TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS......................................................................................................................... 2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.......................................................................................................................... 3
INTRODUCTION......................................................................................................................................... 6
Purpose of Study...................................................................................................................................... 6
Research Questions and Methods ........................................................................................................... 7
RESULTS .................................................................................................................................................. 8
Who Are the Actors in Vermont’s Local Foods System?...................................................................... 8
What is Motivating Actors? Driving Forces and Shared Values............................................................... 17
Communication, Collaboration and Coordination.................................................................................. 20
Challenges to Vermont’s Local Food System .......................................................................................... 24
Opportunities and Positive Forces .......................................................................................................... 33
RECOMMENDATIONS ............................................................................................................................ 36
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SAC RESEARCH........................................................................... 44
REFERENCES AND KEY STUDIES FOR FUTURE SAC FOOD SYSTEMS RESEARCH.............................. 46
APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................................ 49
Appendix A: Lists of People Interviewed and Surveyed .................................................................... 49
Appendix B: Telephone and E-mail Survey Instrument ....................................................................... 52
Appendix C: A Sampling of Local Foods Initiatives in Vermont, Summer 2008....................................... 53
Appendix D: Models and Studies From Other States ........................................................................... 60
The following people graciously contributed information and insights to this study: Terry Appleby, Bill Botzow, Melissa Bridges, Megan Camp, Jennifer Colby, Paul Costello, Barbara Duncan, India Burnett Farmer, Cheryl King Fischer, Jackie Folsom, Tom Gilbert, Christina Goodwin, Chris Gordon, Bay Hammond, Cynthia Hellman, Helen Labun Jordan, Tara Kelly, Megs Keir, Travis Marcotte, Allen Matthews, Tom McCauley, Robin McDermott, Pat McGovern, Beth Meacham, Peter Odierna, Bill Schubart, Mary Barosse Schwartz, Karen Schneider, Megan Sheradin, Amy Shollenberger, Theresa Snow, The staff of the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Tom Stearns, George Wright, Josie Weldon, Lini Wollenberg, Enid Wonnacott, and Melissa Zoerheide. Jennifer Nickerson and Cheryl King Fischer kindly provided editorial comments.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last five years have seen an explosion of initiatives in Vermont’s public and non-profit sectors to promote the production, distribution and consumption of locally or Vermont-produced foods. Yet interest in local food has grown so quickly that there is the risk that diverse groups are undertaking similar activities without coordination and knowledge of what others are doing.

In response to this rapid growth of new and existing local foods programs the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Council (SAC) identified as a research priority in 2008: “...to review current local food initiatives to coordinate opportunities for expanding production and consumption.” This study was conducted to provide an overview of existing and planned recent local foods initiatives in the state. Since other studies have addressed the perceptions of producers, processors and distributors, this study focuses on public, non-profit and grassroots efforts, as opposed to private and for-profit efforts.

The term “local” was defined as meaning the state of Vermont as well as neighboring portions of adjoining states and provinces. “Initiative” was intentionally defined quite broadly as any effort to promote the production, distribution and consumption of local foods in order to capture the full range of public, grassroots and non-profit efforts. “Recent” was defined as 2005 or after, including projects that are still in the planning phase.

The study aimed to address the following questions:

1. Who are the actors in the local foods landscape?
   a. What is motivating their efforts?
   b. What are their relationships with one another?
   c. Is there a need for increased collaboration, communication and coordination, and if so, what may be done to facilitate it?

2. What are the gaps in the local food system and the challenges to increasing the production and consumption of local foods?

3. What are the opportunities or leverage points for increasing the production and consumption of local foods?

Research methods included telephone or in-person interviews with 12 individuals from groups not currently represented on the Sustainable Agriculture Council; e-mail surveys sent to 11 organizations with representatives on the Sustainable Agriculture Council; a query for information on local foods initiatives sent to two statewide localvore listserves and other targeted groups; and participation in the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets (VAAFM) “Local Food Working Day” on April 7th, 2008, and Vermont Fresh Network’s “Scaling it Up” workshop on April 24th, 2008.
Results and Recommendations

The rapid growth of interest in local foods in the last few years is driven by: 1) consumer interests in food health and safety and in lessening the environmental impacts of a centralized food system; 2) high fuel prices; and 3) a shared commitment among Vermonters to maintain a working landscape and utilize agriculture as a sustainable economic development strategy.

The study organized stakeholders by whether they work at the statewide level, at a regional level or at a local/community level. Communication and collaboration currently vary a great deal depending on the level of operation. The non-profit organizations that function on a statewide level seem to be fairly satisfied with the amount that they are communicating and collaborating with one another, with the exception that with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets’ (VAAFM) increased focus on local foods there needs to be greater communication and clarification of responsibilities between the VAAFM and the non-profits.

The regional and community level groups are connecting, and often partnering, with the statewide organizations. However, the regional and community level groups are not all aware of or communicating with one another. For the community level groups this may only be a problem if they are re-inventing the wheel and missing opportunities to learn from one another. It becomes more of a problem for regional organizations when they are competing for the same limited funds, whether it is for the Innovative Kitchens grants or relationships with philanthropic foundations. While there is much to be gained from the potential efficiency and cultural appropriateness of creating regional solutions to regional problems, if organizations are developing infrastructure, they should be sure that all of the different regional infrastructure efforts are able to harmonize with one another if necessary – for example, they might agree to use the same software system to track distribution. Among the statewide organizations there was also the desire to collaborate to a greater extent with colleges, hospitals and corporate wellness programs and with the Vermont Land Trust. Some respondents expressed an interest in seeing greater involvement by the state and regional economic development organizations.

Stakeholders from each category, while aware of the additional time required for collaborative efforts, felt greater coordination of their efforts could be beneficial if approached thoughtfully and strategically. Key suggestions for collaboration included: 1) creating a central vehicle for sharing information; 2) convening a summit of major food and agriculture stakeholders; and 3) developing a vision and action plan to strengthen Vermont’s food system including specific policy recommendations, a funding strategy, and metrics for evaluating success.

Other key recommendations include:
I. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE IN VERMONT

1. Address high costs of fuel by continuing to research and supporting alternative on-farm fuel and energy sources

2. Facilitate access to and succession of farmland for beginning farmers
   a. Continue support for the New Beginning Farmer and Land Access and Land Link Programs
   b. Provide funding and technical assistance to Incubator Farms

II. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN VERMONT’S LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

3. Address gaps in food system infrastructure by supporting multi-farm distribution, processing and storage initiatives (food hubs and other multi-farm models)

4. Organize a summit for Vermont’s food and agriculture actors using a systems perspective to create a unified vision, policy platform, and action plan to develop Vermont’s food system, including metrics for success, to present to funders, investors, and federal representatives

5. Facilitate sharing of information and coordination among organizations
   a. Designate one organization or a partnership of several organizations to coordinate information and resources on the local foods system through a central searchable database
   b. Coordinate and make funding processes more transparent to reduce competition between projects

6. Research new methods for increasing access to local foods for Vermonters of all income levels while still providing farmers with a fair price; continue to support existing programs that increase access to local foods for Vermonters of all income levels, such as Farm-to-Family Coupons, Farm Shares, and Farm-to-School programs

7. Provide educational, marketing and technical assistance for producers and processors, especially for value-added products

8. Promote an understanding of nutrient/waste management as a foundational component of a sustainable/regenerative food system; Support the conservation of energy and building of soil fertility through cover crops, composting, and the re-capture of climate change gases

9. Complete a thorough inventory and analysis of Vermont’s food system including a literature review, economic analysis of the various food sectors, and mapping of all of the components of the food system infrastructure
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

Vermont’s food and agriculture landscape is changing. Consumers are demanding local foods in response to a number of social, environmental and health concerns and farmers and food producers are developing new ways to direct market their products. In response to these trends, one of the Sustainable Agriculture Council’s Action Priorities for 2008 was to: “Promote Vermont’s economy and food security through the production, storage, processing, distribution, and consumption of locally grown food products (Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 2008).” Joint Senate Resolution 63 specifically calls for increasing the direct sale of local farm products by 50% and to increase storage and processing capacity of locally grown farm products by 20% above current levels by 2012” (State of Vermont Senate Chambers, J.R.S. 63, 2008).

The last five years have seen an explosion of initiatives in Vermont’s public and non-profit sectors to promote the production, distribution and consumption of locally and Vermont-produced foods. Major initiatives span the range from the Local Foods in Government Initiative (Bill 38), the Intervale Center’s Food Basket, state support for Vermont Farm-to-School grants, and the renewed Vermont Farmers’ Market Association, to numerous new local food directories, localvore potluck suppers, discussion groups and canning classes. Yet interest in local food has grown so quickly that diverse groups are undertaking similar activities without coordination and knowledge of what others are doing.

In response to this rapid growth of new and existing local foods programs the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Council (SAC) identified as a research priority in 2008: “…to review current local food initiatives to coordinate opportunities for expanding production and consumption.” This study was conducted to provide an overview of existing and planned recent local foods initiatives in the state. Since other studies have addressed the perceptions of producers, processors and distributors, this study focuses on public, non-profit and grassroots efforts. As such, it builds upon the 2007 SAC research conducted by Marina Michahelles on local foods markets, with special attention to food co-ops and independent country stores, and the 2006 research by Dave Timmons on local food usage and production. It is complemented by additional 2008 SAC research on sustainable food sourcing and distribution by Rachel Schattman and mapping of the food system by Dan Erikson.¹

¹ All of these reports are available on the Center for Sustainable Agriculture’s website: http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture
Research Questions and Methods

This study aimed to address the following questions:

1. Who are the actors in the local foods landscape?
   a. What is motivating their efforts?
   b. What are their relationships with one another?
   c. Is there a need for increased collaboration, communication and coordination, and if so, what may be done to facilitate it?

2. What are the gaps in the local food system and the challenges to increasing the production, distribution, and consumption of local foods?

3. What are the opportunities or leverage points for increasing the production, distribution and consumption of local foods?

Research methods included telephone or in-person interviews with 12 individuals from groups not represented on the Sustainable Agriculture Council; e-mail surveys sent to 11 organizations with representatives on the Sustainable Agriculture Council; an internet search and a query for information on local foods initiatives sent to two statewide localvore listserves and other targeted groups; and participation in the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets “Local Food Working Day” on April 7th, 2008, and Vermont Fresh Network’s “Scaling it Up” workshop on April 24th, 2008. Phone conversations were also conducted with Karen Schneider of University of Vermont Extension and Cheryl King Fischer of the New England Grassroots Environment Fund, two other organizations interested in evaluating Vermont’s local foods initiatives.

The telephone interviews lasted from one to two hours and were conducted in the summer of 2008. Handwritten notes were taken of the conversations and then sent to the interviewees to ensure that their responses were transcribed accurately. The results of interviews and e-mail surveys were combined and analyzed through multiple coding and recoding.

Recommendations were developed by comparing the comments from the interviews and e-mail surveys to notes from the two workshops, research suggestions made to the SAC at its April and August 2008 meetings and prior studies on Vermont’s food system.

---

2 Two organizations, R.A.F.F.L. and the Lamoille County Conservation District, received e-mail surveys as telephone interviews were not possible.

3 The data for this study was gathered before the inception of the current economic crises which has considerably changed the funding landscape. If anything, the economic crisis has intensified the need for collaborative strategic planning and the creative sharing of information and resources between organizations.
Quotes from the interviews are interspersed throughout the report to provide examples, emphasize points where there was strong agreement or elaborate on a less common perspective. Respondents are identified with a code for anonymity.

Study Parameters:

The study was not intended to be comprehensive or capture all of the initiatives in the state, but rather to give a general overview of recent local foods efforts that would help the Sustainable Agriculture Council, the Legislature and funders in determining action and research needs for 2009. As such, we attempted to sample the diversity of Vermont’s geographic regions and the full range of types of initiatives. Because of the limited scope of the study, only a portion of the organizations involved in current initiatives were included in the telephone or e-mail surveys and the interviews were conducted with organizations that are not currently a part of the SAC. For the telephone and in-person surveys, an effort was made to interview people from each of Vermont’s different regions who function as “information nodes” in their regions and interact with the food system from multiple roles and could thus speak to the questions from multiple perspectives. Occasionally we chose to interview people connected with more recent initiatives over more well established organizations.

The term “local” was defined as meaning the state of Vermont as well as neighboring portions of adjoining states and provinces. “Initiative” was intentionally defined quite broadly in order to capture the full range of public, grassroots and non-profit efforts devoted to promoting the production, distribution and marketing of local foods. “Recent” was defined as 2005 or after, including projects that are still in the planning phase.

RESULTS

WHO ARE THE ACTORS IN VERMONT’S LOCAL FOODS SYSTEM?

Food systems are composed of the interdependent units involved in the production, processing, distribution (marketing, storage, transporting and sourcing) and consumption of food. Figure 1 illustrates some of the major components of a local food system. Actors and initiatives in Vermont’s food system were explored from both a geographic perspective, considering their location in the state, and from a food systems perspective, considering their location in the food system. Table 1 categorizes the public and non-profit actors in Vermont’s food system divided by whether they operate at a statewide level, a regional level or a community/local level.
Figure 1. Components of a local food system
Table 1. Summary of Types of Public and Non-Profit Food System Actors by Level of Spatial Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statewide Level</th>
<th>Regional Level</th>
<th>Community / Local Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center for Sustainable Agriculture</td>
<td>Regional Planning Commissions</td>
<td>Farmers markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelburne Farms</td>
<td>Regional Land Trusts</td>
<td>Discussion and book groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOFA-VT</td>
<td>Solid Waste Districts</td>
<td>Farm-to-School projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Market Association</td>
<td>School Districts</td>
<td>Localvore pods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Foodbank Agriculture Programs</td>
<td>Economic Development Agencies</td>
<td>Seed saving groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT Valley Neighboring Coop Association</td>
<td>Natural Resource Conservation Districts</td>
<td>College and business efforts to purchase local foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Vermont</td>
<td>Southern Vermont Meat Processing Project</td>
<td>Community gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Fresh Network</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local Foods Cafes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency of Agriculture and other VT State Agencies and Departments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Incubator Farms and Food Hubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vermont Farm Bureau</td>
<td>1. Hardwick Center for an Agricultural Economy</td>
<td>Peak Oil Groups, Town Energy Committees and Relocalization groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund</td>
<td>2. Foodworks at Two Rivers</td>
<td>Corporate wellness programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVM Extension</td>
<td>3. The Intervale Center</td>
<td>Community wellness committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont F.E.E.D.</td>
<td>4. Vital Communities</td>
<td>Community kitchens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHCB Farm Viability Program and service providers</td>
<td>5. R.A.F.F.L.</td>
<td>Permaculture groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVM Food Systems Leadership and Policy Institute</td>
<td>6. VT Food Bank Kingsbury Farm</td>
<td>Plant-a-row and gleaning groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility</td>
<td>7. Manchester Green Agriculture Initiative</td>
<td>CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Land Trust</td>
<td>8. Brattleboro Peak Oil Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Trade projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 A number of organizations such as the Intervale Center, Shelburne Farms and Vital Communities serve their primary regions but also offer advice and consulting services on a statewide level.
The public and non-profit actors spearheading recent local foods initiatives include both well-established organizations that have created new projects focused on local foods, as well as new players on the scene. The well-established organizations with new projects include research and advocacy organizations – such as the University of Vermont Food Systems Leadership and Policy Institute, Rural Vermont (recent policy efforts), and Foodworks at Two Rivers (Central Vermont Food System Council) – as well as state agencies and departments – such as the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets’ (VAAFM) new mobile processing units and the Department of Health’s “Eat for Health” messages. New players on the local foods landscape include the localvores, community wellness committees, Peak Oil groups, the most recent food hubs (organizations that provide marketing and distribution assistance to multiple farms or businesses) incubator farms (organizations that provide land for lease to beginning farmers), a discussion group at the Agency of Natural Resources, The Vermont Food Bank’s new Agricultural Resource Programs, Regional Planning Commissions, Natural Resources Conservation Districts and other municipal groups and venture capitalists such as the Investors Circle and Slow Money investors who see sustainable development as the wave of the future.

Using our broad definition of initiative, there are over 100 recent and planned projects concerning production, consumption and distribution of local foods in Vermont. (See Appendix C: A Sampling of Recent Local Foods Initiatives for a list of local food initiatives.) Although there is a great deal of overlap among categories, initiatives have been roughly divided into the categories of Production and Food Security; Processing; Transportation and Sourcing; Consumer Education, Marketing and Promotion and Fair Trade; Composting, Energy and Nutrient Management; Knowledge Production and Research and Policy.

Although this is not a comprehensive inventory, it appears that the greatest activity among all players has been in the areas of distribution (including marketing, sourcing, and transportation) and education and marketing. This includes efforts by statewide organizations such as the Agency of Agriculture’s local foods purchasing program, Vermont Fresh Network’s Scaling it Up! workshops and matchmaking events that bring together food producers, distributors and institutional purchasers.

At the regional level, Regional Planning Commissions, School Districts, Solid Waste Districts, and regional land trusts are making connections between their missions and maintaining a vibrant and sustainable local food system. These regional organizations are increasingly partnering with food and agriculture organizations on composting projects, Farm-to-School efforts and conservation of farmland. As an example, Action Brattleboro Area (CABA) has been exploring the potential of a USDA-inspected slaughterhouse and meat processing facility to provide employment and economic development through supporting livestock farming Southeastern Vermont.
**Food Hubs and Incubator Farms: Filling Gaps in Regional Infrastructure**

**Figure 2. Existing and Planned Incubator Farms and Food Hubs**

Food hubs and incubator farms are emerging as key players at the regional level. The term “food hub” is used in this report to describe a wide range of regional and community-based efforts to address gaps in the food system infrastructure. Food hubs serve the distribution, marketing and processing needs of multiple farmers, processors and other food providers in a particular region. Their efforts can include employer CSA’s, local food guides and other marketing tools and shared processing facilities and shipping.

“Incubator farms” provide access to farmland for beginning farmers. By leasing land, sharing equipment and providing technical assistance, incubator farms give beginning farmers the opportunity to develop their businesses, build a customer base and hone skills before investing in land and equipment.
Figure 2 locates the existing and planned incubator farms and food hubs in their respective regions. The state has been divided into six section or regions (northwest, northeast, central west, central east, southwest and southeast) to take into account that the Green Mountains effectively divide the state in half, contributing to the challenges of east to west transportation. The regional hubs and incubator farms are in different phases of evolution. Some, such as The Intervale Center are well established (red), others are still in the planning and research phase (yellow), while others fall somewhere in between (orange). Table 2 describes the regional food hubs and incubator farms and some of their activities.

In some communities there is considerable overlap between food hubs and localvore or other citizen initiatives. Community groups that are providing substantial assistance to farmers and consumers through largely localvore or other volunteer-run efforts that have not been included on the map above include the Huntington Historical Society and Community Trust, Hinesburg Buy Local Task Force, the Mad River Valley Localvore pod, Addison County Relocalization Network and L.A.C.E. (Local Agricultural Community Exchange) in Barre (See the section on Localvores and Appendix C for more information on these efforts).
### Table 2. Descriptions of Food Hubs and Incubator Farms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foodworks at Two Rivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founded in 1987 to address the root causes of childhood hunger through hands-on food and gardening education, and a founding member of VT F.E.E.D., Foodworks is currently a driving force for strengthening Central Vermont’s food system through the following programs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Farm to Table (distribution program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Foodbank Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Food, Garden and Nutrition Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Central Vermont Food System Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vital Communities: Valley Food and Farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vital Communities fosters the relationships that support agriculture in the Upper Connecticut River Valley of Vermont and New Hampshire. They bring together consumers, farmers, chefs, processors, schools, grocers, distributors, and others through publications, events and community partnerships. Examples of their programs include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Flavors of the Valley and Feast in the Field culinary events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Valley Food and Farm Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Farm to Dartmouth Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Fresh Connections Workplace Benefit Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hardwick Center for an Agricultural Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founded in 2004 by a group of entrepreneurs in the Northeast Kingdom, CAE conducts research into value-added product opportunities; provides consumer education and outreach and technical training for farmers on processing, branding, and marketing. They are building infrastructure for shared processing, storage, and marketing. The Center’s current and proposed programs include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Hardwick Area Eco-Industrial Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Vermont Food Venture Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Atkins Field Agricultural Education and Resource Center (Incubator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Hardwick Community Gardens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vermont Foodbank Kingsbury Farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The state’s largest hunger relief organization, the Vermont Foodbank, will purchase the Kingsbury Community Farm from the coalition of the Mad River Valley Localvore Project, the Mad River Valley Planning District, Friends of the Mad River, and Vermont Land Trust in 2009. They intend to use the farm to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> House the Vermont Foodbank’s Agricultural Resources programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Feed hungry Vermonters with food produced on the farm and shared through nearby food distribution centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Provide an “Education, Resource, and Community Center” to educate people about hunger and food security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Provide land for an edible forest garden and walking path</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Intervale Center**

Founded in 1986 by Will Raap of Gardener’s Supply, the Intervale’s goals are to grow viable farms; preserve productive agricultural land; increase access to local, organic food, compost, and other soil amendments; and protect water quality through organic waste management and stream bank restoration. Their programs supporting the local food system include:

- Agricultural Development Services, including the Farms Program (incubation), Food Hub and Food Basket and Farm Viability Success on Farms programs
- Healthy City Youth Farm
- Intervale Compost Products
- Food Enterprise Center

**R.A.F.F.L. (Rutland Area Farm and Food Link)**

R.A.F.F.L. is directed and supported by a diverse range of farmers, community members, and agricultural support agencies. The organization’s focus is on strengthening the regional food system so that all members of greater Rutland population have access to fresh, healthy, locally-produced food. Current and planned initiatives include:

- Research and planning for processing and storage facilities to serve the region’s farmers (planned food hub)
- Farm to Institution Local Purchasing Project
- Annual Farmers’ Gathering
- Community Farm and Agricultural Resource Center (Incubator farm)

**Brattleboro Food Security Center**

Post Oil Solutions, a grassroots organization in the Brattleboro area, is launching a Food Security Center to provide locally grown food for people of low income, to organize community gardens in low income communities, to initiate an "Independence Garden" campaign, and to build community across class and race. Current programs include:

- A gleaning project
- Community gardens
- Discussions with community members and groups about starting new community gardens and container gardens
- Working with the Vermont Extension Youth Horticulture Project to find more ways to involve youth in the project.

**Manchester Green Sustainable Agriculture Initiative**

As a result of participating in the Vermont Council on Rural Development’s Creative Economies process, residents of the greater Manchester area identified the need for a local processing center that would offer growers an FDA-approved kitchen for processing food and would also support marketing and educational initiatives. They are currently working to locate an appropriate property to lease for growers, with additional space for community gardens. They also sponsor other efforts to promote local foods and agriculture, including an annual pumpkin carving contest an on-line resource guide (planned) and a harvest dinner by local chefs. Currently efforts are coordinated by the Manchester and the Mountains Regional Chamber of Commerce.
**Localvore Pods and Other Grassroots Community Initiatives**

Vermont was one of the earliest states in the nation to adopt the concept of a “localvore” challenge. Localvore challenges ask participants to pledge to source the bulk of their diets from a limited geographic range for a specific period that is appropriate for the participant. Initially intended as an exercise to help consumers discover local food sources and think about their relationship with their centralized food system, communities throughout Vermont rapidly adopted the concept and expanded its goals. Just three years after the first challenge, localvore groups around the state have created on-line farmers markets, organized dozens of social events bringing community members together to celebrate local foods and farmers and hosted workshops on food storage, preparation and preservation.

There are currently at least 12 localvore groups (also called “pods”) and two community-based task forces focused on strengthening and supporting community food systems (see Table 3) as well as a number of smaller, more loosely organized grassroots efforts. These more loosely organized efforts run the gamut from a group of neighbors in Salisbury who come together for workshops on backyard poultry and bee-keeping, to a network of people who are saving and growing out heirloom and open-pollinated seeds with an eye to the role that regionally adapted varieties play in ensuring the security of a local food system.

**Table 3. Localvore Pods and Local Foods Task Forces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Addison County Localvores</th>
<th>8. Rutland Area Localvores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Champlain Valley Eat Local</td>
<td>9. Southeastern VT Eat Local Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Central Vermont Localvores</td>
<td>10. Springfield Localvores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mad River Valley Localvores</td>
<td>11. UVM-Slade Hall Localvores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Northeast Kingdom Localvores</td>
<td>12. Upper Valley Localvores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center Localvores</td>
<td>13. Windham Localvores / Brattleboro Peak Oil Solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the types of projects coordinated by these volunteer-run groups include:

- Harvest festivals
- Bicycle tours of farms (with Vermont Bicycle Coalition and Rural Vermont)
- On-line farmers’ markets and resource guides
- Locally grown guides

---

5 As early as 2000, Barbara Duncan, Director of the Vermont Earth Institute, and writer Noel Perrin challenged themselves to only eat foods produced within 100 miles of their homes. Residents of the Upper Valley followed with the first community-wide localvore challenge in 2005.
• Book discussion series
• Canning workshops
• Winter farmers' markets
• Community and school gardens
• Collaborative projects with energy committees
• Creating a localvore cafe/retail space for local crafts
• Community potlucks and eat local challenges

**Geographic Gaps**

Both volunteer-run initiatives and formal organizations working on local foods issues seem to be distributed unevenly throughout the state. Essex, Franklin and Bennington Counties appear to have relatively fewer local foods initiatives than the northwestern and central counties despite that fact that agriculture is still an important part of the economy and culture for each of these counties (see also Erickson, 2008).

**WHAT IS MOTIVATING ACTORS? DRIVING FORCES AND SHARED VALUES**

The principle reasons stated for engaging in local foods efforts include:

- Strengthening the local economy and supporting farmers by keeping purchases local
- Concerns about food health, safety, and traceability
- Desire to conserve fuel and energy by transporting food shorter distances
- Ensuring food security and better nutrition for all and providing local residents with local food

- **Strengthening the local economy and supporting local farmers**

Much of the focus of recent local foods initiatives is on creating and supporting local businesses by keeping dollars circulating within the local economy. Increasingly, agriculture and food production are seen as important paths for community development. Paul Costello, Executive Director of the Vermont Council on Rural Development reported that in the Council's work with local communities there is always interest in some type of agriculture or food related project:

*Everywhere we go people are interested in food and agriculture projects. They are starting farmer’s markets, developing and enhancing farmer’s markets, finding ways to create links between farmers markets and the arts, they are starting CSA’s and community gardens. We may go into a community to start a community revitalization project and the next thing you know they are starting a community garden. Agriculture and local foods are widely seen as vehicles for community development and revitalization. – Paul Costello*
Local foods efforts can also contribute to community development by helping to alleviate poverty and get people started in small businesses. Community garden efforts throughout the state help families reduce their food bills, freeing up money to cover other expenses. For example, the Pownal community garden is hoping to introduce vertical and container gardening to a mobile home park. Similarly, the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) has a program helping African Refugee women increase family income and integrate into the larger culture by raising vegetables in the Intervale and selling them at farmers markets in Chittendon County.

Respondents also touted the social benefits from an increased sense of community that comes from direct marketing and neighbors working together, as well as the environmental benefits from preserving open lands. Interview respondents commented that they see these efforts as rebuilding and improving upon a more integrated food system that existed in Vermont prior to World War II.

[People] are disenchanted with the global food system and global economy and want to re-invigorate vibrant, local communities. .... This isn’t about creating new things, it is about remembering about how our communities used to be, taking some of the ideas that worked and leaving the rest that didn’t work so well. R21

- **Concerns about food health and safety and a desire to know food producers**

Recent *Salmonella* and *E. coli* scares and recalls of tainted school beef have highlighted the fact that it is often difficult to trace food products from the centralized food system back to their sources. Respondents cited consumer concerns about food safety as one of the principle driving forces motivating food buyers to source their food from local farms. People want to know where their food comes from and how it was produced.

*The Food Service Director at the Randolph Elementary School was very enthusiastic about continuing [with the farm-to-school project], especially after having to return beef from the beef recall in 2008. She is now working with area farmers to expand the amount of local food served in her cafeteria. R12*

Frequently local food is equated with high nutritional quality because it often comes in whole or minimally processed forms. Whole grains, meat, dairy and produce are more nutrient dense than the highly processed packaged foods that often derive the bulk of their calories from sugars and refined carbohydrates.

*Health is a big driving force. There is much more knowledge about what you are eating and where it is grown. People are more health conscious in general. The Bennington Hospital’s*
wellness program has played a role in that in terms of educating citizens about the effects of obesity and high blood pressure, etc...R4

By providing access to local foods at their businesses Vermont employers and health care providers are recognizing the potential health benefits from eating whole foods. Vital Communities’ Fresh Connections is an employee wellness benefit program conducted with business owners in the Upper Valley and Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center’s Cancer Research Center. The Intervale works closely with Fletcher Allen Hospital and R.A.F.F.L. is exploring similar relationships with The Vermont Country Store and Rutland Regional Medical Center.

- Desire to conserve fuel and energy by transporting food shorter distances

Shortening the distance that food travels from farm to consumer was also seen as an important step in helping Vermont communities reduce their dependence on oil. Vermont has at least 15 Peak Oil groups, and over 50 municipal energy committees. Many of these are actively involved in promoting local foods efforts as a means of conserving limited natural resources and increasing community and regional self-sufficiency.

If we are in the midst of an energy crisis and are too dependent on imported food, then we are in trouble! We want to be sure that we have enough food to feed local people if there is a crisis. R7

The primary goal is to shift our dependence away from imports to locally produced items in order to conserve environmental resources and protect ourselves. It has the dual purpose of energy independence - growing our own fuel and energy sources, and educating consumers and growing and supporting the local food system. R3

- Ensuring food security and better nutrition for all, feeding local residents local food

The idea that all Vermonters should have equal access to locally produced foods regardless of income levels was a strongly shared value among respondents. However, they also recognize the need to ensure access to sufficient, healthy local food for people of all income levels must be balanced with farmers’ need to receive a fair price for their products. Programs such as the Department of Health and NOFA-VT’s installation of EBT (electronic benefits transfer) machines at farmers markets, Farm-to-Family Coupons for WIC participants, subsidized CSA shares through NOFA-VT’s Farm Share and Senior Farm Share program, Farm-to-School efforts and the Vermont Foodbank’s agriculture and gleaning programs are seen as important steps in improving access to fresh, nutritious local foods for Vermonters of all income levels.
COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

➢ **Widespread familiarity with statewide organizations**

In general, groups at the state, regional and community levels are aware of the local foods work of the statewide organizations. The regional and local groups frequently turn to the statewide groups for advice, support or to co-sponsor projects. The organizations cited most frequently by the various respondents at all levels as touch points for collaboration were:

- NOFA-VT
- The Center for Sustainable Agriculture / UVM Extension
- Vital Communities/ Valley Food & Farm
- Foodworks at Two Rivers
- Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets (VAAFM)

- VT F.E.E.D.
- The Intervale Center
- Rural Vermont
- Shelburne Farms
- VT Fresh Network

➢ **Statewide organizations communicate with one another**

The statewide organizations are well-informed of one another’s work and communicate with one another. However, the majority of respondents from statewide organizations indicated a desire for a centralized mechanism for sharing information between themselves, such as a listserv where they can post information about projects, research, upcoming events and policy meetings on a regular (but not too frequent) basis.

Because they share similar missions, there is often overlap between projects initiated by the statewide organizations. In order to avoid this, it would be helpful for the statewide organizations to determine who will be responsible for specific actions and projects in order to reduce duplication of efforts and alleviate competition for funds. In particular, with the expanded efforts of the VAAFM’S Buy Local programs, there needs to be clarity between the tasks and roles the Agency of Agriculture Farms and Markets will be responsible for and those that the other statewide non-profits will assume.

> Rather than improving collaboration, I would say a good focus would be to identify each group’s identity and role in the food system. R2

The philanthropic and investment communities also see the need for coordination and a systematic approach. Delineation of roles and tasks could be part of a larger broad-based strategic planning process for Vermont’s food system (see Recommendation 4).

---

6 Respondents often referred to the Center for Sustainable Agriculture and UVM Extension simultaneously in their comments.
Lower levels of communication and collaboration among regional and community organizations

In contrast, the regional and community groups are not as aware of other local and regional efforts. This is not surprising given that most of the local initiatives are quite new and are usually volunteer-driven, but it highlights a need for a central clearinghouse or information hub through which local groups can learn from and connect with one another, so as not to “re-invent the wheel.”

The Center for Sustainable Agriculture could bring all of the localvore groups together and help them, they could ask the localvores what they need to move forward and facilitate that discussion and help coordinate efforts. The localvore groups are here to stay, but as volunteers, we burn out and the Center for Sustainable Agriculture can provide resources, facilitation, and support. R3

The localvore pods are an exception in that they do communicate with one another and have made a concerted effort to discuss how much they want to coordinate their efforts and share resources. They have organized at least four statewide summits or gatherings for all of the pods specifically to learn from one another’s experiences. While many of the pods maintain their own websites, they also share one central website that collates information about localvore activities around the state: http://www.localvoreproject.org/State/ and have two listserves: one that is open and one for pod organizers. This level of collaboration may be facilitated by the fact that the pods’ projects to this point have been fairly low-budget, relying primarily on contributions and in-kind donations from members and residents in their towns and villages, rather than competing for grants.

The local or regional groups mentioned with the most frequency by study respondents were the localvore pods, Vital Communities Valley Food and Farm program (which also provides services to smaller organizations), the Hardwick Center for an Agricultural Economy and R.A.F.F.L..

While regional and community-based groups may not be aware of other community level groups in distant regions of the state, they are finding creative ways to collaborate with non-profit organizations within their own regions and communities. Examples of local non-profits that are engaging with regional and community-based local foods group include St. Johnsbury Food Co-op, the Huntington Historical and Community Trust, Friends of the Mad River, and the Thetford Energy Committee and Recreation Department and the Mettowee-Poultney Natural Resource Conservation District.

Of all of the types of groups, the newest regional food hubs seem to be in the least communication with one another. This may be due to a combination of the geographic distance between the groups and the fact that as organizations that are still in their start up phases and largely dependent on volunteers they have limited time and resources.
Rutland and R.A.F.F.L. feels a long way away from Hardwick and Brattleboro seems like it is more a part of Massachusetts sometimes. [...] A big limitation is cost—working in a small non-profit, we just do not have loose money around to facilitate visits with colleagues. Everything is tied to programs, if something is not explicitly tied to a program then we do not have the money for it so we are not doing all of the networking and professional development that we could. R21

However, coordination between the various regional efforts can be particularly important for the existing and planned food hubs since they are a) seeking to (re) build food system infrastructure and b) are often competing for the same funding resources. While there is much to be gained by creating regionally appropriate solutions to regional problems, organizations developing infrastructure should be sure that all of the different regional infrastructure components can function in harmony with one another when necessary. For example, participants in VT Fresh Network’s Scaling it Up! April workshop identified a need for computer systems to track distribution. If the different regional food hubs were to use the same tracking software they could coordinate information across regions when necessary, yet still maintain their own unique identities.

- **Desire for increased collaboration with specific groups**

Respondents expressed a desire to collaborate more with particular organizations and agencies on local foods efforts. These include:

- State Agencies, especially the Departments of Tourism and Marketing and the Department of Economic Development
- Regional Economic Development Councils
- Colleges, including the Vermont Law School on policies to support a sustainable local food system
- Hospitals and corporate Wellness Programs
- The various land trusts, including the Vermont Land Trust

- **Need for a centralized, interactive information hub**

Respondents from all three spatial levels shared a desire for one organization to be responsible for centralizing and coordinating information about local foods efforts in the state.

*I think it’s confusing for people to have to go to multiple different websites to get information. It would be helpful to have just one information hub that would be run through the state or the localvores. I don’t know how that would happen, but I worry about us getting into a situation...*
where information is so fragmented and you have to go to multiple websites to get information.  
R3

It would, however, be really nice to see a group like the Sustainable Agriculture Council initiate a comprehensive review of what is happening every year in the state - sort of an annual compendium that concentrates all of the newsletters and information. It could be a website with a searchable database.  
R21

The Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets currently has an excellent and extensive updated listing of local foods resources but it is new enough that people may not yet be aware of it. VT Fresh Network also has been compiling data on the food system infrastructure and currently has the GIS capacity to integrate mapping into the data system. Some respondents suggested that the Center for Sustainable Agriculture could consolidate information on local foods efforts as well as provide support to localvore and other volunteer-run efforts. One of the above organizations or a partnership of a few of them would probably be the best host for an information hub.

- **Need for building bridges between types of food producers and advocates**

Finally, respondents expressed a desire to see food system planning that is broad-based and inclusive. All types of producers - large and small, organic and conventional, wholesale and direct-marketers – and their advocates need to be included in visioning and planning for the future of Vermont’s food system.

Strategic planning needs to include all producers. There has been a problem around concerns of alienating some producers when we talk about planning for the future. “We don’t want to talk about the future because then we will risk alienating someone.”  
R21

[We need to] open the lines of communication between folks that would not normally work with one another. We need to speak with one voice as much as we can while still honoring our differences and diversity.  
R11

We need models of all types of successful VT farms- both the larger scale and the smaller scale producers. There is a tremendous dynamism between the export economy and the local, home-scale economy and we cannot choose between the two, one over the other, without minimizing the success of both. Most of the land in Vermont is better suited for pasture than for row crops. We don’t want to end up working against each other, socially, culturally or politically, but rather we need to build alliances of businesses.  
R17

Building such a broad-based vision however, requires that stakeholder groups or facilitators first identify shared core values, language and definitions for terms such as “sustainable” and “local.” Some of these terms have already been defined and adopted by broad coalitions (e.g.

---

8 Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund and Middlebury College are also doing food system mapping work.
the federal Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education or SARE program has a working
definition of sustainable agriculture), but there is a lack of popular understanding of these
definitions. Public education and outreach efforts to familiarize people with this language such
as frequent inclusion of definitions in publications and public forums could help to ensure that
different types of producers are speaking from a common understanding.

CHALLENGES TO VERMONT’S LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

Table 4. Key Challenges to Vermont’s Food System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Challenges to Vermont’s Local Food System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in food system infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Distribution issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Processing centers and slaughterhouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Marketing assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Access to high-speed internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High costs of fuel and energy, labor and inputs for farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access, price and succession of farmland for beginning farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of unified vision and coherent action plan and policy platform for creating a local food system among stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to local foods for Vermonters of all income levels, while maintaining a fair price point for farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational and technical assistance for producers and processors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and regulatory barriers to waste and nutrient management⁹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 illustrates the issues most frequently mentioned as challenges to a strong local food system in Vermont. While not listed in the table, time was mentioned as a constraint by a number of respondents. This included competition with personal time for volunteer-run initiatives; the financial cost of time for food service providers to engage with Farm-to-School activities; the time it takes for organizations to build trust and relationships with food producers and other stakeholders; and the time it takes consumers to prepare local foods.

⁹ Although waste, nutrient and carbon management was only mentioned by two of the interview respondents, members of the Sustainable Agriculture Council identified it as a research priority in the April and August 2008 meetings so it is included here.
through home-cooking, canning, and freezing. Consumers lack of knowledge about how to prepare whole foods and lack of awareness of the potential benefits of a strong local food system were also cited as important challenges.

Other challenges mentioned with less frequency included: federal subsidies and lack of true cost accounting for the centralized and industrialized food system; limited access to start-up funds for producers and processors; inadequate school budgets for purchasing local foods; a lack of integration between food systems initiatives and municipalities; regulatory barriers to local processing; and access and cost of health insurance for farmers and consumers.

*If you can take the burden of providing health care off of very small businesses so people can take the risk starting, growing and running small businesses and be able to hire a few workers, that would be very helpful for stimulating growth in the agricultural economy. Farming, like any business with heavy equipment is dangerous. If we can offer good, reliable health care for small business and make them immediately eligible for Catamount without the 1 year lock-out period that would be helpful.*  R4

**Gaps in infrastructure**

Gaps in the food system infrastructure are perceived as the most significant challenge to a strong local food system in Vermont. This perception is supported by a number of other studies (Timmons 2006a and 2006b; Michahelles, 2007; VT Beef Producers Association, 2007). Of these, distribution issues were cited most often, followed by the need for processing centers, slaughterhouses, storage facilities and marketing assistance to producers and processors. Uneven access throughout the state to high-speed internet connections was also mentioned as an impediment for conducting business, marketing products and communicating among volunteer-led initiatives.

**Gaps in local distribution system**

The need for a distribution system that works efficiently and fairly for farmers, buyers and distributors alike was the most frequently cited challenge to Vermont’s local food system.

*Most food markets and grocery stores or restaurants currently purchase food from large distributors, who get the food from large producers. Lots of middlemen are included, but the system is very streamlined and there are just a handful of distributors. The challenge for building a more local food system is that we need a more local distribution system that would maintain that convenience and efficiency. A system that distributes local foods, but that mimics the more centralized system so a grocery buyer does not have to deal with ordering from hundreds of little farms.*  R7

Entrepreneurs and the regional food hubs can fill this role by consolidating, packaging, marketing and/or transporting products from multiple farms from a central location, but they need start-up technical and financial assistance.
Need for more processing centers and slaughterhouses
The need for processing and slaughterhouse facilities has been well documented and the state is beginning to work on this through the mobile processing units and the Innovative Kitchen grants. The need exists at both the regional level and at the community or neighborhood level:

But the processing facilities need to be regionalized, two Innovative Kitchens are not going to be enough, we really need six in my opinion, but even four would be better than two. [...] R22

I am not a small farmer, I am a tiny farmer. But I service a tremendous amount of people through my farm—we also have to make it possible for small farmers to have small scale infrastructure. [Another] farmer and grain grower and I got together to figure out what we had to do to create our own grain network, but it was costly. It took a lot of time, energy, and self-education. [...] There should be funds for small-scale collective infrastructure and all of our processing, instead of just these huge efforts for large scale farmers. But it takes money, time, labor and education to make these networks happen. R3

Need for storage facilities
Similarly, respondents called for storage facilities at both a regional scale, such as warehouses at food hubs, and at a community scale, such as church freezers and community root cellars.

...there are no common cold storage lockers for storing large amounts of frozen food. So how can we improve communal food storage and extend the season? That’s an important question we need to be asking. R4

Need for marketing assistance
Marketing assistance for farmers and food processors was mentioned repeatedly as an important gap or need. Often farmers or food producers lack the skills, time or resources to advertise and promote their products as well as they could. With such assistance farmers and producers of specialty products would be better able to take advantage of consumer interest in locally produced food and the Vermont brand. Marketing assistance is currently available to farmers and food producers through the Agency of Agriculture and some of the statewide organizations, but it would be helpful to have a way of coordinating and centralizing some of these resources.

The legislature needs to allocate funds for such a program that would provide training and marketing advice for producers. Right now the Agency of Agriculture does some, the Department of Tourism does some, and Vermont Fresh Network does some, but they are all just doing pieces. There needs to be one person in one central place making sure that enough of this support is getting to everyone. One person to provide marketing assistance to people producing local food [would be helpful]. R11
High costs of fuel and energy for farmers

The current cost of fuel is a significant challenge for producers and distributors. This is compounded by additional costs of finding and keeping good labor, and other operational expenses. Combined, these factors make it difficult for both parties to make sufficient profit without increasing prices. Some farmers are finding ways to cope by working together:

*For example, a few small beef producers are collaborating on buying grain. If four to five people get together to purchase grain, then they are not making four to five individual trips to the grain mill.*  R4

But small scale efforts such as these could benefit greatly from more systemic solutions.

Price, access and succession of farmland for beginning farmers

Access to and expense of purchasing farmland for beginning farmers was the second most frequently mentioned challenge after distribution issues.

*We are losing farmers and farmland. New farmers cannot afford to purchase farm land because of the high prices of real estate. We need to keep farmland preserved in public trusts and provide incentives and financing to support new farmers.*  R7

Incubator farms and other community-based land purchases, such as the Mad River community’s purchase of Kingsbury Farm in collaboration with the VT Land Trust, can be important steps in helping to alleviate this problem. Cooperative farmland trusts present another alternative:

*For example, consumer cooperatives can purchase land as a farmland trust – members contribute the money to buy and preserve working organic farms and then lease the land out to farmers so the community owns the property and guarantees that it will be kept in productive use for perpetuity. Puget Sound Consumers Coop, where I used to work, did that.*  R19

Lack of a unified vision and coherent action plan and policy platform for creating a local food system among stakeholders

While policy-makers, advocates and entrepreneurs have many innovative ideas for how to strengthen Vermont’s food system, these have yet to be pulled together in one cohesive plan. Study respondents felt that the various stakeholders need to work together to collectively create a vision for Vermont’s local food system. This should be followed by an action plan for achieving the vision, including policy recommendations for the Legislature and metrics for measuring success. The plan should also include funding strategies for specific projects that can be shared with funders and used to leverage federal funds.
There is a really big network of people doing this work, but the local food system has not been pulled together in peoples’ minds yet as well as it might be…. We need clear articulation from leadership of where we need to go and how we are going to get there so we can have a shared sense of progress. R4

We need to undertake a rigorous and robust strategic planning for the state. Right now we do not have strong leadership from the state in terms of where agriculture in the state is going…. We have nothing to point to that says: “This is what we are all working towards right now” and you can’t set funding policies and priorities without that tangible goal. Strategic planning needs to include all producers. R21

Someone should go after major USDA grants for agricultural innovation; we should be looking for millions of dollars. There is plenty of room for someone to build consolidated support to bring significant funds into the state, but we need to have specifically defined projects. R17

The state is cutting its budget. One of my frustrations is that we [the various ag organizations] do not go all over and talk about these issues in the same way, if we were all to get together and ask for millions of dollars [it could help a lot]. R11

**Access to local foods for Vermonters of all income levels while maintaining a fair price point for farmers**

Individuals and organizations working on local foods initiatives face a number of challenges rooted in the national centralized food system and larger culture. These include a perception among the general public that locally produced foods are more expensive and thus less affordable than foods from the centralized food system, and a lack of consumer awareness of how to access and prepare local foods.

Access [to local foods] is also a challenge, but that is changing. Convenient access is another matter – buying local is not as convenient as the grocery store. R3

These issues in turn are related to the externalization of the true costs of agriculture and food production and a heavily subsidized food system at the national level. While many unprocessed local foods are not necessarily any more expensive than unprocessed mass-produced foods, prices charged by smaller-sized local farmers do tend to more accurately reflect all of the costs of inputs than those of the subsidized industrial food system. The high cost of fuel, inputs, workman’s compensation, distribution and marketing pose considerable challenges for Vermont farmers and other food-related businesses.

Price is a big challenge….It’s not clear to me if it is too hard for farmers to get the price that they need to be able to cover their expenses, or if it has to do with the consumer’s willingness to pay a certain amount, or if it is that in Vermont, we can’t grow large enough quantities to really make
While the short-term solution may be to increase and expand innovative programs that allow access to locally produced foods to Vermonters of all income levels, the long-term solution is to provide a living wage so that all Vermonters have sufficient disposable income to pay Vermont farmers a price that reflects the true value of their products.

- **Educational and technical assistance for producers and processors**

While the Food Venture Center is very helpful for food related businesses, because of the costs involved in travelling, it is difficult for business people in the southern reaches of the state to fully utilize the Center. If the regional food hubs, the state technical college or regional extension offices could provide some of the same services currently provided at the Food Venture Center they could mentor more entrepreneurs around the state. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board’s Farm Viability Program was cited as another excellent model for providing technical assistance to farmers. These programs and other subsidized technical assistance programs should be expanded given the high demand for their services.

*Subsidizing technical assistance for producers would also be helpful. Right now our farm economy does not pay well enough for farmers to be able to afford to hire people to help them with technical assistance to improve their systems. R21*

- **Knowledge of, and technical and regulatory barriers to, composting, nutrient, waste and carbon management**

Soil health and fertility is the foundation for agricultural productivity. Cover crops, manure management and composting increase the sustainability and regenerative capacity of a food system through the sequestration of carbon, protection of water quality and improvement of soil fertility. But farmers need technical assistance to incorporate composting and recycling efforts into their operations.

In the spring and summer of 2008, the Sustainable Agriculture Council began discussing the importance of conducting on-farm research on cover crops and composting. Currently dairy farmers own or lease the majority of agricultural land in the state. Yet many of the local foods efforts are targeted at produce farmers, meat producers and other specialty producers. Providing on-farm research and technical assistance to dairy farmers and other livestock producers would benefit this population as well as help Vermont move toward a regenerative food system.
Funding for research is huge, especially research on soil health and composting systems – that is a fundamental leverage point. [...] I include composting in production as it is really the beginning of building soil health and the basis for nutrient management, insect and weed management—soil health is a really important way to address fertility and pest problems. We can give farmers technical assistance to help them customize their composting operations for individual farm needs, helping them engineer inoculants for particular problems. We need the research to support this, and we must see composting as an integral part of production or else you will miss a huge window of opportunity to affect the farm system and food system as a whole. R21

Pasture and manure management can also provide important strategies for mitigating climate change.

When you are losing nitrous oxide from a manure pit, you are losing nutrients that we are trying to sequester and contributing to climate change. By addressing fertility and waste management, you are also addressing emissions and climate change. R21

Figure 3 illustrates how the key needs identified by study respondents fit into the food system.
Figure 3: Key needs identified by respondents from a systems perspective

**PRODUCTION**
- Access to land and capital for beginning farmers
- Access to technical and marketing assistance
- Support for Agricultural Education Programs

**PROCESSING**
- Funding for slaughterhouses, processing centers and storage facilities
- Technical and marketing assistance or processing and value-added businesses

**DISTRIBUTION: TRANSPORTATION**
- Improved distribution systems to move food from place to place

**DISTRIBUTION: SOURCING**
- Markets for local food in all communities

**DISTRIBUTION: MARKETING**
- Assistance for farmers and processors
- E-marketing systems
- High speed internet

**WASTE AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**
- Research and technical assistance on nutrient management, recycling waste and on-farm energy systems
- Legislation that promotes sustainable waste and nutrient management

**CONSUMPTION**
- Consumer education
- Access to local foods for all Vermonters at fair prices for farmers

**CHANGE AGENTS**
- Communication and Coordination

**PRODUCTION**
- Access to land and capital for beginning farmers
- Access to technical and marketing assistance
- Support for Agricultural Education Programs
**Who is working on these challenges?**

Table 5 identifies actors currently working on key challenges to Vermont’s food system. Some of these efforts are collaborative, some are independent. As stated earlier in this document, a critical step for developing a plan for Vermont’s food system will be to identify where projects overlap and where they would benefit from a collaborative effort.  

Table 5. Organizations Working on Key Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Challenges to the Vermont’s food system</th>
<th>Organizations currently working on challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gaps in food system infrastructure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Distribution issues</td>
<td>Foodworks, VT Fresh Network, The Intervale Center, Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Vital Communities, NOFA-VT, VT- FEED, Shelburne Farms, Agency of Agriculture, Rural VT, Localvores, all of the Food Hubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Processing centers and slaughterhouses</td>
<td>Agency of Agriculture, VT Beef Producers, VT Grass Farmers, Regional Economic Development Councils, Entrepreneurs, Food Hubs, VT Fresh Network, UVM Extension, Community Action Brattleboro Area, Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Bennington County Industrial Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Storage</td>
<td>Food Hubs, Localvores, Entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marketing assistance</td>
<td>Agency of Agriculture, Department of Tourism and Marketing, NOFA-VT, Food Hubs, VT Fresh Network, VT Council on Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High costs of fuel and energy for farmers</strong></td>
<td>Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Vermont Biofuels Association, Entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access, price of, and succession of farmland for beginning farmers</strong></td>
<td>Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Incubator Farms, Land Trusts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need for unified vision and coherent plan and policy platform</strong></td>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture Council, NOFA-VT, Rural VT, Vermont Farmers Bureau, Shelburne Farms, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational and technical assistance for producers and processors</strong></td>
<td>UVM Extension, Agency of Agriculture, VHCB Farm Viability Program and providers, Women’s Agricultural Network, Food Venture Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical and regulatory barriers to waste and nutrient management</strong></td>
<td>Highfields Institute, Composting Association of Vermont, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Agency of Natural Resources, Carbon Farmers of America, UVM Extension, Solid Waste Districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

10 Valley Food and Farm’s staff is compiling a more detailed matrix focused on specific research questions and projects.
OPPORTUNITIES AND POSITIVE FORCES

Table 6 lists the most frequently cited opportunities and positive forces for strengthening Vermont’s food system. These are the areas with the greatest activity, consumer interest or that are seen as potential leverage points.

Table 6. Key Opportunities and Positive Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Opportunities and Positive Forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer demand and localvore education efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer concerns about food health, nutrition and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative or community land purchases, food hubs and incubator farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency of Agriculture Local Foods Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of farmers markets, winter markets, Farmers Market Association and CSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBT machines at farmers markets, Farm-to-Family and Farm Share programs and Farm-to-School Programs, gleaning and plant-a-row projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHCB Farm Viability Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other significant opportunities or leverage points mentioned with less frequency included: high fuel and energy prices, people’s desire to connect with land and community, increased interest in farming among young people and retirees, innovative leaders and entrepreneurs and interest on the part of the philanthropic and investment communities. Not surprisingly, some of the very same issues that were considered challenges - high fuel prices, concerns about food health, nutrition and safety and feelings of disconnection - were also considered opportunities because they are driving consumers to change their purchasing behaviors.

*Consumer Demand*

Consumer interest and demand for local foods was seen as the greatest opportunity and positive force for strengthening Vermont’s food system. Respondents felt that strong consumer interest in local foods, combined with concerns about high fuel prices and Vermonters’ shared cultural commitment to a working landscape (personal communication,
Costello, 2008), represent a significant political opportunity for legislative and regulatory change.

There is so much shared care and concern for Vermont agriculture, and the future of agriculture here that we can easily make it a [political] priority. R17

While consumer demand for local food is high, the vast majority of consumer dollars spent in Vermont still go towards food produced elsewhere. Subsequently, respondents felt that there is still ample room for consumer education and outreach promoting local foods.

➢ **Consumer concerns about food health and safety**

Consumer concerns about obesity, diabetes and the traceability of foods from the centralized food system can function as leverage points for educating consumers about the benefits of buying local. As examples, the Vermont Department of Health integrates information about fresh, local whole foods in its materials, including providing cards on the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables for use at farmers markets. Fletcher Allen Hospital is a signatory of the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge and, working in close collaboration with the Intervale Center, has created a model program whereby 25% of the food served at the hospital is sourced locally (Fletcher Allen website and Scaling it Up! Workshop, 2008).

➢ **Collaborative efforts among multiple farmers and processors**

Respondents felt that incubator farms, food hubs and other collaborative multi-farm marketing, processing and distribution efforts hold great promise for addressing infrastructure and funding challenges. The Hardwick Center for an Agricultural Economy, one of the newer multi-operation efforts, was mentioned numerous times as an inspiring model of a collaborative approach to community development through strengthening of the local food system. But producers can collaborate in other ways as well.

*Cabot’s’ involvement with Mateo Kelher’s artisanal cave-aged cheese is an example of a great partnership in expanding development capacity of a small producer by working together with a larger business. It feels like there are lots of opportunities for large and small producers to collaborate. [...] Honeys, jams, wines, there is the capacity for all of these to market better by working together, and they could also benefit from working together on distribution, and developing a brand identity in both the national and international markets through both electronic and conventional media. R17*
Expansion of farmers markets, winter markets, CSAs and the Vermont Farmers Market Association

Farmers markets, winter markets, CSAs and the Vermont Farmers Market Association make a significant contribution to Vermont’s food system by increasing the number of venues where consumers can purchase local foods. Vermont now hosts 64 summer markets, at least 14 winter markets and at least 69 CSAs. By eliminating middlemen, farmers markets, farm stands and CSAs allow food producers to make a greater net profit than if they were to sell their products wholesale. These venues also provide important social spaces where community members can visit with one another and where they can build relationships with the people who raise their food. They form the basis of what farmer and Representative Will Stevens (Addison-Rutland-1) terms “relational-based farming.”

Local Foods Access Programs

One in 10 Vermonters is hungry. This translates to roughly 66,000 people. (personal communication, Theresa Snow, 2008). Vermont receives over $4.5 million per month in food benefits from the federal Food Stamp Program (NOFA-VT website, 2008) and over 55,000 Vermonters receive food stamps (Raspuzzi, 2008). Food security and access programs such as EBT (an electronic swipe card that replaces Food Stamps) machines at farmers markets, and Farm-to-Family Coupons allow Vermont farmers to capture some of these federal resources and allow low-income consumers to purchase locally grown products and baked goods at Farmers Markets. EBT cards are currently used at ten Farmers Markets in Vermont (Raspuzzi, 2008).

Subsidized farm shares and Farm-to-School programs are other important strategies for alleviating hunger and food insecurity while increasing access to local foods for all Vermonters. Begun by VT FEED, and supported by the VT Farm-to-School Bill, which provides funds to school districts for planning and implementation, the VT Farm-to-School efforts are nationally recognized for their work integrating local foods into school cafeterias and curriculums. With Vermont FEED’s assistance, other communities, including the Rutland area, through R.A.F.F.L. and the Northeast Kingdom through Green Mountain Farm-to-School, have built on VT FEED’s model and started their own farm-to-school programs.

The Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets (VAAFM) Local Foods Programs

Respondents considered the mobile poultry processor, mobile freeze unit and Buy Local Program to be positive forces and potential leverage points. The mobile poultry processor and mobile quick freeze unit were cited as examples of how the Agency of Agriculture can help farmers with processing options and increase the availability of local foods for consumers.
Respondents felt the Buy Local program should be expanded as widely as possible to reach mainstream consumers. In addition to expanding public outreach and promotions, programs such as the Department of Health’s Healthy Workplace Initiative that promotes serving fresh, local foods at workplace meetings could be replicated in other departments. With the passage of Act 38, the Agency is also working on increasing the amount of local foods that are purchased by state entities such as Correctional Facilities (Act 38, 2007)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the last five years numerous studies have been conducted on aspects of Vermont’s food system, each with their own recommendations. Respondents to this study generated many new recommendations, but they also reiterated and reinforced recommendations made in previous studies. Recommendations are divided into general recommendations for Vermont agriculture and specific recommendations for strengthening the local food system. Special attention is given to Recommendation 9: Completing a thorough inventory and analysis of Vermont’s food system. Occasionally quotes have been inserted after a recommendation if its meaning needs further explanation.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE IN VERMONT

1. Address high costs of fuel by researching and supporting alternative on-farm fuel and energy sources
   a. Increase research and technical assistance on alternative on-farm energy sources, including
      • Solar
      • Wind
      • Hydroelectric
      • Methane digesters
      • Other bio-fuels
   b. Because of the increased interest in forest biomass as an energy source, move Forestry from the Committee on Natural Resources to the Agriculture Committee in order to facilitate looking at biomass issues from a whole-landscape perspective.

   There are opportunities with the energy economy, but also dangers. The global economy could dominate Vermont with its need for wood and biomass; we could potentially be in for a very bad situation of being on the negative side of developing an extractive economy based on biomass. R17

2. Facilitate access to and succession of farmland for beginning farmers
   a. Support New Beginning Farmer and Land Access and Land Link Programs
   b. Provide funding and technical assistance to Incubator Farms
   c. Explore other models for communal and cooperative land purchases
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN VERMONT’S LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

3. Address gaps in food system infrastructure
   a. Support Multi-Farm Distribution, Processing and Storage Initiatives
      ➢ Re-examine state regulations that may act as barriers to local foods production, especially for smaller producers
      ➢ Provide subsidized technical assistance to farmers and value-added processors
      ➢ Provide support for multi-farm marketing and processing efforts, continue and expand Scaling It Up! and Matchmaking events
      ➢ Create a state-run grant program for farmers and consumers to collaborate on small-scale infrastructure projects such as multi-farmer micro grain mills, community meat lockers and root cellars
      ➢ Create legislation that favors cooperative efforts, including removing barriers to capital accumulation for cooperatives
      ➢ Improve infrastructure for Farmers Markets under Capital Bill H. 185 Grants for Farmers Markets
      ➢ Working with Vermont Campus Compact and VISTA/AmeriCorps, create a Vermont Food Corps to work with the food hubs and with Farm-to-School and Farm to Institution projects. Similar programs already exist in Montana http://www.growmontana.ncat.org/foodcorps_faq08.php and Wisconsin http://www.reapfoodgroup.org/farmtoschool/

   b. Provide marketing assistance to producers and processors
      ➢ Increase funding for marketing and promotions assistance
      ➢ Centralize state marketing assistance
      ➢ Continue work to expand high speed internet access throughout the state
      ➢ Create an electronic method for connecting growers, distributors and buyers. Vermont Freshnetwork is working on e-commerce in collaboration with other organizations. Their efforts should continue to receive support.

4. Organize a summit for Vermont’s food and agriculture organizations to create a unified vision, policy platform, and action plan for Vermont’s food system

Respondents largely agreed on the need for a convening of agriculture and food leaders to develop a coherent vision and action plan for Vermont’s food system. The Sustainable Agriculture Council or another organization or partnership of organizations could convene the gathering, but there seemed to be general consensus that Paul Costello should facilitate the process because of the non-partisan nature of the Vermont Council on Rural Development and Costello’s experience facilitating similar efforts.
The plan should include:

- A vision for Vermont’s food system
- An action plan for achieving the vision, including:
  - Policy recommendations for the legislature
  - A funding plan for specific projects that can be shared with funders and used to leverage Federal funds through Senators Leahy and Sanders and Congressman Welch. University of Vermont and/or the Agency of Agriculture could be the conduits for these funds.
- Metrics for measuring success
- Mechanisms for disseminating the plan to the public

The initial gathering should include representatives from all sectors of Vermont’s food system (composting facilities, producers (both conventional and organic), processors, marketers, distributors and consumers); as well as representatives from all of the government agencies that are involved in food system work (e.g. Health, Education, Natural Resources and Economic Development) and non-profit advocacy agencies to ensure that all stakeholders begin from a shared understanding. Stakeholders could later break into smaller working groups organized by food sector, value chain or region to address specific tasks. Other states have created similar working groups organized by value chain and region. (See Leopold Center: http://www.valuechains.org/rfswg/RFSWG%20Brochure063008bl.pdf)

Vermont Fresh Network’s “Scaling it Up!” workshops, the Agency of Agriculture’s “Local Food Working Day” and the matchmaking events laid strong foundations for such multi-party collaborative efforts. The organizers and results of these events should be included in the planning of the summit. Rural Vermont also conducted a series of Vision for Vermont Agriculture Planning Meetings in 2004 that should be referred to and built upon.

5. Facilitate sharing of information and coordination of roles and responsibilities
A separate but related issue is the need for the governmental and statewide non-profit organizations to clearly delineate their roles and responsibilities in order to avoid undesired overlap and redundancy (recognizing that some redundancy is positive). This could be accomplished through a smaller gathering of the VAAFM, the statewide non-profits and any other state departments that should be at the table.

I’d love to have an agriculture [gathering] with just one person from each ag organization attending; it would not be large, maybe just a dozen people. And the one person would be the advocate to return to their organization. It would be someone who could listen and understand and agree that we need to try to work together. R11

Potential goals for this gathering could include:
- Clearly identify and define each organization’s identity and roles
- Establish mechanisms for sharing information (see below)
• Determine methods for coordinating efforts where desired
• Determine the process for the larger visioning and action plan summit (see Recommendation 4)

Specific recommendations for improving communication, coordination and collaboration among government and non-profit agencies include:

a. **Designate one organization or a partnership of several organizations to coordinate information and resources on the local foods system**

Specific tools and strategies suggested for improving communication among stakeholders included:

- One central information hub with an interactive searchable database, perhaps using a Wiki format so that users can update the information, with a GIS/mapping function (See Cornell’s searchable database for the Northern Regional Foods Initiative and Middlebury College’s Food Mapping Project.)
- A listserv to alert stakeholders about upcoming research, policy initiatives, meetings and projects to help keep people informed about who is doing what
- Monthly breakfast meetings on local foods initiatives that would rotate through different regions of the state
- An annual compendium or “State of the State” report and directory of local foods efforts
- Provide technical support to localvore pods and regional food hubs
- An annual celebration and awards ceremony

b. **Coordinate and make the funding process transparent to reduce competition between projects**

The non-profits often apply to the same philanthropic organizations for funds. Such competition for limited resources can act as a barrier to increased coordination and collaboration. To facilitate greater coordination among the non-profits it would be helpful if the foundations could be part of the strategic visioning and planning process. It would also help if they could make their own process more transparent, perhaps explicitly sharing directives with the non-profits as to how they would like them to collaborate with one another.

c. **Connect local and regional efforts to municipal planning**

While entrepreneurs and grassroots consumer efforts are seen as driving the recent innovations in Vermont’s food system, municipalities have the resources to provide the long-term support for some of these innovations. In the words of one respondent, it would be helpful to:
...connect efforts to municipalities so that they become partners and stakeholders rather than just allowing something to happen in their community. The Farmers Market Infrastructure Improvement section we proposed for the Capital Bill would be an example so that the interests of a municipality and its agriculture are more closely connected. Farmers markets put people on the streets and other local merchants benefit from that. R4

Another mechanism for institutionalizing support for such innovation would be to add a Sustainability Amendment to Chapter 117 of statute on Municipal Planning and Development

There was an amendment added to this that required municipalities to take child care into consideration in their planning elements. If another amendment was introduced that added that municipalities had to take sustainability into consideration as an element in their municipal plans then you would have 240 towns and all of the Regional Planning Commissions talking about sustainability. R22

Food Councils can also help municipalities in their planning around food systems issues. Both Burlington and Montpelier currently have Food Councils.

6. **Support programs that increase access to local foods for Vermonters of all income levels while still providing farmers with a fair price and research new means of doing the same**
   - Research new methods for increasing access to local foods for Vermonters of all income levels
   - Support a National Farm Bill that supports family farmers
   - Increase publicity and support for EBTs at farmers markets, Farm-to-Family, Farm Share and Farm-to-School programs
   - Expand Catamount program so that farmers and consumers do not have to be uninsured for a year before qualifying
   - Work to create a living wage so that all Vermonters are food secure and have sufficient income to purchase food at prices that reflect the true costs of production

7. **Provide educational and technical assistance for producers and processors, especially for value-added products**
   - Find ways to provide the type of support provided by the Food Venture Center to regions of the state that are not located close to the Center
   - Continue the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets’ (VAAFM)’s efforts with mobile processing units
   - Continue to strengthen the Agriculture Education Bill and other legislative efforts to support agricultural teaching and training in technical centers
   - Support the Farm Viability Program and other providers of technical assistance (WAGN, UVM Extension, VAAFM, etc...)
8. Promote an understanding of nutrient/waste management as the foundation of agricultural productivity; Support the conservation of energy and building of soil fertility through cover crops, composting, and the re-capture of climate change gases
   - Provide research and technical assistance on the re-capture of energy and nutrients through cover crops, composting and the recapture of climate change gases
   - Create legislation that recognizes and supports the role of composting of agricultural and food waste in creating a regenerative and sustainable food system.

9. Complete a thorough inventory and analysis of Vermont’s food system including a literature review, economic analysis of the various food sectors, and mapping of all of the components of the food system infrastructure (see below)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPLETING A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF VERMONT’S LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

This study was intended as an overview of recent local foods efforts by public, grassroots and non-profit groups, rather than an exhaustive and comprehensive assessment and analysis of Vermont’s food system. To conduct such a more thorough analysis will require additional funding and a larger team effort. Further steps to complete the process should include:

1. A literature review and summary of the recent studies on Vermont’s food system combining, in one document, data on processing, storage and distribution from all food sectors

2. An assessment of all of the components of the food system, with substantial graphic representations and overlays of the food system components using GIS.
   a. Complete the inventory begun in this study so that it captures and maps all significant players, including for-profit ventures, philanthropic organizations and investors as well as public and non-profit initiatives. This should be done in conjunction with creating an interactive database (see Recommendation 5a).
   b. Continue mapping work to include other aspects of the food system infrastructure including slaughterhouses, food hubs and incubator farms, storage facilities, canneries and processing centers and regional distribution routes. It could also include major purchasers of local foods such as farm-to-school programs and institutional purchasers such as colleges and hospitals with local foods programs.

Examples of similar graphic assessment projects include:
3. Conduct a “Leaky Bucket Study” study to generate the economic data on supply and demand necessary to understand and create a plan for Vermont’s food system for the next 50 years

Despite previous studies such as “Measuring and Understanding Local Foods” (Timmons’ 2006a) and “Generating Wealth from the Land” (Sustainable Agriculture Council, 2005), we still lack a detailed understanding of the actual demand for Vermont produced food, our capacity to meet that demand and our ability to feed ourselves based on food produced within the state by specific food sectors.

Examples of applied economic studies from other states:
- Maryland Agricultural Development Corporation MarBidCo, a model for agriculture-based economic development
- The Vivid Picture Project: Envisioning a Sustainable Food System in California
  - http://www.vividpicture.net/
- Growing Local: Expanding the Western North Carolina Food and Farm Economy
- Value Chain reports from the Leopold Center at Iowa State
  - http://www.valuechains.org/
- Avoiding the Local Trap: Scale and Food Systems in Planning Research, Born and Purcell
- Why Local Linkages Matter: Findings from the Local Food Economy Study, Sonntag, Sustainable Seattle, 2008
  - http://sustainableseattle.org/Programs/LFE%20Files/LFE%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf
- Alameda County Foodshed Report, Cozad, King, Krusekopf, Prout and Feenstra, UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program UC Davis, 2002
SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

I. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE IN VERMONT

1. Address high costs of fuel by researching and supporting alternative on-farm fuel and energy sources

2. Facilitate access to and succession of farmland for beginning farmers
   a. Support New Beginning Farmer and Land Access / Land Link Programs
   b. Provide funding and technical assistance to Incubator Farms

II. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN VERMONT’S LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

3. Address gaps in food system infrastructure
   a. Support multi-farm distribution, processing and storage Initiatives
   b. Provide marketing assistance to producers and processors
   c. Increase funding for marketing and promotions assistance

4. Organize a summit for Vermont’s food and agriculture organizations
   a. Create a unified vision, policy platform and action plan for Vermont’s food system

5. Facilitate sharing of information and coordination among organizations
   a. Designate one organization or a partnership of several organizations to coordinate information and resources on the local foods system through a central interactive database
   b. Coordinate and make funding process more transparent to reduce competition between projects

6. Research new methods and support existing programs that increase access to local foods for Vermonters of all income levels while still providing farmers with a fair price

7. Provide educational, marketing, and technical assistance for producers and processors, especially on value-added products

8. Promote an understanding of nutrient/waste management as a foundational component of the food system
   a. Support the conservation of energy and building of soil fertility through cover crops, composting and the re-capture of climate change gases

9. Complete a thorough inventory and assessment of Vermont’s food system
   a. Include a summary of all recent studies, an economic analysis of demand and supply and graphic mapping of food system infrastructure components
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SAC RESEARCH

1. **Complete inventory and analysis of local food system** (see Recommendation 9)

2. **Conduct analysis of Vermont’s food system infrastructure needs and research sustainable multi-farm models**

   Gaps in the local food system infrastructure (storage, processing and distribution) are one of the principle challenges facing Vermont’s food system. Particular emphasis should be placed on understanding these gaps and identifying solutions.

   a. Conduct a literature review of recent studies on Vermont’s food system infrastructure

   b. Collaborating with food hubs and distributors in different regions of the state, conduct economic analysis to understand long-term demand and supply for various products, both in-state (particularly among institutional buyers) and beyond Vermont’s borders (New York, Boston, etc...). This could include value-chain analysis. The Connecticut Valley Neighboring Cooperative Association is currently engaged in similar long-term scenario planning and it would be helpful to include them in this process.

   c. Review successful examples of sustainable distribution strategies to meet the expanding market demand for local farm products. Building on existing research by the Sustainable Agriculture Council, the Intervale Center, Vermont Fresh Network, the VAAFM and others, conduct research on a statewide level with producers, buyers, and distributors to explore and evaluate different multi-farm models for processing, storage and distribution

3. **Research barriers and models for nutrient management and cover cropping on dairy farms**  

   Given that grass-based farming is particularly well-suited to Vermont’s landscape and environmental conditions, and that conventional dairy farms constitute the majority of agricultural land in the state, it is important to conduct research that supports the overall sustainability of these farms. Research on the potential contributions of cover cropping and on-farm composting can help farms improve soil fertility and prevent soil and nutrients from leaving the farms and entering waterways. Thus, understanding sustainable nutrient management is critical to creating a regenerative local food system in an era of climate change and decreasing access to limited petrochemicals.

---

11 This recommendation is based on research recommendations made by SAC members in the April and August 2008 meetings.
a. Research current management, mechanical and economic constraints that may be minimizing widespread adoption of cover cropping and on-farm composting practices, and determine strategies to maximize these practices.

b. Select several model and experimental cover cropping and composting approaches on existing Vermont dairy farms for case studies. Consider hosting workshops on cover cropping and composting on these farms in conjunction with state organizations and agencies. Case studies could include evaluation of profitability, sustainability and the energy costs and savings involved with these practices.

c. Develop educational literature and other media that can be used to promote cover cropping and composting to conventional dairy farmers.

4. Research and develop marketing strategies to promote foods produced and processed in Vermont

Assistance with marketing and promotions was mentioned repeatedly by respondents in this study as an important need for strengthening Vermont’s food system. It was understood that respondents meant marketing both to Vermont consumers and to consumers beyond Vermont’s borders. Building on the work of the VAAFM, Moving Vermont’s Agriculture Forward workgroup, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, the Intervale Center, and Vermont Fresh Network, conduct any additional research necessary to:

a. Explore the long-term economic impacts of sustainable marketing activities through farmers markets, CSA’s, farmstands, country stores and community food co-ops in fostering an increase in local food production and consumption (SAC research committee recommendation from 2008)

b. Identify the most important marketing assistance desired by producers and distributors

c. Develop collaborative marketing strategies that build on sustainable, place-based brands and retain farm identity where desired

d. Create e-commerce mechanisms that are equitable and make sense for both producers and buyers
REFERENCES AND KEY STUDIES FOR FUTURE SAC FOOD SYSTEMS RESEARCH

http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/legdoc.cfm?URL=/docs/2008/acts/ACT038.HTM


Erickson, D. 2008. Mapping Vermont’s Food System, A study prepared for the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Council. Received via e-mail communication, November, 2008.


http://www.uvm.edu/~susagctr/Documents/schoolfood.PDF

http://www.nesawg.org/pubs/NAW-RegionalismWhitepaper-Dec06.pdf

http://css.snre.umich.edu/css_doc/CSS00-04.pdf


http://crs.uvm.edu/vtrpoll/2006/localfoods06.pdf


http://www.vhcb.org/pdfs/farmsteadcheesereport.pdf


Timmons, D. 2006b. Speaking of Vermont Local Food. [http://www.uvm.edu/~susagctr/Documents/SAC%202006%20speaking%20of%20local%20food-timmons.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/~susagctr/Documents/SAC%202006%20speaking%20of%20local%20food-timmons.pdf)


[^12]: This curriculum guide gives statistics on hunger in Vermont broken down by county.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Lists of People Interviewed and Surveyed

List 1: Telephone or In-person Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Organization and Title</th>
<th>Location or Service Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Terry Appleby</td>
<td>General Manager, Coop Food Store</td>
<td>Lebanon, NH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connecticut Valley Neighboring Coops Association</td>
<td>Statewide in VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bill Botzow</td>
<td>State Representative, Bennington Co. (Commerce Committee)</td>
<td>Dist Bennington-1 Pownal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jennifer Colby</td>
<td>Outreach Coordinator, Vermont Pasture Network</td>
<td>Statewide E. Randolph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Paul Costello</td>
<td>Vermont Rural Development Council</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jackie Folsom</td>
<td>President, Vermont Farm Bureau</td>
<td>Statewide Cabot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dairy Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tom Gilbert</td>
<td>Programs Director, Highfields Institute</td>
<td>North and Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board Member, Center for an Agricultural Economy</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice president, Vermont Compost Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chris Gordon</td>
<td>Associate Director, South Hero Land Trust</td>
<td>Grand Isle Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bay Hammond</td>
<td>Secretary, Middlebury Farmers Market</td>
<td>Addison Co. Shoreham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizer, Addison County Relocalization Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cynthia Hellman</td>
<td>Development Officer, Our Place Drop-in Center &amp; Food Shelf</td>
<td>Bellows Falls Brattleboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member, Brattleboro Peak Oil Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tom McCauley</td>
<td>Executive Director, Rutland Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Rutland Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Theresa Snow</td>
<td>Program Director, Agricultural Resources Vermont Food Bank</td>
<td>Statewide Lamoille Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-Founder, Salvation Farms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. George Wright and Josie Weldon</td>
<td>Executive Director , Association of Africans Living in Vermont; Program Manager, New Farms for New Americans</td>
<td>Chittendon Co.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I had conversations with Karen Schneider of UVM Extension and Cheryl King Fischer of New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, but did not conduct formal interviews with them.
**List 2. E-mail Survey Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Organization and Role</th>
<th>Location or Service Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Staff</td>
<td>Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Megan Camp</td>
<td>Vice president, Shelburne Farms Program Director, Education Programs</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Christina Goodwin</td>
<td>Director, Lamoille Co. Natural Resources Conservation District and Nature Center</td>
<td>Lamoille County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Melissa Zoerheide</td>
<td>Valley Food and Farm, Vital Communities</td>
<td>CT River Valley, VT and NH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tara Kelly and India Burnett Farmer</td>
<td>Planner, Rutland Regional Planning Commission Coordinator, Rutland Area Farm and Food Link</td>
<td>Rutland County and surrounding areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Helen Labun Jordan</td>
<td>Agricultural Development Coordinator, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Travis Marcotte</td>
<td>Director, Agricultural Development Services, Intervale Center</td>
<td>Chittendon Co. and surrounding areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Allen Matthews</td>
<td>Farm Enterprise Coordinator, UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Megan Sheradin</td>
<td>Executive Director, Vermont Fresh Network</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Amy Shollenberger</td>
<td>Director, Rural Vermont</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Enid Wonnacott</td>
<td>Executive Director, Northeast Organic Food Association-VT</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 While not on the SAC, Christina Goodwin, Tara Kelly and India Burnett Farmer were sent e-mail surveys because I was not able to conduct telephone surveys with them.
List 3. Respondents to Localvore Listserve Query

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Location or Service Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Addison Co. Localvores / (ACoRN)</td>
<td>Bay Hammond, Organizer</td>
<td>Addison Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bennington Co. Industrial Corporation</td>
<td>Peter Odierna, Executive Director</td>
<td>Bennington Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Center for an Agricultural Economy</td>
<td>Tom Stearns, Board member</td>
<td>Hardwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hinesburg VT Council on Rural Development Taskforce</td>
<td>Bill Schubart, Chair</td>
<td>Hinesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Huntington Historical and Community Land Trust</td>
<td>Megs Keir, Organizer</td>
<td>Huntington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mad River Valley Localvores</td>
<td>Robin McDermott, Organizer</td>
<td>Mad River Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Manchester and the Mountains Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Beth Meacham, Visitor Services and Membership Manager</td>
<td>Manchester Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Southwestern Vermont Eat Local Challenge</td>
<td>Mary Barrosse Schwatz, Organizer</td>
<td>Bennington Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. St. Johnsbury Localvores</td>
<td>Melissa Bridges, Education and Outreach Director, St.</td>
<td>St. Johnsbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Upper Valley Localvores</td>
<td>Pat McGovern, Organizer</td>
<td>Upper CT River Valley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Telephone and E-mail Survey Instrument

**SAC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: UNDERSTANDING LOCAL FOODS INITIATIVES IN VERMONT**
Research conducted for the Sustainable Agriculture Council, Summer 2008

**Definitions:** “local” means focused on Vermont, although it may include neighboring states or provinces. “Initiatives” can include efforts by grassroots groups, private businesses, government agencies, non-profits, or individuals. We are defining “recent” as projects begun in 2005 or after. It can also include projects that are planned for the future (such as applications for processing facilities).

1. Your name and contact info as you would like it listed in report:

2. Please list all of the local foods initiatives with which you are currently involved. These can include projects you are involved in either as a professional or a volunteer. Please identify the year that the project started.

3. What is the purpose and main constituency for each of the recent projects, that is, those begun after 2005?

4. Are you aware of other groups in the state doing similar work as any of these projects? Briefly, who are they?

5. Are you collaborating or communicating with any other projects? If so, how? (e.g. meetings, listserves, connect at workshops, etc...)?

6. How effective are these efforts at collaboration and communication? Can you recommend ways to improve collaboration and communication between local foods efforts?

7. Are there individuals or organizations that you are not currently collaborating with who you would like to see included in efforts to strengthen Vermont’s “local foods” efforts? If so, who are they? [Note: this question was added for the e-mail survey]

8. What do you see as the 1-3 biggest challenges to the effectiveness of building a local food system in Vermont? Why do you think those gaps or challenges exist?

9. What do you see as the 1-3 biggest opportunities, trends or positive forces supporting building a local food system in Vermont?

10. Can you list the 1-3 initiatives or groups/organizations that you see as having the greatest chance to make improvements in the state’s food system?

11. Do you have any suggestions for ways the Center for Sustainable Agriculture at UVM, the State Agency of Agriculture or the legislature can support or strengthen local foods efforts in the state?

12. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Appendix C: A Sampling of Local Foods Initiatives in Vermont, Summer 2008

This sample is intended to demonstrate the wide range of recent local foods initiatives begun over the last three to five years, illustrate their relative geographic distribution and document some of the newer, less well-known initiatives. The programs of more established and well-known organizations often cross multiple categories, but are cited in one category only to avoid counting single programs multiple times. Where an organization has multiple projects or programs in one category they are merged and counted together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
<th>WEBSITE OR CONTACT PERSON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. VT Foodbank Agriculture Programs</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vtfoodbank.org/our_programs/">http://www.vtfoodbank.org/our_programs/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Kitchen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Salvation Farms Statewide Gleaning Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vermont Foodbank Farming Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. VT Community Garden Network</td>
<td><a href="http://www.burlingtongardens.org">www.burlingtongardens.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. VT / NH Seed Saving Group</td>
<td>Sylvia Davatz, <a href="http://sdav@valley.net">sdav@valley.net</a> and Anne Miller, 426-3100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vermont Grain Growers Association</td>
<td>Heather Darby, UVM Extension: <a href="mailto:heather.darby@uvm.edu">heather.darby@uvm.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northwest</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. South Hero Land Trust</td>
<td><a href="http://www.shlt.org">www.shlt.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Farm and Forest Forum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Farm and Forest Directory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eat Local Series with Stowe Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Movie Series with Rural VT and Lanpher Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Intervale Food Enterprise Center (planned)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.intervale.org/programs">http://www.intervale.org/programs</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. UVM Dining Services Social Responsibility Initiatives</td>
<td><a href="http://uds.uvm.edu/social.html">http://uds.uvm.edu/social.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northeast</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Sterling College</td>
<td><a href="http://sterlingcollege.edu">http://sterlingcollege.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Central West

14. R.A.F.F.L. (Rutland Area Farm and Food Link)  
   - Community Farm and Agricultural Resource Center (planned)  
   - Farm to Institution Local Purchasing Project  

15. Middlebury College Farm and Food Program  

### Central East

16. Woodstock Agricultural Forum  
17. Bethel Farm-to-School  
18. Randolph Farm-to-School  
19. L.A.C.E. (Local Agricultural Community Exchange)  
20. Kingsbury Farm (VT Food Bank)  
21. Two Rivers / Foodworks  
   - Farm to Table  
   - Foodbank Farm  
   - Food, Garden and Nutrition Programs  

22. Vital Communities  
   - Dartmouth College Farm to Cafeteria  
   - Workplace Benefits  
23. Willing Hands  

### Southwest

25. Green Mountain College Farm to College  
26. Rutland Eco-Municipality (planned)  

### Southeast

27. Brattleboro Post Oil Solutions Projects  
   - Brattleboro Localvores  
   - CSA in every town  
   - (Re) Learning to feed ourselves  
   - Community Gardens  
   - BPOS Food Security Center (planned)  

1. Reinventing Health  
   a. Plant-a-row for Children in Southern Vermont  

### Links

- [http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org/](http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org/)  
- [http://www.middlebury.edu/campuslife/dining/news](http://www.middlebury.edu/campuslife/dining/news)  
- [http://lacevt.org/](http://lacevt.org/)  
- [http://www.kingsburycommunityfarm.org/](http://www.kingsburycommunityfarm.org/)  
- [http://www.tworiverscenter.org/](http://www.tworiverscenter.org/)  
- [http://www.vitalcommunities.org/agriculture/ftd.cfm](http://www.vitalcommunities.org/agriculture/ftd.cfm)  
- [http://www.greenmtn.edu/farm_food/food.aspx](http://www.greenmtn.edu/farm_food/food.aspx)  
- [http://rutland.govoffice.com](http://rutland.govoffice.com)  
- [www.postoilsolutions.org](http://www.postoilsolutions.org)  
- [http://reinventinghealth.org/](http://reinventinghealth.org/)  
**PROCESSING**

**Statewide**

29. **Agency of Agriculture Farms and Markets**
   - Innovative Kitchens Grants
   - Mobile poultry unit
   - Mobile produce freeze unit

**Southeast**

30. **Southern Vermont Meat Processing Project**
    Community Action Brattleboro Area

---

**TRANSPORTATION, SOURCING AND DISTRIBUTION**

**Statewide**

31. **Agency of Agriculture Farms and Markets**
   - Local Foods In Government Initiative
   - Farm-to-School Grants

32. **VT Fresh Network**
   - E-Commerce System Development
   - Professional Development Colloquia
   - Institutional Purchasing
   - Scaling it Up! Workshops
   - Matchmaking events

33. **NOFA-VT**
   - VT Farmers Market Association
     - www.nofavt.org/market-organic-food
   - EBT Debit Card Pilot Project (with other partners)
     - nofavt.org/market-organic-food/farmers-markets/ebt
   - Farm Shares and Senior Farm Shares
     - www.nofavt.org/programs/farm-share

34. **CT Valley Neighboring Coops Association**
    Terry Appleby, Hanover Cooperative Society

**Northwest**

35. **Intervale Center**
   - Burlington Food Hub
   - Food Basket

36. **Fletcher Allen Healthy Food in Health Care Initiatives**

37. **Burlington Schools Sustainable Schools Project**

**Central West**

38. **ACoRN (Addison Co. Relocalization Network)**
    - Online Market
      - http://www.addisoncounty.locallygrown.net/
Central East
39. Vital Communities
   - Fresh Connections
   - Farm to Dartmouth

Southwest
40. Manchester Green Sustainable Agriculture Project
    Beth Meacham, Manchester Chamber of Commerce
    bmeachem@manchesterchamber.net

MARKETING AND PROMOTION, CONSUMER EDUCATION, FAIR TRADE

Statewide
41. Agency of Agriculture Farms and Markets
    - Online directories of VT Products
    - Online Marketing Manual
    - Moving VT Agriculture Forward (with VCRD)
    - International workshop on Terroir
    - Buy Local Signage with Health Dept.
    - Food Directory Grants to regional groups
    - Mini-grants for community and producer groups
    - Eat Local National Challenge
    - VT Ski Burger (similar projects may be planned)

42. VT Fresh Network
    - Dining Challenge
    - Farmers Dinners

43. NOFA-VT
    - Vermont Farmers’ Fare and Mobile Pizza Oven

44. Rural Vermont (also see Policy Section)
    - Hot Cocoa and Ice Cream Socials
    - Vision for Vermont Agriculture Planning Meetings
    - Film Screenings
    - Local Foods Cookbook
    - Cooking Classes

45. VT Localvores (statewide umbrella group)

46. Fair Trade VT
    Representative Chris Bray

47. Edible Green Mountains

48. Vermont Fences

49. Iron Chef Competitions
    Various organizations

50. Local First Vermont

51. Local Banquet
52. VEI "Menu for the Future" Reading Groups
   http://www.vtearthinstitute.org/programs.html
53. Good Agriculture Practices for Home Gardeners
   UVM Extension

Central East
54. Fiddlehead Festival
   www.fiddleheadfestival.com
55. Vital Communities Valley Food and Farm
   www.vitalcommunities.org/Agriculture/agriculture.htm
   - Flavors of the Valley
   - Valley Food and Farm Guide
   - Tidbits e-newsletter
56. Orange Co. Farm Bureau Local Agriculture Ad Campaign
57. Upper Valley BALLE type Group (planned)
   Terry Appleby, Hanover Cooperative Society
58. Fair Trade Brattleboro
   http://fairtradebrattleboro.org/default.aspx

Central West
60. R.A.F.F.L.
   - Annual Farmers Gathering
   - New Market Identification and Outreach
   - Locally Grown Guide
   - Farm Tours

COMPOSTING, ENERGY and NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Statewide
61. Vermont Carbon Farmers
   www.carbonfarmersofamerica.com/Farmers.htm
62. Legal Compost Initiative
   http://www.compostingvermont.org/
63. Municipal Energy Committees
64. Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network
   http://www.vnrc.org/article/viewwith9452/1/625
65. ANR Committee on Waste
66. Vermont Organics Recycling Summit
   http://www.compostingvermont.org/
67. VT Sustainable Jobs Fund involved with a number of composting initiatives
   www.vsjf.org/sustainable_agriculture/vsjf_grants_projects

Northeast
68. Northern Vermont Composting Partnership
   http://www.highfieldsinstitute.org/programs.htm

Central East
69. Vermont Technical College Food Waste Biodigester
   http://www.vecgreenvalley.org/projects.htm
70. Ottaquechee NRDC food scrap reduction program
   Linda Schneider, Ottaquechee NRDC
## KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION: RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

### Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Study Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71.</td>
<td>UVM Food Systems Policy and Leadership Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>Rural VT Consumer and Farmer Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>The Future of Farming in Vermont......</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 74. | CT Valley Coops Initiatives  
   - Scenario Planning  
   - Local Food Supply Networking |
| 75. | Moving VT Agriculture Forward Work Groups  
   - Branding and Marketing  
   - Business Development |
| 76. | VT Pasture Network Study on Meat Processing |
| 77. | Action Plan for Sustainable Agriculture and Regionally-Based Food Production in Vermont (Jim Ryan) |
| 78. | Karen Schneider’s review of local food research at UVM Extension, in process |
| 79. | Cheryl King Fischer’s report to Johnson Family Foundation, 2008 on CHE initiative |
| 81. | Civic Agriculture in VT. V. Bitterman, 2007 |
| 82. | Cheryl Mitchell, UVM & Dept of Health WIC Interviews |
| 83. | NOFA-VT EBT Study |
| 84. | VT Buy Local Report |
| 85. | VT Agency of Agriculture’s Buy Local workshop notes |
| 86. | VBSR Farm and Fuel Group |
| 87. | VSJF Seed Study |
| 88. | Middlebury College Food Systems Study |

### Northwest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Study Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 89. | Recent Intervale studies  
   - Intervale Farmer Surveys for Local Food Hub (in progress)  
   - Center for Rural Studies Consumer Survey for Food Hub (SARE), 2007 |
- Bibliography on VT Local Foods Literature

**Northeast**
90. Highfields Institute
- Carbon Materials Inventory
- Rural Municipal Emissions Assessment

**Central West**
91. Rutland Nutrition Coalition Survey on food consumption patterns
92. R.A.F.F.L. Consumer and Producer Surveys

**Central East**
93. Teal Farm (model sustainable farm) http://tealfarm.com/

**Southwest**
94. Bennington Co. Industrial Corporation Ag Group

**POLICY**

**Statewide**
96. Farmer Protection Act (2006)
97. Farm Fresh Milk (2008) H. 616
98. Farm Fresh Meat (2208/ 2009) S. 322
99. Local Foods Resolution
100. Capital Bill: Sec. Farmers Markets Improvements
Appendix D: Models and Studies from Other States

Cozad, S., S. King and H. Krusekopf, S. Prout and G. Feenstra, (2002). Alameda County Foodshed Report, University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, Davis, California


Kirby, L.D., C. Jackson and A. Perrett (2007). Growing Local: Expanding the Western North Carolina Food and Farm Economy


