Saffron: A Golden Opportunity for Diversified Farmers

What is it?

- Most expensive spice in the world (\$3,000-9,000/lb)
- Dry stigmas of a **fall blooming crocus** (Crocus sativus)
- Used as a culinary spice or medicinal herb
- Hardy to USDA coldhardiness zone 4
- We have shown it can be **grown in high tunnels and the field in Vermont**.
- Hundreds across the US are growing it.



Saffron by the Numbers

3 stigmas: number produced by 1 saffron crocus flower

46 tons: annual imports into the US

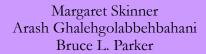
4,000 blooms = 1 oz or 28.4 grams of dry saffron

8 lb = average saffron yield/ha (2.5 acres)

 $$25-100 = retail\ price\ per\ gram\ in\ 2018$

\$223,000- over \$1 million = potential annual revenue/acre









Saffron in Solar Fields: Good for the Environment and Agriculture



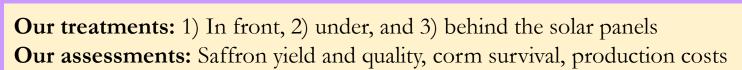
What are the issues?

- We are losing farms across the US: 4.3% drop in # of farms in the US from 2007-2012.
- We are losing agricultural land to development: 40 acres of farmland are lost every hour.

What can be done?

Develop innovative ways to keep farmers in business:

- <u>Develop solar power</u> for supplemental income.
- <u>Cultivate high-value crops</u> like SAFFRON within solar fields to enhance revenues.









www.uvm.edu/~saffron/