mentorship, and training on product prototyping. Along with these resources, finalists will receive \$20,000, with up to three winners receiving an additional \$55,000, and a presence at the Dairy Innovation Showcase at the 2023 Grow-NY Summit in November.

The 10 finalists are:

- Bell & Goose Cheese Co. of New Hampshire, with marinated feta cheese.
- lu•lu ice cream of Vermont, with goat's milk gelato.
- Maia Yogurt of Connecticut, with grassfed yogurt for kids.
- Maple Valley Farm of

Vermont, with saffron maple yogurt.

- North Country Creamery of New York, with semi-hard, pasteurized cheese.
- Naturally Golden Family Farms Co-op of Pennsylvania, with an all-natural, dairy-based coffee creamer.
- Oakfield Corners Cheese LLC of New York, with Mexican style cheese.
- Spekl'd of Connecticut, with a pre-made, brown butter product.
- Terra Firma Farm of Connecticut with a ready-to-use, premium ice cream base.
- Very Good Yogurt of New York, with sugar-free,

savory yogurt.

Four of the finalists—Bell & Goose Cheese Co, lu•lu ice cream, Naturally Golden Family Farms Co-op, and North Country Creamery—have previously received grants through the NE-DBIC.

Bell & Goose Cheese Co, lu•lu ice cream, and Naturally Golden are recipients of the Dairy Marketing & Branding Services grant. lu•lu ice cream also received a Goat & Sheep Dairy Supply Chain Grant. North Country Creamery is a recipient of the Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant and was

part of the dairy cohort that participated in the NE-DBIC Missouri Learning Journey.

As our Center Lead, Laura Ginsburg, noted, "This competition, along with our specialized grants for dairy processors, creates more pathways for regional dairy processing that benefits farmers, consumers, and our regional economy."

The competition culminates on August 8 at Cornell University's Stocking Hall in Ithaca, New York, where finalists will pitch their products to a committee of judges. To learn more, visit dairyinnovation.org.



Pesticide Applicator Certification Exams

By Stephanie Smith, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Are you ready to take a Pesticide Applicator certification exam? Have you studied the appropriate materials? Do you know which exam or exams you need to become certified or licensed? Are you 18 or older? To take an exam you must register by contacting the Certification & Training coordinator at least a week (7 days) in advance at 802-461-6118.

All exams are given by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

- All exams are CLOSED BOOK
- Please bring a calculator
- Please bring a current, state-issued, picture ID (required)

There is no cost to sit for (take) exams, *however* there is a fee for obtaining certification.

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1st Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Brattleboro
Monthly
1st Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030: Child Care

Editor's note: This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>



Lead Author: Graham Unangst-Rufenacht and Mollie Wills, Rural Vermont

Contributing Authors: Drake Turner and Ansley Bloomer, Let's GrowKids; Matt Levin and Charlie Gliserman, Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance; Shoshanah Inwood and Andrea Rissing, Ohio State University; Florence Becot, National Farm Medicine Center, National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

What's At Stake?

Child care is fundamental to household economics, and therefore farm economics. Farmers with children must continuously negotiate access to affordable child care as the needs of their children and families change. Planning for these

adjustments is part of whole-farm business planning, yet rarely taken into account in farm business support. Even with financial assistance, Vermont families may spend almost 30% of their annual income on child care. Vermont estimates the basic wage needed for two adults with two children (ages 4 and 6) to live alone and support their children is \$31.75 per hour (or \$66,036 annually), often far above a farmer's or farmworker's hourly wage. Child care

Current Conditions

The time when farm families have young children is particularly vulnerable for a farm operation, and access to child care can help parents maintain the farm during this period. In Vermont, 71.5% of children ages five and under are in families where all available parents are in the labor force. Despite this, almost two thirds of infants and nearly one third of toddlers and preschoolers do not have access to licensed care

programs. Child care choices for farm families are influenced by values, farm productivity, cost of care, and distance to care centers and relatives. Family care is the preferred child care arrangement for farm families due to affordability and flexibility around non-traditional schedules. Low and fluctuating profit margins make it difficult

for farm families to afford off-farm care. Household stressors play a significant role in amplifying overall stress levels on farms. How child care is practiced affects relationships, inequitable division of labor, and day-to-day operations. First-generation and women farmers face the most significant challenges in accessing affordable child care.

There is tension between the belief that farming helps children gain life skills and a reluctance to use one's children as labor. Farm parents' time is split between the farm and their children, and allocations towards one come at the expense of the other. Farm parents must regularly weigh the safety risks and benefits of keeping their children on the farm. In the U.S., approximately 33 children are seriously injured in agriculture-related incidents every day, and approximately every three days a child dies. About 60% of agriculture-related injuries are sustained by nonworking children.

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Farmers struggle with lack of child care providers, distance from providers, cost, and scheduling constraints. For seasonal, migrant, and undocumented workers, language, transportation, and safety issues may compound these challenges.
- Care of young children largely falls on women. Gendered roles can exacerbate family

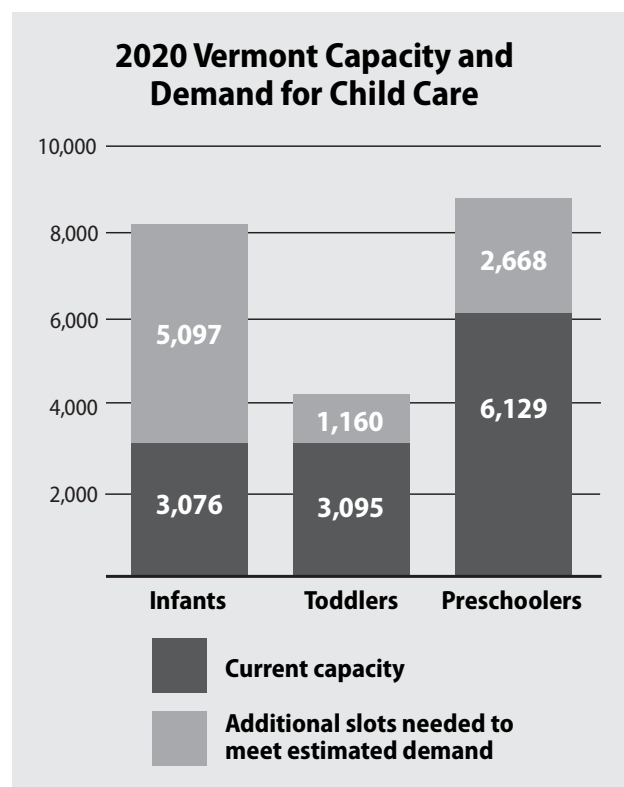
tensions and intersect with isolation and lack of extended family, contributing negatively to mental and physical health.

- Different abilities amongst children limit options for appropriate child care. Children requiring extra care directly affect relationships in the family, farm structure and management, and overall quality of life.
- There is no comprehensive accounting of how cost, availability, and access to child care affect farm structure and management. Agricultural service providers lack training and expertise in providing support to farmers around child care, and family scheduling is often not factored into their services.
- Vermont needs approximately 2,090 additional early childhood educators to meet current needs for young children.

Opportunities

- Farmers with access to child care have an increased chance of improving farm viability and personal and family health, while reducing their stress.
- There is demand for cooperatives and on-site, affordable child care, particularly in rural areas and the farming community.
- Access to child care could increase Vermont's attraction for many rural families, including farmers and farm workers. Along

is also the best way to keep farm children safe. Addressing farm families' and farm workers' need for child care is necessary to support longterm, thriving, and equitable food systems in Vermont. There is further need to examine how national and state child care policies intersect with farm family well-being and farm economic development.



with cost of land, soil quality, and familiarity with an area, some farmers also consider access to child care when deciding where to establish their operation.

- European public social support systems provide a model for comprehensive child care and family policies with generous parental leave and subsidized care available to all parents.
- Child care subsidies are currently underused by rural families, despite higher poverty and unemployment rates. Farmers who are able to access subsidies describe them as a boon to their farm.

Recommendations

- Develop and enact policies which create just and equitable systems for fairly compensating farmers and farmworkers. Systemically work across sectors to bring voice to, and address the gendered nature of, child care and household work and its consequences for society, particularly farms.
- Ensure universal, high-quality child care for all families living in Vermont. Invest in the necessary facility infrastructure changes, and increase support for and expansion of current programs, particularly in rural, underserved areas. Provide living wages, scholarship supports, and ongoing professional development and training to early childhood educators to enable them to both enter and remain in the field.
- Conduct research into how child care cost, availability, acceptability, and access affects

farm structure and management, and how these factors may evolve as children age. Conduct a comparative analysis between U.S. farmers and farmers in western European countries where child care and social

support systems are more robust.

- Integrate care work as a critical component of farm planning and child safety. Direct agricultural service providers to work with the Vermont Department of Children

and Families (DCF) and to include household economics as a part of farm economics. Train service providers to share information about tax benefits and child care assistance programs with farmers.

- Work with Vermont DCF to simplify and expand the criteria for child care subsidies to make them more accessible to farmers, including pursuing an IT system that enables these changes.



FARM AND FOOD WORKERS RELIEF PROGRAM

ADMINISTERED BY:



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm and Food Workers Relief Program (FFWR) provides a one-time \$600 payment for expenses incurred by frontline farmers and meatpacking workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



One-time relief payments

Eligible frontline farmworkers and meatpacking workers can apply for a one-time \$600 pandemic relief payment through check, direct deposit, or gift card. [See if you're eligible.](#)



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Japanese Knotweed in Vermont

By Emilie Inoue, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The invasive weed known as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is actually part of a complex of species that also includes giant knotweed, (*Fallopia sachalinensis*) and Bohemian knotweed (*Fallopia X Bohemica*). These plants are herbaceous shrubs that can reach up to 19 feet in height. They have hollow, jointed stems reminiscent of bamboo, but can be distinguished from it by the presence of a sheath around the joint where the leaf emerges. In addition, they have large (3-5 x 2-4"), alternate, oval shaped leaves with a tips that taper to a point. The species that make up the complex are similar in appearance, though giant knotweed has considerably larger leaves.

Japanese knotweed, like many invasive weeds, outcompetes native, locally adapted plants. It spreads through rhizomes, sending up fast growing shoots from an underground stem which allow it to form dense thickets to the exclusion of other plants. Members of the knotweed complex spread primarily as stem fragments or shoots from rhizomes. Seeds spread via water and wind, and by animal and industrial activities (such



as the movement of soil, including as commercial fill). Because this plant can be easily spread and have adverse impact on local plant and wildlife populations, Japanese knotweed is listed on VT's noxious weed quarantine rule list. Plants that are listed on the noxious weed list are prohibited from possession, cultivation, sale, movement, and distribution. The Agency of Agriculture does provide permits for the management of Japanese knotweed.

Knotweeds can be controlled physically through burning, smothering, and pulling. Growth can also be controlled through cutting or mowing; if the plant is cut back multiple times per season

for several seasons in a row, the root-borne starch reserves can eventually be depleted. However, the plant's extensive root system can make both cutting and pulling less effective. Pulled or cut plant remains must be destroyed to prevent further propagation. This can be accomplished by burying the stems at least 6 feet deep or allowing them to dry until biologically inert. It is possible to control knotweed with chemical and biological control are methods as well. Chemical herbicides can pose a danger

to aquatic habitats, so they often prove difficult to use against riparian populations. *Aphalara idatori* is a psyllid insect that was approved for release by the USDA in 2020, though it should be noted that previous releases of this insect in other countries have not led to the establishment of biocontrol populations. The USDA is continuing to work on additional solutions.



Sources:

- https://nyis.info/invasive_species/japanese-knotweed/
- <https://www.nyisri.org/research/biological-control/biocontrol-updates-resources/>
- ITIS - <https://www.itis.gov/servlet/SingleRpt/SingleRpt>
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Glinnis Hill Farm

Business Planning for Farm Determinations and Viability

By Noah Gilbert-Fuller, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

With Vermont returning to lush, green colors for this summer season, Vermont's farmers are working hard tending to crops, raising livestock and stewarding the land. This hard work also comes with a need to adapt to many changing conditions. Not only do farmers have to deal with pests and the weather, they also have to get their produce to market where consumers can buy it. In the face of all these sources of uncertainty, business planning can elevate a farm's ability to market themselves, generate income, manage risk, and meet their goals for their farm's future.

Glinnis Hill Farm is a diversified vegetable farm run by Gus Glinnis and Mollie Podmore on the site of a historic dairy barn in Berlin, VT. The start of the journey in 2022 began with a goal: to revive and conserve the farm while contributing to local food and economic resilience. To do that, the farm realized they needed to plan out how they would achieve productivity and viability.

Reaching out to the Intervale Center and their business planners, Gus and Mollie were able to develop a Business Plan that laid out their objectives for growth over a 10-year period. They then could send this document to organizations that



Gus Griffin and Mollie Podmore, pictured with plant starts at the beginning of the season.

help farmers finance, lease, conserve, and manage land to gain their support as they started operations. For example, before they started farming, Glinnis Hill Farm was asked by their town Zoning Administrator to receive a Farm Determination from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to meet local land use requirements. They were able to use their Business Plan as an outline of how they would manage their property and meet the criteria of a Small Farm Operation.

Though unexpected challenges may arise and cause farmers to adapt to market conditions in real time, a thorough Business Plan can help a farm navigate through these challenges while working towards their goals. In addition, business plans allow prospective farmers to show how they plan to meet the conditions in local town

bylaws around agricultural land use. This often makes it easier to start farming, especially if the farm business needs to construct farm structures.

Section 3.1(g) of the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) states that a farm may submit a "... prospective business or farm management plan, approved by the Secretary, describing how the farm will meet the threshold requirements of this section" to meet the definition of a Small Farm Operation regulated under the RAPs. Even if a farm does not meet those criteria right at the outset of their business, a prospective farm can describe how their operation will meet RAP criteria, such as farming 4.0 contiguous acres, or making \$2,000 or more in income from the sale of agricultural products, by designing a farm management plan and cash flow worksheet.



Glinnis Hill Farm: The view of the beds and the buildings at the historic Glinnis Hill Farm.

Business Plan materials are evaluated by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

Since last year, Glinnis Hill Farm has started operations with a Market Style CSA, which provides members farm credit to their dollar which they spend on food items they may choose. One of their proudest achievements so far is their "Solidarity Shares" program which offers free or reduced cost shares to underserved individuals. This is done through a sliding scale pricing program, where customers are presented with an average rate and may pay above or under the average rate depending on their needs. This strong vision is supported in the farm's Business Plan with activities such as on-farm concerts that subsidize the Solidarity Shares and bring in a wide customer base who feel invested in making a more

equitable food system.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Agricultural Development Division hosts a webpage dedicated to New and Beginning Farmer Resources, with a section on Business Planning. You can find the webpage at this web address: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/development/new-farmer-resources#BP&A>.

For Farm Determination Business Plan Guidelines, visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/business-plan-guidelines-farmers>.

For more information on Farm Determinations and the Required Agricultural Practices, visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations/farm-definitions-and-determinations> or contact Noah Gilbert-Fuller at Noah.Gilbert-Fuller@vermont.gov or (802) 505-3407.

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension
802-257-7967 ext. 303, or
vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.vvbga.org

Reports From The Field

(Burlington) From chilly and slow to hot and dry: it must be spring on the farm. Despite a cold winter and not a lot of snow cover we had a lot of crimson clover overwinter, surprising me. I'm happy for the early blooming pollination resource.

Field vegetables are looking good, albeit a bit slower than normal. We lost our first round of spinach to seedcorn maggots and are seeing some onion losses to maggots and/or their subsurface associates in beds that followed a clover sod. Leafminers are showing up and I've seen a few CPBs.

I'm looking forward to starting our summer CSA. Demand is strong, but with the slower spring our selection for week one isn't great, though reasonable with salad mix, kale, PYO cilantro, and hopefully head lettuce and tunnel cucumbers. Week one is half reunion and orientation, so selection seems to matter less than in successive weeks. Trying to up our game with more farming and ag info at our CSA distribution, we'll see if we can stick with it through the busy summer.

(Hinesburg) April farmstand sales were slow. May farmstand sales better. Some interesting temp data from 2 weeks ago: Outside temp was 26 degrees. Inside hoop house with no row cover was 28 degrees; pole beans damaged but now recovering. Inside hoop house, under 2 layers row cover was 44 degrees; no damage to cukes, pepper, tomatoes. Cool season crops are growing and selling well. Over-wintered onions showing thrips damage. They find the onions earlier each year. Treated with nematodes; seems to have slowed the thrips down. Irrigating every day.

(E. Wallingford) Early and mid-season blueberries are in full bloom; late blueberries coming out of pink bud. Bees are working hard. Planted 100 peach and plum bareroot and dormant trees in late April; all but one tree have leafed out and pushing new growth. Could use some rain. Very little frost/freeze damage at this elevation, blueberries were not in major bloom yet. Land is ready to plant veggies and 120-day pumpkins.

(East Dorset) The 2023 freeze shows about a 25% blueberry crop blueberry loss for us at this point. More damage in the earlier varieties. It is also a preliminary look at the crop. We will see how it ends up after the summer.

(Grand Isle) The cold snap didn't hit the Lake Champlain islands as severely as other areas. We had some patches of frost. The blueberries are entering petal fall stage and the pollination looks excellent. Monitored

and kept track of pollinators this year; 98% bumble bees. Did a 10-minute scout every other day and counted 30-40 bees.

(Richmond) We had a hard frost of 21 degrees here on May 17. Our Bluecrop blueberries were in full bloom with lots of pollinators out and about. Looked like quite a few blossoms were brown the next day and we are starting to see those flowers/blueberries shrivel and fall off. The rest of our blueberries were in late bud stage, so we were unsure about the impact but now they are in full bloom, and it looks to be a strong crop. Great to see a variety of pollinators in the fields. Busy trying to stay on top of weed control and installing irrigation in our fields.

(Fairfax) May 17: low 20's in the strawberry fields. Started irrigating at 9 pm, and ice finally melted off the berries about 11 am. About 14 hours that night. From May 7 to 17 had over 40 hours of frost protection. Flowers look good, the plants not so much. Some winter injury and extreme temps this spring hasn't been great. 30 years of growing strawberries and 7 sleepless nights of frost protection. The most I can remember, but my memory isn't so good anymore. Last year was the best year for strawberries of the 30. This year won't be so good. Lessons learned. Success irrigating sweet corn transplants in the low 20's. Asparagus melted even with the irrigation.

(Westminster West) We were fortunate not to have lost anything from the killing freeze two weeks ago

and were happy to be able to supply plants to some growers that lost theirs. Found CPB on our early tunnel potatoes yesterday. Other than that, should have new potatoes for 4th of July sales. Garlic crop looks the best in many years with virtually no losses over the winter and strong growth with scapes just starting to poke up.

Plant sales are very strong, and farmers' markets have set records each market day so far; nice weather certainly helps. We tripled our potato acreage this year, with 9 varieties, if I don't lose the map, I may be able to find them all! Trying to get the squash acreage in this week. Have increased scale and added new varieties due to market demand. Tunnel celery and tomatoes are growing well. Water may become an issue. I'm hoping to get a new well before the season ends.

Reminder to Report Vermont Surface Water Withdrawals

Becky Maden, UVM Extension Vegetable Nutrient Management Specialist

If you irrigate from a river, stream, lake, or natural pond, you likely need to comply with Vermont's surface water bill (Act 135). You are required to report estimated use if your farm withdraws 10,000 gallons or more of surface water within a 24-hour period in the preceding calendar year, or 150,000 gallons or more of surface water over any 30-day period.

If your farm requested a meter, we expect to install them soon. In the meantime, estimate water use by recording acres irrigated, run time, and irrigation

specs (sprinkler type or drip emitter spacing). For support with estimating usage, contact me at rebecca.maden@uvm.edu. If you have questions about the regulation or reporting, contact Ryan Patch at the VT Agency of agriculture, Ryan.Patch@vermont.gov.

Upcoming On-Farm Events

Tuesday, July 18, 4-6 pm. VVBGA workshop at Burnt Rock Farm in Huntington. Topics: Small scale veg farm equipment, efficient fertilizing, root crops, irrigation.

Pollinator Updates

Laura Johnson, UVM Extension Pollinator Support Specialist

How do pollinators respond to flowers killed by frost? Pollen is likely still present on flowers, and even with tissue freeze damage, remaining pollen can still be nutritious, and may even be viable. If stigmas or ovaries are damaged by the freeze, then flowers are not likely to produce fruit. A Michigan State University blueberry pollinator study over 15 years examined impacts of freezes on blueberry crops and wild bee populations. Specialist bees, like the Carolina miner bee, *Andrena Carolina*, and other miner bees (which are abundant on Vermont berry and tree fruit crops) showed population declines in subsequent seasons. Other, non-*Andrena* species of bees showed resilience and did not decline due to freeze. It is encouraging that species showing declines eventually partially rebounded. Pollinator declines resulting from a freeze event during bloom likely won't be seen until subsequent years.

CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Ag.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Jersey cows available:

closed herd in Highgate; Organic, grass-only, some A2A2, vaccinated, awaiting results of disease testing. 802-370-1051 (8)

Angus bull for sale, he is proven and 4 years old. Call for more info. (802)-558-8196 (8)

Dexters for sale. 6 cows (open) 1 red, 2 dunn, 3 black, 3 steers. All dehorned. Animals are in great condition. Please

contact: 802-356-5988 (Windsor County) (8)

Angus Bulls for sale good genetics and ready for service. Greensboro, VT (802) 533-9804 (9)

Cow and calf pairs from closed Certified Organic herd. Mixed breeds, reasonable prices. 802-254-6982 (8)

Employment

Equipment Operator. Crop Production Assistant. CSA

Coordinator & Wash Pack Manager. All positions with details at root5farm.com (5)

Equipment

4.5 ton grain bin, 6.5 ton grain bin, (2) 8 ton grain bins priced to sell. 38 John Deere hay elevator. 16 ft New Holland hay elevator. 802-624-0143.(5)

Meyers Snow plow 8'6" wide \$800. 7-yard dump body on INK Truck \$1,500. 802-558-0166 (5)

Gehl 5640 skid steer-82 HP-2 speed. New tires, has steel tracks, 2,675 hrs. \$19,995. 802-333-4840 (5)

Horsepower Delaval vacuum pump, good shape. 3 Pt: 7 ft back blade. 8 ton grain bins, 32 ft John Deere hay elevator, 16 ft new holland hay elevator. 802-893-4683, 802-624-0143 (7)

60-gallon Upright Milkplan Bulk Tank \$3700 Semen Tank \$300 Pick Up Only, Killington VT Call 802-490-5712 (7)

Two tecumsac gasoline power tapers for tapping sugarbush. \$75 each or both for \$125. Both start and run great. Tap up to 150 taps on one tank gas. 802-291-4525. Call or text. Royalton. (8)

1 8ft snow blower \$2300. 1 5ft international snow blower \$1300. 802-624-0143 (9)

New Holland Baler with kicker, good shape. 315 New Holland baler, good baler. 1 24ft hay elevator. Priced to sell. 802-624-0143 or 802-895-4683 (9)

Kuhn disc mower for 3 point hitch. 5 foot cut with 4 discs. Excellent condition. \$1500. 802-291-4525. (9)

Gehl - 3935 -\$9500.00, Gehl - 3410 -\$7000.00, Kuhn/knight 3170 mixer- \$19,000.00 Call 802-537-2435 or 802-345-5543 (9)

Kuhn GMD400 Disc Mower, Kuhn tedder, Darf 5 wheel rake on rubber, JD 24T baler (would like to sell together). Also JD 2040 tractor with



loader (40 hp; 2wd), NH 329 manure spreader. Springfield, 802-886-1473 (9)

1 Bunker Silo Defacer (fits on skid steers) \$1250.00, 400 amp transfer switch for generator \$400 or BO, Electric pipe threader \$300, Call Robert Manning, 802-233-9173 (9)

2012 Kuhn 3130 trailer type reel mixer wagon. Digistar scale, floatation tire, very good condition, always under cover - \$19,500. upweyfarm@gmail.com 802-457-1639 (9)

New bunk full of organic grass silage. Trucking is available. We are an Organic farm and would consider leasing part of our barn and pastures. We are located in Newport Center, Vermont. You can call Tom at 1-802-744-2444 or Shaye at 1-802-744-6553 or cell phone 1-802-274-4939. (9)

Equine

Trailer – 2 horse thoroughbred size, dressing room, ramp and tag along. 802-345-8026 (6)

6 stable available, indoor arena. Outdoor paddocks, do all work yourself and all feed. Slight fee for water & lights. 802-345-8026 (6)

General

Beautifully restored doctor's buggy and Irish Brougham coach. Call 802-451-6813 for photos & details. (8)

24x36 Pole Barn, built by John Morgan, metal roof, hemlock siding, 6 sliding doors, 1000 bale hay storage. Must be moved this summer. Barn is currently in West Windsor,

VT. Best offer. Photos not allowed in Agriview, but available by request. 802-484-5827

Hay, Feed & Forage

Certified Organic wrapped round bales for sale. approx 50% dry matter. Have forage sample results for 3rd cut, \$45.00/ 50.00 per bale depending on which hay is taken. Call or text 1-802-210-5279 (5)

4x4 Wrapped Round Bales, 1st cut 2022 for sale. \$45/bale 4x4 Dry Round Bales, \$50/bale 4x4 Wrapped Round Bales, 1st cut 2021 \$40/bale Pickup at the farm. 1710 Wild Apple Road, South Pomfret, 05067 Call Tom at 802-457-5834 (6)

Good Quality First cut netted large dry round bales, \$50 Excellent Quality First cut 9x200 ft Ag Bags of 2021 Haylage early cut Delivery available, David Leblanc 802-988-2959 or 802-274-2832 (6)

Organic round bales for sale. Well wrapped, tedded, June cut, 2022. Never wet; sweet smell. I load, you haul. \$35 at the farm. Easy access for trailer or truck. Thistle Hill Farm. N. Pomfret, VT info@ThistleHillFarm.com. (7)

Certified Organic Wrapped Round Bales for sale. All hay is tedded and feeds out like it's dry. 4.5' by 4' bales. Early and late 1st cut @ \$45/ bale. 2nd and 3rd cut @ \$55/bale. N. Danville 802-748-8461. (8)

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

continued on page 12

Small square first cut bales. \$4.00 a bale. Call 802-767-4247 (9)

Wheat and oat rotocut straw from western Canada, quality feeding. Large bales 3X4X8 or 3X4X7. Stored inside. From 175USD/ton, transport available (not included). We are located 30 minutes away from Swanton VT in Canada (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu). Call or text us 514-588-3829 for more info. (9)

Feed-organic haylage, 3rd cut - \$60 a ton, 2nd cut - \$60 a ton, 1st cut - \$45 a ton. Call 802-537-2435 or 802-345-5543 (9)

4x5 round bales. Early 1st cut. 802-265-4566 (6)

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Good quality hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard and orchard sweet grass. 18 to 20% plus protein. Large bales and organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole or processed at farm we load or direct delivery by trailer load. 802-849-6266 or 802-373-5217 (12)

RUTLAND COUNTY

Small square bales. First cut.

210 available at \$5 each. 802-773-8716 (6)

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Small square bales – 1st cut \$6.00 or less for quantity. 802-793-3511 (4)

Small square bales - 1st and 2nd cut; excellent quality. \$5.00/bale at the Paquet Farm, Barre 802-476-5082 (8)

WINDSOR COUNTY

Hay for sale. Small square bales. First cut. 1,000 available. \$4 each. 802-767-4247 Poultry

Sheep & Goats

Now taking orders for our 2023 registered Alpine kids. Lazy Lady Farm, with 35 years of breeding experience will have doe and buck kids, from 30 does, available starting in March. We have a 2800# herd average with DHIA testing. We are CAE,CL and Johnes free with annual testing. Please visit our website: www.lazyladyfarm.com. for farm info and our sales list. 802-595-4473 laini@lazyladyfarm.com (6)

Ice House Farm dairy goat kids available. Disease free herd. Saanen & Alpine lines averaging over 4,000 pounds of milk per season. Call 802-

247-1443 (8)

Alpine kids \$200. CAE/CL/Johnes negative. ADGA top genetics. <http://www.sagefarmgoatdairy.com> Katie 802-461-9025 kpindell@gmail.com (8)

Wanted

A 1941 farm license plate with the prefix AGR. Also need a 1944 farm plate. Terry at 802-885-5405 (6)

Hay elevator in good working condition with motor 24' is perfect. Please email with pic and info. You can call me Israel at 802-563-6061 Appreciated!! Email is Israel1@gmail.com (7)

Maltese pup or young dog. 802-885-6450 (8)

Help wanted year round on our organic livestock (Angus beef, pork, lamb) farm in N. Danville, Vt. Part time position consists of morning chores (7:30 am-10:30am) Monday thru Friday and every other weekend. Full time position possible for someone willing to do chores and who has experience

with outdoor work (fencing, haying, logging) as well. We also would allow someone to use the farm to produce for themselves and market through our on farm store (chicken, eggs, produce, etc). Pay depends on experience with entry level at \$15/hr. We would assist someone from out of town in finding rental housing. Email Vince Foy at badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call 802-748-8461. (8)

Fahr KH40 hay tedder for parts. Contact Dan, Hinesburg VT 802 482-2047 (9)

Caretaker for beautiful "hobby" farm in the Upper Valley of Vermont, Woodstock area. On site detached housing provided. Part or full time duties. Perfect for retired person or couple. Basic horse experience preferred but not necessary. References required, Make inquiries by email: morganmiltimore@gmail.com or call 802-436-1111. (9)

For Sale

Entire Micro Dairy and Cheese

House For Sale: AlpineGlo Farm has been successfully making farmstead goat cheeses since 2016 in the Windham County area, and is looking to pass on the business locally as sales outlets and a strong customer base are in place. This is an opportunity to step right into a functioning business. Inventory includes a herd of 13 ADGA Alpine Dairy Goats (10 currently due to kid in April), all milk parlor contents, and all cheese house contents including 30 gallon pasteurizer. Real estate is not included, this is to be set up on your property. For full details and inventory please contact the farm directly. Located in Southern Vermont(Westminster). Contact Rachel Ware at rachel@alpineglofarm.com or (802) 463-2018. PLEASE, serious inquiries only. (8)

419 acre organic farm; 2 robotic milkers, 3 bunker silos 275/100 freestall, 4 bedroom farmhouse. Call 802-537-2435 or 802-345-5543 (9)

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Ava Murphey, Huntington, Vermont to process, package, buy/sell and transport cheese within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by August 15, 2023.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

Vermont Fairs and Field Days 2023

Vermont Fairs will continue to follow state and federal COVID-19 guidelines. Please know that the situations are still changing frequently so we suggest you visit the individual Fair's web site for the most current information.

- The Bradford Fair July 14-16, 2023
- Lamoille County Field Days July 21-23, 2023
- Franklin County Field Days..... August 3-6, 2023
- Addison County Fair & Field Day..... August 8-12, 2023
- Deerfield Valley Farmers Day August 10-13, 2023
- Vermont State Fair August 15-19, 2023
- Caledonia County Fair August 23-27, 2023
- Bondville Fair..... August 25-27, 2023
- Champlain Valley Exposition August 25 - September 3, 2023
- Guilford Fair September 3-4, 2023
- Orleans County Fair September 6-10, 2023
- The Tunbridge World's Fair..... September 14-17, 2023

Vermont Businesses Invited to Join the Maple 100!

By Kristen Brassard, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets



The Vermont Maple 100 is back and it's bigger, sweeter, and more exciting than ever before! This annual promotion is the ultimate showcase of everything maple-related in Vermont. From thrilling maple adventures to mouthwatering maple-inspired products, this event has it all, and we want you to join in on the fun!

From September 15 – October 15, 2023, Vermont businesses are invited to join forces with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and organizations from across the state as we embark on a quest to help visitors and Vermonters alike discover new and delightful ways to indulge in Vermont's sweetest treat. Whether you have a cozy restaurant that serves up delectable maple-infused dishes or a farm that produces the finest maple syrup, we want you on board!

The best part? Participating in the Maple 100 is free, and you'll reap the benefits of a robust marketing campaign promoting your business to a captive audience of Vermont tourists during our busiest season. Imagine the influx of visitors, all eagerly searching for the next maple adventure or scrumptious maple-infused treat. This

is your chance to shine and make a lasting impression on maple enthusiasts from near and far!

By creating lasting memories with unique and

exciting experiences, we will help consumers "tap in" to the many wonderful uses of maple. We want them to know it's not just a breakfast sweetener and to take that knowledge home with them, so they think of maple and of Vermont when making future purchasing decisions. Tell us how you'd

like to get involved! Maybe it's promoting a tantalizing maple-inspired product, hosting an unforgettable event, or creating a special Vermont Maple 100 menu at your restaurant. Whatever your connection to maple, we'd love to have you as part of this celebration!

Registration for the

Vermont Maple 100 closes on July 31st. Visit agriculture.vermont.gov/join-maple-100 or contact Kristen Brassard at kristen.brassard@vermont.gov today to learn more and secure your spot in this delectable celebration. Let the maple madness begin!

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you more easily identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round

Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley

Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov
802-828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour

Mary.Montour@vermont.gov
802-461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett

Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov
802-522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos

Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov
802-461-3814

Phil Wilson

Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov
802-505-5378

Early Summer 2023

Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant

Grants to support modernized packaging initiatives that prioritize sustainability, scalability, and marketability

Kathryn Donovan

Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov
802-585-4571

August

Working Lands Enterprise Fund Service Provider Grants & Contracts

Grants and contracts for service providers that support agriculture and forestry businesses

Clare Salerno

Working.Lands@vermont.gov
802-917-2637

Fall 2023

On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant

Grants to provide dairy farmers with funds that support the purchase and supplies to improve milk storage, handling and energy efficiencies

Ben Eldredge

Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov
802-522-9478

Dairy Food Safety and Certification Grant

Grants to support food safety projects, including specialized equipment purchase, supplies, food safety training, and certifications.

Ben Eldredge

Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov
802-522-9478

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Business Enhancement Grants

Grants to provide farm and forest businesses with funds to support marketing, infrastructure, equipment, workforce development, and energy-focused projects

Clare Salerno

clare.salerno@vermont.gov
802-917-2637

Farm First Program Manager Karen Crowley Retiring

Interview with Juana Lopez, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

By Juana Lopez, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

As she sips her cup of coffee, Karen begins to ponder and reflect on the role she has played at Farm First. Karen Crowley, who has been the Program Manager for over 3 years will be retiring this summer.

Farm First, is a Vermont-based program that provides professional, personal support to tackle a wide range of issues that farm owners and their families might face, including but not limited to financial and family concerns, addiction, and illness. These services are free and confidential.

Karen explained that Farm First has been a mighty program since the very beginning of 2009. Since then, with grant funding in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (VAAFAM), they have had the opportunity to innovate and serve more farmers. The agency has supported Farm First to update market materials, increase media content on the Farm First website, train agricultural service providers, and launch the Farmer Peer Network. Overtime, Farm First capacity, services, trainings, and team have grown allowing the program to provide services to more farmers across Vermont. An example of this is the wellness checks that Farm First is now providing with



Karen Crowley

a wellness coach to help farmers learn about lifestyle shifts to help manage stress, a follow-up session is offered after three months. Each farmer who participates will receive a \$100 gift card.

“Being able to try new things has allowed for new opportunities and for growth. It’s what also led to Farmer Peer Network” she said. The Farmer Peer Network is a group of diverse farmers who have been trained in active listening and accessing resources who connect with other farmers and help them create goals, find solutions, or make referrals for counseling.

“What was the hardest part of the position,” I asked Karen?

“I think the most challenging part of this role was hearing about farmers who had been suffering for so long and having a tough time alone. I wanted to let them know that they were in fact not alone and good services and tools were

available for them” she stated.

“Farm First has had an impact on the farming community by reducing the stigma on mental health. It has helped people understand that mental health changes overtime. Others like the Agency of Agriculture, funders, and partner organizations that come into contact with the farming community are always willing to help.”

“Is there anything you would like to say to current and future farmers within Vermont,” I asked?

Karen instantly smiles and quickly replies, “You are not alone. There are many people who are struggling, and there are many resources that can help like Farm First and the Farmer Peer Network. Connect with people.”

Leanne Porter, who has played the role as the Training and Development Manager at Farm First, will

be stepping into her new position as the Program Manager. “Leanne has been working with me for a long time and is currently learning about her new role as the Program Manager. She has all the support from the Agency and staff and will do an amazing job since she knows the role so well. She is a problem solver, she is creative, and she thinks outside the box when it comes to mental health. My only expectation and wish for Farm First is to keep “kicking butt.” I think it is a perfect time and place for me to step down from this role,” Karen told me.

Karen will be moving to rural Vermont, where she will have adventures tapping

maple trees for maple syrup, foraging, and bee keeping. She states that she does not want to lose touch with the agriculture community. She will stay strongly committed to the people and the land in a different way. “I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Foods, and Markets for always collaborating with us and helping us build what Farm First is today.

Thank you, Karen Crowley, for all your hard work. Best wishes as you embark on a new journey.

For information, visit:

- <https://www.farmfirst.org/resources/peer-support>
- <https://www.farmfirst.org/>

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The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by August 15, 2023.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.



Upcoming Grazing and Dairy Learning Events

By UVM Extension

Thanks to funding from the Agricultural Clean Water Investment Program (AgCWIP), the Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC), and elsewhere, UVM Extension and their collaborators have put together a wealth of learning opportunities over the next few months. Some of you may have already attended some of the early season offerings, including a 5-part series of dairy goat-focused pasture walks in April in May. The learning continues throughout the summer with the events listed here.

Visit UVM Extension's Conferences and Events web page for all event information - <http://go.uvm.edu/conferences>.

<http://go.uvm.edu/conferences>. Contact Susan Brouillette at Susan.Brouillette@uvm.edu with any questions or to ensure that you receive notice of these types of opportunities in the future.

Thursday, July 13

9am to 2pm
Cedar Mountain Farm, 25 Linden Rd, Hartland, VT. Day-long dairy herd health workshop with Dr. Dayna Locitzer. Topics to include physical exam of the cow, time budget, and veterinary skills.

Friday July 14

11am to 1pm
Ken Leach and Joanne Chickering, 2710 VT Route 30, Pawlet, VT. Drought management & drought resiliency.

Wednesday, July 19

10 am to noon
Rebop Farm, 1320 Sunset Lake Road, Brattleboro, VT. Pasture walk with discussion of how to enhance bird, bee, and beneficial insect habitats in rotational grazing systems.

Saturday, July 22

1pm to 4pm
Larson Farm, 661 South Street, Wells, VT. Pasture walk: using automatic gate openers and innovative seed varieties to enhance dry matter intake, soil fertility, and milk production. Pot luck to follow.

Thursday, August 10

Time TBD
UVM Miller Farm, Spear Street, So. Burlington, VT.

Milk quality workshop with the UVM Ag Viability Program.

Wednesday August 23

noon to 2pm
The Corse Family Farm, 1085 Corse Road, Whitingham, VT. Soil health in pasture systems, grazing management, and considerations for transitioning to grass-fed. DGA discussion will also happen.

Thursday, August 31

10 am to noon
Berlin UVM Extension, 327 US Route 302, Suite 1, Berlin, VT. Sheep and goat dairy protocol development with Dr. Dayna Locitzer which

will include group lecture followed by breakout sessions for developing individual farm protocols.

Thursday, September 7

11am to 1pm
R Robar, Kiss the Cow Farm, 992 Walker Hill Rd, So. Royalton, VT. Strategies for success transitioning and maintaining grass-fed dairy production.

Wednesday, September 20

11am to 1pm
North Country Creamery, 931 Mace Chasm Road, Keeseville, NY. Forage quality and pasture productivity improvement for the grass-fed dairy.

Agency Contact Numbers

Phone numbers for Agency programs are listed below. You are always welcome to call our main line at 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to the person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	802-461-6798
Animal Health	802-828-2421
Business Development	802-828-1619
Dairy	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection	802-828-2426
Pesticide & Plant Health	802-828-1732
Produce Program	802-522-7811
Vermont Agriculture & Environmental Lab	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures	802-828-2433
Working Lands	802-917-2637

Agroforestry

A storytelling and mapping project of Vermont Farm to Plate

By Kelly Dolan, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees and perennial plants into an agricultural landscape, and it has been shown to enhance carbon sequestration, air and water quality, and soil health and to support more resilient agricultural landscapes. However, the 2023 Vermonter Poll showed that only 1.2% of Vermonters practice agroforestry or really understand it. The Farm to Plate Agroforestry Priority Strategy Team, composed of agroforestry farmers, researchers, policy makers, technical service providers, nursery managers, students, and agroforestry advisors, has organized to change this by supporting agroforestry adoption in the state. Together, we've identified key bottlenecks to agroforestry adoption in Vermont including a lack of awareness,

clear examples, nursery plants, and markets. The Agroforestry Storytelling and Story Mapping Project was born out of this work and aims to enhance awareness of agroforestry by sharing the stories of agroforestry farmers in the state and showcasing the many farmers that are practicing agroforestry through an ArcGIS story map. In the coming weeks, Farm to Plate will be featuring on their website and in their monthly Food Systems e-news stories of farmers in Vermont utilizing agroforestry related practices.

See all the stories and the ArcGIS story map here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fc597629f37841e693bb1d323923c8b9>

For information on how to join the Farm to Plate Agroforestry Team, please email Kelly Dolan, Farm to Plate Network Manager: kellydolan@vsjf.org

FEATURED FARMER: Ramsay Mellish, Cutting Hill Beef Company

By Sarah M. Audet,
Communications & Media
Consultant, Champlain Valley
Farmer Coalition

In the not too distant past, Ramsay Mellish was a typical college student desperate for money. What is perhaps less typical is the job he found to help make ends meet: Relief milker at a dairy farm near his university in New Hampshire.

It wasn't long before Ramsay became deeply interested in the science of dairy and traded in the ivory towers for metal silos. That's right: he dropped out of college, became a farmer, and never looked back.

Fast forward to April 2016, when Ramsay and his wife Caroline purchased a farm in Cornwall. They milked exclusively for five years under a contract with Stonyfield.

Unfortunately, when they renegotiated in 2021, it was for a lower price. In order to make up for the lost revenue, they expanded their milking herd from 120 to 180, and started growing organic vegetables at a nearby farm.

This opened the Mellishes' eyes to the benefits of direct marketing. As one might imagine, it's a lot of work to build relationships with co-ops and gro-



cery stores. But once you've got a boot in the door, it's much easier to sell them other products.

And that's how it has come to pass that their organic dairy is now known as Cutting Hill Beef Company. They've raised hundreds of cows, selling their meat from Vermont to Rhode Island and everywhere in between.

Ramsay and Caroline have no plans to stop there with diversification. They are now raising a flock of 1,000 hens for eggs, which will grow to 3,000 by fall 2023. They also have a small drift of pigs for personal consumption, but you can count on finding their retail pork in the near future.

"What we're doing currently is a big experiment," Ramsay explains of their multi-species venture.

He is not simply referring to their goal of growing and diversifying their revenue, however.

"As dairymen, we talk about multiple species in our hay," Ramsay observes. "But many don't consider multiple species of animals, or even multiple species of ruminants, within the same system."

He adds, "There's really interesting diversification ideas that happen at small scales and it's never implemented at a larger scale."

And so, the Mellishes are wondering: What are the environmental and economic

Ramsay Mellish with his cattle.



benefits of raising multiple animal species on the same parcel of land? Can it be done at scale in an effective way?

They believe it can.

"We know that the pastures benefit from having both ruminants and monogastric animals because of the difference in their manure. We know, too, that grazing even different ruminant species within the same pasture impacts the soil ecosystem differently than just one species," Ramsay explains.

How? Cattle manure is lower in nitrogen and higher in other nutrients, while monogastric manure is higher in nitrogen and lower in other nutrients. Taken together, this creates a balanced diet for the soil.

"We can get the nitrogen basically paid for by the sale of the product from the monogastric animal, whether it's pork or eggs," he points out. "If it can be scaled big

enough, then you have an excess of these nutrients you can spread on your hay fields."

There are research-backed benefits to the animals, as well, when there are multiple species on the same land.

"Small ruminants are susceptible to certain types of parasites that cattle are not. And cattle are susceptible to certain types of parasites that small ruminants are not," Ramsay says. "When you put them in the same pasture, you confuse the parasites and they leave."

This big experiment is all in service to a grander vision: environmental stewardship.

Ramsay observes, "As farmers, we have a huge impact on the environment. Farmers are essentially responsible for managing hundreds of thousands of acres in Vermont, and we need to be mindful of that."

This is an excerpt. To read the full story, visit <https://tinyurl.com/39p9af8c>

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