

## Faye Conte Student Research Conference Abstract Submission

Title: Multi-Farm Collaborations: A Case Study of the Intervale Center's Food Hub

This paper seeks to examine the efficiency and impact of food distribution by local producers in Vermont and offer recommendations for increased collaboration among small and medium sized farmers. The concept of food miles is widely understood as the distance food travels from its place of origin to consumer. This definition makes sense within the framework of industrial agriculture where enormous farms produce one commodity and then ship it directly to different grocery stores throughout the country and world. It inherently implies that food produced and consumed locally is more environmentally friendly. However, when adding up all the miles that each small farm travels when delivering product to multiple locations several times per week, local farms may not have as low of an impact as they could.

The research will highlight the food miles impact for different vegetable farmers located within 30 miles of each other in Vermont by calculating the number of miles of all deliveries to different markets, including convenience stores, grocery stores, cooperatives, CSA pick-up locations, farmer's markets, and farm stands. It will also examine other measures of efficiency, yet to be determined. The paper will then use the Intervale's Farm Hub initiative in Burlington, Vermont and Hardwick, Vermont's Center for an Agricultural Economy as case study examples of collaboration, increased efficiency, and reduced costs. Using these case studies as models, this research will identify opportunities for increased efficiency by organized collaboration between the previously identified farms to create multifarm storage, processing, and packaging facilities, distribution processes, and market expansion initiatives.