



# farm to plate

STRENGTHENING VERMONT'S FOOD SYSTEM



## Annual Report

Year 6 | Fiscal 2016

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A 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR VERMONT'S FOOD SYSTEM



**2016 FARM TO PLATE**  
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AND NETWORK COORDINATORS

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**Lucy Leriche**, Secretary of Commerce and  
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**Katie Michels**, Vermont Food Funders Network

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**Richard Berkfield**, Co-Chair, Aggregation and  
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**Becka Warren**, Co-Chair, Consumer Education  
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**Ellen Kahler**, Executive Director, VSJF (ex officio)



## To: Governor Phil Scott and Members of the Vermont General Assembly

The Farm to Plate Investment Program was launched during the Douglas Administration, made steady progress to increase economic development and improve local food accessibility for all Vermonters during the Shumlin Administration, and will continue to strengthen Vermont's farm and food economy during the Scott Administration.

After releasing the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan in 2011, we built an effective statewide Network to implement the plan and our outcomes have exceeded expectations. For instance, between 2009-2015 our food system added over 6,000 net new jobs and 779 new businesses, the sector's overall gross sales increased 32% (from \$7.6 to \$10 billion), and Vermonters are spending at least \$189 million annually on local food. With ongoing state investment and partnership, this Network of 350+ organizations and businesses will continue to work together to open new markets for Vermont products and create new economic opportunity for the benefit of all Vermonters.

By continuing to align our actions and increase public-private collaborations we will drive even greater economic activity in our food system and tap into growing consumer demand for our products outside our borders. Our work over the next five years will focus on five strategic priority areas, namely:

- » protect and expand affordable and environmentally sustainable farmland in agricultural production;
- » improve the viability of farms and food businesses;
- » increase local food availability and affordability in all market channels;
- » increase consumer engagement and demand for local food; and
- » meet food system employment needs in positive work environments.

Our ability to be **adaptive** and **innovative** will be crucial over the next 5 years in order to address a changing federal landscape (e.g., uncertainty about what changes in immigration policy and dairy pricing will mean to Vermont dairy farmers), to new water quality rules, to new markets for our products, to climate change impacts, and demographic changes that will impact both farm ownership and workforce needs. In partnership with the Scott Administration, we can meet these challenges and continue to grow our local and regional food systems for the benefit of all Vermonters and our rural communities.

***It is with deep gratitude that we thank the Shumlin Administration and the Vermont Legislature for their abiding financial and moral support over the past 6 years.***



## The Vermont Legislature's intended outcomes for the Farm to Plate Investment Program and our progress to date



### Increase economic development in Vermont's farm and food sector

**\$10 BILLION** Food System Gross Sales (food production, manufacturing, trade)  
Up from \$7.6B in '07

**\$1 BILLION** Net Value Added Food Manufacturing  
Per year



### Create jobs in the farm and food economy

**+6,000** Jobs  
Since 2009

**+779** Businesses  
Since 2009



### Improve access to healthy local food for all Vermonters

**11.4%** Food Insecure Vermonters  
Down from 13.6% during Great Recession

**1,627 TONS** Food Rescued by Vermont Foodbank in 2015

The Farm to Plate Network has also focused on cross-cutting issues that impact the major elements of Vermont's food system: financing, education, labor and workforce development, technical assistance and business planning, energy, and policy.

**Sources:** \$10B: Kavet, Rockler and Associates based on USDA Census of Agriculture and Economic Census. These data sources are updated every 5 years — the next update is possible in late 2017. *Net value added manufacturing:* U.S. Census Bureau Annual Survey of Manufactures and U.S. Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics. *Jobs and Establishments:* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics. *11.4%:* USDA Economic Research Service. *1,627 tons:* Vermont Foodbank.

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# Protect and Expand Affordable and Environmentally Sustainable Farmland in Agricultural Production

Access to affordable and environmentally sustainable farmland is imperative to increase our local food supply and grow our food system economy.

There are many positive trends to point to— 1) the levelling off of farmland loss, 2) relative affordability of farmland in Vermont compared to other New England States, and 3) continued conservation of farmland. Yet challenges still remain: an aging farmer population without identified successors, tightening dairy markets, and younger farmers who still face barriers accessing traditional forms of capital to acquire land or who have interests in starting enterprises that are not immediately compatible with current agricultural land use.

The Farm to Plate Network is creating strategic partnerships and tools to address farm succession planning, farmland conservation, and farmland investment, leasing, and matchmaking.

## Succession Planning

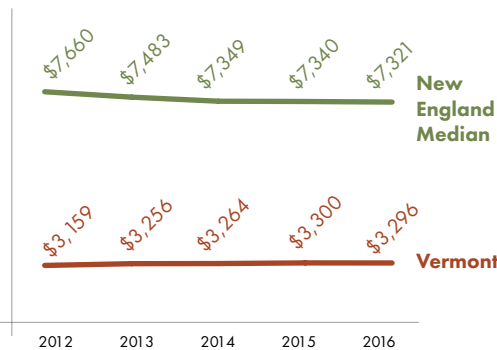
**GOAL 9** Dairy market price projections provided by the August 2016 Farm Credit East *Knowledge Exchange Report* suggest that external market pressures will exacerbate the need for transition and succession planning in the coming years on Vermont’s remaining dairy farms in order to keep agricultural land in production. To address this challenge, the [Farmland Access and Stewardship](#) and

### Flat is Good!

#### 1) Land in Agriculture in Vermont

1,244,909	1,233,313	1,251,713
2002	2007	2012

#### 2) Farm Real Estate, Average Value per Acre



[Production & Processing Working Groups](#) are collaborating on projects designed to focus on farm transition and succession. A recent [Land for Good](#) study revealed that 91% of Vermont farmers over the age of 65 do *not* have an operator under the age of 45 working with them and they manage nearly 30% of all farms in Vermont. The subset of seniors farming without young farm operators own a combined \$973 million in farmland and buildings and manage 297,813 acres of land. Meanwhile, 58% of beginning farmers in Vermont— farmers with less than 10 years of experience farming as a principal operator—are 45 or older.



Laughing Child Farm, Pawlet, VT.

Photo: A. Blake Gardner

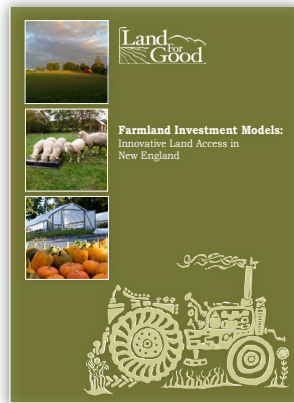
The research also revealed a “commodity disconnect” between the types of food grown and produced by young and senior farmers. Significantly more young farmers grow vegetables, while there are many more senior farmers growing hay for livestock feed. The two Working Groups will focus on:

- » Incorporating succession planning and retirement planning into existing conferences and workshops.
- » Professional development to raise the knowledge level of technical service providers around issues of farmer retirement and succession planning, and multi-generational farm viability.
- » Investigating farm apprenticeship and internship structures to determine what has been effective to date and what can be done to meet the growing demand for these programs.



## Farmland Investment Models

**GOAL 5** *Land For Good* and UVM Extension, in conjunction with the [Farmland Access Task Force](#), examined farmland investor models offered in the Northeast by values-based investment companies. The findings of the project are now available in the report [Farmland Investment Models: Innovative Land Access in New England](#). The project team conducted extensive interviews with five companies engaged in “values based” farmland investing about the structural, legal, and financial aspects of their arrangements with farmers.



The report concludes that socially motivated investors can contribute to the sustainability of farms and their communities.

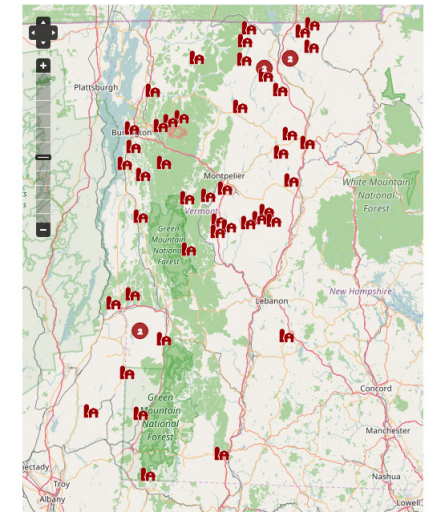
The report is unique in reflecting feedback and dialogue between farm seekers and representatives from investment companies. Previously, it has been unclear how acceptable specific models would be to Northeast farmers, what concerns they might have, and under what circumstances each model might work for certain types of farmers. This project was the first of its kind to bring these stakeholders together to build mutual understanding of their respective needs, and to jointly identify ways to strengthen these models. Next steps for Farmland Access Task Force members are to provide training to farm service providers on how to advise clients who are exploring the investment models, and continue to have dialogue with the investment companies as to how the models can be used to provide complementary bridge financing for farmland access in conjunction with conservation easements.

## Farmland Conservation

**GOAL 5** The *Vermont Land Trust* and land conservation partners, such as VHCB and NRCS, had another successful year of farm conservation, conserving 19 farm parcels and 3,286 acres of farmland as of October 11, 2016. The portfolio of farms conserved to date has been impressive, representing the diversity of farming that Vermont’s working landscape has to offer.

## Land Link

**GOAL 5** For many new and established farmers, simply finding available land is a huge challenge. [Vermont Land Link](#) serves as an important online hub to help farmland seekers find and connect with property holders who want to make their land available for farming. Over the past year the Farmland Access Task Force has focused its attention on improving farmland listing and linking efforts on the website, with plans to add farmer profiles and make the website more mobile friendly in 2017.



Land Link shows available farms for purchase.

Along with improving LandLink’s role as an online tool for coordinating farmland access, task force members from the [University of Vermont](#), the Intervale Center, [Land For Good](#), and [RAFFL](#), through a **Working Lands Grant**, have also been engaged in providing more coordinated on the ground direct service and education to farm seekers. Over the last year, the four organizations conducted 3 well attended Farmland Access Workshops in Danby, Shelburne, and White River Junction.

### Vermont Water Quality Network

After conducting a systems analysis mapping exercise in late 2015, more than 65 nonprofit organizations, local, regional and state government agencies, businesses and individuals have come together to create the [Vermont Water Quality Network](#), whose purpose is to create a culture of clean water in the state. Administratively supported by ECHO, five action teams have formed around high impact systems change levers and are working on specific projects in 90-day cycles. Many Farm to Plate Network members have become engaged with this sister Network since good food is inextricably linked to clean water and both rely on healthy soil remaining on the land and not in our waterways.

# Improve Viability of Farms and Food Businesses

If farms and food businesses are not profitable, Vermont’s agricultural economy cannot be sustainable. Cost and scales of production, sales in different market channels, food safety, business management, infrastructure and equipment, distribution, and environmental impacts all play roles in overall business viability. The Farm to Plate Network addresses these variables by identifying effective business models and building trust and transparency along entire supply chains (e.g. Vermont’s meat industry) to help farmers and producers profitably sell into wholesale, retail, and other markets.

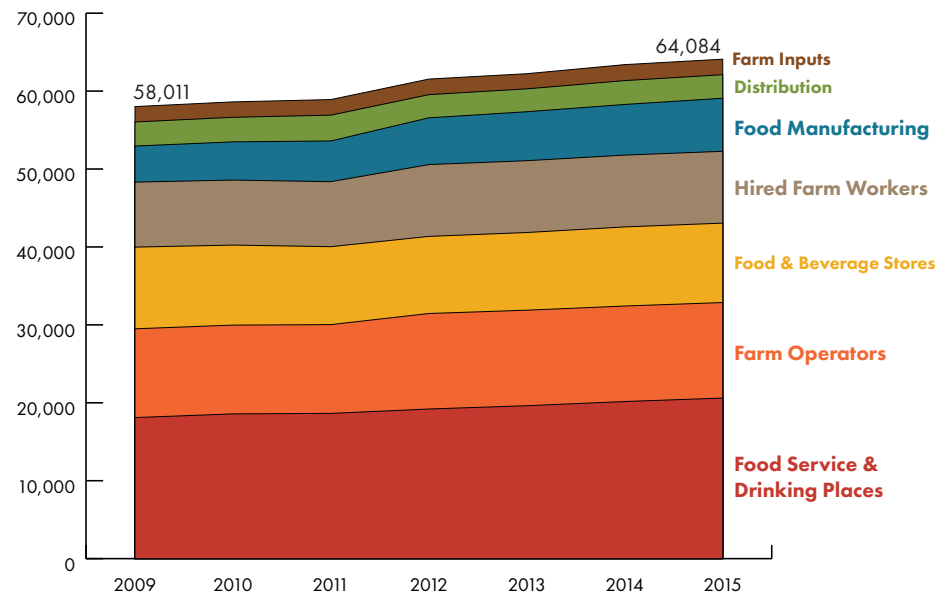
## Jobs and Establishments

**GOAL 17** Job growth in Vermont’s food system—which includes jobs at restaurants, stores, food processing and manufacturing facilities, farm support services, aggregation and distribution services, and jobs on the farm—continues to outperform many other sectors of Vermont’s economy. The number of food system jobs increased 10.5% from 2009 to 2015—6,073 jobs. The largest employment sector of Vermont’s economy—education and health services—increased 6.6% (4,128 jobs), while professional and business services increased 17.2% (6,035 jobs). The number of food manufacturing jobs increased 47% (2,182 jobs), and growth in food manufacturing jobs came during a time of an overall decrease in the number of manufacturing jobs in Vermont.

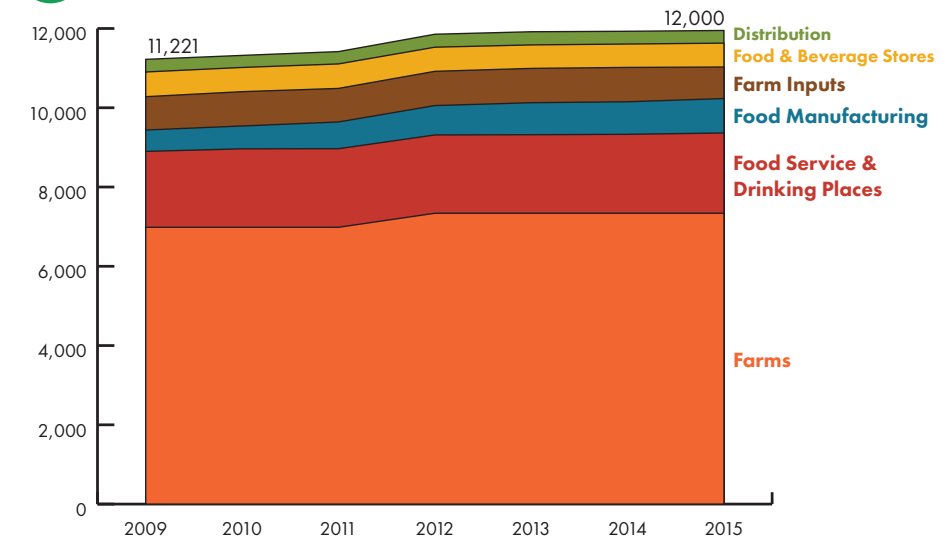
## Farm Viability

**GOAL 18** While interest in farming has experienced a revival in the past two decades in Vermont, evidenced by the 26% (1,510 farms) increase in the number of farms from 1997 to 2012, it’s less clear if this renewed enthusiasm can attain economic sustainability. Over the same period, the number of farms reporting net losses increased by 1,422, and comprised 58% of total farms in 2012—up from 49% of farms in 1997. However, net farm income trends in Vermont are consistent with national trends where slightly more than half

**Vermont Food System Employment Increased from 2009 to 2015**



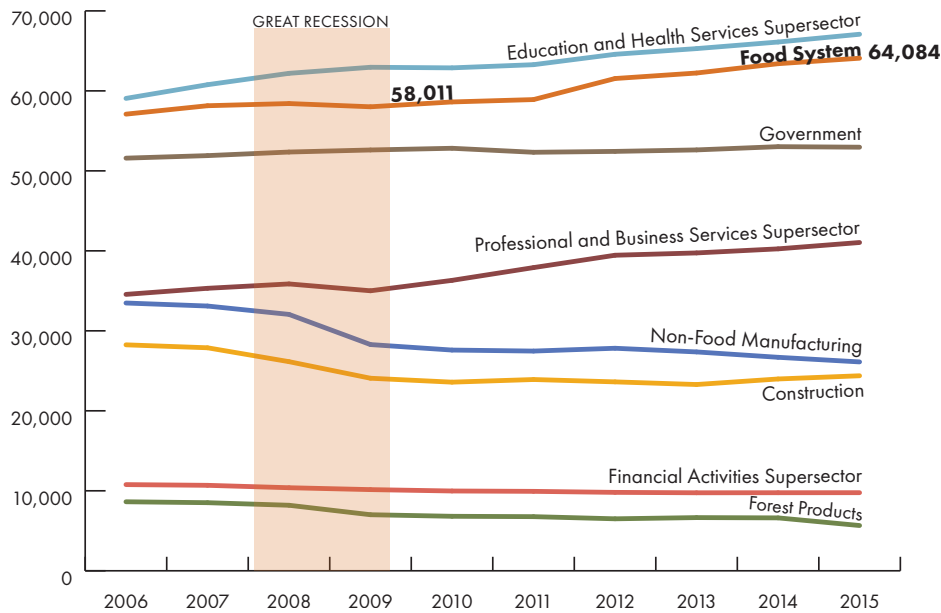
**Vermont Food System Establishments Increased from 2009 to 2015**



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics, and Vermont Department of Labor.



**Food System Continues to Show Solid Job Growth After Great Recession**



of farm households nationally lost money on their farming operations each year. To the extent that net farm income trends reflect growth in a new wave of highly diverse farm business models that have yet to reach economic maturity, it's crucial that these farms have access to farm viability service providers through programs like VHCB's Farm and Forest Viability Program who can help them optimize their operations and make decisions that put them on a financially sustainable path for the long term.



Farm to Plate tour of Mountain Meadows Farm in Sudbury.

In response to farm income trends and the surge in the number of new farms with relatively untested business models, farm viability service providers formed the *Farm Viability Indicators Task Force* in order to aggregate and develop standardized information on the viability of

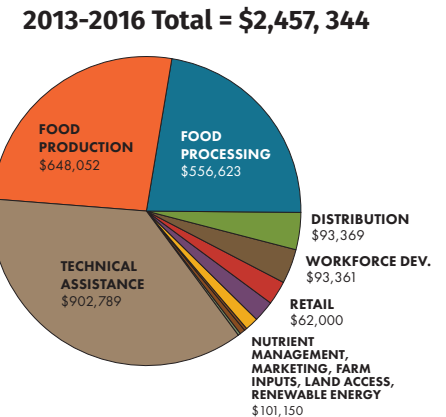
various business models and scales. Their work will increase the spread of best practices and industry benchmarks, diagnose the viability of individual businesses and larger industries as a whole, and provide farms with indicators and tools to more thoroughly assess and self-examine the viability of new enterprises, current operations, and/or expansions.

**Financing**



The growth in food system jobs and enterprises has been mirrored by an uptick in investment in these businesses. The *Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation (VACC)*, a program of the *Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA)*, reported \$25.8 million in loans to 235 farmers, food businesses, and forestry and forest product based businesses— more loans than in any prior year! In fact, the agricultural sector now represents the largest percentage—35%—of VEDA's total loan portfolio.

Over the last four years the *Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI)* has played a key role in helping position Vermont's food system businesses to be competitive and viable in the marketplace by not only investing in equipment and infrastructure essential for growth, but key technical assistance programs that help them improve production practices, reach new markets, and successfully navigate the changing regulatory landscape. The initiative has made over \$2.4 million in grants and leveraged over \$5 million in matching and outside funds. In partnership with WLEI, VACC is now offering a loan option for dairy farmers transitioning from conventional to organic milk production. Also in 2016, the *Vermont Community Loan Fund* created a new low-interest, deferred payment loan program, *SPROUT*, for food system and forest product businesses.



# Increase Local Food Availability and Affordability in All Market Channels

Total food sales in Vermont were about **\$3 billion** in 2012, the last available year of data, and sales at grocery stores accounted for about 60% of total sales. Last year we estimated that *local food sales* equaled about **7% (\$189 million)** of total food sales. So, while it is comparatively easier now to access local raw and processed food—at farmers’ markets, CSAs, farm stands, co-ops, specialty food stores like *Healthy Living*, restaurants, and increasingly at institutions, country stores, independent grocery stores, and grocery stores—there is still room for improvement. That’s why the Farm to Plate Network seeks to make local food in all these market channels more available and affordable to consumers through marketing assistance, consumer incentive programs, procurement policies, and more efficient supply chain logistics.

## New Resources for Independent Grocery Stores →



**GOAL 13** Independent retail food outlets—including country stores, convenience stores, and grocery stores—represent the next frontier in local food development for producers and processors and market access for consumers. Farm to Plate researchers interviewed staff at 73 independent stores and conducted 6 in-store local food audits from 2014 to 2015. Most independent stores already carry some local dairy products, baked goods, produce, beer and wine, and coffee. The research also identified barriers to selling more local products and gauged interest in technical assistance to increase the availability and sale of local food.

**The findings were used to create a new series of five minute training videos called *Take Five* as well as in-store trainings to help independent retailers increase their local food sales.** Episodes include such topics as promotions, merchandising, signage, sampling, and procurement.

## Research Leads to Action



Annie Harlow shares display tips at a training in Willey’s Store in Greensboro.

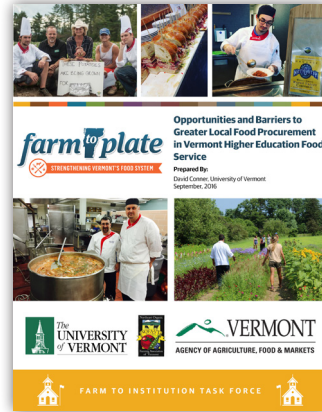
“The retail training was just what we needed to jumpstart our store. The trainers gave great recommendations that will add profit to our bottom line, and helped us learn how to better promote local food.”

— **Emily McClure, Craftsbury General Store**



## Farm to Institution: Best Practices

**GOAL 2** The *Farm to Institution Task Force* completed a project to develop best practices and recommendations for ramping up the amount of local food served at institutions. The report highlights best practices currently being employed and recommendations for institutions to serve even more local food. The Task Force is also working with institutions of higher education to develop procurement policies aimed at increasing local food sales.



Key results include:

- » 14-40% of food available at Vermont's institutions of higher education food services are sourced within the state.
- » While local foods can require more labor, their presence motivates and excites staff to better promote the foods and their own educational mission.

In 2016, Sodexo, through its Vermont First initiative, made **\$2.8 million** in local food purchases in order to serve its contracts with higher ed institutions— that's 15.32% of their total purchases!

## Farm to Health Care: Produce Prescription Program

**GOAL 2** Vermont is a national innovator in connecting farm fresh food to health care settings. The *University of Vermont Medical Center* is leading the pack with dining service purchases of local food, onsite farmers' markets, vegetable prescription programs, and more. Many other hospitals are increasing these efforts, including *Grace Cottage* and *Northwest Regional Medical Center*. This year, members of the Farm to Plate Network are advising a produce prescription program being managed by the *Vermont Department of Health*. The program provides fruit and vegetable coupons to at-risk patients that are redeemable at grocery stores, co-ops, and farmers' markets in Rutland and Chittenden Counties.

## Farm to School

**GOAL 2** Recently released *Farm to School Census* data ranks Vermont 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation—up from 7<sup>th</sup> in 2011-2012—in farm to school engagement. With 78% of Vermont



Coventry Village School harvest.

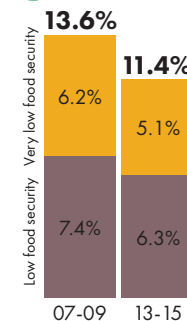
districts reporting, Vermont schools spent more than \$1.5 million in local food in the 2013-2014 school year. That's equal to about 17% of school food spending on local food products. New research conducted by the Vermont Farm to School Network found that for every dollar that a school spends on local food, an additional \$.60 is added to the local economy!

## Universal Recycling and Food Rescue

**GOAL 14** The *Vermont Agency of Natural Resources* and the *Vermont Foodbank* reported a 40% increase in food donations in 2016, topping the 25-30% increase seen in 2015. The increase in food donations over the past two years represents a unique synergy between Agency of Natural Resources efforts to implement the Universal Recycling law and food rescue organizations' efforts to get more fresh, healthy, food onto

the plates of Vermonters in need. The Foodbank's Fresh Rescue Program offers large grocery stores a convenient cost effective option whereby trained and qualified Foodbank partner agencies can directly pick up surplus nutritious foods from stores.

### Food Insecurity Finally Decreased



Source: USDA Economic Research Service.

Food insecurity in Vermont has decreased for the first time since the height of the Great Recession. According to the USDA, that means an average of 5,500 fewer households were food insecure from 2013 to 2015 compared to 2007 to 2009.

# Increase Consumer Engagement and Demand for Local Food

When consumers demand more Vermont food products, it sends a powerful market signal to producers, processors, distributors, and retailers to provide more local food. The Farm to Plate [Consumer Education and Marketing Working Group](#) is focused on efforts to improve the ability of Vermonters to find, purchase, and use local foods and ensure these efforts reach all Vermonters at all income levels.

## #RootedinVermont



Consumer demand research conducted by the Consumer Education & Marketing Working Group found that many Vermonters want local food to be more connected to Vermont traditions and communities. After all, Vermonters were farming, gardening, fishing, and hunting long before there were craft beers and gourmet burgers. The Rooted in Vermont statewide grassroots marketing campaign celebrates all Vermonters' entry points to local food and is geared toward engaging Vermonters not already committed to the local food movement.

Rooted in Vermont is creating a brand that connects tradition, pride, community, trust, and equity to local food. Grassroots marketing efforts tap into family, leisure, health, sustainable lifestyle, and independence motivations, while celebrating everyone's unique connections with local food: from growing or raising food, to buying it from the neighborhood farm stand or market; from hunting and fishing to dining at a restaurant in town; from enjoying Vermont products in the great outdoors to cooking with friends and family at home.

Rooted in Vermont grassroots marketing and social change efforts will lead to increased engagement and purchases in Vermont's local food economy. Our goal is to increase local food purchases by 3%—from 6.9% to 10%—by 2021 (representing more than \$300 million in local food sales) and help local food consumption become mainstream in the next 5-10 years.

"Our vibrant agricultural community in Rutland responds to, and evolves with, the statewide activity around agriculture, consumers, and shared practices. The Vermont Farm to Plate Network allows us to stay connected in a meaningful and productive way, not just with other organizations like ours, but with businesses, farms and agencies that are all working towards similar goals. This year, working with the Rooted in Vermont project, we have found a simple, effective way to promote all that is food and agriculture, no matter the town. Another great example around the effectiveness of this network!"

— *Elena Gustavson, Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL)*



RAFFL Everyday Chef workshop at Godnick Adult Center in Rutland.

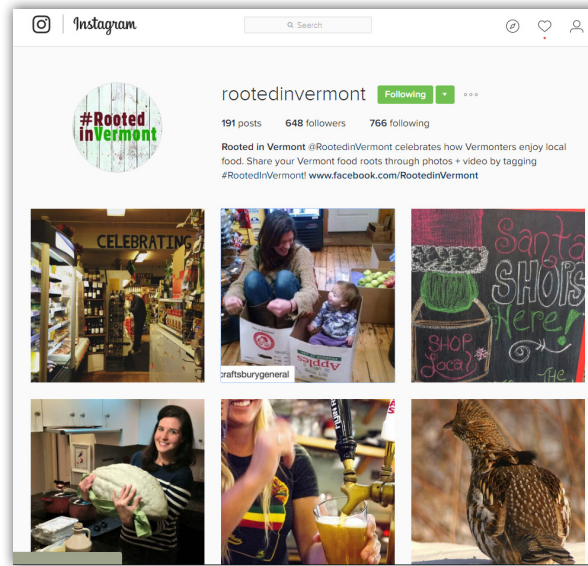
Photo: RAFFL



"Our family has been hunting, making maple syrup, and growing our own veggies for years and that's how we eat local food. We can't afford to buy a lot of local food even though we've been eating local long before it was cool. I love that Rooted in Vermont includes hunting, fishing and gardening as local food—and I am proud to be Rooted in Vermont!"

— *Liz Perrault, Plainfield*





## Expand Agritourism Opportunities



Open Farm Week was held for the second year in August, 2016 in order to increase participation in culinary and agricultural tourism. Organized by the [Agritourism Task Force](#), nearly 100 farms signed up on [DigInVT.com](#) to offer over 300 educational and experiential events during that week.



Open Farm Week at Trillium Hill Farm, Hinesburg, Vermont.

A survey after the event found that 100% of participating farms felt that Open Farm Week should happen again, and was helpful for attracting new customers/visitors and increasing sales. The task force also helps strengthen strategic collaboration among the [Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing](#), [Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets](#), [Agriculture & Culinary Tourism Council](#), and [DigInVT](#).

## Improve Nonprofit and Private Sector Marketing Capabilities

**GOAL 25** A [Communications & Marketing Community of Practice](#) formed

at the end of 2016 and will provide professional development and shared learning among communications, marketing, and outreach professionals working in the food system. These efforts will help amplify best marketing practices to effectively promote products, brands, and programs.




Nick Managan, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Becca Warren, Vital Communities, Nicole Fenton, Skillet Marketing & Design, and Shane Rogers, Green Mountain Farm-to-School discuss Rooted in Vermont marketing strategies.

# Meet Food System Employment Needs in Positive Work Environments

Coordinated Farm to Plate Network activities are helping prepare and educate students to meet the growing workforce needs of food system employers. The Network is working to help food system businesses improve their human resources management so that workers have better working conditions and wages, while the businesses have a competitive advantage to recruit the workers they need.

## Career Profiles and Pathways

**GOAL 16**  To encourage more young people to consider food systems careers, more than 20 students at *Hannaford Career and Technical Center* in Middlebury and *Montpelier High School* developed food system career profiles of professionals, including farmers, chefs, entrepreneurs, and more. The profiles highlight key skills that are useful for specific career pathways but also show that the “school of life” and following your passion are equally important in achieving your dreams. As farmer Richard Wiswall says, “Good judgment takes experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgments you make along the way.” The profiles will be sent to schools and guidance counselors throughout Vermont. In 2017, additional schools will be part of developing additional career profiles.



**FARMER**



**HERDSWOMAN**



**FOOD MANUFACTURER**



**BAKER**




**ENTREPRENEUR**




**PRODUCE MANAGER**

Photos: Heather Gray

## Workforce-Education-Business (WEB) Partnerships

**GOAL 16**  The Farm to Plate Network is building partnerships between workforce support organizations, educators, and businesses to help meet the labor needs of businesses and ensure that educational pathways link to jobs and careers. We’ve created a WEB in Washington County and will be starting WEB partnerships in additional counties in 2017.

**GOAL 17** 

“As a state we need to address workforce shortages if we want to continue to grow our farm and food economy.” — *Bruce Hennessey, Maple Wind Farm*

“As a restaurant owner, I spend a lot of time and resources on job training. I work closely with schools because I am dedicated to educating the next generation of food system workers. I hope more food system businesses will get involved with the education system, but we need to make this process easier. That’s why I’m working with the Farm to Plate Network to build partnerships between workforce support organizations, educators, and businesses throughout the state.” — *Crystal Maderia, Kismet Farm to Table Restaurant*



Crystal Maderia leads conversation at first WEB meeting in Washington County.



Photo: Green Mountain Technology + Career Center



Harvesting at Robtoy Farm, Jeffersonville, Vermont, summer 2016.

A new Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems summer learning program at *Green Mountain Technology and Career Center's* 40-acre *Robtoy Farm* started in Jeffersonville. The [Education and Workforce Development Working Group](#) visited in April and were pleased to learn that students are obtaining hands-on experience as well as classroom theory and opportunities for college credit. This is a great example of how career and technical education is becoming more interdisciplinary and providing flexible pathways toward a variety of food system careers.

## Workforce Training and Food Rescue

- GOAL 14**
- GOAL 15**
- GOAL 18**

Innovative collaborations have emerged between Vermont's nutrient management, food security, and workforce development communities. This year, *Salvation Farms* launched the [Vermont Commodity Program](#)—a food hub for Vermont surplus crops operating alongside a workforce development program. The new hub, located in

Winooski, pairs post-harvest handling experience with job training, including transferable industry-recognized certifications, and general job-readiness skills.



Photo: Salvation Farms

Bagging potatoes gleaned from Barber Farm in Jericho at Salvation Farms' facility in Winooski.

## Human Resources



The [Labor Cross-Cutting Team](#) completed an inventory and evaluation of human resource and labor management trainings available to food systems businesses in an effort to improve overall working conditions. While there are 30 different organizations in the state that offer some type of HR training or resources, there are some challenges: many programs are only available in Chittenden County, some programs are too time consuming for businesses to participate in, and several programs have to hire trainers from out of state. The literature on this topic demonstrates a positive correlation between the possession of HR management skills and profit returns on both vegetable and dairy farms, so it's essential that businesses have better access to HR and labor management training.



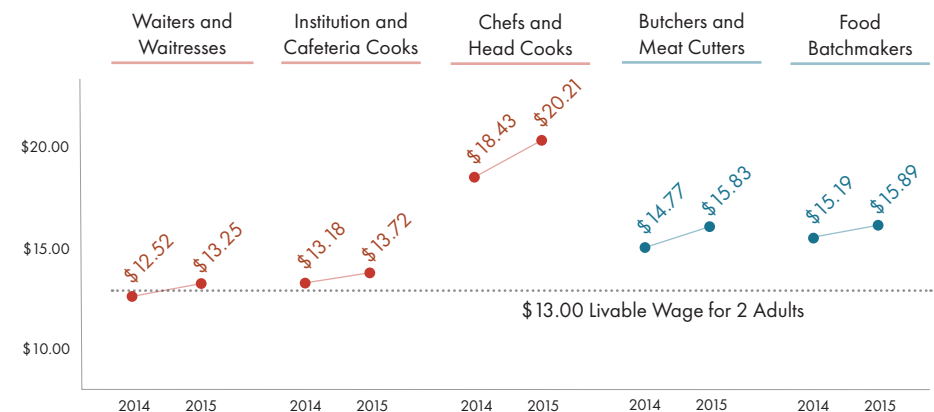
## Wages



Many food system job categories have been characterized as low wage. It is important to note that wages have been relatively stagnant throughout the U.S. economy for decades. For the first time since the Great Recession, many food system job categories, including retail jobs, saw wage increases from 2014 to 2015.



### Median Hourly Wages Increased for Many VT Food System Jobs



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics.

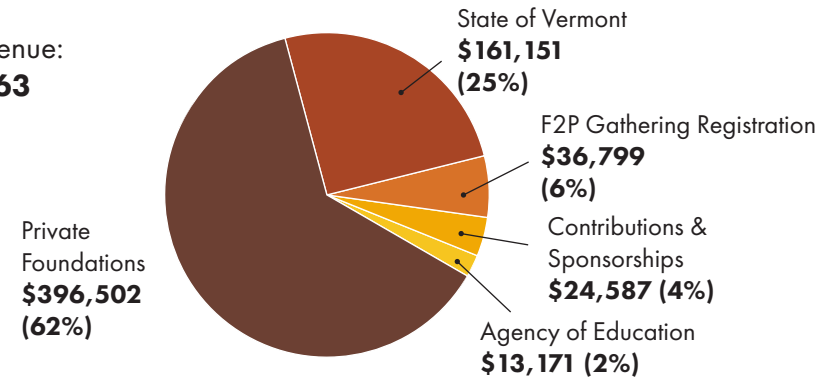
# Farm to Plate Investment Program Financial Report

**Actual Revenue and Expenses** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016 (FY16)

Revenue	
Private Foundations	\$396,502
State of Vermont	\$161,151
F2P Gathering Registration	\$36,799
Contributions and Sponsorships	\$24,587
Agency of Education (federal funds)	\$13,171
Other Revenue	\$6,152
<b>Total Revenue Received</b>	<b>\$638,363</b>
Expenses	
F2P General Operations	\$65,704
F2P Personnel	\$294,191
F2P Projects	
Farm to Plate Network Meetings/Gathering	\$72,903
Working Group/Task Force Chair Stipends	\$65,625
Local Food Campaign Development	\$55,648
Independent Grocers Project	\$22,390
F2P Network Grants	\$20,446
Food System Professional Learning Community (teachers)	\$13,830
Farm to Plate Website	\$12,602
Network Member Stipends	\$12,450
Slow Money Vermont	\$4,197
<b>Total F2P Project Operations</b>	<b>\$280,091</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$639,986</b>

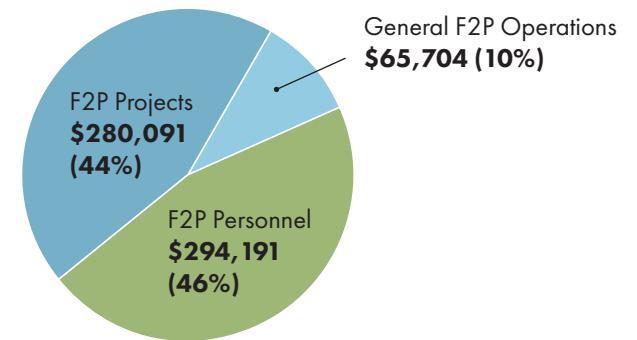
## Farm to Plate Investment Program Revenue

Total Revenue:  
**\$638,363**



## Farm to Plate Investment Program Expenses

Total Expenses:  
**\$639,986**



The VSJF and the Farm to Plate Network Steering Committee are extremely grateful to our funding partners who help to fund the work of Vermont Farm to Plate and are actively engaged in various projects within the Network. Their ongoing support allows us to find creative solutions to complex problems, and grow a stronger, healthier, more prosperous food system in Vermont and the region.

- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets •
- Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development •
- John Merck Fund • Henry P. Kendall Foundation •
- Vermont Community Foundation • Sandy River Charitable Trust •
- High Meadows Fund • Claneil Foundation •
- Keurig Green Mountain • Jane's Trust Foundation



## The VSJF serves as the administrator of the Vermont Farm to Plate Investment Program.

In 2009, during the Douglas Administration, the Vermont Legislature added the Vermont Farm to Plate Investment Program to the VSJF's governing statute (10 V.S.A. § 330). The Legislature tasked the VSJF with conducting a public engagement process and writing a 10-year strategic plan for strengthening Vermont's food system. The Farm to Plate Strategic Plan was released in January, 2011 at the start of the Shumlin Administration.

In order to implement such an ambitious plan, VSJF launched the Farm to Plate Network in the Fall of 2011. Network activities seek to advance new ideas, fix bottlenecks, reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts, and open new markets for Vermont products in a coordinated fashion. The Network creates the space for strategic conversations across multiple stakeholders and audiences to make systematic food system change that no one organization can accomplish alone.

The VSJF serves as the "backbone" or Network Coordinator, supporting the work of Farm to Plate Network activities. To that end we support the Network by:

- » **Facilitating Network wide communication** — The Farm to Plate website, newsletter, and group meetings, events, and list-servs provide new and ongoing opportunities for communication and collaboration



"Because of an increased level of collaboration it is no longer just our organization on its own, but a group that consists of professionals from other organizations that can bring entirely new perspectives and ideas."

— *Network Survey Respondent*

"As a public health agency, The Vermont Department of Health recognizes the importance of moving upstream to address the many factors that impact health and wellbeing beyond what happens in the doctor's office. It is essential that we engage with all sectors, including the food system. F2P is providing a valuable platform to make those connections, share information, deepen our understanding of the issues, and forge new collaborations."

— *Joan Marie Misek, Vermont Department of Health*

- » **Tracking the results of our activities using the Results Based Accountability framework** — The Farm to Plate Network uses Results-Based Accountability as a shared measurement framework to track progress on the 25 goals of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan. Our dynamic data visualization system is unique in the country and shows positive and negative trends for over 100 indicators.
- » **Helping to secure additional philanthropic funding support for the overall effort** — A combination of Vermont General Fund and philanthropic foundation support provides necessary funding to advance high impact projects designed to increase jobs and economic activity in Vermont's food system and improve access to healthy local food for all Vermonters (especially low income Vermonters).

### How are We Doing? 2016 Network Survey Results

To assess how VSJF is performing as the "backbone" for the Farm to Plate Network, we periodically survey Network members. Here's what they had to say:

- » **85%** say the Network is helping build new relationships and stronger relationships
- » **93%** say they value the networking opportunities
- » **85%** say that VSJF is effective in coordinating the Network







Click on any graphic or image in the document for more information!

## EXPLORE

# VERMONT'S FOOD SYSTEM

CONSUMER DEMAND



FARM INPUTS



FOOD PRODUCTION



FOOD PROCESSING



WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTION



RETAIL DISTRIBUTION



NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT



FOOD SECURITY



FOOD SYSTEM EDUCATION



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



FINANCING



RENEWABLE ENERGY



REGULATION



LEADERSHIP

