

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:

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

Our treatments: 1) In front, 2) under, and 3) behind the solar panels

Our assessments: Saffron yield and quality, corm survival, production costs



www.uvm.edu/~saffron/