



farm^{to}plate

RETROSPECTIVE 2010-2020



Appreciating the Land

We are on the land which has served as a site of meeting and exchange among indigenous peoples for thousands of years and is the home of the Western Abenaki People. The Farm to Plate Network honors, recognizes, and respects these peoples, especially the Abenaki, as the traditional stewards of the land and waters. In that spirit, we acknowledge that we are guests in this land. We need to respect and help protect the lands within our use. We have a responsibility to help make this truth visible, to support efforts toward indigenous sovereignty and well-being, and to dismantle the legacies of colonialism here in Vermont.

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Acknowledgments

The past decade of expansion in Vermont's agriculture and food system is due to collective effort by many people who love this place. Thank you to Governor Douglas, Governor Shumlin, and Governor Scott, and past and present Vermont Legislators for creating, supporting, and reauthorizing the Farm to Plate Investment Program. Thank you to all consumers who prioritize Vermont food in their communities and their own households. Thank you to technical assistance and capital providers for supporting farms and food businesses, foundation partners who provided consistent funding for Network and project-based work, and institutional leaders committed to expanding local food sourcing. Thank you to Vermont and regional distributors and grocers responding to consumer and business needs. Thank you to land stewards, educators, and advocates who champion the importance of a vibrant and thriving local food system.

To Vermont's incredible farmers and food producers: thank you for your hard work, your dedication to our communities and environment, and the delicious food that you make every day.

A LETTER FROM

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

The Vermont Legislature and Governor Douglas created the Farm to Plate Investment Program in May 2009, and tasked the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) with administering it. It's been deeply satisfying to look back over the first ten years of Farm to Plate. Our hopes were high in 2009, but we did not predict the magnitude of progress Vermont would make due to collaboration, connection, and alignment across the 2010 Strategic Plan. This Retrospective celebrates what has been accomplished toward the three outcomes outlined in the Farm to Plate Investment Program legislation, indicates areas where we fell short of our aspirations, and shares the lessons we carry into our second decade.

The Farm to Plate Strategic Plan 2010–2020 became the gold standard of food system plans across the United States, and the Farm to Plate Network an inspiration. Since the Plan's release in January 2011, more than 600 farms, food businesses, non-profit, governmental, educational, advocacy organizations have joined the Vermont Farm to Plate Network to implement the Plan's recommendations, collaborate on high-impact projects, share market intelligence, dismantle bottlenecks, seize new market opportunities, and inspire new product development. The Network's groups, annual gatherings, website, reports, and backbone staff democratized information about the food system, to build a collective path and transform it. The swift, coordinated mobilization to keep Vermonters fed and food workers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic is clear evidence of the strength of Network relationships.

Since the Farm to Plate Investment Program's passage, Vermont has had impressive gains in food system job growth (58,912 to 64,571, 11%), economic output (\$7.6 billion to \$12 billion, 57.7%), and local food consumption (from \$114 million to \$412 million, or 5% to 17.8%). Producers have gained greater access to institutional and grocery markets, value-added processing has increased, and more consumers have come to expect that locally sourced foods will be widely available to them. We have much to celebrate together.

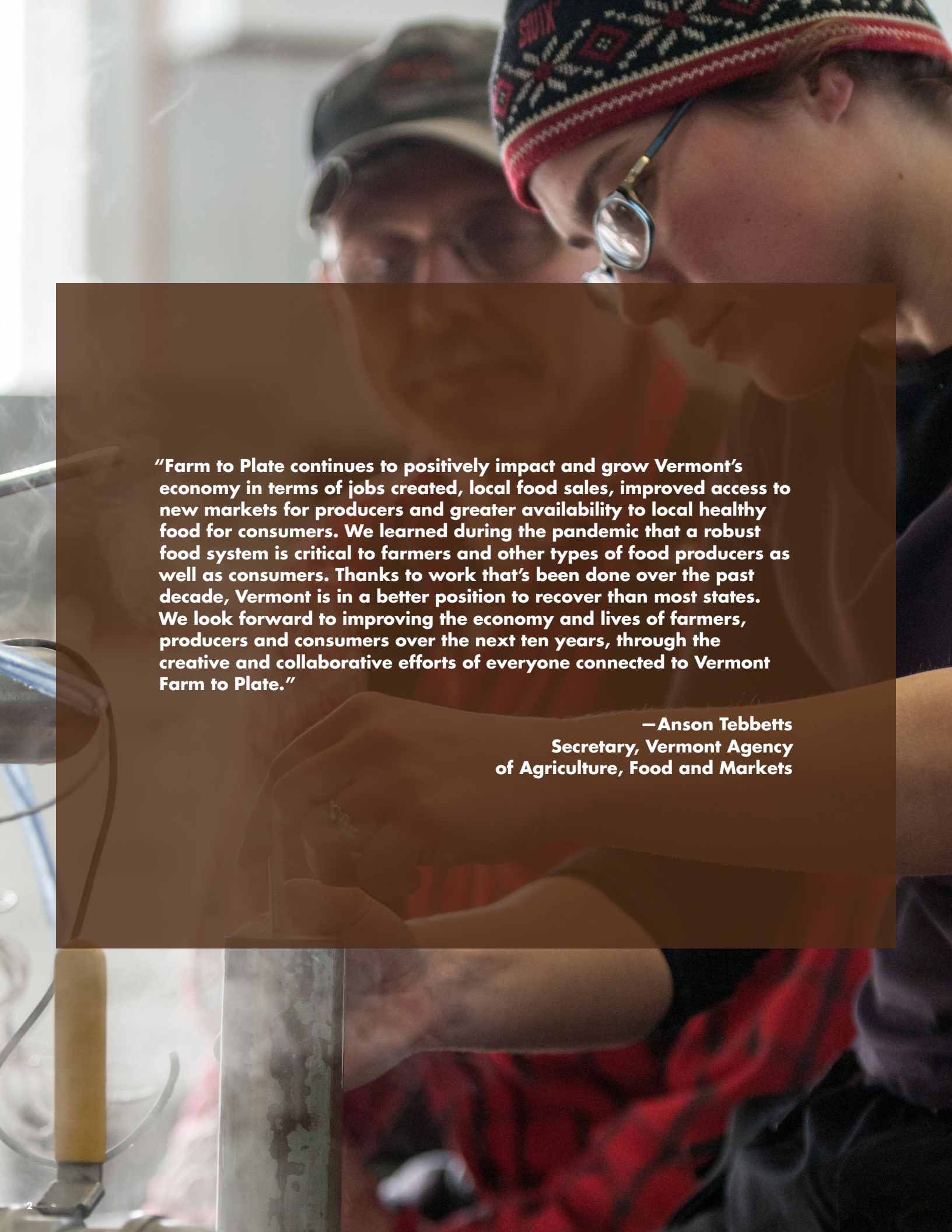
We also know that Vermont agriculture continues to be threatened by national and global trends. Consolidation in all areas of the global food system puts much of our past gains and future hopes at risk. Vermont's stalwart dairy industry is an exemplar of consolidation's deleterious effects, caught in a commodity system that prioritizes low prices and the bottom line of multi-national corporations over farm viability, land stewardship, and farmer well-being. We are also in an era of increased risk, uncertainty, and danger due to climate change. Concerns amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic—supply chain disruption, development pressure and rising land prices, increased food insecurity—will become widespread and persistent.

Our collaborative efforts through Vermont Farm to Plate are needed now more than ever. We have 10 years of impressive changes in our food system to build upon. We have a clear vision, goals and priorities strategies to guide us over the next ten years, as detailed in the Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan 2021–2030. Now is the time to take stock in all we have accomplished to date, and forge ahead to a more equitable and thriving future.

Ellen Kahler
Executive Director

Jake Claro
Farm to Plate Director

Sarah Danly
Farm to Plate Network Manager



"Farm to Plate continues to positively impact and grow Vermont's economy in terms of jobs created, local food sales, improved access to new markets for producers and greater availability to local healthy food for consumers. We learned during the pandemic that a robust food system is critical to farmers and other types of food producers as well as consumers. Thanks to work that's been done over the past decade, Vermont is in a better position to recover than most states. We look forward to improving the economy and lives of farmers, producers and consumers over the next ten years, through the creative and collaborative efforts of everyone connected to Vermont Farm to Plate."

**—Anson Tebbetts
Secretary, Vermont Agency
of Agriculture, Food and Markets**

Table of Contents

- The Process4**
 - From Planning to Implementation9**
 - What is a Backbone Organization?11**
 - A Sampling of Farm to Plate Network Accomplishments12**
 - How Well Did The Network Do?15**
- The Results16**
 - Part 1: Priority Strategies Accomplished16**
 - Part 2: What’s Changed?19**
- The Next Decade.....37**
- Staff, Financials, Funders 2009–2020.....40**
 - Current Farm to Plate Staff40**
 - Former Farm to Plate Staff41**
 - Financials.....42**
 - Thank You to Network Members44**



Farm to Plate Investment Program:

The Process

At the turn of the millennium, commodity market volatility, increased food sector consolidation, and climate change were causing increasing public scrutiny of national and global industrial agriculture.

In 2009, a prolonged milk price crisis began, which, alongside the Great Recession, created unease and concern for the outlook of agriculture in Vermont. Yet, Vermont agriculture also showed signs of expansion, and opportunity, especially for diversified and organically certified farms and the growing number of specialty food producers and processors. More and more consumers wanted to know where their food came from, farmers markets and CSAs expanded, young people without farming backgrounds started farms, farm to school programs increased in number, and “food hubs” emerged as a concept for aggregating and distributing local food.

Seeing the confluence of these threats and opportunities, representatives from Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility and Rural Vermont collaborated with members of the House Agriculture and Commerce Committees and the Senate Agriculture and Economic Development Committees during the 2009 legislative session to craft the Farm to Plate Investment Program legislation. The legislation then passed with strong tri-partisan support and was signed into law by Governor Jim Douglas in May 2009, as [10 V.S.A. chapter 15A § 330](#). The legislation tasked the Vermont

Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF), in consultation with the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Council (SAC), with developing a strategic plan for agricultural and food system development, focused on three intended outcomes:

- 1 Increase economic development in Vermont's food and farm sector.**
- 2 Create jobs in the food and farm economy.**
- 3 Improve access to healthy local foods.**

What followed was the most comprehensive statewide food system development plan in the country and the first of its kind in New England: [The Farm to Plate Strategic Plan 2010–2020](#).



The Farm to Plate Strategic Plan 2010–2020 became the gold standard for food system plans across the United States. A Strategic Plan Process Team guided development of the plan’s content, goals, and strategies. From May 2009 to November 2010, the Process Team analyzed data, conducted in-depth stakeholder interviews, and convened public events involving over 1,500 Vermont residents. The Plan was then written by VSJF staff assisted by researchers, interns, and volunteers, and released with great fanfare at the Statehouse in January 2011.

The celebrated release of the Plan’s Executive Summary contained 54 priority recommendations for action. An additional four chapters—over 1,000 pages of research and analysis—were created over the following three years. In addition to providing the Legislature with a comprehensive view of the state of the Vermont

food system and a ten-year roadmap, the detailed research and analysis also provided farm and food enterprises with information that influenced their activities, stimulated movement towards emerging market opportunities, and provided valuable market research for launching new businesses or expanding existing ones.

The VSJF staff is grateful to the members of the Farm to Plate Process Team. They provided invaluable guidance to both the process and the final content of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan 2010–2020.

- Roger Allbee* (Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets)
 - Marie Audet (Blue Spruce Farm)
 - Stacy Burnstein (Castanea Foundation)
 - Megan Camp* (Vermont FEED and Shelburne Farms)
 - Guy Choiniere (Choiniere Family Farm)
 - Eric Clifford (Clifford Dairy Farm)
 - Paul Costello (Vermont Council on Rural Development)
 - Brian Dunkiel (Dunkiel Saunders)
 - Amanda Ellis-Thurber (Lilac Ridge Farm)
 - Bill Schubart (Worth Mountain Consulting)
 - Will Stevens* (Golden Russet Farm)
 - Ryan Torres* (Vermont Community Foundation)
 - Steve Voigt (King Arthur Flour)
 - Tom Vogelmann* (University of Vermont College of Agriculture and Life Sciences)
 - Enid Wonnacott* (NOFA Vermont)
- * also a member of the Sustainable Agriculture Council*

The Plan encompassed all types and scales of agricultural-related production and processing, from small-scale diversified farms to commodity dairy farms, from on-farm processing to commercial-scale food manufacturing. It highlighted the important role of all markets within the food system, including local markets (i.e., Vermont plus 30 miles), regional markets (i.e., New England, New York, and southern Quebec), and national and international markets. It encompassed supply chain infrastructure (e.g. distribution), economic issues (e.g., financing), and societal concerns (e.g., food access). The Plan recommended specific infrastructure investments and public policy to support new and existing agricultural enterprises.

It detailed current conditions in Vermont, analyzed challenges and opportunities in ten areas of market development, and provided actionable recommendations to strengthen Vermont's food system.

Chapter 1 contained an overview of the Strategic Plan and the planning process.

Chapter 2 contained 25 goals for the decade, and data indicators built around the goals to track progress toward a shared vision of the Vermont food system.

Chapter 3 focused on current conditions, gaps and barriers to strengthening Vermont's food system, along with an analysis of emerging opportunities and a series of objectives and strategies aimed at reaching the Plan's 25 goals. The chapter contained seven sections, including: understanding consumer demand; farm inputs; food production (with sub-sections on dairy, livestock, eggs, hops, maple syrup, grains, honey, beer, fruits and vegetables, and more); food processing and manufacturing; wholesale distribution and storage; retail distribution; and nutrient management.

Chapter 4 examined crosscutting issues that impact the whole food system, including food insecurity, education, workforce development, technical assistance and business planning, financing, energy, regulation, and leadership, communication, and coordination across the food system.

The Plan also contained **Appendices** on revitalizing the dairy industry and on the food distribution system.

Useful for individual organizations and businesses, the Plan has guided the Farm to Plate Network and its member organizations to work collaboratively toward the 25 goals laid out in the Plan. In summary, the Plan provided the framework for strategic conversations and action across all types of entities, impacting the food system in ways that no organization could have accomplished alone.

Planning participants prioritized ten areas for market development within the farm and food sector. Recommendations for action within the Plan were then organized around these market development needs.

- Market Research
- Natural Resource, Physical infrastructure, and Technology
- Sales and Distribution
- Marketing and Public Outreach
- Business Planning and Technical Assistance
- Financing
- Network Development
- Education
- Workforce Development
- Regulation and Public Policy





The 2010–2020 Strategic Plan encompassed the entire food supply chain, which distinguished it from previous agricultural plans.

In 2009, it was not uncommon to hear people say, “Agriculture is dead in Vermont,” often in reference to a tragic number of dairy farms going out of business that year amidst ongoing fluctuations in conventional dairy milk prices. By focusing on the entire food system, including the agricultural support system, we demonstrated its scale, impact, and importance to the Vermont

economy. We shifted the state narrative to an awareness that ***agriculture development is economic development***, and thus worthy of time, energy, and financial investment. This new approach generated excitement and a renewed focus on bolstering all elements of the food supply chain.

"When the Plan came out, I remember reading it and writing notes in the margin. It really helped me get my head around the why of what we were doing at Vermont Bean Crafters. Reading about the number of acres that will be in intergenerational succession in the next ten years, at the same time as new markets were emerging, and what possibilities there could be as a value-added producer to get into these markets got me really excited about our future as a company. I realized the bottleneck was not going to be around land-based production, it was going to be related to post-harvest handling and accessing markets. So, the Plan provided a lot of important intel at a time when I was not clear if I should be more vertically integrated, which was my original idea, or try to get the most value out of the products I was growing. It also helped us identify all of the organizations and entities that were building towards something in the aggregate, and using that knowledge to help us leverage the public-private partnerships and access the capital that we and other land-based enterprises needed to fuel our growth."

— Joe Bossen
Founder, Vermont Bean Crafters



"The Farm to Plate Network is critical to the development of Vermont's food system and overall economy. The information sharing, data collection, and analysis that the network provides helps to identify gaps, barriers, and opportunities for strategic and effective investment by a range of partners across Vermont, including the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, which makes grants and investments in food system businesses, as well as our Viability network of business advisors."

—Ela Chapin
Former Director | VHCB's Farm & Forest
Viability Program and Former Working Lands
Enterprise Board Member



From Planning to Implementation

The Farm to Plate Network formally launched with the first annual Network Gathering in October 2011 in order to implement the Plan. Since that first Gathering, attended by 125 people, over 600 organizations have participated in Network projects, activities, gatherings, and more.

The formally organized Network was a logical next step in statewide coordination and collaboration that had been building for decades. The specific structure of the Network was inspired by a network governance model developed by RE-AMP, a climate change and energy policy network. The Network's structure was purposefully designed to coordinate action around the key leverage points and cross-cutting issues identified in the Plan, while amplifying the work of farm and food sector businesses and support organizations.

From 2011–2020 the Network consisted of five Working Groups, seven Cross-Cutting Teams, 11 Task Forces, and a Steering Committee. Working Groups (WG) and Cross Cutting Teams were the central structure of the Network. Organizational staff, farmers and food producers could join the Network via a simple online registration, and choose to participate in one or more Groups matched to their professional focus and/or interests. Within these Groups, members collaborated on high impact projects and monitored progress toward the 25 goals in the Strategic Plan. Over the years, Network projects took many forms, including technical assistance and producer trainings, convenings and skills training, research, creating informational resources, organizing public events and producer-distributor forums, and uncovering and overcoming structural impediments through strategic investments

and policies. The annual two-day Network Gathering brought members of these groups and others working in food and agriculture together each year for professional development, updates on key issues, relationship development, project planning and problem-solving, and celebration.

A considerable investment in time, capital, and love was poured into Vermont's food system over the past decade through the Network. The 600 organizations and businesses (see pages 46-47 for list) participating in Farm to Plate over the years accomplished a great deal. They took a risk to be a part of something new, and gave it life. In the pages ahead, we look back at new relationships leading to strong partnerships, the sharing of information and creation of numerous resources, and projects and initiatives that impacted the food system.

Farm to Plate Network Groups

The form of the Network followed the function that was needed to enact change, and was dynamic rather than static over time. Groups were created, dissolved, and even merged over time to adapt and meet the needs of new developments in the food system. The diagram below captures the Network structure and its specific groups toward the end of the first ten years, which looks quite different from how it looked when it first launched in 2011.



Working Groups

Working-Groups (WG)—the inner ring of blue circles—brought together organizations and businesses to work on high leverage areas by implementing and monitoring key strategies identified in the Strategic Plan.

Cross-Cutting Teams

Cross-Cutting Team (CCT)—the outer ring of purple circles—as their name suggests, corresponded to the cross-cutting issues identified in the Plan. The activity of these groups advanced strategies that connected to the priorities of multiple Working Groups.

Task Forces

Task Forces (TF)—the smaller green circles tied to WGs or CCTs—formed from a subset of members of WGs or CCTs to implement discrete high impact projects addressing key objectives and strategies identified in the Strategic Plan. TFs were timebound, disbanding once project objectives were accomplished.

VSJF's Role as Backbone Organization

Legislators knew that a strategic plan developed by a neutral organization outside of state government would be shielded from changes in Administrations.

They tasked VSJF, a legislatively created non-profit, with creating, implementing, and tracking progress on the Plan. VSJF added staff capacity in order to support the Network and its members, and this capacity is essential to a networked approach to systems level change. VSJF's Farm to Plate staff capacity has fluctuated between two and four full-time equivalents. Staff support members and groups with logistics, information, connections, facilitation, and project management.

memory” of the Network. Suffice it to say, network work is very labor-intensive work. Relationship and trust building and maintenance takes time and a lot of focused, persistent effort.

Consistent financial resources were essential for effective collective implementation of the 2010–2020 Strategic Plan. Multi-year funding is necessary to build systems and relationships. Funding supported the backbone staff roles described above, stipends for private sector participants and Network leadership, and a Network Fund to seed projects. The keystone support for the entire Vermont Farm to Plate has been the \$100,000 received annually from State General Fund support through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (FY12–FY20). The General Fund support demonstrated State commitment to agricultural development via the Network and inspired additional funding support from over 11 foundations, other state and federal grants, over 30 non-profit and corporate sponsorships, and event registrations. All told, Network support totaled \$5.6 million from 2011–2020 (see page 44 for more detail).

As part of our commitment to using data for continuous improvement, VSJF requests annual evaluations from Network members regarding VSJF services as the backbone organization. In survey results between 2014–2020, 85%–98% said that VSJF was effective in coordinating the Network (0% said that VSJF was not effective).

VSJF has also been instrumental in advancing regional food system development, knowing that Vermont's food system will benefit from this work. VSJF is part of the New England Food System Planners Partnership (a community of practice among the six backbone organizations in each state in New England) and the regional network, Food Solutions New England. These efforts have led to significant funding and effort taking shape between 2021–2030 to achieve 30% regional food consumption by New Englanders by 2030, through a project called New England Feeding New England.



What is a backbone organization?

A term coined by John Kania and Mark Kramer in their seminal 2011 Stanford Social Innovation Review on the Collective Impact framework, a backbone organization functions as the support staff to systems-change initiatives, helping to guide vision and strategy, support aligned activities, establish shared measurement practices, build public will, advance policy, and mobilize funding.

Farm to Plate staff worked directly on many Network projects, as needed, including contributing technical content and analysis, serving as primary editors, doing layout or design work on final documents to be published, and supporting adoption of developed resources after dissolution of the project team. VSJF hired staff and contractors for specific Network projects when there was no clear Network organization to do so, such as Independent Retail Grocers training project and implementing the Rooted in Vermont consumer campaign. VSJF also held the intangible “institutional

A sampling of Farm to Plate Network accomplishments.

2011

- 1st Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering
- Local food counts methodology created



2012

- "Scaling Up to Sell to Wholesale Markets" forum with UVM and Sodexo
- 2nd Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering



2013

- "Charting a Path" Food System Workforce Needs Assessment & Conference
- F2P Food Retailers Task Force and VT Department of Health work together on Healthy Retailers Initiative
- Launch of Vermont Land Link website connecting farm sellers and would-be buyers
- F2P Meat Processing Task Force workshops and events
- At a Turning Point: Strengthening Vermont's Producer and Processor Associations report released
- Food Cycle Coalition launched
- Inaugural Governor's Institute on "Farms, Food, and Your Future"
- Vermont Farm to Plate website launched
- 3rd Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering



2014

- Exploring the Next Frontier: Increasing Local Food Sales at VT's Independent Retailers report released
- Capacity building technical assistance program provided to producer associations
- Agricultural Land Use Planning Modules released
- On-Farm Energy Success case studies released
- Three Financing the Food System Business case studies released
- Slow Money VT launched
- 4th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: Equity and Access in our Food System

2015

- First annual Open Farm Week
- Pilot of Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coupon Program
- 5th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: Soil Health and Water Quality



2016

- Food System Career Profiles and Pathways curriculum and profiles developed
- 6th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: Growing the Good Food Economy
- Take 5 Retail Grocers Training Video Series released



2017

- Farm to College Procurement report released
- Rooted in Vermont consumer campaign launched
- 7th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: Succession in the Food System
- Independent Grocers Task Force provides technical assistance to store owners



2020

- Rooted in VT “Wild Kitchen” series launched in collaboration with VT Fish & Wildlife Department
- “How and why to create a Business Advisory Board” videos released
- On-Farm composting project launched
- Update of the Food System Financing Inventory
- Food as Medicine panel discussion held with healthcare payers
- Small Bites newsletter for retail grocers, distributors and producers launched
- Edible Grains Value Chain Development feasibility study—part 1 conducted
- 10th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: Looking Ahead—The Next 10 Years

2019

- Ranching for Profit week-long training and grant program for grass-fed livestock producers
- Local Planning for Food Access: A Toolkit for Vermont’s Communities released
- Rooted in Vermont “Local Food in Your Backyard” partnership with Vermont Libraries launched
- Local Foods Wholesale Market Assessment published
- Exploring Food System Careers guide published
- Stakeholder Engagement training for Network members held
- 9th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: At the Crossroads—Our Food and Farm Culture and Economy
- Farm to Plate Investment Program re-authorized for another 10 years

2018

- Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program started in VT
- Grass-Based Beef Production Guide released
- Accessory On-Farm Business Legislation adopted
- VT Food in Health program inventory developed
- 8th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: Resiliency in a Changing Food System Landscape



2021

- Release of Vermont Agriculture and Food Systems Strategic Plan 2021–2030
- Governor’s Commission on the Future of Agriculture Executive Order
- Launch of the new Farm to Plate Network
- 11th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering: The New Network

"The principle utility of the Network is the capacity to make connections, and that makes us stronger individually and as an agricultural community. Structurally, the Network allows for communication between organizations that would not normally communicate, and gives us the ability to develop projects with feedback from partners within the Network, as part of the process, where in the past, they probably would have been developed in something of a vacuum by an individual organization.

Also, having the perspective of this past year (2020), the strength of those relationships that were forged in the early years of Farm to Plate were responsible for a great deal of the resiliency that we saw in the food system. To have the personal relationship, as well as the professional relationship with each other, it really has led to many refinements in the way that all of our organizations approach the work that we do."

—Sam Smith,
Farm Business Director,
Intervale Center



"My first position at the Agency in 2011 was a legislatively appropriated position created out of the language in the ten-year Strategic Plan, to work on local food system development and local product procurement. In the last ten years my department grew from 4 to 15 staff, and that growth is easily connected to increased awareness of the opportunities that exist within the food system that has stemmed from Farm to Plate.

An integral piece to that has been data collection and the success in showing that food system development is rural economic development. No one really did that before. The data has been out there, but had never been comprehensively analyzed and succinctly turned into the rationale for why investment in agriculture and the food system is critically important. The Agency now has ample partners cultivated through Farm to Plate to carry the message that a healthy and viable food system also means a healthy and viable rural economy."

—Abbey Willard
Agricultural Development Division Director,
Vermont Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets

How well did the network do?

From 2014–2020, VSJF surveyed members on how effective and valuable the Network was to their organization. These figures represent the range of results over that period of time.

91–93%

said they valued the information sharing provided through the Network

88–94%

said they valued the networking opportunities provided through the Network

79–96%

said the Network helped to make existing relationships stronger

74–94%

said the Network helped build new relationships

76–88%

said the Network helped their organization reach its own goals





Farm to Plate Investment Program: The Results

The results of the Farm to Plate Investment Program are covered in two parts. Part 1 addresses how many of the priority strategies from the Strategic Plan were worked on and accomplished, and Part 2 evaluates data across food system categories to determine how things changed for the better or worse over the first ten years of the program's existence. In other words, Part 1 covers how well we did in implementing priority strategies from the Plan, and Part 2 covers whether or not Vermonters are better off for it.

Part 1: Priority Strategies Accomplished

The 2010–2020 Farm to Plate Strategic Plan established 54 high-priority strategies as key to accomplishing the 25 Plan goals of the Plan.

To evaluate our progress over the first decade of Farm to Plate, we assessed whether high-priority strategies were accomplished. They include strategies most suited to individual organizations, those where the Network could play a key role, and actions that other coalitions of organizations could undertake. There is a wide array of different statuses and stages of completion. Some of these strategies—both some incomplete ones and the ones that were successful but ongoing—have carried forward into the new Plan.

With the caveat that these high-priority strategies are complex and do not always have clear-cut answers to completion status, the following is our estimate of how many of the 54 strategies fall into each completion status.

COMPLETION STATUS	NUMBER*
Priority strategies fully completed by F2P Network	7
Priority strategies currently underway or partially completed by F2P Network	14
Priority strategies fully completed by other entities, not as a F2P project	10
Currently underway or partially completed by other entities, not as a F2P project	29
Decided to not complete	5
Not acted on	6

* Note that some high-priority strategies contained multiple parts, some of which were completed/begun through the Farm to Plate Network, and others of which were completed/begun by other entities, and were counted in both of those categories, so these counts add up to more than the 54 distinct strategies.



In addition, many of the other strategies from the Plan were completed. For example: “Encourage Vermont’s food access advocates to partner with Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) to research and develop language for addressing food security,” a strategy from the Food Security chapter, was accomplished when a F2P task force comprised of both RPCs and a wide variety of food system organizations created the Local Planning for Food Access guide and laid the foundation for ongoing work together.

Furthermore, over the course of the decade new opportunities and barriers emerged, and Network members gained a greater understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing our food system, through the collaborative learning environment facilitated by the Network—which led the Network to adapt and take on several projects that had not been conceived of in 2010.

FULLY COMPLETED BY F2P NETWORK.

- High-priority strategy “Measure consumer demand: Establish a statistically valid, credible methodology and begin collecting data on how much locally and regionally produced food Vermonters are purchasing and how much Vermont-produced food regional consumers are purchasing” was fulfilled with the creation of the Local Food Counts methodology. The Count was conducted in 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2020, and will continue to be conducted every three years to measure progress on the new 2030 Plan (2023, 2027, 2030).
- High-priority strategy “Financing for slaughter expansion: Assist slaughterhouse owners in accessing funding for capacity improvements, such as additional storage and other systems improvements, to maximize plant use and profitability” was

fulfilled through the work of the Meat Processing Task Force, which through financial analysis helped processors receive matching grants for capital improvements and new infrastructure. This is a good example of a strategy that was fully completed, but due to unforeseen challenges is once again a priority strategy of the new 2021–2030 Plan.

CURRENTLY UNDERWAY OR PARTIALLY COMPLETED BY F2P NETWORK.

In some cases, work on a high-priority strategy has begun but is not yet complete—with many carrying over into the new 2030 Plan and Network. In other cases, a strategy consisted of several distinct activities, and while some were completed, others were not.

- High-priority strategy “Grain and dry bean market and processing infrastructure analyses: Conduct a regional market analysis of demand, packaging options, and marketing opportunities for a variety of grain and dry bean products. Include an analysis of the processing infrastructure needed to support high-demand products. Conduct an inventory of grain milling and other processing facilities in existence or being considered in Vermont and the region. Include recommendations for the grower and processor regarding packaging and marketing. Include an assessment of opportunities for value chain partnership” began with a 2019 preliminary grain aggregation center feasibility study, but a more detailed analysis of the opportunity and infrastructure needs has yet to be completed.
- High-priority strategy “Planning and zoning: Review and update zoning ordinances to ensure, to the greatest extent

possible, that prime agricultural soils are conserved for agricultural use. Develop tools such as those developed by the [Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission](#) to guide improvements to planning and zoning ordinances that support the further development of the food system” was partially fulfilled with the creation of the sustaining agriculture land use planning resources for town and regional planners, but implementation of these strategies on a town-by-town basis is ongoing, and the specific tool of zoning ordinances is no longer a priority focus for either food system planning or land conservation and access efforts.

FULLY COMPLETED BY OTHER ENTITIES, NOT WITHIN F2P NETWORK.

- High-priority strategy “Enable Uniform Limited Cooperative Associations: The Vermont Legislature should pass the Uniform Limited Cooperative Association Act, which would create a new corporate structure to allow producer co-ops to accept equity investments from nonproducer members (minority shares) (H.109 from the 2009 session)” was fulfilled in 2012 ([Act 84](#)).

It was not necessary for F2P to play a role in some strategies, such as “Farmland lease resources: Assemble information on farmland lease options and samples for secure tenure models, customize them for Vermont application, consolidate into a searchable database and online resource, and conduct four workshops for farmers and landowners that explain leasing and lease options and provide hands-on technical support,” as resources were created and published by Land for Good and the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School.

CURRENTLY UNDERWAY OR PARTIALLY COMPLETED BY OTHER ENTITIES, NOT AS A F2P PROJECT.

- High-priority strategy “Expand gleaning programs: Establish gleaning programs and coordinators in every county by 2014. Include on-farm harvest gleaning plus reclaimed food from restaurants, caterers, institutions, supermarkets, etc.” Gleaning has expanded a great deal over the past ten years through the work of the Vermont Gleaning Collective under the leadership of Salvation Farms. However, there is still a need for financial support for gleaning coordinators to ensure every county is fully served, and this need has been carried forward into the new 2030 Plan.

DECIDED NOT TO COMPLETE.

In some cases there was a conscious, if not explicit, decision that a high-priority strategy was no longer the correct action to take, such as when initial planning revealed that the project was infeasible, or the strategy became irrelevant due to changing conditions.

- High-priority strategy “Develop and establish a Vermont branding program: Continue researching options for additional value-added premiums such as reserved designations, geographical indications, and terroir certifications” led to ACCD/VAAFM conducting a feasibility study in 2012–2014, but the study concluded that a Made In Vermont brand could not be authenticated or enforced. The underlying intent of this recommendation carried forward into the new 2030 Plan (e.g.,

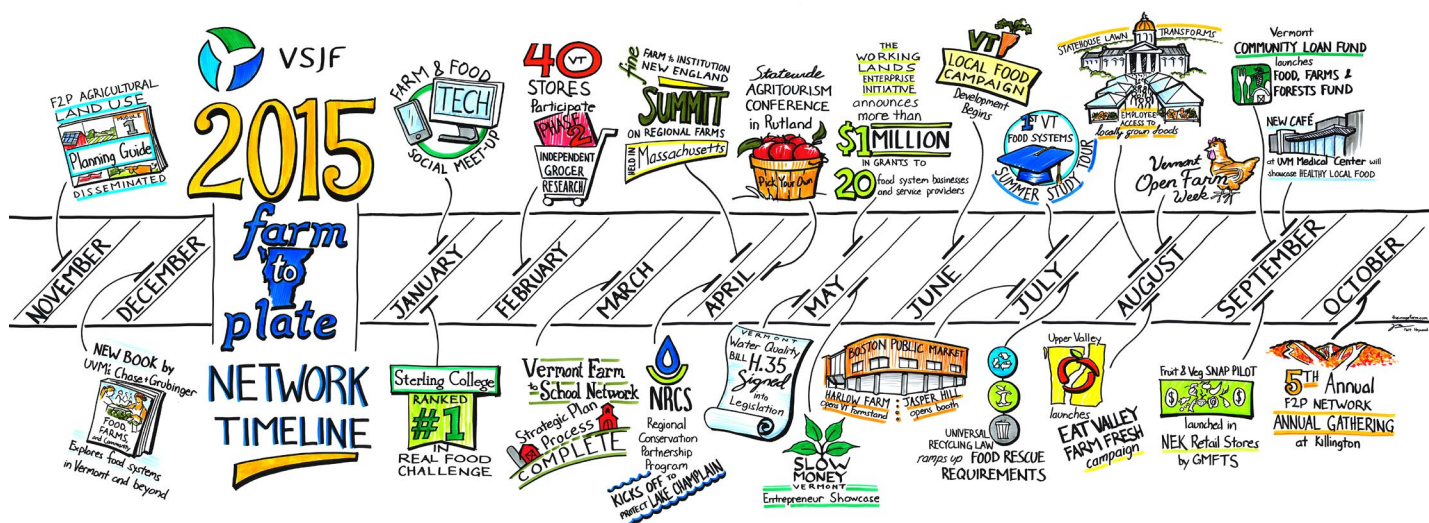


“Fund coordinated marketing efforts, such as a statewide marketing campaign for local agricultural products”) but the development of a geographically enforceable Vermont brand was not pursued further.

NOT ACTED UPON.

Some high-priority strategies were never taken up or acted upon. Because these were not deliberately discontinued, they may still be viable and worthwhile projects. In some cases, a new strategy for reaching the same intended outcome was developed, but the original recommendation could still be valuable as well. In other cases, progress simply has not been made because the necessary alignment of stakeholders never came together.

- High-priority strategy “Statewide meat industry council: Provide early-stage, publicly supported funding and organizational development assistance to create a statewide meat industry council (or Vermont Meat Guild), including three years of funding for a dedicated staff person to serve the council and industry” was never acted upon but may still be a viable idea worth pursuing.



Much has changed over the last ten years in Vermont's Food System, and each year along the way was packed with new projects, policies, investments, and business ventures. To capture this activity in a fun and visual way, each year from 2011–2020 Farm to Plate worked with The Image Farm's Matt Heywood to illustrate major food system developments. Above is an example from 2015.

Part 2: What's Changed? Is Vermont Better Off?

The analysis that follows is a snapshot of key changes across the food system over the last decade, and is intended to address the question of whether Vermont is better off due to Farm to Plate and the collective efforts of food system stakeholders in the last ten years.

In the affirmative to the question, tangible growth and development occurred in Vermont's local food system over the past ten years, from jobs and enterprise growth, to changes in food manufacturing and distribution, to increased institutional food procurement, more food system based curriculum and training in our schools, and new forms of capital to finance expansion. The analysis also points to tangible losses and concerns—the ongoing loss of dairy farms and weakening of the dairy economy, the loss of farmland and corresponding threat to losing more due to development pressure, labor shortages, low wages, and industry consolidation. Together, the successes, growth, losses, and concerns give guidance to our strategic direction for the coming decade, and further contextualize the priority strategies of the 2021–2030 Strategic Plan.

The data shown on the following pages are a combination of secondary data pulled from federal and state sources and primary data collected from Farm to Plate projects and members. As is the case with all data, it has limitations and does not provide the full story or answer all of the questions we have about a topic, yet it does give us an idea of direction (i.e., is the trend generally positive, neutral, or negative) along with the magnitude of changes

happening over time, and in doing so gives us a foundation to understand together where we are headed and where we might go depending on the strategic choices we make in the coming decade.

Vermont's food system economic output expanded 57.7%, from \$7.599 billion to \$11.985 billion. This includes \$2.93 billion from food manufacturing, which is Vermont's second largest manufacturing industry.

Pre-COVID from 2011–2019, the food system added 6,189 net new jobs pre-pandemic, an 11% increase. More than 65,000 Vermonters were directly employed by over 11,500 farms and food-related businesses.

Local food purchases rose from \$114 million to \$412 million, going from 5% to 17.8% of the total amount spent on food in the state annually.

Results Part 2: Table of Contents

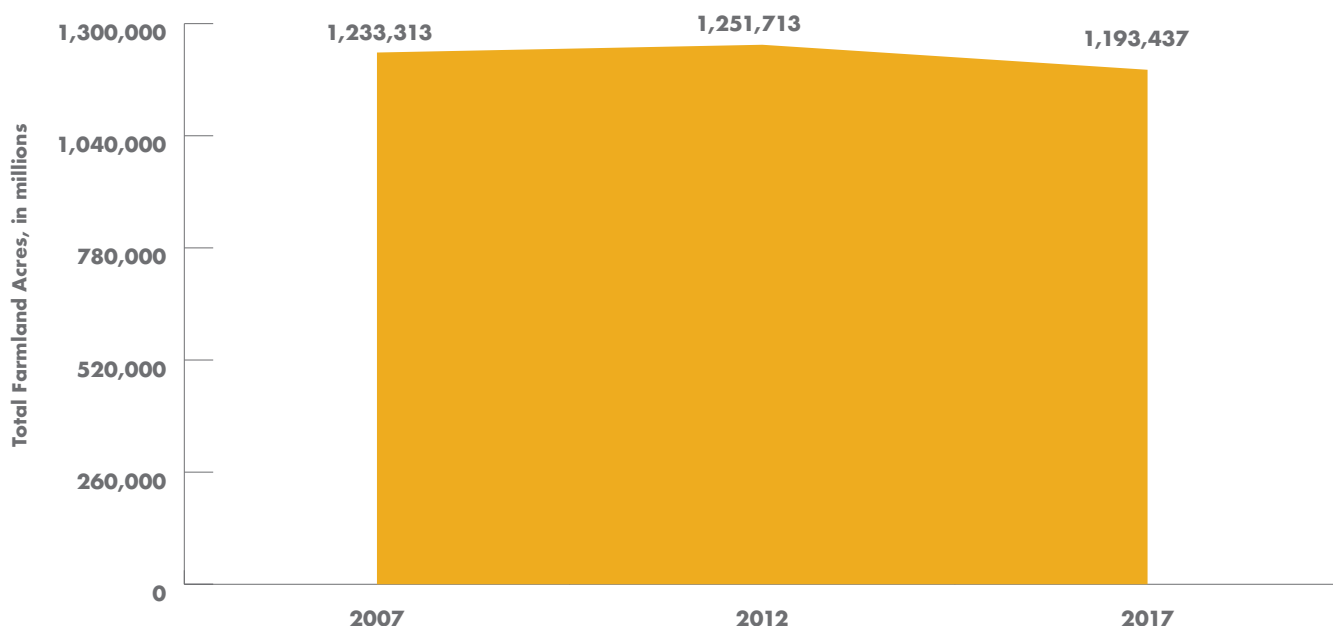
Farm Inputs	.21
Land in Agriculture	.21
Access to Land	.22
Environmental Stewardship	.22
Production and Processing	.23
Farm Viability and Food Production	.23
Food Manufacturing Changes	.26
Aggregation and Wholesale Distribution	.27
Wholesale Distribution	.27
Sales of Local Food	.27
Direct to Consumer	.28
Retailers	.28
Institutional Procurement	.29
Nutrient Management	.29
Municipal Solid Waste Tonnage and Composition	.29
Education and Workforce Development	.31
Educational Opportunities	.31
Jobs and Workforce	.32
Food Access and Health	.34
Food Insecurity	.34
Ability to Buy Local Food	.34
Healthcare	.35
Financing & Funding	.35
Capital Continuum	.36

Farm Inputs

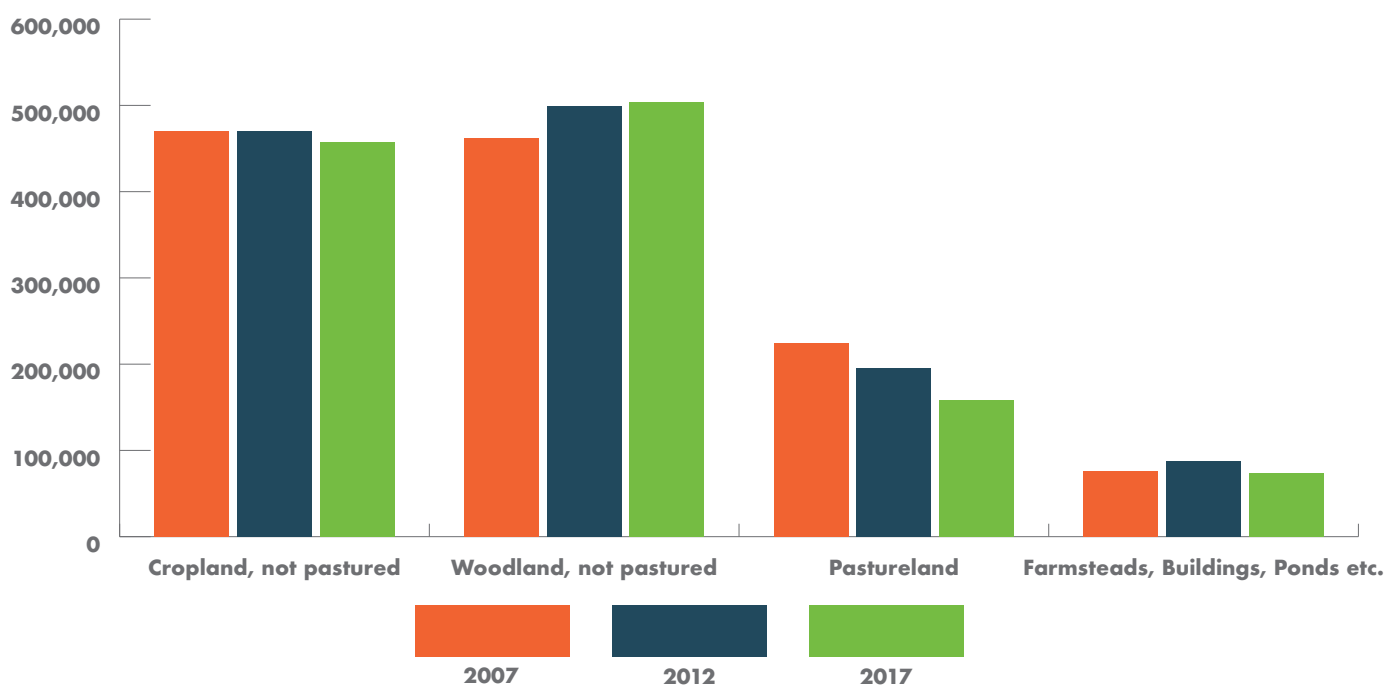
Land in Agriculture

Since 2007, total Vermont land in agriculture has decreased 3.2%, from 1.23 million acres to 1.19 million acres (39,876 acres lost). Dairy farms still cover the largest amount of land in agriculture (36% of the total) and drive overall farmland acreage trends in Vermont. Land in dairy decreased 19.6% (-105,784 acres) from 2007 to 2017. Woodland acres on farms increased over 2007–2017, while cropland, pastureland, and farmstead acres all decreased. The pasture category showed the largest decline, dropping 66,532 acres. Use of cropland for grazing fell nearly 25,000 acres from 2007–2017, creating 37% of the decline in the pasture counts, and represents both the loss of dairy farms and existing dairy farms decreased grazing practices.

Vermont Land in Agriculture, 2007–2017

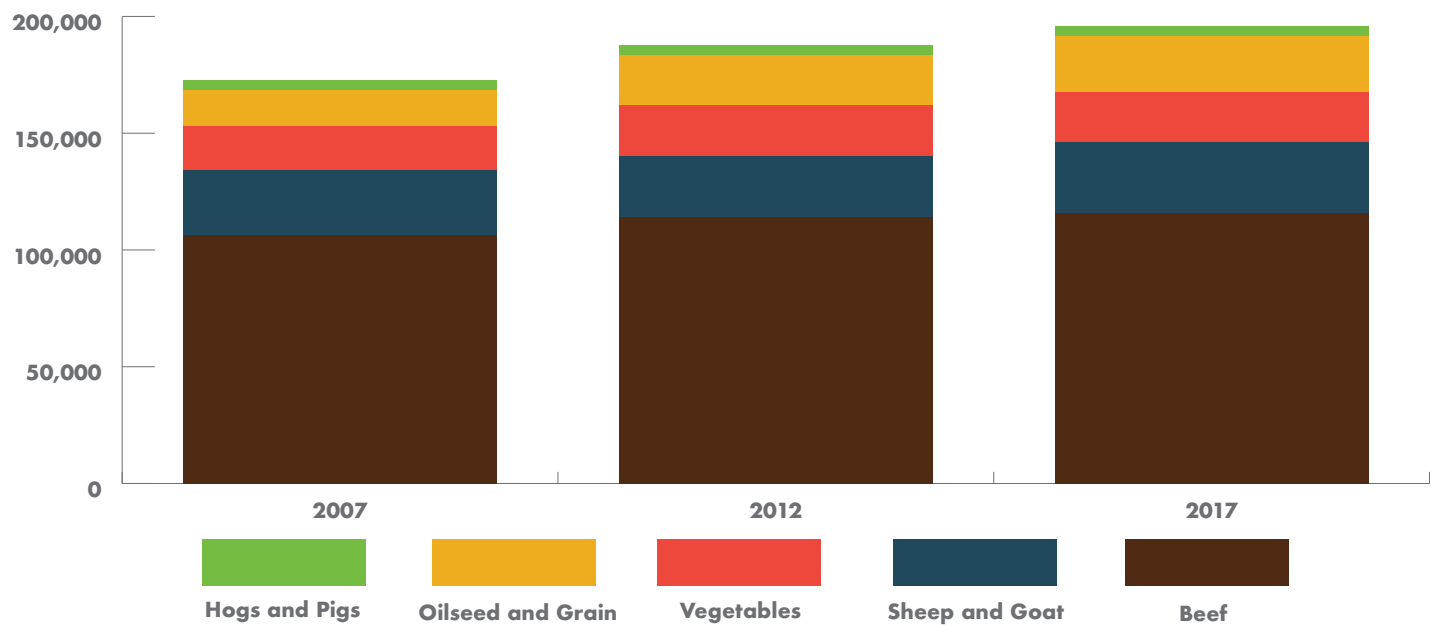


Land in Agriculture by Farm Acreage Type, 2007–2017



Acreage used for produce, grains, beef, and non-bovine livestock is comparatively small to dairy and hay, but the trends are generally positive. Between the 2007 and 2017 ag census, vegetable acreage increased 17% (approximately 3,200 acres), oilseed and grain acreage increased 49% (approximately 7,800 acres), beef farm acreage increased 9% (9,500 acres), hog and pig farm acreage expanded 25% (approximately 900 acres), and sheep and goat farm acreage increased 8% (approximately 2,200 acres).

Land in Agriculture for Select Non-Dairy Categories, 2007–2017

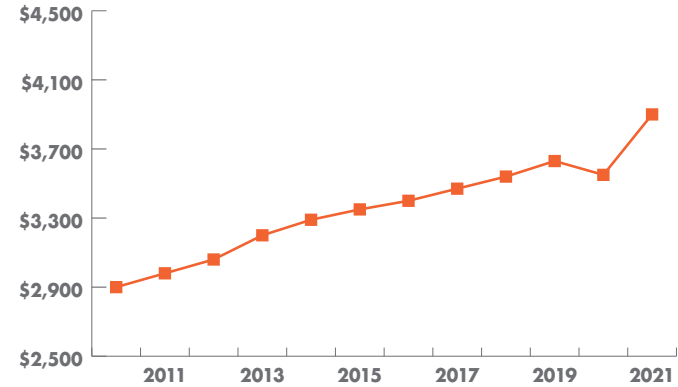


Access to Land

The affordability of farmland is a significant determinant of how much land remains in active agricultural use. From 2010-2021, the per acre value of farmland increased by 34.5%, reaching a high of \$3,900/acre in 2021. Though farmland costs have gone up, the last decade has also seen the emergence of land access tools, technical assistance and coordination, and creative financing to help current, new, and beginning farmers acquire farmland. For example: Vermont Land Link, a farmland-specific listing and linking service launched in 2013, helps farmers to identify and assess potential land opportunities for lease or purchase; The Vermont Land Trust’s Farmland Access Program is now routinely paired with robust production and financial technical assistance from the Intervale Center, UVM Extension, Land for Good, or other service providers to help new farmers succeed, and; the emergence of alternative land ownership, access, and financing models such as community ownership and management (e.g., Agrarian Trust, White River Land Collaborative, Pine Island Community Farm), and lease-to-own arrangements between farmers and values-based farmland investment companies (e.g., Dirt Capital, Iroquois Valley).

However, severe racial disparities in land access remain. Land owned by white producers remained unchanged from 2012–2017, with white producers owning approximately 99% of the land in agriculture in Vermont over that time, and only approximately 5,855 acres owned by black, indigenous, or farmers of color in 2017.

Per Acre Value of Ag-land, Including Buildings 2010–2021



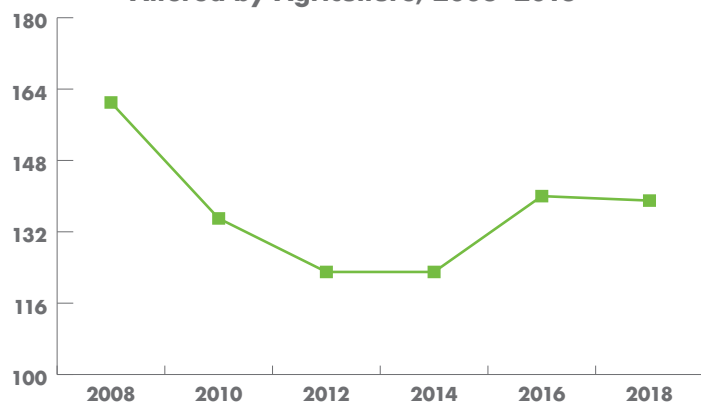
Environmental Stewardship

In 2011 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in response to a federal lawsuit filed by the Conservation Law Foundation, revoked prior 2002 approval of Vermont’s Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL). The EPA made the decision largely

on the basis that there was not sufficient assurance that non-point source phosphorus reductions from agricultural activities, would be achieved. As a result, a new Lake Champlain TMDL was developed and approved in 2016. Since then, agriculture has

reduced its phosphorus load to Lake Champlain by 28.4 metric tons, representing 96% of total load reductions achieved from 2016–2020 (28.4 metric tons out of 29.5 total). Additionally, from 2008–2018, river and stream miles impaired or altered by agriculture decreased 13.7%.

Stream Miles Impaired or Altered by Agriculture, 2008–2018



Many collaborations contributed to measurable water quality improvements and phosphorus load reductions, including creation of the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership, and the

founding of farmer-led Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition, Connecticut River Watershed Farmer Alliance and the Franklin and Grand Isle Farmers' Watershed Alliance. The Vermont Clean Water Act (Act 64 in 2015) created the foundation for the Clean Water Fund and set in motion revisions to the Accepted Agricultural Practices and their transition to becoming the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) in 2016. The State of Vermont—in partnership with 25 organizations, agencies, businesses, and nonprofits—received a \$16 million USDA Region Conservation Partnership Program grant to provide financial and technical assistance to farms and forest landowners, which leveraged an additional \$20 million in match contributions to improve water quality.

The recognized impacts agriculture has on the environment have evolved considerably since 2011 when water quality dominated public discourse, and now encompasses an acknowledgment that Vermont farms can enhance the states resilience, help mitigate and adapt to climate change, and provide beneficial ecosystem services to the public. The changing discourse both amongst the general public and within the agricultural community around farming's role in environmental stewardship, along with the partnerships that emerged and evolved out of water quality work, have resulted in the creation of the Soil Conservation Practice and Payment for Ecosystem and Soil Health Working Group (PES WG) in 2019, and the inclusion of an Agriculture and Ecosystems sub-committee in the drafting of the State's Climate Action Plan (2021).

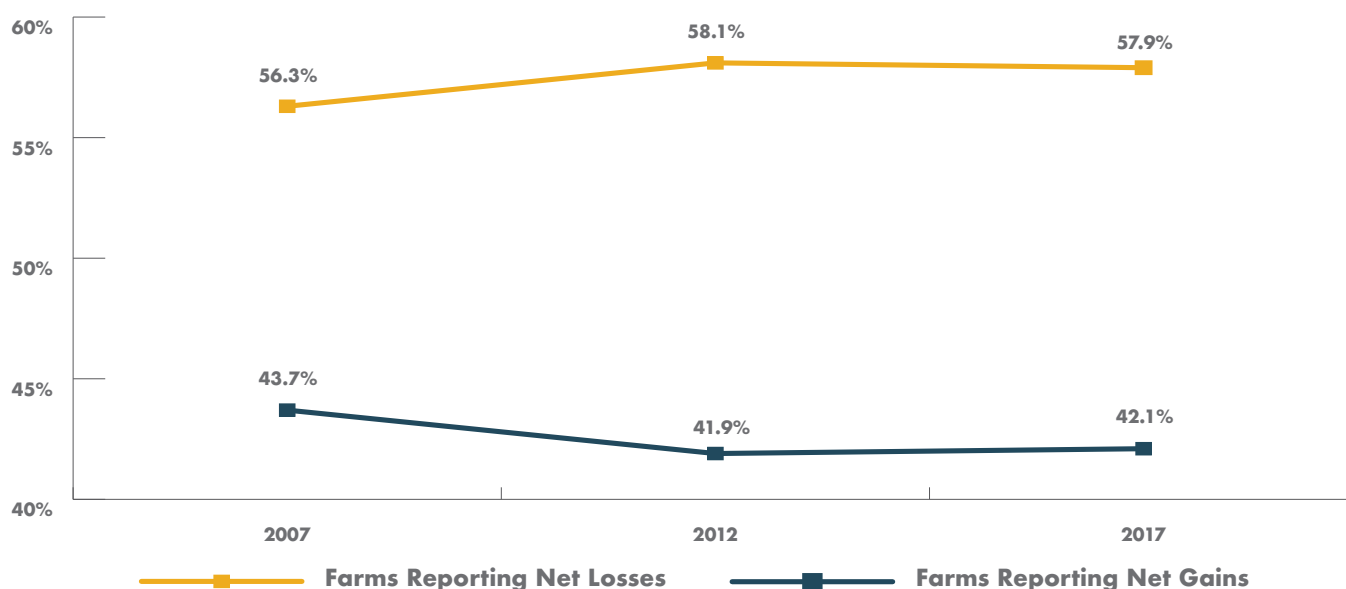
Production and Processing

Farm Viability and Food Production

Over the decade of 2007–2017, there was a global recession, multiple years of low dairy prices, and an increase in beginning farmers starting farm businesses (28% of primary producers were

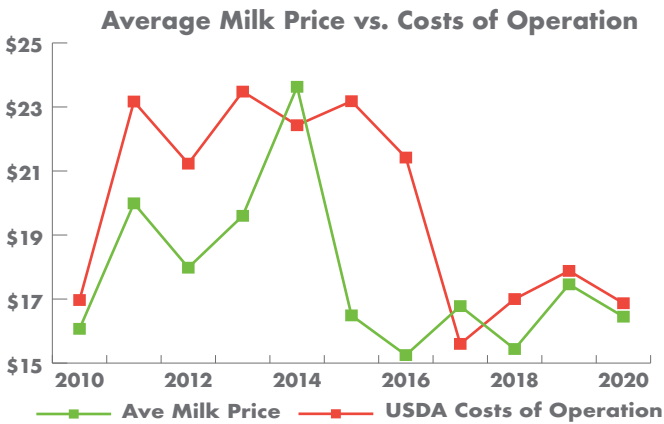
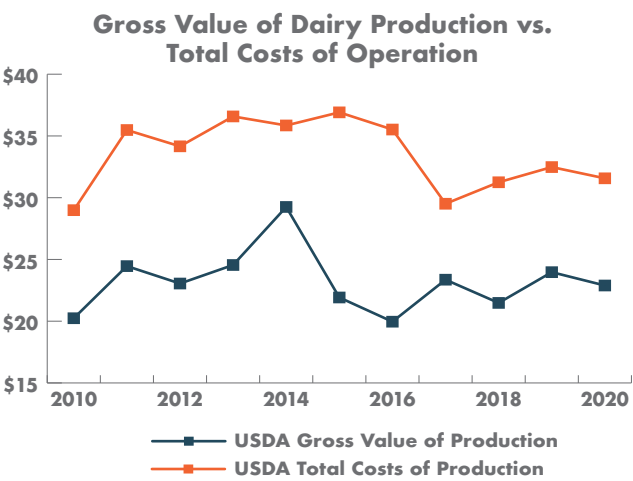
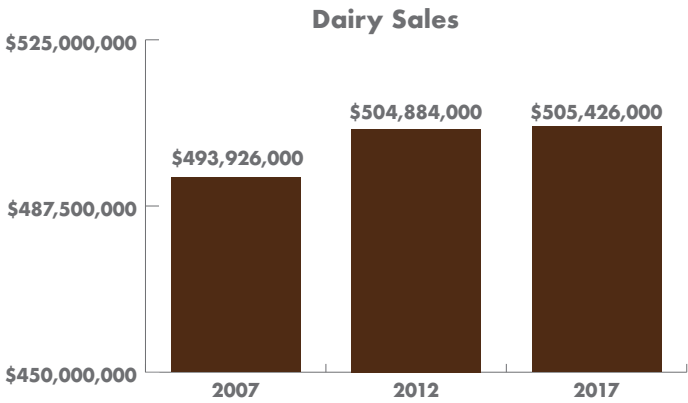
new and beginning farmers in 2012, rising to 35.5% by 2017). Despite this, the percentage of Vermont farms reporting net gains remained stable at around 43%.

Percent of Vermont Farms Reporting Net Gains vs. Net Losses 2007–2017



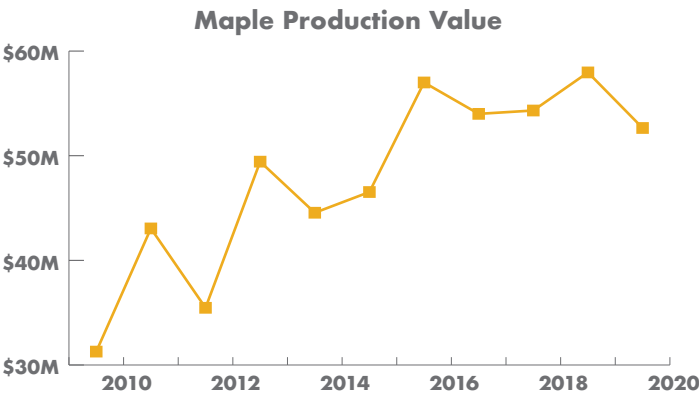
CONTINUED VOLATILITY OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

The dairy industry experienced another challenging decade of low milk prices and changing markets. The total number of cow dairy farms shrank, from 1,015 to 636 from 2010–2020. Farm-gate sales did increase by \$11.5 million from 2007–2017, but this represents only a 2.3% increase in total sales. This stagnation of farm-gate sales occurred as the average operating cost for Vermont dairies—not inclusive of labor—was 12% greater than the average cwt milk price. Additionally, the average Total Operating Cost (which includes labor) was 44% greater than the average Gross Value of Production (which includes cattle and other income).



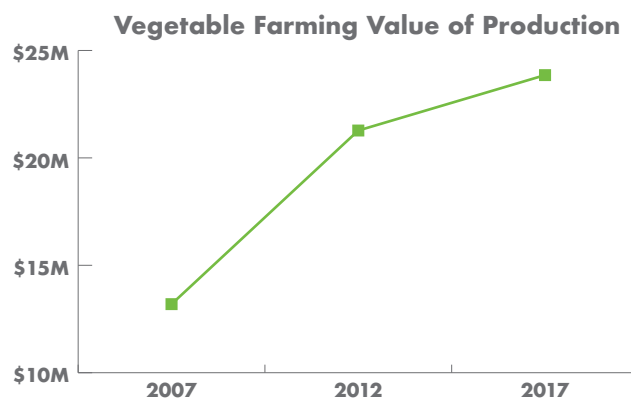
EXPANSION OF THE MAPLE INDUSTRY

Maple sales increased by \$21 million from 2010–2020. Industry expansion, increasing yields, and profitability have been supported by the UVM Proctor Maple Research Center and adoption of new technologies. Maple products gained market share as a natural sweetener substitute for sugar and corn syrup. Strong domestic and international growth opportunities exist in the next decade for maple in the growing snacks, beverages, and health and wellness products sector.



GROWTH IN VEGETABLE FARMING

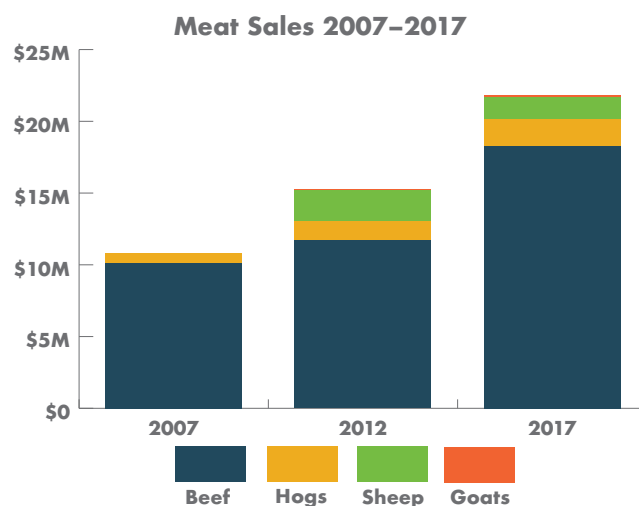
The number of vegetable farms increased from 506 to 716 from 2007–2017, and over the same period the value of vegetable farming production increased by over 81%, though most of the sales increase occurred between 2007–2012. Sales growth leveled off between 2012–2017 due to competition for markets, higher production costs, regulatory obstacles, and lack of affordable labor. Out-of-state direct and retail markets have potential for growth given larger urban populations in nearby states, the capacity of Vermont growers to deliver high-quality, organic, and ecological grown products for much of the year, as well as the widespread adoption of improved food safety, cold storage, and winter greenhouse production techniques. Much of this out-of-state sales growth will be dependent on successful values driven aggregation and distribution models, such as collaborative CSAs, online distributor-retailers (e.g., Farmers To You), food hubs (e.g., Vermont Way Foods), and specialty distributors.



INCREASED MEAT PRODUCTION

Many types of meat production increased between 2007–2017. Vermont gained 560 farms producing ‘non-dairy’ meat livestock, which include beef, hogs, sheep, and goat, and the corresponding sales increased 102%. The number of meat birds (chickens and turkeys) sold from 2012–2017 increased by nearly 65,000.

The rise in meat production and value corresponds with greater consumer interest in smaller, local meat sources, which are perceived to deliver supply chain transparency, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability. Over the past decade, Farm to Plate Network groups have helped the meat industry by focusing on barriers to growth including processing infrastructure, labor and workforce development, distribution and marketing, improved animal genetics, and farm-to-farm collaboration amongst calving, feeder, backgrounding, and finishing farms. Progress has been made and will continue to be a focus.



“Farm to Plate was integral in getting the nationally renowned Ranching for Profit week-long school to Vermont in February 2019. This was the first time the school had ever been taught east of the Mississippi River. Seven Vermont businesses were in attendance in a class of 44 participants. We spent the week learning with producers from 17 states, as well as Canada and Australia. The course, as well as the varying perspectives in the class, made for a rich experience with lasting impact.

Jake Claro and the staff at Farm to Plate went above and beyond to make this happen. They worked to reduce barriers to attendance, not only covering the registration for a second participant from each Vermont farm business, but also reimbursing our hotel and meal expenses for the week. After the course, Farm to Plate also created a \$4,000 implementation grant for each attendee. It allowed us to implement something we identified in the class that would move our business forward. We are so grateful to be recipients of this opportunity.

We are still involved with programing through Ranch Management Consulting and we travel to Texas three times a year to meet with a producer-led ‘Board of Directors’ to fine tune our business. The experience has been invaluable and given us a new perspective on what is possible.”

Cheryl Cesario, Co-owner Meeting Place Pastures | Grazing Outreach Specialist UVM Extension

Food Manufacturing Changes

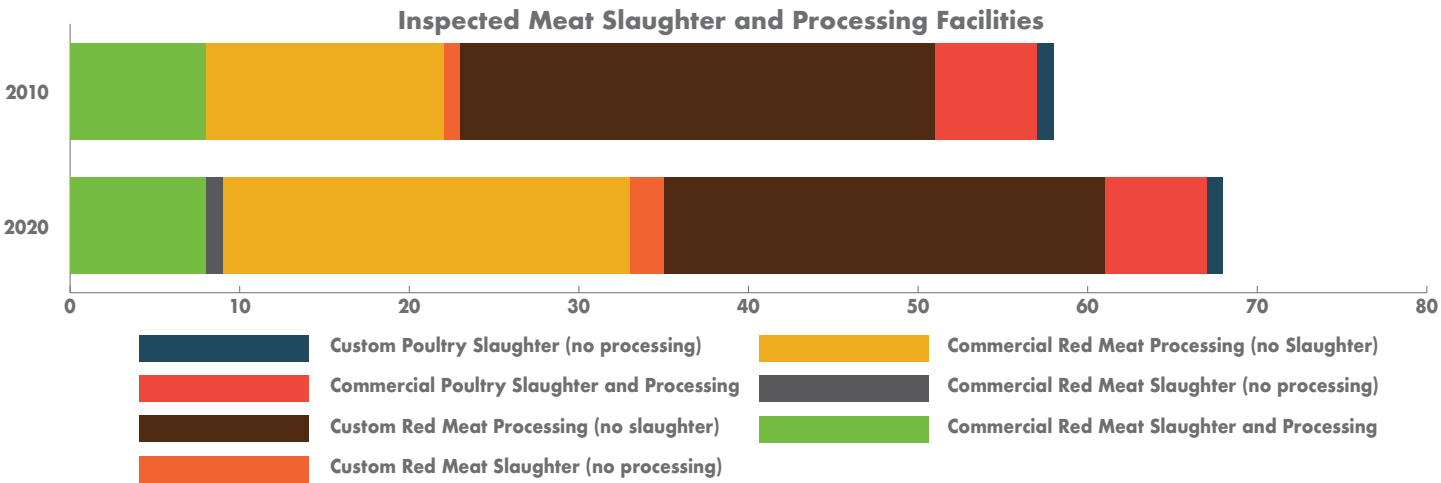
Food manufacturing expanded during 2012-2017, adding 242 new businesses and 3,233 net new jobs, and a 3% rise in economic output (\$2.85 billion to \$2.94 billion). Growth was particularly

strong for specialty food manufacturers, bakeries, and beverages (especially breweries).

DAIRY AND MEAT PROCESSING

Dairy and meat processing capacity experienced growth over the decade as well. With an increase of 133%, there are now more than twice as many dairy processing plants than there were in 2010. These plants range in size from large (e.g., Commonwealth Dairy) to small (e.g., on-farm cheesemakers). Meat slaughter and processing capacity grew by 17% from 2010–2020, with much-needed USDA-inspected facilities such as Vermont Packinghouse

and NEK Processing starting production in 2013 and 2014. But while Vermont saw an increase in the overall number of slaughter and meat processing facilities over the past 10 years, bottlenecks associated with infrastructure, storage, peak seasonal demand periods that exceed capacity, and a reliable and skilled workforce still plague the industry.

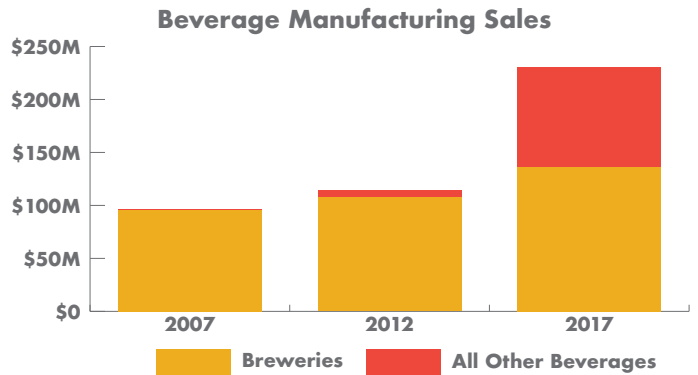


“As a result of two years of focused work from 2011–2013 by the F2P Meat Processing Task Force, we have more inspected processors in the state, and farmers are adjusting their systems to send more animals year-round or during the off-peak times. Communication seems to be better all the way around. We have plenty of places for further improvement, but I hear less frustration and I see more opportunity.”

Jean Colby | Howling Wolf Farm LLC

BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING

Beverage manufacturing has become a significant food manufacturing industry in the state, with overall sales increasing \$134 million (139%) between 2007–2017. Beer sales increased by \$40 million from \$95,991,000 to \$136,479,000. “Other beverage production,” which includes wine, spirits, hard cider, and non-alcoholic beverages (e.g., kombucha), grew by \$93 million.



Aggregation and Wholesale Distribution

Wholesale distribution

Distribution in Vermont and the region has undergone considerable change and disruption over the last decade, in-line with national trends of consolidation in the distribution industry. For example, Black River Produce (BRP), a longtime locally-owned regional distributor and champion for local product was acquired in 2016 by privately-held Reinhart Foodservice, a large corporation servicing the eastern half of the United States, which in turn was purchased by publicly-held, nationally-focused, Performance Food Group (PFG) in 2019. Distribution consolidation such as this puts further price pressure on producers, impacts the options they have available to cost-effectively transport food (e.g., through the loss of or increase in prices for freight delivery), and makes it harder for

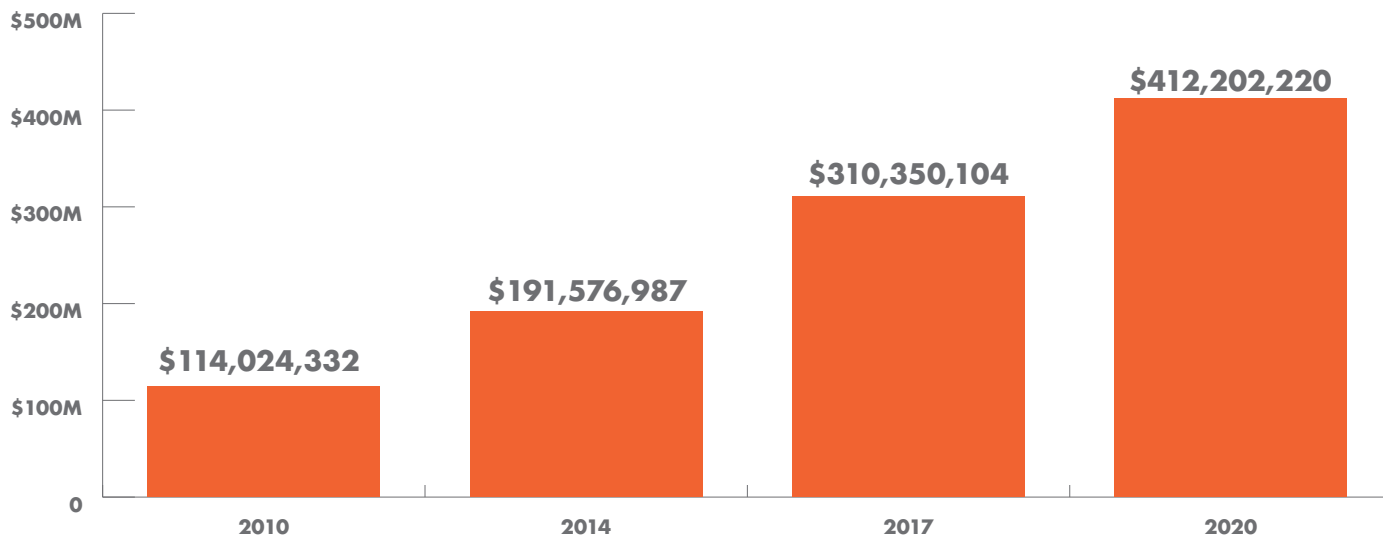
smaller producers to access wholesale markets. However, there has also been a steady rise and growth in intermediated market distributors—smaller produce, specialty food, and beverage distributors, food-hubs, and online distributor-retailers which explicitly emphasize local food as part of their business. Examples include Myers Produce, Pumpkin Village Foods, Lesser Distribution, Farm Connex, Food Connects, Intervale Food Hub, Green Mountain Farm Direct, and Upper Valley Produce. Additionally, there is increasing logistics coordination and sales and marketing efforts emerging amongst Vermont’s food hubs through the Vermont Food Hub Collaborative and the Vermont Way Foods brand.

Sales of Local Food

From 2010–2020 local food and beverage purchases rose from \$114 million to \$412 million, going from 5% to 17.8% of the approximately \$2.3 billion spent in total annually on food and beverages in Vermont.

Various market development efforts (e.g., Farm to School and Farm to Institution, Independent Grocers), paired with consumer education and engagement campaigns and programs (e.g., Rooted in Vermont, Open Farm Week, Breakfast On the Farm, farmers market and CSA directories, local food guides), have created a supportive and comprehensive local food purchasing environment across market channels which has played a key part in the increase in local food sales.

Purchases of Vermont Food in Vermont

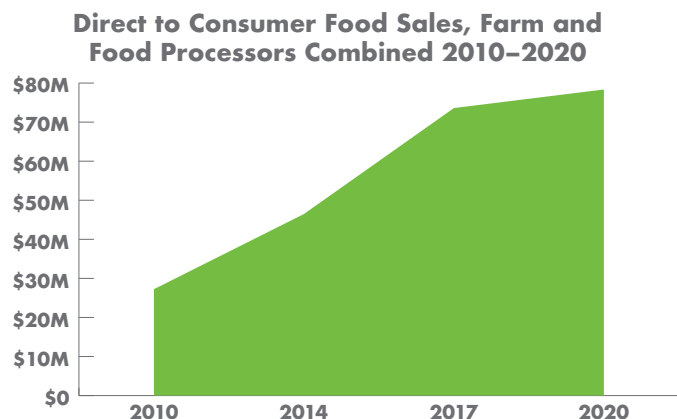


“Farm to Plate [Network] has provided an accessible venue for groups like Food Connects to engage in valuable cross-sector relationships that have resulted in significant changes in how we work to accomplish our mission. Farm to Plate has helped us build our own organizational capacity by asking better questions, developing stronger relationships and delivering more relevant programming for a larger impact. Farm to Plate makes us smarter.”

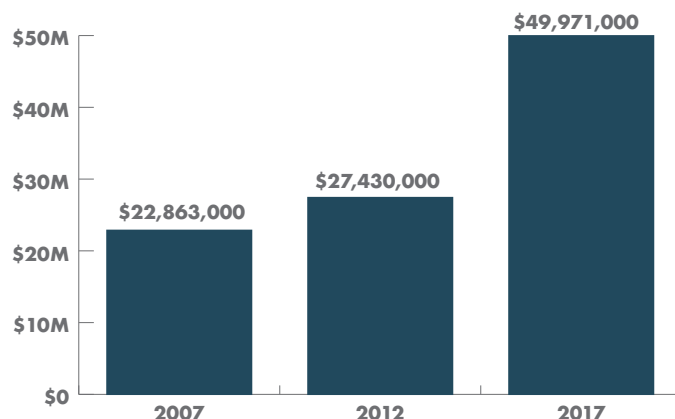
Richard Berkfield, Executive Director, Food Connects

Direct to Consumer

By 2017, direct to consumer food sales, inclusive of both direct sales by farms and small food manufacturers, represented 20% of local food and beverage purchases. This important market channel for farms and food producers increased by 179% from 2010–2017. Direct sales by farms alone increased by 82% from 2010–2017, although part of that numerical increase was due to the inclusion of value-added products made on farm and sold direct, starting in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Direct sales channels, which historically include farmstands, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture, have evolved to include e-commerce platforms, often with a wide selection of multi-farm and food products, and home delivery.



Farm Direct to Consumer Sales



Retailers

Concerted Network efforts to increase local purchasing by retail grocery stores and their consumers have produced satisfying results. From 2014, when the Farm to Plate's Independent Grocers Project began activities, to 2020, purchases of local foods at Vermont food retailers increased 32%.

The Independent Grocers project has provided tailored in-store training support to 50 stores, matchmaking forums and retailing workshops to over 100 stores, distributors, and producers, and a local-food focused industry newsletter to over 400 stores, distributors and producers.



"Vermont Farm to Plate has had a positive impact on our business in the years we have been working with them. They have helped tremendously with inventory control, displaying products to increase sales, including seasonal displays, and we have tripled the amount of local products that we sell and they are all doing well! We have increased our communication by holding morning huddles and mini-huddles at shift changes which has helped us all work together more efficiently toward the same goals. The monthly newsletter we receive is helpful to get our brains in the game when we need to focus on refreshing what we already know how to do but need to get excited and implement new ideas... not just on paper!"

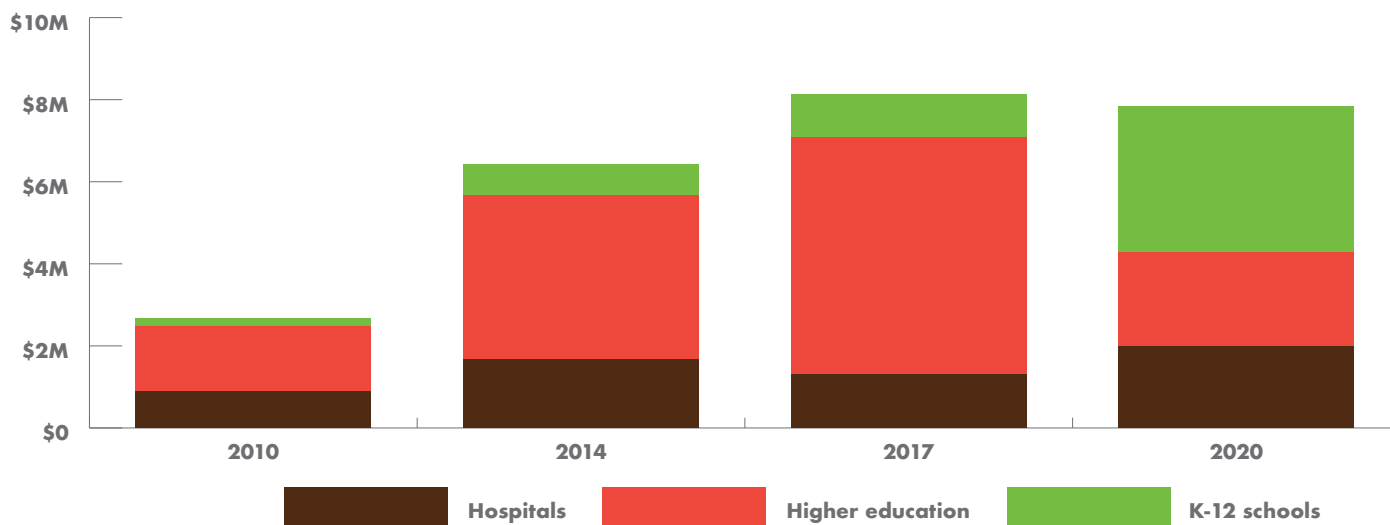
Wendy Horne, Keeler's Bay Variety

Institutional Procurement

Local food procurement at Vermont's institutions evolved significantly between 2010–2020. Purchasing by institutions in total increased 193%. Purchasing of local food by hospitals increased 127%, and for K-12 schools it increased by 1,696% with a major increase in 2020 due to pandemic purchase changes. For higher education, from 2010–2017 local purchasing increased by 262%, but due to COVID which hit institutions particularly hard, purchasing by higher education decreased 61% from 2017–2020. The total institutional procurement growth was in part spurred by Farm to School program expansion, the creation of peer networks and local and regional partnerships between Vermont hospitals

and local food advocacy organizations and networks, and dedicated local food programs and purchasing priorities at colleges and universities. To give one example, Sodexo, which provides food service to the majority of Vermont's colleges and universities, created the Vermont First program in 2014. Catalyzed by a forum facilitated by Farm to Plate in 2012, Vermont First aims to grow market opportunity for local producers, stimulate job growth, and ensure the viability of Vermont's working lands. Local purchasing incentives for K-12 should continue to spur on institutional market development, as will continued commitments by hospitals, universities, and colleges.

Institutional Sales 2010–2020



"Farm to Plate is a key catalyst for convening influential stakeholders that has helped make Vermont First a compelling and effective program. Farm to Plate has created the space for organizations and individuals to build trusted relationships in order to collaboratively tackle challenging, enduring issues. With our Vermont First Advisory Board we are able to dive deeper into supply chain topics from milk to beef due to the shared vision and shared food system language created by Farm to Plate."

Annie Rowell, Vermont First Coordinator, Sodexo

Nutrient Management

Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (URL, Act 148) passed in 2012, is spurring great changes in the waste management industry, although the various requirements of the law have come into effect at different times with universal applicability not beginning until 2020. In the years between passage and full implementation of the

URL, overall food scrap diversion rates are estimated to have remained steady at approximately 35%, but in 2021 the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) reported that food scrap collection and composting have increased, and that the number of licensed food scrap haulers has more than doubled since 2012.

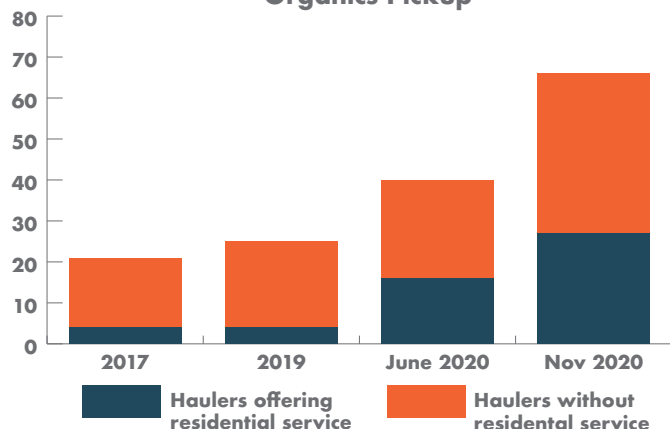
Municipal Solid Waste Tonnage and Composition

ANR predicts that compliance with the URL will lead to diversion of an additional 46,379 tons of food scraps, but there is additional public outreach and collection infrastructure needed to reach that diversion rate. Additional challenges remaining to be solved include finding appropriate solutions for the food scraps that are landfilled in packaging (29,000 tons in 2018); ensuring that

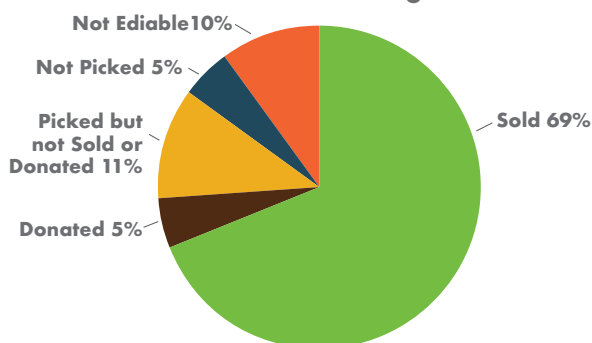
organics are managed for their highest use within the recovery hierarchy, rather than simply diverted from the landfill; and leveraging this organic resource to support Vermont businesses—haulers, compost facility managers, on-farm composting—and return nutrients to area farms.

There has also been a significant increase in food recovery/food rescue—edible but unsold food at farms or retailers being recovered for the charitable food system—spurred on through new partnerships between ANR and the VT Foodbank, the formation and growth of the VT Gleaning Collective, and the relationships built through the Food Cycle Coalition.

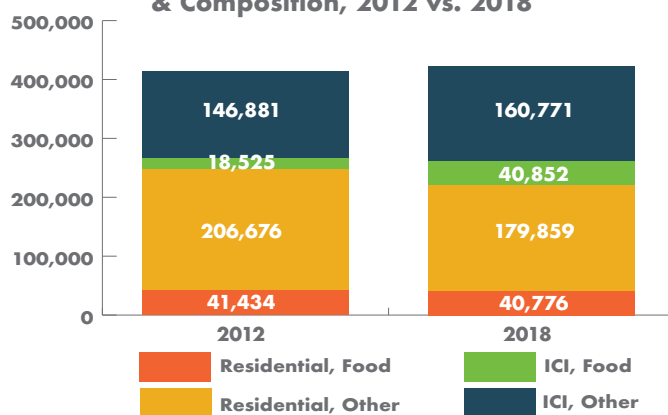
Growth in Haulers Offering Organics Pickup



Estimated Percentages of Food Sold, Donated, and Lost on Vermont Vegetable Farms



Municipal Solid Waste Tonnage & Composition, 2012 vs. 2018



“There are people engaged in the Coalition addressing different issues, from food waste reduction all the way down to anaerobic digestion. And then everywhere in between—charitable food, composters, farmers, waste reduction, the digesters, energy capture. Soup to nuts.

The Food Cycle Coalition provides the structure to have all these folks together to solve problems at a community level. The food cycle coalition was the way CAV’s previous director, Pat Sagui got the solid waste management entities involved in the Hunger Councils. For the first time, we had solid waste managers together with the charitable food system folks and community organizers, and food shelves, to tackle food waste prevention, and keeping edible food out of compost systems and getting it to hungry people. I think we would have really struggled to make those connections without the Network. It opened doors to those kinds of meetings and really established those relationships.

For me personally, I see the Network as essentially giving me and CAV a seat at the table. Before I started at CAV, I couldn’t figure out how to plug in or fit with the Network. There is a little bit of a clique to the Network and it’s hard from the outside if you don’t have an official role, to know how to plug in. But there was a seat with CAV’s name on it, and I got to talk with the Network. It allowed a link to this broader food system network in VT and these other conversations that were happening. It’s much easier for me to reach out and say, ‘I’m in the Network, etc., I chair the Food Cycle Coalition.’ The Network is great, and we need to recognize the limitations it has and take care of that. That’s our work going forward.”

Natasha Duarte Director, Composting Association of Vermont (CAV)

Education and Workforce Development

Educational opportunities

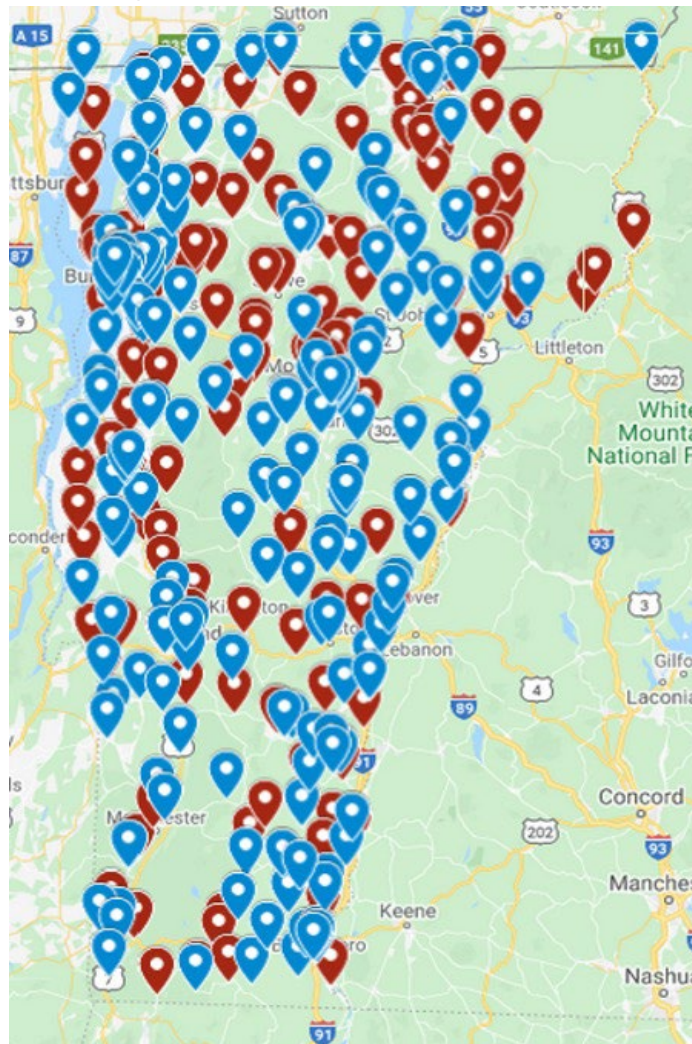
K-12 FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

The past decade has seen strong growth in Farm to School programming at Vermont's K-12 schools. In a 2018 survey by the Vermont Department of Health, 65% of VT schools connect with local farmers or farms and 61% integrated farm to school into the curriculum. Since 2011, through leadership, coordination, and advocacy, the Farm to School Network has brought together educators and farm-to-school stakeholders representing all parts of the state, hosted numerous events, including regularly recurring regional gatherings, developed modules and trainings for educators, and successfully advocated for local purchasing incentive legislation. The Farm to School Institute run by Vermont Food Education Every Day (FEED) has served 63 Vermont schools.

VAAFM's Farm to School Grant Program was created in 2007 and in 2018 expanded eligibility to include early childhood education (ECE) providers. To date, the program has granted over \$1,558,538 to 189 Vermont schools and 92 ECEs, reaching 55,293 children. The grant program provides technical assistance to schools on integrating farm to school into their curriculum, in addition to assistance with expanding nutrition programs and local purchasing.

Despite these successes, consistent funding remains a challenge and a consistent need for the Farm to School Network and for the state Farm to School Grant Program. In 2014, the program had \$56,000 to grant, although the need was identified at \$500,000.

Vermont Schools supported to date by Vermont FTS Grant Program



Blue pins indicate schools that have received state Farm to School funding; while red pins are schools that have not yet. Approximately half of schools have received support to date (exact accounting is complicated by recent school consolidations).

Image credit: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Between 2013–2021, the number of food and farm-related programs at Vermont's career and technical education centers (CTEs) increased. The total number of CTEs offering forestry or natural resources programs increased from 11 to 13, the number offering agriculture programs from 3 to 5, and the number offering culinary

arts from 12 to 15. Both then and now, all 17 of the CTEs offer at least one food-related program (either culinary arts or agriculture).

SECONDARY EDUCATION

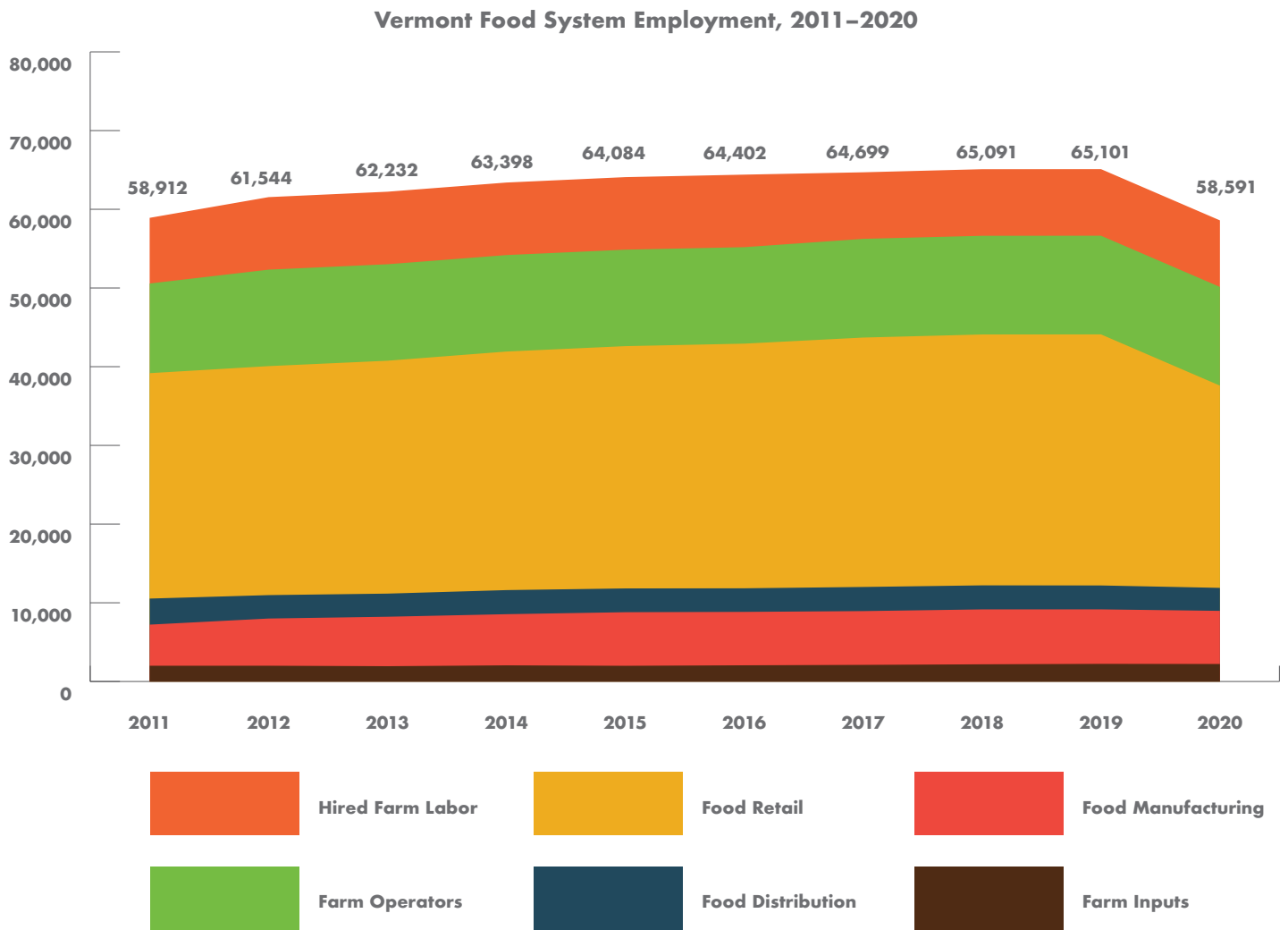
The decade saw shifts in-state secondary education opportunities for agricultural and food system careers, with the closure of multiple academic and experiential food system programs and institutions on the one hand, and the concurrent expansion and founding of new food system programs on the other. Vermont

Technical College and the University of Vermont continued their joint 2+2 program to provide educational opportunities to youth interested in dairy farm management. There is also increasing interest in non-degree models, with UVM’s Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program serving as a good example.

Jobs and Workforce

Job growth has been significant in the food system, with employment increasing 11% (6,189 net new jobs) from 2011 to 2019. The big driver of growth over this period was food manufacturing, which increased employment by 32.5% (1,699 net new jobs) and is an industry that now comprises approximately 10.7% of all food system related employment. Unsurprisingly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, food system employment declined from 2019–2020 by 6,510 jobs, with 95% of losses occurring in food service and retail. We anticipate the majority of these losses will return in 2021 data as restaurants and grocery stores were particularly hit hard in the early stages of the pandemic.

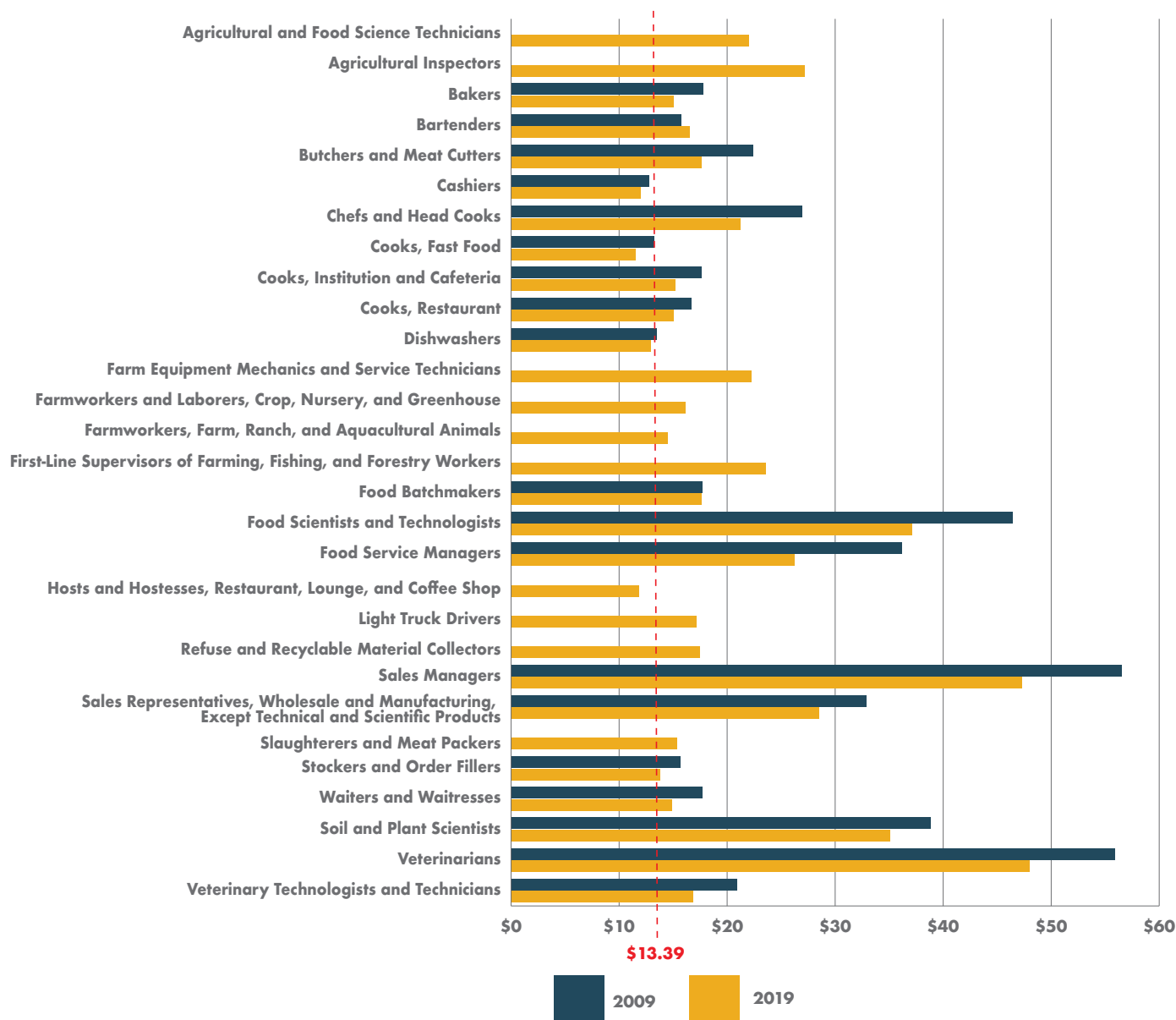
Promising gains in farm operators and hired farm workers from 2009–2017 were tempered by growing struggles in the dairy industry that intensified from 2017–2020. However, workforce shortages are depressing growth potential in the industry. Research carried out by F2P in 2013 revealed that for many food system employers, one of their biggest challenges is work-ready entry level employees and that technical skills are also challenging to find in prospective employees. While these challenges are not endemic to the food system, as all sectors are facing workforce shortages, the food and beverage industry was particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and employment levels have not yet rebounded to pre-pandemic levels.



LIVABLE WAGES

While the number of jobs created in the sector has increased by 11% over 10 years (2011–2019), wages paid to workers across the sector remain lower than in other sectors of the economy. From 2009–2019, even though a few occupations saw moderate increases that brought the wage above (e.g. Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers) or closer to (e.g. Food Preparation Workers) the state livable wage \$13.39 in 2020, most saw a decrease in value when adjusted for inflation.

Median Hourly Wages for Select Careers, 2009 vs. 2019 (adjusted to 2019 dollar)



Based on self-reported data for the US Census of Agriculture, farmers (both farm owners and farm workers) have seen very little improvement in net income between 2007 and 2017:

- The average net cash farm income in 2017 was \$26,215 per farm, compared to \$20,772 in 2012 and \$22,816 in 2007. When adjusted for inflation to 2017 dollars, net cash farm income in 2007 was \$26,976, making a very slight decrease from 2007 to 2017.
- The average inflation adjusted wage rate in the Northeast for hired agricultural labor increased from \$12.90 in 2009 (adjusted to 2019 dollars) to \$15.39 in 2019.

Food Access and Health

In 2011 we identified a need for addressing health care as part of making food system careers, especially farming, a viable career option. Little progress has been made on this issue, and is an example of other complex systems that intersect with the proper functioning of the food system and outside of the direct purview of

Vermont Farm to Plate. There has also been an increased shortage of affordable child care and housing over the past 10 years, which also affects the ability of individuals to accept certain job opportunities within the food system.

Food Insecurity

For many years, USDA data showed approximately one in ten Vermonters being food insecure—unable to access reliable, safe, healthy food. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic however, researchers estimate that the number skyrocketed to one in four.

Food insecurity would be even more pronounced if it were not for the increased collaboration and partnerships between food access and security organizations and farm and food businesses that occurred from 2010-2020. The coordination and alignment resulting from these partnerships made the anti-hunger response at the start

of the pandemic much more effective than might have been (e.g., enabling the rapid launch of the Vermont Everyone Eats program).

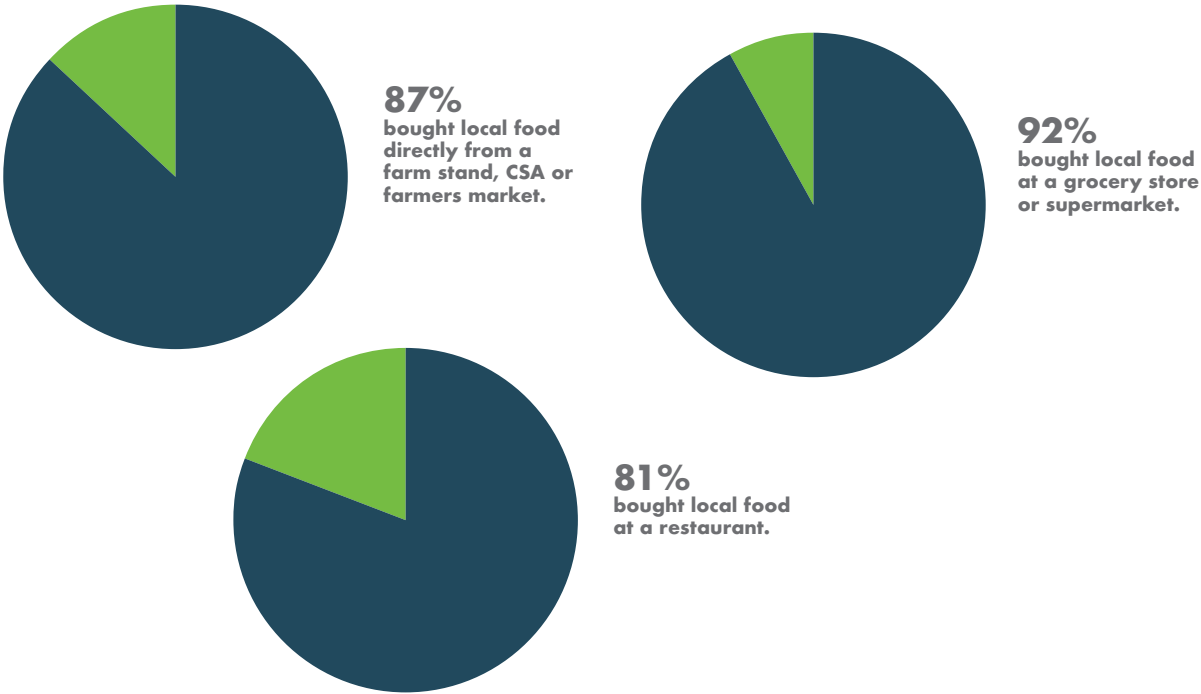
At the same time, there remains racial disparity in food-related health outcomes. National data indicates higher rates of food-related chronic diseases among Black and Indigenous communities, and in Vermont, Latinx farmworkers experience higher than average rates of food insecurities.

Ability to Buy Local Food

Even households considered food secure by USDA’s metrics can struggle to access local food, which is often less available or more expensive than commodity or processed food shipped in from across the country. Economic related access to local food remains a challenge, and one which is affected by both federal agricultural policy (e.g., tax payer subsidies to corn, wheat and soybean growers on industrial scale farms) as well as many interrelated economic issues (such as the cost of childcare or housing).

While a number of programs help increase consumers’ purchasing power to allow them to access local food, there still tends to be unstable or inadequate funding support and infrastructure challenges. For example, 37% of farmers markets in towns with high 3SquaresVT eligibility levels do not accept 3SquaresVT as payment. Nevertheless, over the past decade, the availability of local food at retail stores and at schools has increased.

Percent of Vermonters that have purchased local food in the past year



Healthcare

Over the past decade, understanding among Network members of food access as one of the social determinants of health has grown, as well as emphasis on the healthcare system as an opportunity to support access to healthy, and even local, food. For example, many special projects and statewide programs in Vermont have promoted a “Food as Medicine” framework, while the [2019–2023 State Health Improvement Plan](#), to which the F2P Health Cross Cutting Team contributed, includes a recommendation to “use health care payment reforms and regulatory levers...to create incentives and encourage flexibility in using health care resources to support access to food, housing, and transportation.” In 2018, the F2P Network surveyed 31 programs across Vermont that address the intersection of food and health; at least 19 of these were created since 2010, and 27 identified a goal of increasing access to local food.

“The Farm to Plate Network provided new opportunities for the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) to connect with organizations and individuals working in local food, food access, and healthcare. F2P convened partners who are specifically interested in advancing food access through health systems and helped VDH build relationships with organizations doing produce prescriptions and other healthy food access work. The Farm to Plate Health CCT was especially helpful in advancing VDH goals and contributed to drafting a food security goal in the State Health Improvement Plan. The Network also provided an opportunity for me as an individual to learn more about Vermont’s agriculture system and opportunities that exist to support access to healthy local food.”

Ashwinee Kulkarni, Public Health Specialist, Vermont Department of Health

“Participating on Farm to Plate teams over the years has helped me deepen existing partnerships and helped facilitate new partnerships that have been invaluable to my role promoting healthy food access and consumption. For example, VDH applied for, and received a Gus Schumacher Pilot Program grant award to implement a produce prescription project in two counties thanks to F2P partnerships and support. Participating in F2P has helped me get a broader perspective and understanding of our food system including the challenges and opportunities involved in getting (healthy local) food to our tables.”

Suzanne Kelley, Public Health Programs Administrator, Vermont Department of Health

Financing & Funding

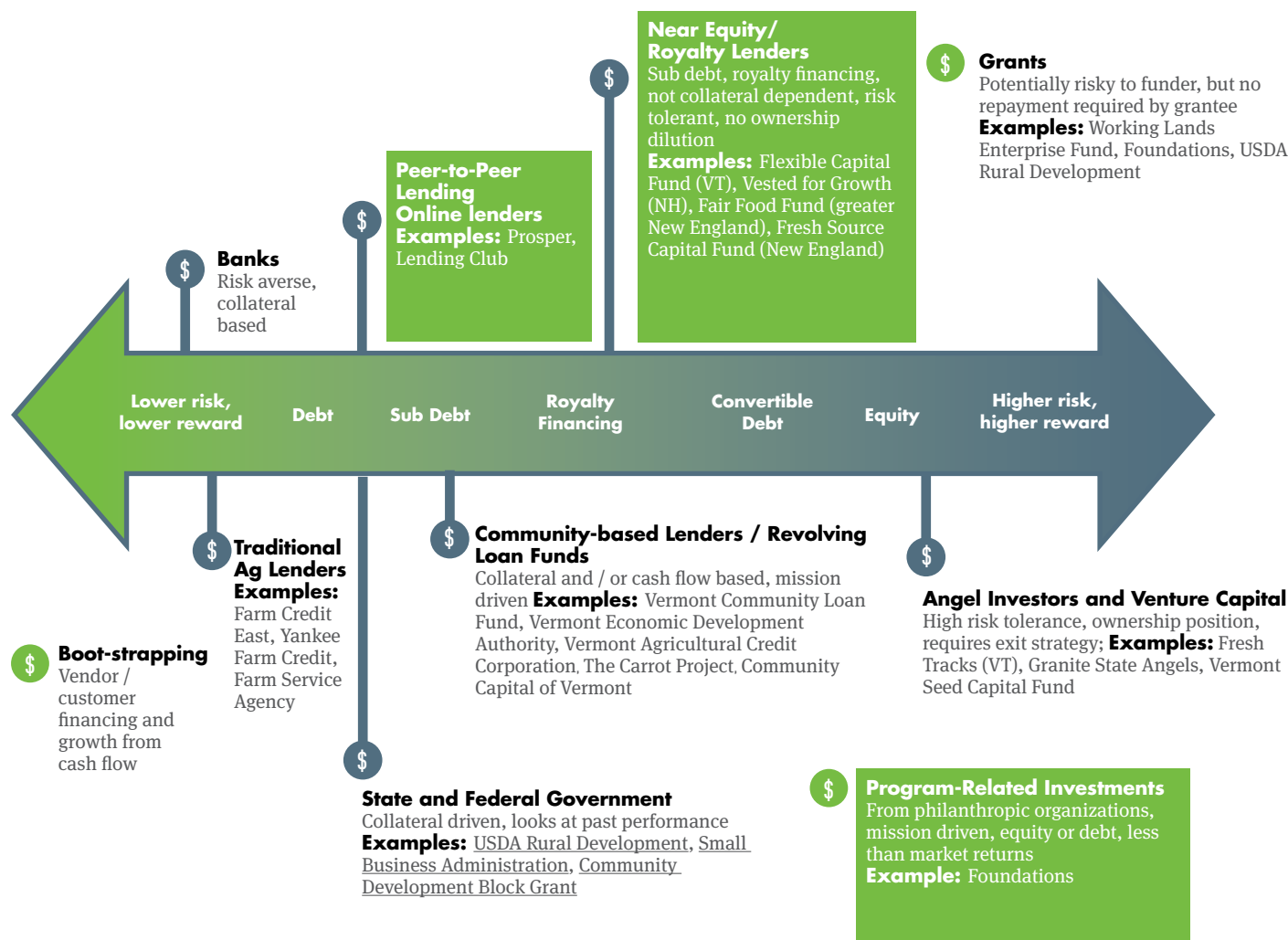
A key component of expansion in the agricultural economy over the past decade has been the increase and diversification of capital available across the food system.

The 2010-2020 Strategic Plan has served as the foundation for strategically investing in Vermont’s food system for at least two major sources of grants funding. The Vermont Food Funders Network (VFFN), a loosely knit group of 14 Vermont and New England based foundations (4 public and quasi-public entities joined the group in 2018), have provided \$40.2 million in grant funds and \$16.6 million in mission-based investments across 6 focus areas connected to the Strategic Plan between 2010–2020. Since its establishment in 2012, the Working Lands Enterprise Fund, has made \$3.5 million in grants to 136 businesses. The Northern Border Regional Commission also made a number of large, strategic grants (\$1.765 million) between 2016–2020.

New dedicated debt programs include the VCLF Farm & Forest Fund, the Vermont Farm Fund, and Vermont Land Trust’s Farmland Futures Fund. In addition, peer-to-peer lending has grown since 2010 due to technology and new online lending platforms. The Federal Jobs Act (2012) provided a mechanism to move crowdfunding from donation/grants only, to also include crowdfunding for securities such as debt and equity. It also provided for the democratization of investing in private companies—allowing for non-accredited or “main street” investors to invest in businesses in their communities at smaller dollar amounts that are then aggregated to reach a capital raise goal. Since 2010, Vermont has also seen an increase in networks of organizations supporting diverse entrepreneurs and increasing access to investor networks. Royalty, now more commonly known as Revenue Based Financing, which can be creatively structured as either debt or equity, has also grown dramatically over the last decade (e.g., Flexible Capital Fund, L3C).

Capital Continuum

The Capital Continuum illustrates the different types of capital across a spectrum of risk that farms and food businesses can utilize to grow their enterprise. Over the past 10 years, the number and types of capital have expanded, providing additional options depending on the needs of a given business.



tools + networks





Farm to Plate Investment Program:

The Next Decade

The first ten years of Farm to Plate resulted in deep and profound changes that fill us with optimism for the direction of food and agriculture in Vermont, and reaffirmed the critical and positive impact it has on Vermont's economy, environment, and social and cultural well-being. The first ten years have also revealed persistent, structural challenges that will require our collective commitment, intelligence, ingenuity, and collaboration to solve.

With the legislative reauthorization of Farm to Plate in 2019, and creation of the [Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan 2021–2030](#) with its 15 goals and 34 priority strategies (based on 276 recommendations from 54 product, market, and issue briefs), Vermont has a detailed roadmap to guide action, investment, policy, and partnerships for the next ten years.

It's clear the struggles of Vermont's dairy industry pose serious risks to the health of Vermont's food system as a whole. However, the industry remains an important and viable asset and the foundation of Vermont agriculture. With strategic investment centered on innovation, differentiation, and value-added production it can continue as an economic driver well into the future.

Priority Strategies 5, 7, 8, and 11 offer ways to stabilize and revitalize the dairy industry, in a holistic way that is inclusive of growing segments in cheese and value-added products, by increasing capital investment in processing, storage, co-packing, marketing and product differentiation, supply chain development, and technical assistance.

Additionally, as this Retrospective's results section lays bare, there are promising signs of growth across emergent and maturing

industries, such as produce, meat, maple, and food and beverage manufacturing. The question that remains is whether these emergent agriculture and food industries can scale effectively to keep Vermont's working lands in production at existing levels and counteract land and farm infrastructure losses due to any further declines in dairy and climate change induced migration pressures.

While value-added food and beverage manufacturing contribute significantly to Vermont's economy, we need to continue to do all we can to tie value-added production with our working landscape. Keeping the two connected, and ensuring that both can prosper together, is key to differentiating the Vermont brand and keeping Vermont's agricultural landscape healthy and viable. And, for value-added and farm production to thrive, ample processing, storage, and distribution infrastructure is needed in conjunction with strong marketing to access market channels of all types in and out of state, and a policy environment that can accelerate expansion opportunities.

Priority Strategies 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 29, 30 all speak to how Vermont can diversify its production portfolio by supporting robust industry and supply chain development.



Of course, the food system is more than just what is produced on the farm. A healthy, viable, and environmentally sustainable food system needs to account for food access and security, climate and the environment, racial equity, education and workforce development, and a suite of cross-sector systemic issues like health, housing, transportation, and child-care. In these areas, our analysis of results is not as clear—whether that is because the issues themselves are complex and hard to reduce to single measures, or there is limited existing data to help us understand progress or regression, or we did not sufficiently dedicate ourselves to intentionally working on the issue, or a mixture of the three. In the next ten years we will redouble our efforts on these complex cross-cutting issues, in some cases starting anew and in others building upon prior efforts.

For example, countless organizations, farms and food businesses, and government agencies have worked tirelessly to reduce hunger and food insecurity in Vermont and prevent many more from falling into these perilous and uncertain circumstances. And they have been doing so in a way that partners with local farm and food businesses and provides access to healthy local food for all Vermonters. COVID-19 demonstrated the importance of having robust local production, infrastructure, distribution, and community based social capital in place to answer the call of the crisis, but the pandemic also brought into focus the fact that still too many Vermonters teeter on the edge of food insecurity. Taking this into account, the 2021–2030 Strategic Plan outlines a multi-faceted approach to addressing food access and security.

Priority Strategies 21, 22, 24 recommend appropriation for a new Local Food Access Funding Program, increased funding for proven ways to alleviate food insecurity that also

incorporate more local food, and the development of a state Food Security Plan to ensure that households, communities, markets, and the state as a whole are prepared to effectively and efficiently respond to global or national food supply chain disruptions.

Due to the immense work of many farmers, non-profits, educational institutions, and government agencies on improving water quality and the conditions of Lake Champlain, there has been tangible positive progress reducing agricultural phosphorus emissions over the last decade. Yet, there's much more to understand, and work to do, with regards to how the food system in Vermont contributes to the state's climate mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency, and how we can enhance positive contributions while dampening negative impacts.

To this end the 2021–2030 Strategic Plan lays out ways in Priority Strategies 25, 26, 27, and 28 to enhance climate resilience in the food system while incentivizing practices and management that enhance ecosystems and improve soil and water quality.

With workforce development, while we have seen success with projects that bring attention to the breadth and depth of food system careers, and programs that offer experiential training and even formal apprenticeships, these efforts have yet to scale to the need and keep pace with industry growth and changes. Thus, labor shortages remain a bottleneck to unleashing the full potential of the farm and food economy.

The 2021–2030 Plan takes prior learning, and remaining bottlenecks into account, and through Priority Strategies 18, 19, 31, and 32 recommends: redesigning the state education model



to provide Career and Technical Education centers with independent funding streams; creating and funding legislation to support workforce pipeline educational programs; supporting and expanding existing farm and food educational programming; providing livable wages and improving workplace conditions through policy, shared workforce programs, market incentives, and technical assistance; and reforming U.S. immigration and labor laws and rules.

Over the course of Farm to Plate's first 10 years a growing recognition emerged that many of our shared goals concerning the food system, from food access and security to workforce development and employee well-being and quality of life, could not be achieved without a willingness to take-on cross-sectoral issues such as housing, health-care, child-care, and transportation. For this reason, the 2021–2030 Plan calls for more intentional building of cross-sector coalitions to address larger socioeconomic issues that impact people across Vermont regardless of their direct involvement in food system work.

And, all of our shared goals, spanning economic development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience, and food access and security, cannot be achieved without creating a food system that is just, equitable, inclusive, and diverse, and does so by deliberately dismantling the systems of racism and exploitation that our food system was built upon. Racial equity was not an explicit consideration of the first Strategic Plan, and the crescendo of events that culminated in the nationwide racial uprising of 2020 made the omission painfully evident.

Priority Strategies 2, 3, 9, 13, 32 33, 34 of the 2021–2030 Plan directly speak to recommendations to address systemic racism



and racial equity in the food system through financing, funding, land access, trainings, immigration reform, support and allyship to BIPOC representation, leadership, and organizations, and more in-depth research and data collection investigating racial equity in the Vermont food system.

Now more than ever, working as a network is essential. As we learned through the pandemic, and what we will need to remember through the era of climate change, is that while we may be able to go fast alone, we can only go far together. Accomplishing our goals, capitalizing on opportunities, and overcoming challenges requires working together in a networked way, and over the next 10 years the Farm to Plate Network will once again devote itself to implementing the Plan by generating reinforcing activities, fostering partnerships, creating continuous communication and knowledge exchange across stakeholders and areas of expertise, and maintaining shared measurement to inform action and strategic decision-making.

Together we can create a food system where farms and food businesses of all sizes thrive across Vermont serving the state and region, where all of those who produce, process, sell, and distribute food earn livable wages and have an economically secure quality of life, where agricultural stewardship builds resilience through generating clean water and air, healthy soils, and diverse ecosystems and is publicly recognized and rewarded for doing so, and where all of those living in Vermont will be well-nourished and have easy access to healthy and culturally appropriate food. Together we can create a food system that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, socially just and equitable—a food system that belongs to us all.



Farm to Plate Investment Program:

Staff, Financials, Funders 2009–2020

Vermont Farm to Plate has benefited from a dedicated and passionate group of individuals serving as Network staff, and supporting the development of our state's food system. Much of what has changed over the past 12 years would not have been possible without their efforts.

Current Farm to Plate Staff



Ellen Kahler
(2009–present)



Jake Claro
(2012–present)



Sarah Danly
(2017–2022)



Kelly Nottermann
(2018–present)



Becka Warren
(2019–present)



Beret Halverson
(2021–present)

Former Farm to Plate Staff



Lydia Pitkin
(2016–2021)



Shane Rogers
(2017–2021)



Rachel Carter
(2013–2018)



Erica Campbell
(2011–2017)



Scott Sawyer
(2010–2016)



Stephanie Smith
(2014–2016)



Sarah Galbraith
(2012–2014)



Heather Pipino
(2009–2012)



Kit Perkins
(2009–2011)

Financials

Revenue

Foundations	\$3,477,294
State of Vermont	\$1,612,212
Federal Sources	\$201,734
F2P Gathering Registration	\$256,049
Contributions & Sponsorships	\$205,972
Misc Other Revenue	\$35,922
Total Revenue	\$5,789,183

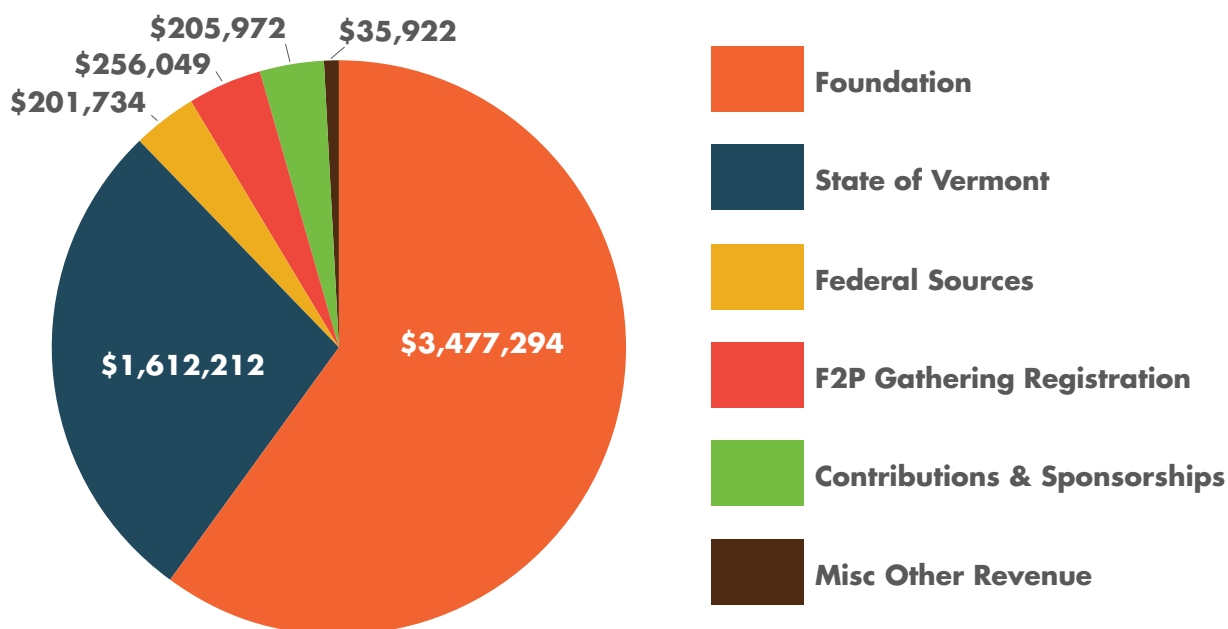
Expenses

F2P General Program Operations	\$941,845
F2P Personnel	\$2,154,359
F2P Network Activities	
F2P Website	\$275,255
F2P Network Meetings / Annual Gathering	\$430,137
F2P Leadership Stipends (group chairs)	\$563,702
Network Member Stipends	\$28,227
F2P Implementation Grants	\$206,302
Total F2P Network Activities	\$1,503,623

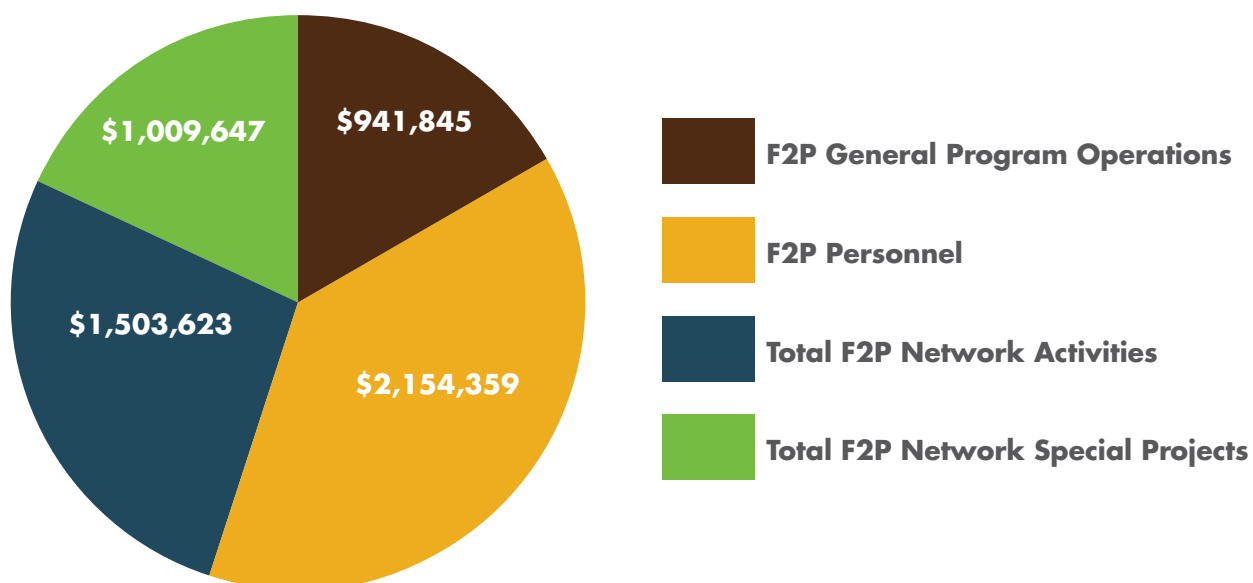
F2P Network Special Projects

Dairy Technical Assistance Survey	\$5,000
On-Farm Energy Case Study Project	\$10,097
Local Food Counts	\$7,628
Methodology Development	
Independent Retail Grocers Training Project	\$340,582
Food System Professional Learning	\$24,451
Community (teachers)	
Financing Case Study Development	\$4,048
Slow Money Vermont	\$45,579
Rooted in Vermont Local Food Campaign	\$461,587
F2P Support for Other New England States	\$110,675
Total F2P Network Special Projects	\$1,009,647
Total Expenses	\$5,609,474

VT Farm to Plate Revenue: 2011-2020



VT Farm to Plate Expenses: 2011-2020



Thank you to the funders who supported Vermont Farm to Plate over its first ten years!

- John Merck Fund
- Henry P. Kendall Foundation
- Vermont Community Foundation
- High Meadows Fund
- Sandy River Charitable Trust
- Canaday Family Charitable Trust
- Claneil Foundation
- Angell Foundation
- Jane's Trust
- Two anonymous foundations
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
- Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development.

In addition, support from over 25 corporate and organizational sponsors has enabled scholarships for the annual Network Gathering, and the maintenance of the Farm to Plate website.

Thank you to Network Members

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund backbone staff extend our appreciation, affection, and respect to all the Network members. You have placed your faith in the Strategic Plan and the Network, and in each other. Thank you for your time and your brilliance. Onward!

802 Fresh!, Addison County Regional Planning Commission, Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN), Addison County Solid Waste Management District, AdvanceVT, Aegis Renewable Energy, AERO, Agricola Farm, Agrilab Technologies, Alliance for Vermont Communities, American Farmland Trust, Annes Dumplings, Antiques and Uniques Festival, Ayers Brook Goat Dairy, Babette's Table, Bennington College, Bennington County Conservation District, Bennington County Regional Commission, Billings Farm & Museum, Bi-State Primary Care Association, Black Bear Biodiesel, Black Dirt Farm, Black River Produce, Blossom whole food kitchen and catering, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of VT, Bobcat Acres, Bone Mountain Farm, Book & Plow Farm, Bragg Family Farm, Brook Road Advisors, Brown Boar Farm, Build A HealthyPlate: VT Agriculture to Health, Burlington Farmers Market, Burr and Burton Academy, Busy Bee Honey, Butterworks Farm, Cabot Annex Store, Cabot Creamery Co-operative, Cabot Farmer Owners, Capital City Farmers' Market, Capital City Farmers' Market (Winter), Capstone Community Action, Casella Organics, Cedar Hill Continuing Care Community, Center for Agriculture & Food Systems at Vermont Law School, Center for an Agricultural Economy, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc., Central Vermont Council on Aging, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District, Champlain College, Champlain Islands Farmers' Market, Champlain Orchards, Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Champlain Valley School District, Chelsea Green Publishing, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Citizen Cider, City Market, Onion River Cooperative, Clean Yield Asset Management, Clifford Farm LLC, Codman Community Farms, Collins Grazing, Community Capital of Vermont, Community College of Vermont, Community Harvest of Central Vermont, Community Kitchen Academy, Compost Technical Services, Composting Association of Vermont, Confluence Behavioral Health, Conservation Law Foundation, Cooperative Fund of New England, Cracked An Egg Farm, Crave Food Systems, Cream Hill Stock Farm, Creative Workforce Solutions, Crescent Maple Farms, Crooked Mile Cheese, Crosby Forge & Farm, D Acres of NH, Dairy Farmers of America, Data Systems Inc, Deer Run Farm, Dirt Capital Partners, Doolan Fence, Dorset Theatre Festival, Drift Farmstead, Dun Rite Dailey Farms, Dunc's Mill, Dungeon Dragon Farm, EarthWalk Vermont, Earthwise Farm & Forest, East Brook Farm and Hops, Efficiency Vermont, Elephant in the Field, EmpowR, Endeavor Paso finos, Energy Action Network, EntreWorks Consulting, Erica Houskeeper Communications, LLC, Fairy Tale Farm, Farm Connex, Farm First, Farm Fresh Connect, Farm to Institution New England Farmer Veteran Coalition of Vermont, Farmers To You, Farmor Farm, Farms for City Kids Foundation, Fat Chance Farm LLC, Faywood Gardens & Kitchen, Feeding Chittenden, Fenn Farm, Fertile Acres Farm, Fire Tower Pizza, Five Vine Consulting, LLC, Flannel at Topnotch Resort, Flavors of Home, Flexible Capital Fund, Floating Bridge Family Farm, Flourish Farm, Flywheel Farm, LLC, Foggy Brook Farm, Food Connects, Food Revolution Network, Food Solutions New England, Footprint Farm, Four Springs Farm, Four Town Lowlines, Fresh Source Capital, LLC, Friends of Northern Lake Champlain, Friends to Food Homestead, Frog Hollow Farms, Front Seat Coffee, Fuller Mountain Farm, FUNJ. Shrooming Company, Gail Makuch, Gallup Brook Fencing, Galusha Hill Farm, Garnet Mountain Farm, Ghost Dog Dairy, Goddard College, Golden Thread Farm, Golden Well Farm, Good Food Good Medicine, Good Heart Farmstead, Got Weeds?, Grass Cattle Company LLC, Grateful Greens, Gratitude Farms, LLC, Gray Hill Farm, Greater Cabot Working Landscape Network, Gredio, Greenfield Highland Beef, Green Mountain Career and Technology Center, Green Mountain College, Green Mountain Compost, Green Mountain Farm-to-school, Green Mountain Girls Farm, Green Mountain Technology and Career Center, Green Pasture Meats, Groundworks Collaborative, Grow Compost of Vermont, Grow More, Waste Less, Food Systems Consulting, LLC, Hannaford Career Center, Happy Bird Poultry Farm, LLC, Harken Back Farm, Harlow Farm, Harmonized Cookery, Hartshorn Certified Organic Farm, Harvest Hill Farm, Health Care Without Harm, Health Hero Farm, Healthy Living Market and Café, Healthy Roots Collaborative, Heart of the Village, Heavenly Honey Apiary, Henry P Kendall Foundation, Hermitage Inn, Hestholl Icelandics, Hidden Mountain Maple, High Meadows Fund, Highfields Center for Composting, Highland Lodge, Hinesburg Revolving Loan Fund Committee, Hired Hand Brewing Co., Historic New England, Holistic School of Business, Honey Dew Homestead, Honey Field Farm, Honey Road, LLC, Hooker Mountain Farm, L3C, HOPE, However Wild Honey, Hunger Free Vermont, Hunger Mountain Co-op, Hurricane Ridge Farm, Ice House Farm, Ingredient Connection, Inn at Shelburne Farms, Intervale Center, Intervale Food Hub, Iroquois Valley Farms LLC, J.J. Hapgood General Store & Eatery, J.Scott Marketing, Jacksons Eggs N More, Jean Hamilton, Jericho Farmers Market, Joseph Geoffroy's Maple, Keith Farm Meats, Killington Grand Resort & Preston's Restaurant, Kingdom Crust Company, Kingsbury Market Garden, Kismet Kitchen, Kitchen Garden Designs, Label Quest LLC, Lake Paran, Lamoille County Conservation District, Lamoille County Planning Commission, Lamoille Economic Development Corporation, Land For Good, Larson Farm and Creamery, Laughing Child Farm, Lavender Essentials of Vermont, Leadership Retreat, Lemonfair Saffron Co., Leverage Point Consulting, Lilac Ridge, Loaves & Fishes, Local Concepts, LLC, Local Maverick, Localvore, Lodestar Consulting, Luce Farm Wellness, Mable, Mad River Food Hub, Mad River Taste Place, MamaSezz Foods, Maplehill School and Community Farm., Maplemont Sheep, Mark & Kerry's Farm, Mary Johnson Children's Center, McAllister Farms, Merck Forest & Farmland Center, Middlebury College, Middlebury Foods, Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Migrant Justice, Milk Money Vermont, Miskell's Conseration Land Consulting LLC, Mission Farm, Mixed Up Nut Butter, MKT: Grafton, Montpelier High School, Montpelier Parks & Trees Department, Montpelier Senior Activity Center, Montpelier Vineyards, Morrisville Food Co-op, MoTown Mushrooms, Mount Anthony Union Middle School, Mountain Health Center, Mountain Home Farm, Must Be Clever, Myers Produce LLC, Natural Capital Investment Fund, Natural Resources Conservation Council, Navicate, Ned's Best Beef, NEKTI Consulting, New Day Farm, New England Dairy Promotion Board, New England Label, New Promise Farm, LLC, New York University, Newfield Herb Farm, Nightshade Kitchen, North Country RC&D, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, Northeast

Recycling Council, Northeast SARE, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, Northern Community Investment Corporation, Northern Vermont University, Northfield Savings Bank, Northshire Grows, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, NorthWoods Stewardship Center, Nutjob, nutty life, Odyssey Events VT, Office of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, Oh! Veggies, Open Hearth Pizza, Orchard Grass Farm, Orchard Street Business Services, Organic Valley Coop, Otter Creek Organic Berry Farm, Our Community Cares Camp, Inc., Pam Knights Communications, Pangea Farm, Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center, Peaceful Harvest Mushrooms LLC, People Making Good PR, Permaculture Solutions, Peterson Quality Malt, Pete's Greens, phantom, Philo Ridge Farm, Piecemeal Pies, PIZZA on Main, Potters of Vermont, Pumpkin Village Foods, Putney Food Co-op, Ragged Orchid Farm VT, Rambling Brook Farm, Randolph Technical Career Center, Real Organic Project, Red Hen Baking, Regeneration Corps, Relocalizing Vermont, WGDR, Resilient Vermont Network, Responsible Investing Solutions, ReThink Health: Upper Connecticut River Valley, Retreat Farm Ltd., Rich Earth Institute, Richardson Family Farm, Richmond Farmers Market, ripe.io, Rival Brands, Road Trip Food Company, Robinson Hill Beef, Roselily Farm, Round Sky Solutions, Royalton Farms, RSF Social Finance, Rural Vermont, Rutland Regional Planning Commission, Salvation Farms, Salvation Suppers, Scott Farm Orchard, SDG Farm, Secure Food Supply New England, Sel de la Terre, SerVermont, Seyon Lodge State Park, ShareMRV, Shelburne Farms, Sherpa Foods, Sherry's of Vermont, LLC, ShiftMeals, Shire Beef, LLC, Shoestring Farm, Silver Spring Meats, Single Gate Farm, Sitari Capital, Skillet Creative, Skinny Pancake, Skyline Holsteins, Slow Money Vermont, Small Axe Farm, Smokey House Center, Snowcap Brewing Company, Sobremesa, Sodexo, Southern Vermont Career Development Center, Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, Spoonwood Cabin, Springfield High School, Springfield Regional Development Corporation, St. Johnsbury Area Local Food Alliance (ALFA), St. Michael's College, Stan Ward Consulting - Food Information Systems, Sterling College, Stone Environmental, Inc., Storm View Angus, Strolling of the Heifers, Sugar Feather Farm, Sugarsnap Catering, Sunnybrook Farm, Sunrise Farm, Sunset Lake CBD, Sustainable Fiber Solutions, SUSU commUNITY Farm, Sweet Seasons Farm & Artisan Confections, Tammy Time Chips, Tavernier Chocolates, T-Bone's Custom Meats, Templeton Farm, terroir de Calais, Terrosafarm, The Abbey Food Service Management Group, The Butcher Barn, The Carrot Project, The Chubby Muffin, The Community Health Centers of Burlington, The Farm of Milk and Honey, The Fort Ticonderoga Association, The Gleanery, The Good Food Institute, The Icebox, The Inn at Weathersfield, The Jay Village Inn, The John Merck Fund, The Killeen Crossroads Farm, The Knoll at Middlebury College, the little acre farm, The Lodge at Spruce Peak, The Marble West Inn, The Mountain School, The Nomadic Oven, The Roots Farm Market, the thompson family farm, The University of Vermont, The UVM Medical Center, The Vermont Spätzle Company, The Waffle Shack, The White House Inn, The Williams Agency, The Willowell Foundation, Third Branch Flower, LLC, Three Calls Farm at Maplehill, Three Chimney Farm, Three Ponds Restaurant & Catering, Tigertown Farm, Town of Bennington, Town of Lyndon, Townline Registered Shropshires, Trenchers Farmhouse, Triangulus, Trillium Hill Farm, Tulsi Tea Room, Twin Farms, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, U-32, UE Local 255, Umbrella, University of New Hampshire, University of Wollongong, Up the Road Farm, Upper Valley Food Co-op, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA National Agroforestry Center, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Rural Development, UVM ASCI, UVM Center for Rural Studies, UVM College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), UVM College of Arts and Sciences, UVM Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE), UVM Department of Education, UVM Extension (Rutland), UVM Extension (Berlin), UVM Extension (Brattleboro), UVM Extension (Champlain Valley Crop, Soil & Pasture Team), UVM Extension (Northwest Crops and Soils Program), UVM Extension 4-H, UVM Extension Agricultural Business, UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture, UVM Extension Community Horticulture, UVM Extension Women's Ag Network, UVM Research on Adaptation to Climate Change (RACC) EPSCoR, UVM Sea Grant, UVM Tree Fruit and Viticulture, Vagabond Vintner, Valley Brook Farm, Valley Cafe, Vanguard Renewables, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, Vermont Agency of Education, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation (VACC), Vermont Artisan Village, Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Vermont Association of Conservation Districts, Vermont Botanical Beverages, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR), Vermont Center for Integrative Herbalism, Vermont Cheese Council, Vermont Community Garden Network, Vermont Community Loan Fund, Vermont Compost Company, Vermont Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, Vermont Department for Children and Families, Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, Vermont Department of Economic Development, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Department of Health Barre District Office, Vermont Department of Health Bennington District Office, Vermont Department of Health White River Junction District Office, Vermont Department of Labor, Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, Vermont Design Works, Vermont Dog Eats, Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA), Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, Vermont Farm Fund, Vermont Farm to School Network, Vermont Farmers Food Center, Vermont FEED-Shelburne Farms, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, Vermont Food Collaborative, Vermont Foodbank, Vermont Fresh Network, Vermont Grass Farmers Association, Vermont Healthy Soils Coalition, Vermont Honey Farm, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Hydroponic Produce, LLC, Vermont Intern Program, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Law School, Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association Vermont Natural Beef, LLC, Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC, Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital, Vermont Public Health Institute, Vermont Releaf Collective, Vermont Retail and Grocers Association, Vermont Rural Ventures, Vermont Small Business Development Center, Vermont Smoke and Cure, Vermont Specialty Food Association, Vermont State Employee Credit Union, Vermont Studio Center, Vermont Sushi Factory, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Vermont Technical College, Vermont Tortilla Company, Vermont Way Foods™, Vermont Whey Fed Pigs, Vermont WIC Program, Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association, Vermont Workers' Center, Vermont Young Farmers Coalition, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), Vermont's Local Banquet Magazine, Vine Ripe Greenhouse Construction, Vital Communities, VocRehab Vermont, von Trapp Farmstead Cheese, VTDinners, Wagatha's, Wake Robin, Wandering Moose Farms, Wayward Goose Farm, White River Investment Club, White River NRCD, Whole Farm Services, Wholeshare, Wicked Bines Farm, Wild Branch Food, Wild Roots Farm Vermont, Willett's Bend Farms, Willing Hands, Willow Brook Far, Willow Tree Community Compost, Wilson Farm Market, Windfall Veggies & Beef, LLC, Windham Farm and Food, Windham Grow, Windham Regional Commission, WonderArts VT, Woodbury Village Store, Yankee Farm Credit, Yellow Wood Associates, Zabby and Elf's Stone Soup



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