



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
EXTENSION

Center for
Sustainable Agriculture

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Every year we prepare an annual report to share with our partners, funders, leaders, colleagues and friends, to show why and how the Center's work matters - and how we understand our particular role in Vermont and at its land grant university.

We are compiling this to share a look into our work in 2020, a year of growth, pain, change, grief, and enduring commitment to devoting ourselves to building a world in which all might truly thrive.

I want to express our deepest thanks to those funders, partners, colleagues, supporters and friends who have been able to keep supporting the Center's work in Vermont and the region.

Knowing that we are part of a network of people and organizations seeking to be part of the growth and healing ahead, fills us with humility and gratitude. It is that network that is present in each of the short quotes below, a reflection of the relationships, connections and support that allow our programs and projects to take root and to flourish.

For this report, we had a series of conversations about our work in the past year, and are synthesizing those with the brief quotes here. If you'd like to experience a little more, we invite you to visit the Center's web page to see more photos and watch the videos of the conversations these came from. That's at <https://go.uvm.edu/csaannrep20>.

As always, we want to hear what you think of this, and any questions you have about our programs, and ways we might be able to work together.

Wishing you and yours well,

Linda & the Center Team



Photo credit: Green Mtn. Farm to School



Schools might have a robust learning program or curriculum, including things like taste-testing and farm-to-school integrated into the science class. Part of what we were trying to understand is what is going on within communities. What do they understand about farm-to-school? What might be future opportunities in those communities for farm-to-school? How might districts be able to have the schools within each district really work together to achieve the end point?

Linda Berlin
Center Director

Project: Vermont Farm-to-School Program Research



When we manage pastures we are managing roots and creating conditions for soil microorganisms and soil fungi to prosper. This produces better pastures and healthy soils, and will benefit animals in the medium and long run.



Juan Alvez
Pasture Program
Project: Pasture Technical Assistance



To see these both these young women work so closely together, the miles that they put on their feet and legs, setting up fences and providing pasture for all the dairy animals on the farm was just amazing.

Mary Ellen Franklin

Vermont Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA)
Project: Establishing a Mentor-Apprentice Relationship at Butterworks Farm



Led by the Center for Sustainable Agriculture, several of us came together and developed an online conversation series that we titled "Sourcing and Selling Vermont Food in the Time of COVID-19." We asked questions like: Should you keep your farmstand open? If you do, how do you do it safely? How can you still connect with people who can't come visit your farm in meaningful ways? And we talked about equity and access in local food systems as well. The series attracted almost 600 farmers, agricultural service providers and community members.

UVM Extension Colleague: Director of Agritourism
Project: Sourcing & Selling Vermont Food in the Time of COVID-19 Webinar Series
Project in collaboration with Cheryl Herrick



Photo Credit:
Howling Wolf Farm

Lisa Chase
Pasture Program
Project: Regional Community Conservation Project



Our work on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a microcosm of how the future of agriculture is looking. It's an example of the next generation coming forward with what they want to do and how they want to do it. It is also how that interfaces with previous generations, and the support that previous and newer generations can have for each other.



Jenn Colby
Pasture Program
Project: Regional Community Conservation Project



The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is helping quantify the effects of all the good conservation practices that farmers are doing on agricultural lands at the watershed scale. We're excited about what it might tell us about the success of conservation programs and practices on farms, and to what extent this work might build resilience to climate change in our watersheds.



Joshua Faulkner
Farming & Climate Change Program Coordinator
Project: CEAP Watershed
Also supported by Matt Kelting



The wool pellets trial is to investigate the use of raw wool compressed into a small pellet, then incorporated into the soil to see how it would serve as a fertilizer. Look at the healthy plants on the left – we had some pretty dramatic results here.

Kimberly Hagen
Pasture Program
Project: Wool Pellets



Lots of things changed in terms of pricing, regulations, etc. in small farm operations. This is from a farmer who looked ahead and asked, "what do I want to do going forward with the season," and then decided to stick to vegetables. I think it shows diversity, but it also shows that farmers are adaptable and they look at lots of different things that are happening around them, then make decisions based on those circumstances.

Suzy Hodgson
Farming & Climate Change and Pasture Program
Project: Diversification in Small Operations



This story is about how we helped a farmer get access to the no-till drill for a 2019 renovation of a hay field without tilling it up and totally exposing all the soil. During 2020, this area experienced a pretty severe drought for most of the year. Had the field been turned over, tilled, and reseeded in 2020 when there was no rain, it would have been a waste of time and money for the owner.

Laura Johnson
Agronomy Professional
Project: No-Till Drill for Farmer Use



Solar grazing is an incredible way for us to make energy and meat at the same time, and stop using diesel or gas to mow fields that have solar arrays on them. It's something that makes me feel hopeful about the future.

Amber Reed
Pasture Program
Project: Solar Grazing



We were able to re-envision and reimagine what would the next phases of the "Who Farms?" project look like. So far from saying that we weren't able to do this project under the conditions of COVID-19, we began a conversation about what would it mean to do this project during a pandemic.

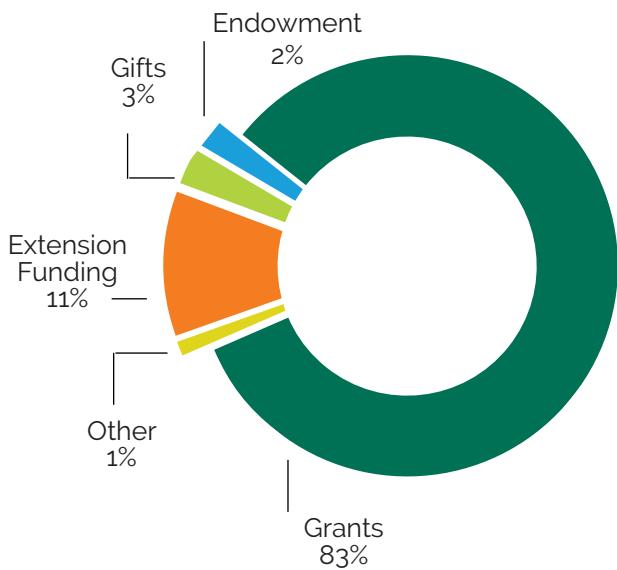
Luis Vivanco
UVM Colleague: Humanities Center, Anthropology
Project: Who Farms?
Program co-coordinated by Cheryl Herrick and Sha'an Mouliert



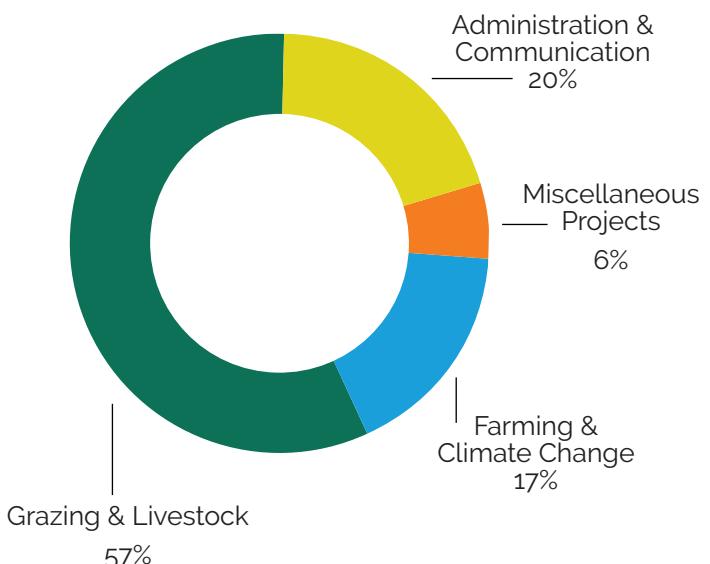
Photo Credit:
Sally McKay

FINANCIALS

INCOME



EXPENSES



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