



# Purpose of the Guide

**T**his guide is intended to help farmers utilize their farms as learning environments for local schools and communities, market their products to schools, and increase their exposure within their community. There are many details to consider before hosting the public. The contents of this book will help you identify those considerations, overcome many of the challenges, and provide farm-based activities and resources. By hosting school groups, opening your farms for public events, and selling farm products to the school cafeteria, you are not only reconnecting your neighbors to Vermont's agrarian history, but creating a more educated and agriculturally-literate consumer. You are helping to rebuild and redefine a local food system.

The Vermont FEED partners are thrilled to be offering this guide to you. We have spent many years working to link Vermont schools with Vermont farms. Joining a national trend of reconnecting people to where their food comes from, the VT FEED project has worked with communities throughout the state to bring school groups and the greater community to farms, and to help farmers establish viable markets with the school cafeterias.

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Thank you for being a steward of the land, growing food, and sharing your experiences with others.

Enjoy!



# Contact Information

Vermont FEED is a partnership of Food Works, The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) and Shelburne Farms.

## Food Works



64 Main Street  
Montpelier, VT  
(802) 223-1515  
[www.tworiverscenter.org](http://www.tworiverscenter.org)

Food Works was founded in 1988 to address the crisis of childhood hunger in Vermont. The initial aim was to provide teachers and students with prevention-based skills and knowledge of food through school gardening and nutrition education. Over the years, we have found students hungry for real connection to nature and their local community and have since developed ecological literacy and cultural literacy programs.

## NOFA-VT

**Northeast Organic Farming  
Association of Vermont**



PO Box 697  
Richmond, VT 05477  
(802) 434-4122  
[www.nofavt.org](http://www.nofavt.org)

NOFA-VT is a nonprofit organization of farmers, gardeners, and consumers working to promote an economically viable and ecologically sound Vermont food system for the benefit of current and future generations.

## Shelburne Farms



1611 Harbor Road  
Shelburne, VT 05482  
(802) 985-8686  
[www.shelburnefarms.org](http://www.shelburnefarms.org)

Shelburne Farms is a membership-supported, nonprofit environmental education center, 1,400-acre working farm, and National Historic Landmark in Shelburne, Vermont. The farm serves as an educational resource by practicing a rural land use that is environmentally, economically and culturally sustainable. Its mission is to cultivate a conservation ethic.



# Thank You

Vermont FEED would like to thank the many educators and farmers that made this guide possible. In particular:



**Scott Greene & Suzanne Young** are raising two sixth generation Vermonters on their diversified farm. They are committed to traditional agricultural and farmstead vocations by providing their family and community with choice farm products.



**Anne & Jack Lazor** have been dairy farmers at Butterworks Farm for 30 years, growing all the feed for their cows, as well as grains and beans for people in their farm crop rotation system. They process all their milk into yogurt, grind wheat into flour, and corn into cornmeal. They feel that education is important in order to share farming insights with the public and to inspire and nourish coming generations to eat healthy food and grow their own.



**Suzanne Long** has been a diversified organic farmer with her husband, Tim Sanford for 18 years, as well as a cello and fiddle teacher. She has raised two children on the farm, apprenticed young farmers for 15 years, and worked with students for 13 years. She finds the teaching rewarding when the kids are excited to be on a farm and ask many questions. Their awe is a refreshing reminder to Suzanne of all the amazing things on a farm. "When kids and adults come to a farm, they're inspired by the natural world and how food is produced: things they take for granted when they purchase food at a store."



**Scout Proft** and her husband Matt have been diversified farmers for more than 20 years in the hills of East Dorset, and are raising five children on the farm. "I have students on my farm," explains Scout, "because I want them to know and appreciate where their food comes from. With this knowledge they will be better able to make wise and healthy food choices and support local farmers."



**Amy Richardson**, with her forestry degree, joined her husband on his multi-generation dairy farm in the Hartland hills to raise a family and run the diversified farm. Amy states that she "feels strongly that many children, even in Vermont, have lost a basic connection to land, seasons, and cycles of life. Bringing children to farms can be a successful event with organization, and rewarding for the farmer as well!"

Thanks also to Beth Holtzman, Jen Cairns, Dana Hudson, Erica Curry, Abbie Nelson, Joseph Kiefer, John Hayden, Julie Wolcott and Holly Brough.

# FEED Goals, Mission, Beliefs

## Mission

To raise school and community awareness about healthy food, Vermont farms and farmers, and good nutrition. We act as a catalyst to rebuild healthy local food systems by cultivating links between classrooms, cafeterias, local farms, and communities.

## Goals

- To increase student and teacher knowledge of food, farms, and nutrition by developing and testing replicable curriculum that meets the Vermont Framework for Standards and Learning.
- To increase direct marketing opportunities for locally produced foods and improve the eating patterns of school-aged children by developing local purchasing contracts with schools and offering professional development to school food personnel.
- To engage communities in active support of their local school and community food system.

## Beliefs

- All children and members of their community should have access to safe, affordable, healthy, nutritious foods.
- Children will make healthier food choices, gain confidence, and develop critical thinking skills through growing, harvesting, and preparing foods as part of their school curriculum.
- Healthy diets positively and directly impact students' academic performance.
- Local agriculture is important historically, and for the future.
- School food policy must change to make local, healthy, and nutritious foods available to students.
- Food-literate children will impact and change family purchasing, cooking, and eating patterns.



# The Three C's Approach to Food in Vermont Schools

**V**T FEED was designed to help school-age children make informed food choices, improve their diets, and recognize the role local farms play in communities. VT FEED achieves this by focusing on the three C's: Classroom, Cafeteria, and Community.



**Classroom** – providing standards-based farm, food, and nutrition curriculum and professional development for teachers.



**Cafeteria** – incorporating local and seasonal produce as well as professional development for school food personnel.



**Community** – developing community forums and committees of farmers, partners, and other community members.

Together the three C's support healthy children, healthy agriculture, and healthy communities.





# Why VT FEED?

- Twenty six percent of Vermont children are at risk of being or are now overweight.
- Every day an average of 48,000 Vermont school children line up for breakfast and lunch. For some this equates to 10 meals a week and half of their daily nutritional intake.
- Only 2% of children and youth in our nation meet Food Guide Pyramid recommendations for all five major food groups in a day.
- Despite the abundance of food nationwide, children and youth are still undernourished. Homemade meals have been replaced by highly processed, convenient foods.
- School food service is challenged to feed a well-balanced meal to students who have an appetite for high fat, salt and sugar foods.
- The farmer share of the food dollar has dropped drastically from 40% in 1950 to 10% of every food dollar today.
- Although fresh, local foods are being grown next door to schools and are readily available statewide, they are not being widely used in schools.
- Youth are increasingly disconnected from how food is grown and how it gets from the farm to their plates.