



Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association

*Promoting the economic, environmental, and social sustainability
of vegetable and berry farming in Vermont since 1976.*

January 25th, 2022

Dear Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers,

Another year has come and gone, as our organization enters its 56th year! We had 474 total memberships this past year (farm + commercial), which is our largest membership count to date. Thank you for being a part of this great association. Let's hope that our 2023 annual meeting we will be back in person! I know how much I miss being able to talk with other growers face-to-face and catch up. I am always in awe of all the projects and ingenuity amongst our farmer membership. You are all doing such important work, keeping farmland productive, and feeding our local communities. Thank you!

The Association continues to address the needs of our industry, in part through our strong relationship with UVM Extension. Once again UVM Extension has been hard at work. Technical assistance is provided in many ways. From a quick email to Becky about a soil test result, to a new walk-in cooler project on a budget with the help of Andy and Chris, to getting your CAPS plan updated and perfected with Hans, talking with Ann about a recent leaf sample, or reading the pest reports posted by Scott. Extension is there to help us succeed and that's why the VVBGA provides funding to support Extension programs. Most of the Extension staff we work with are funded via grants--funding from the VVBGA helps them get those grants.

A new addition to the Extension staff is Laura Johnson, who's leading the pollinator support program of research and education for farmers. In a survey Laura conducted, many of you expressed concern about pollinator numbers on your farms. This project will help growers adopt practices such as establishing pollinator habitats and assessing pollinator activity on their farms. Becky Maden is available to help get you on board using the VVBGA's soil health website. This tool allows you to track nutrients, upload soil samples, manage your soil amendment budget and comply with RAPS. We can also look forward to a pack shed "manual" from the UVM Agricultural Engineering team, sponsored by a Northeast SARE grant. Hans continues to expand the reach of CAPS and CAPS-Plus and bringing on new wholesale opportunities for growers to access. Your membership fees help to fund many of these programs! Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm for the association.

The VVBGA board of Directors is available to hear your thoughts on VVBGA programs and ideas for upcoming grower meetings, additional technical assistance, and research topics. Don't forget to donate to the VVBGA "research and extension fund," which the VVBGA board allocates each year to support specific projects.

I hope you enjoy the annual meeting of the VVBGA. Thank you for growing food, supporting VVBGA, and being a part of this great organization!

With Admiration,

Lisa MacDougall, Mighty Food Farm

President, VVBGA