

Growing Healthy Vermont Schools, Farms, & Communities



Vermont Food Education Every Day

2 0 0 9 A N N U A L R E P O R T

Farm to School Food Education Every Day!



Vermont FEED

A Collaboration of Three Vermont Non-Profits: Food Works
at Two Rivers Center, NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms



VT FEED **Mission:**

To raise awareness about healthy food, the role of Vermont farms and farmers, and good nutrition. VT FEED is a catalyst for rebuilding healthy food systems, and to cultivate links between the classrooms, cafeterias, local farms, and communities.

VT FEED **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.

VT FEED is a collaboration of three nonprofit organizations: Food Works at Two Rivers Center, the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont and Shelburne Farms. We bring our complementary strengths in bringing together and providing technical assistance to farmers, teachers, and school communities to create strong, sustainable community-based farm to school programs.



VT FEED could not have accomplished the work described in this report without the generous support from our 2009 sponsors and donors:

2009 SUPPORTERS

Anonymous
 Canaday Family Charitable Trust
 Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
 Jorgenson Foundation
 The Forrest & Frances Lattner Foundation
 Brian & Amy Mason
 National Farm to School Network
 Kit Perkins & Andrew Thurber
 Bradley Rawson & Lisa Robinson
 University of Vermont – Center for Rural Studies
 USDA Rural Development
 Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
 Vermont Department of Education
 Vermont Department of Health
 And other individual supporters

2009 JUNIOR IRON CHEF DONORS

American Flatbread Company
 Black River Produce
 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont
 Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Inc.
 City Market
 Connecticut Culinary Institute

Co-Operative Insurance Companies
 Culinary Institute of America
 Ashley Desmond
 Eating Well Magazine
 Gardener's Supply Company
 Homeport
 Just Delicious Catering
 King Arthur Flour
 Kiss The Cook
 Kittridge Equipment Company
 Lake Champlain Chocolates
 Mary's Restaurant
 New England Culinary Institute
 New England Dairy & Food Council
 Organic Valley Family of Farms
 Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
 Vermont Department of Education
 Vermont Teddy Bear Co.
 Leland J. Westie
 Willie's Barbeque

The staff of VT FEED wishes to sincerely thank these organizations for their support during 2009!

“Vermont has really taken [Farm to School] on in the most holistic way. . . not just in a couple of school districts but statewide”

– Anupama Joshi, Farm to School Program Director, Center for Food and Justice at Occidental College



Letter from the Director

2009 marked a decade of providing technical assistance and training to school communities throughout Vermont for VT FEED. With VT FEED's support and the dedicated efforts of many teachers, food service directors, students and community members Vermont has become a national leader of the Farm to School movement. Together we are working to:

- improve student health and reduce rising obesity rates;
- improve access to wholesome and local foods for all Vermont youth and children;
- help Vermonters regain lost skills needed to prepare fresh, whole foods; and
- reconnect children and families to the land where their food is produced and the farmers who grow it.

The partners and staff of VT FEED have focused our Farm to School program on the "3-C's" approach, which integrates Farm to School activities into classrooms, cafeterias, and local communities. VT FEED has helped reconnect children to the food they eat, where and how it is made, and how food choices affect themselves and the health of their communities. We have also helped schools access fresh, local foods year-round. Bonnie Acker, artist and founding partner of the Burlington School Food Project in 2003, expressed the results of our work in this way:

"Preparing and sharing new food—local, fresh, whole, affordable—involves interactive curiosity, open-ended creativity, and practical problem-solving. Those are perspectives and skills that students will use throughout their entire lives. "

In 2009, VT FEED hosted the first New England Farm to School Conference. It was a huge success with over 300 participants. Read more about it on page 5 in our Regional Update. One of the illustrations of our 3 C's model is the Jr. Iron Chef VT Competition which was hosted by VT FEED in partnership with Burlington School Food Project for the second year. This event involved 53 teams of middle and high school teams with their food service directors, teachers, local chefs and parents. Students created recipes that contained local ingredients, were replicable in a school kitchen, met the school nutrition guidelines, and tasted great! Recipes were trialed and served at their home schools before and after the event. What better way to get students involved in their own school food change?

Our success would not be possible without the support of our generous donors and our many partners, to whom we extend deep thanks. We hope you will enjoy reading more about these partnerships throughout this report. You can also find out more about our projects and partnerships by visiting our website: www.vtfeed.org

Sincerely,

Abbie Nelson
VT FEED Director



VT FEED's Leadership Reaches Beyond Vermont: Regional and National Update

VT FEED continues to play a lead role in regional and national Farm to School efforts. As a Northeast Regional Lead Agency for the National Farm to School Network, VT FEED is an information clearinghouse and technical assistance provider for 7 Northeast states, coordinating regional activities and initiatives, working on regional and national policy that supports Farm to School, leading in many aspects of strategic planning regionally and nationally, and organizing a Northeast Regional Steering Committee that guides the Farm to School movement.

"It was incredible to witness the enthusiasm, expertise, and true spirit of collaboration at the Farm to School Conference. We have so much to learn from each other town to town and state to state. The Farm to School movement is truly maturing as we discuss and consider regional policy efforts and the more advanced technical support needs in our work. This conference was an outstanding way for us all to share our stories."

– Dana Hudson, VT FEED Staff and Regional Coordinator for National Farm to School Network

In May 2009, VT FEED hosted and organized the Northeast Farm to School Conference "Cooking Up Connections" in Burlington. Over 300 people from throughout New England, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Canada attended. Keynote speakers, workshops, local food, taste tests, field trips and a visit from Senator Leahy, left attendees inspired with ideas and tools to bring back to their schools and communities.

Regionally, VT FEED is working with organizations and state agencies from throughout VT, NH, ME,

MA, RI, CT, and NY to elevate Farm to School issues within agriculture, health and economic groups as a high priority. For example, the planning work has begun to bring meat and dairy products from throughout the Northeast into local schools through mainstream distribution channels and government programs.

Nationally, VT FEED works in partnership with 7 other regional lead agencies from around the US, as well as the National Farm to School Network staff from the Community Food Security Coalition and The Center for Food and Justice at Occidental College. This network partnership continues to work on the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act and the Farm Bill to include funding for Farm to School programs and break down the policy barriers to increasing local food in schools. In 2009, VT FEED staff also presented at more than 10 conferences throughout the US, including The National Farm to School Conference, The Community Food Security Coalition Conference, and The Farm Based Education Association Conference.



VT FEED Staff with Senator Patrick Leahy and wife Marcelle Leahy

FOOD EDUCATION EVERY DAY




VT FEED




Impact: Highlights of VT FEED in 2009:


 **50** schools and 121 teachers received VT FEED on-site consulting and technical assistance from VT FEED, affecting more than 9,000 students.

MORE THAN


 **300** teachers, food service personnel and parent volunteers from 8 states participated in the Northeast Regional Farm to School conference co-hosted by VT FEED.


MORE THAN


 **200** students from 33 middle and high schools across Vermont competed in the 2nd Annual Jr. Iron Chef VT, raising awareness about Vermont Farm to School program among 1,000 attendees. This annual event co-sponsored by VT FEED continues to grow each year!

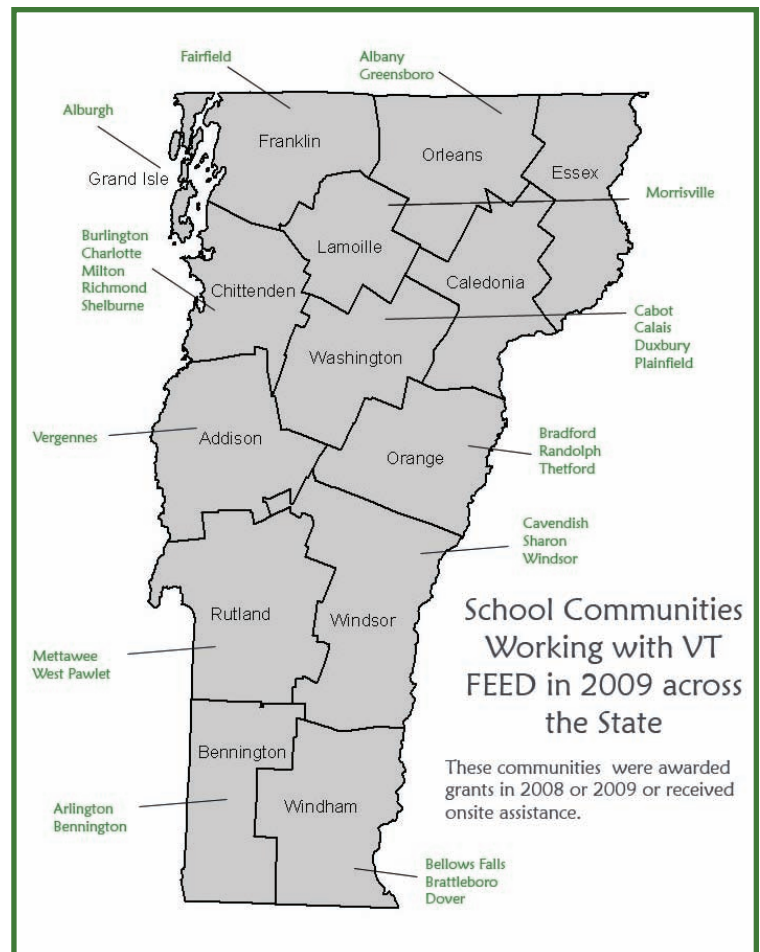
 **100** food service personnel received VT FEED training through the Culinary Certificate program and regional workshops around the state.

MORE THAN

 **35** farmers received marketing support from VT FEED helping establish and sustain connections with school food service.

 **11** Vermont Farm to School Grant recipients received professional development from VT FEED to support them in integrating food, farm and nutrition into the curriculum.

 **VT** FEED research and trials of minimally processed vegetables are continually helping to increase the amount of locally grown products served in school cafeterias throughout the school year.



VT FEED SERVICES

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

VT FEED offers consultation to schools and communities in a variety of ways. Some examples of Technical Assistance offered include:

Farm to School Action Plan Support

VT FEED staff facilitate one, or a series of meetings, to help a farm to school committee develop its vision and outline steps to reach its goals.

Food, Farm and Nutrition Curriculum Integration Support

VT FEED staff work with schools to help teachers meet their classroom needs while incorporating Food, Farm and Nutrition topics into their teaching. A primary goal of this work is to integrate these topics into the classroom in a way that does not make farm to school an “add on” but rather connects this curriculum to State Standards and Grade Expectations.

Cafeteria Staff and Local Food Procurement Support

VT FEED staff can provide support and technical assistance to staff by making connections with local farmers, consulting about equipment for processing local food and provide training and recipes for the use of local seasonal foods.

VT FEED WORKSHOPS

VT FEED offers workshops focusing on using the 3 C’s model for building Farm to School Programs. These workshops can be offered for a school, a district, and sometimes on a regional level. Workshops are tailored to the intended audience and can have basic or advanced track depending on participant needs.

GRADUATE CREDIT COURSES

These courses are tailored for a specific school and community. Participants can include teachers, parents, administrators, food service, farmers, and volunteers. The course focuses on skill-building related to farm to school and the VT FEED “3 C’s” model. Topics covered in these courses can include: seasonal foods; school food programs; food media messaging; childhood nutrition; diet related diseases; food preferences; using food as a teaching tool; and food access and hunger. Structure for these courses vary, from two-day intensive structure to a three-hour class offered once a month. Credit for these courses are optional for participants.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

VT FEED also provides free downloadable tools, findings and web-based resources to interested Farm to School practitioners. These include: *VT FEED’s Taste Test Guide*, *VT FEED’s Guide for Connecting Farms to Schools and Communities*, and *VT FEED’s Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools*.



For more information about our services, please visit our website: www.vtfeed.org

Farm to School Food Education Every Day!



Vermont FEED

A Collaboration of Three Vermont Non-Profits: Food Works
at Two Rivers Center, NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms

1611 Harbor Road • Shelburne, VT 05482
802-985-0325 • www.vtfeed.org