**Project Title:** Semi-Firm, Aged Gold: Rural Economic Effects of AOC Comté and Their Implications for Vermont Agricultural Policy

**Abstract:** Geographical Indications, a legal term which indicates that the characteristics of a good are directly due to the environmental and/or sociocultural factors of the area of its production, are managed very differently within American and European spheres. This study focuses on the concept of intellectual property as the root of these differences, using cases studies of AOC Comté in France and the Cellars at Jasper Hill in Vermont. In-depth interviews along the supply chain of a Jasper Hill cheese and extensive quantitative data regarding the rural economic effects of AOC Comté allow for the comparison of these two very different agricultural policy structures and the specialty cheeses within them. Reconciliation of these structures may not be possible on an intellectual property level, as privatized trademark systems conflict with the collective management structure of Geographical Indications. However, existing collective management strategies within United States agriculture such as cooperatives could be manipulated to include origin status. Suggestions are made for Vermont agricultural policy regarding management of origin-linked products, which hold potential value for producers.