

Food Education Every Day!



Vermont FEED

Growing FEED

The Network Newsletter of VT FEED Schools

Spring 2005

Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) is a community-based approach to school food system change in a rural state through a collaboration of three Vermont non-profits: Food Works, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, and Shelburne Farms.

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"I have realized that making food is a great way to get kids interested in talking about healthy choices and trying new foods. The changes in our school have been felt throughout the whole K-5, in school and at home!"

- Pamela Quinn,
5th grade teacher

For more information on **What is FEED?** See the back page of this newsletter.

SCHOOL GARDENS ARE SPROUTING

This past year teachers and students have been inspired to build their own school gardens as part of, or related to, the FEED work being done at schools. These gardens offer a place to study hands-on Science, Math, Language Arts, and Social Studies while providing ingredients for the school food service. Here are just a few examples of how schools are "planting" healthy learning opportunities for students.

Starksboro school built gardens and planted them with garlic this past fall. The garlic will be used next fall in the cafeteria meals with more vegetables to come this spring.

Alburg school created a garden bed in the shape of an "A" in the front of their school and is growing herbs and salad greens in the spring for the lunch program.

Chelsea schools 'Civics in Action' class completed 12 raised garden beds this past fall; one for each grade. This spring they will plant crops for the food service and for classroom lessons.



Julie Boudreau's Class in Hardwick harvesting fresh foods for taste tests

Hardwick school created a garden bed for each classroom. The produce and herbs grown there were used this past fall for classroom and cafeteria taste tests.

Orange Center school has a booming summer garden program where students harvest their snack daily from the garden (when seasonally appropriate).

Classrooms grow the seedlings in the spring, the summer Gardens For Learning program uses and maintains the gardens throughout the summer break, and then classes return in the fall to harvest and prepare the beds for the following spring.

VT FEED 2004 – 2005 SCHOOLS

Now in its sixth year and tenth school, Vermont FEED is busy working with many rural Vermont communities. Both of our two current in-depth FEED schools, Chelsea and Hardwick, have devoted hours of cooking, gardening, visiting farms, learning agricultural

heritage, and learning about nutrition to improve the overall health and well-being of their students. The food service staff at both schools are exploring new recipes for their cafeterias while incorporating into the menus foods grown from local farms. We know

that this is just the beginning. Each school is forming food nutrition councils to sustain their efforts and to continue involving their local community in their school food initiatives.

SCHOOL FOOD IS CHANGING...

If you want more information or to contact food service directors who are making changes, please contact the VT FEED office (info on back page).

What seemed like a dream imagined by school staff and community members at the FEED Conference - November 2003, is actually happening in schools around the state. Food service directors are buying locally grown seasonal foods and students are eating it!

VT FEED has been consulting with 25 schools from around the state to offer assistance in making school food changes. The concern that local food is cost-prohibitive is less of an issue because produce is purchased in season, when the price is competitive. Our VT food distributors—Burlington Food Service, Black River, and Squash Valley Produce—have all made a commitment to provide local produce, whenever possible. Just ask your distributor for local produce.

Following are a few of the ideas being tried around the state:

★ Food service and teachers can set up a **taste test** schedule for introducing new foods. Taste tests prepared by students can be offered in the cafeteria or classroom. It is important for nutrition and food education to occur in conjunction with the taste test—even in small doses—so that students experience the connection between education in the classroom and the food served in school. Students can pass out food samples at snack time or at a tasting table in the

cafeteria. It works best if students are involved in preparing the food item(s), staffing the tasting table, conducting a survey about the new food, and reporting the results in announcements or a school newsletter. Students can be



★ the strongest food advocates and advertisers!

Some fresh fruits and vegetables are offered to schools through the USDA Food Commodity system. The food service could provide a small quantity of these to classes for testing, before these appear in ★ the school lunch.

Some schools **mix the more expensive whole foods and fresh foods with commodity foods**. For example, a rice pilaf with seasonal produce (even squash can be cubed), commodity raisins, and a mix of white commodity rice and brown rice is a great side dish. ★

Schools purchase **“Seconds”** (which means the produce has a blemish, or is dented or broken) from a local vegetable

farmer at reduced prices or they get discounts on over-produced items. Zucchini is famous for this, so when it is cheap, purchase a lot, grate it and freeze it for a winter of ★ zucchini muffins and cakes!

Seasonal salad bars are attracting more attention from older students and adults who are enjoying sides of seasonal grated salads (cabbage and apples, or beet and parsnip and ★ carrot).

Some schools are purchasing from a **CSA** (community supported agriculture) farm to get a regular weekly or monthly share of vegetables. Because consumers/schools sign up for this and become a guaranteed market, the farmer can afford to sell produce at a lower ★ price.

The **local or regional Food Coops** have been very interested in helping schools purchase more fresh and local foods, either by providing products for taste testing and/or giving special discounts ★ to schools.

Be sure to **advertise** changes in your school food program. Print what changes you are making on the monthly menu. It can be as simple as a text box outlining what is new or what you purchased locally. Invite a local newspaper to participate in a school food taste test.



Classroom baking by Alburg kindergarten students

Vermont FEED is a partnership of 3 non-profit organizations: Food Works, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, and Shelburne Farms. The VT FEED team is:

Joseph Kiefer
Food Works
64 Main Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 223-1515

Abbie Nelson
NOFA- VT
PO BOX 697
Richmond, VT 05477
(802) 434-4122

Dana Hudson
Shelburne Farms
1611 Harbor Road
Shelburne, VT 05482
(802) 985-8686 ext 25

STATEWIDE INITIATIVE—ACT 161

Many schools have created, or are in the process of, developing school food nutrition policies. As it happens, a Wellness and Nutrition Policy requirement (ACT 161) was passed last year by the Vermont legislature. It requires all schools to develop wellness programs “...to encourage life-long pat-

terns of healthy eating and regular physical exercise among Vermont citizens.” The Department of Education has been charged with writing a model school fitness and nutrition policy. Included will be the formation of a statewide advisory council, a grant program to establish school wellness

programs, and teacher training and curriculum development. An educational consultant has been hired to implement this Act. Contact the VT Department of Education for more information. ssl.csg.org/dockets/26cycle/2006A/26Abills/2026a02vt.pdf

ONE COMMUNITY'S DISCUSSION ABOUT CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Rob Williams of the "Action Coalition for Media Education" (ACME) and Sue Dillon, school nurse of Waitsfield Elementary School are planning an event in March for the Mad River Valley that will address food and obesity issues in this community and beyond. They will show movie clips from the film *Super Size Me* as well as other clips from informational news shows. Afterwards there will be a panel of people who are doing things to make a difference in the lives of kids. They will be sharing projects they are involved with or activities they are engaged in that are improving the health of kids in the community and around the state. The

Health and Prevention Committee of Washington West Supervisory Union, FEED, ACME, LOVE IS PEACE (getting organic foods in schools), and many more will be there to share.

Following the panel presentation, there will be small group discussions. These groups will brainstorm ideas and think about next steps to help prevent and solve problems related to childhood obesity and providing healthier foods in schools.

There will be informational tables set up in the lobby. There will also be an organic dinner served by high

school students prior to the event. This is part of a student project for the "Creating Sustainable Communities" class.

If you want more information please Contact Sue Dillon, Waitsfield School Nurse at Jsjdillon@aol.com.



"FEED impacted my teaching by informing me of the tremendous impact food and nutrition have on both society and the individual. Good food for thought. Our school was positively transformed by FEED efforts."

- Ben Gunsberg,
7th- 8th grade teacher

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

UPDATES FROM PAST FEED SCHOOLS

Alburg Jennifer Mitchell, Alburg School's kitchen manager wants her students to open their minds and palettes to different and fresh foods. As part of the FEED program, she began taste tests of different food groups with the FEED classes. So far she has tried different grains: brown rice, millet, and barley; fresh vegetables, including green and purple cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower; fresh fruits; and is ending with tastes of different kinds of beans. Based on how these students responded, she will feature more of the same types of foods as part of school lunches. Ever hear of millet and vegetable salad? Some students have tried it and liked it!

Orange by Melissa Anderson. "I was just writing to let you know what the third graders at Orange Center School have been up to. We have created our own daily healthy snack menu. We have had things

from banana nut muffins to smoothies and apples with peanut butter, to veggie sticks with ranch dip. The whole school helped the summer garden club last year by starting seeds that were saved the previous fall. Third graders planted herbs to compliment our FEED unit."

Edmunds Both Edmunds Elementary and Middle Schools are actively engaging in their school food projects.

- Every month there is a new taste test in the cafeteria, made by students, parents, teachers, and food service.

- A committee has been meeting to plan a school garden for this spring, paid for with city grant money received last year.

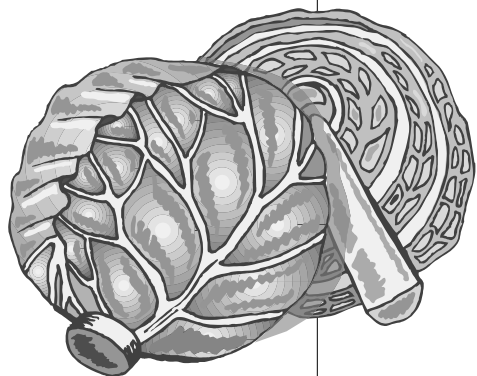
- Some teachers from Edmunds and Champlain Elementary Schools have been taking a Healthy Snacks class offered by the FEED partners to develop

food and nutrition lessons to use during classroom snack time.

- The cafeteria continues to improve the options for lunch-time meals with an expanded sandwich bar.



LOCAL PRODUCE RECIPE FOR SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS



Cabbage Patch Salad with Carrots and Apples

Yield: 50 portions

Ingredients:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 4 | small green cabbages, cored and thinly sliced |
| 2 | small red cabbages, cored and thinly sliced |
| 4-6 | carrots, shredded |
| 6-8 | Tart, crisp apples, cored and cubed or sliced |
| 3/4 | C. cider vinegar |
| 2 | C. oil (olive or vegetable) |
| 1 | t. each salt and pepper |
| 3 | T. honey |
| 1 | C. Raisins or dried cranberries (optional) |

Directions:

Shred or slice cabbage and carrots in food processor. Cube or slice apples. Peeling is not necessary. Place vinegar and honey in bowl and whisk in oil (can be done in a blender or food processor). Toss remaining ingredients with vinaigrette. Let salad stand for 1 hour to marinate before serving. Variations: Add raisins or dried cranberries.

Equipment:

food processor or chefs knife and cutting board and whisk, measuring cups, measuring spoons, mixing bowl.

"It is so great that the students themselves are cooking up recipes with local foods and then delivering the taste tests to each classroom. It doesn't get better."

- Val Simmons
Hardwick Elem. School
Food Service Director

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT HEALTHY SNACK LESSON



Adapted lesson from
Janet Lynch, Milton FEED teacher

Essential Question: How can we make healthy eating choices?

Materials: Variety of snack choices, red, yellow and green light signs, flip chart paper and markers.

Activity: Ask students what they eat for snack. Have each student share a snack that they eat, and state if they think it is healthy.

State that today you are going to look at a variety of snacks. As a class you are going to group the snacks into three groups. The first group of snacks are Red Light snacks, second Yellow Light snacks and third Green Light Snacks. Red Light Snacks are snacks

you should eat rarely, Yellow Light snacks you can eat occasionally and Green Light snacks you can eat as often as you want. (Show Red, Yellow and Green light signs as you introduce snack groupings.)

Discuss with the students what types of snacks might go under each category. Look at the labels of some of the food and try to choose guidelines for making healthy choices.

Break the students into groups. Give each group of students a variety of snacks to sort. Once groups have sorted snacks have each group share their results.

Look at the labels of the snacks again. Record the fat, sugar, protein, fiber and other nutrients of the snacks. If

there are any snacks that seem to be in the wrong group, review their nutrient content and discuss if the snack is in the appropriate place. Remember, high sugar and high fat foods lacking other nutrients should be in the Red group.

Wrap-up: Ask each student to share what they learned. Discuss what we can do now that we grouped these snacks. As a class come up with guidelines or action steps toward healthy snacking.

Extensions:

For older groups have them make a chart so they can compare the fat, sugar, fiber and other nutrients in each snack.

Make Green Light snacks once a week with your students to model healthy snacking.

Keep a snack journal with students.

NEW DIETARY GUIDELINES

Every five years, dietary guidelines are jointly published by the US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Health and Human Services. The following is an excerpt from the recently released publication (January 2005) outlining the new guidelines. You can find the guidelines on the web at <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

“...To help manage body weight and prevent gradual, unhealthy body weight gain in adulthood; Engage in approximately 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity on most days of the week...”

“...Two cups of fruit and 2-1/2 cups of vegetables per day are

recommended for a reference 2,000 calorie intake...”

“Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. Select from all 5 vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables and other vegetables) several times a week...”

“Consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or lowfat milk or equivalent milk products”

“...In general, of the daily 6oz of grains at least half should come from whole grains...”

“...Keep total fat intake between 20 and 35 percent of calories, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts and vegetable oils...”

“...Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains often...”

“... Consume less than 2,300 mg (approximately 1 tsp of salt) of sodium per day...”

Still under revision is a new food guide pyramid that has had much discussion and public comment. There has even been speculation that it may not be a pyramid, but a plate (pie chart) or other diagram. No date for release has been publicized, but one obvious change is that no matter the shape, with these new recommendations, the model will have to look very different.



Burlington Teachers learning to make their own homemade salsa at the Healthy Snacks Class. This is an activity they can duplicate with their students.

GROWING FEED THROUGHOUT VERMONT

The Vermont FEED project has had many successful years working in Vermont communities. In those years, FEED has focused its energy on introducing the integration of all 3 C's into a school to improve food education efforts. By working in-depth with teachers, food service, and farmers, FEED has learned that it takes a whole community to make successful change.

Over that time, the interest for improving access to local, fresh produce and the desire to increase food farm and nutrition education has increased. The FEED partners have gone from recruiting schools 6 years ago to join the FEED movement, to receiving more requests in a week for information and assistance than ever expected.

In an attempt to serve the most Vermont's schools as possible, Vermont FEED is starting to develop a competitive application process for technical assistance



Mark your Calendar!

FEED/AFHK joint conference

November 14, 2005

Sheraton Hotel

Burlington, VT

grants for schools that will provide a variety of consulting options.

This consulting model will still allow FEED to offer teacher and food service professional development workshops, help develop taste test programs, and facilitate farmer/food service relationships. The only difference, is that it may be in conjunction with other schools within the same district or in a more advisory role. Contact the FEED office at 434-4122 if

you would like to learn more about accessing technical assistance from FEED.

FEED will also be hosting a state-wide conference this Fall in partnership with Action For Healthy Kids on **November 14th** at the Sheraton in Burlington. The goal is to continue to help network communities passionate about their school food issues. Keep an eye out for the conference announcement and registration in your school's mail.

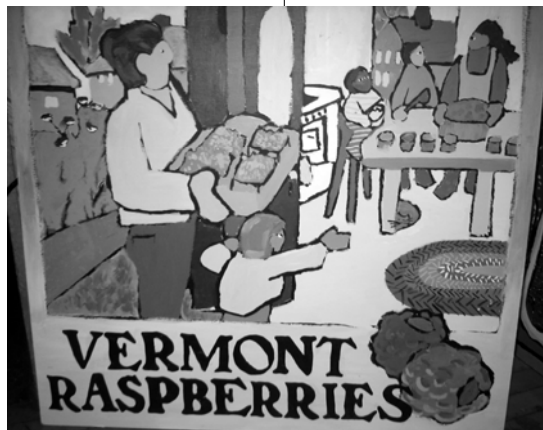
PICTURES FROM THE FIELD...



Students in Burlington working in the kitchen to help prepare carrot muffins for school-wide taste tests



Chelsea High School "Civics in Action" class planning at the site for the school garden. They built a total of 12 raised beds, one for each class



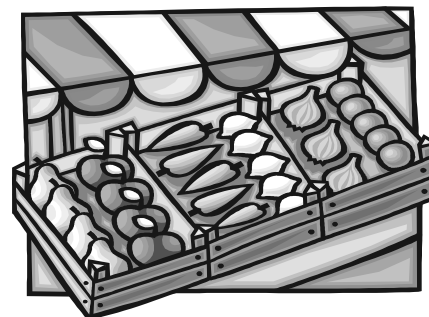
Over 30 colorful student paintings about Vermont agriculture by 7th and 8th graders were created to decorate the cafeteria walls at Edmunds School. Made possible with the help of local artist Bonnie Acker



BRATTLEBORO COOP'S HEALTHY SNACKS INITIATIVE

The Brattleboro Coop will be offering a classroom-based healthy snack program starting this year. Here is the idea for incorporating into the school:

- Teachers collect \$5.00 per student a month to support program.
- Coop offers up to 20% off specially selected cases of food each month.
- Teachers order cases and serve healthy snacks in their classrooms daily.
- Teachers solicit parent volunteers to help pick up food.
- Coop coordinator works with teachers to order foods and possibly find sources for donations.



The Brattleboro Coop "Feed Your Head" committee also has free food and farm lessons available to help create educational links to what we eat. If anyone is interested in learning more about the snack program or the free lessons, please contact Lisa Ford at 257-0236 X221.

MAKING CHANGES IN ALL THE C'S FOOD ACTIVITIES IN STARKSBORO

Robinson Elementary School in Starksboro was a FEED school in 2001, and has continued to make great strides in providing food, farm and nutrition education experiences for their students.

Cafeteria News: As a result of VT FEED connections, Joyce and Sue, the school food staff, are happy to report that they are offering more vegetables and fruit now. They are also adding more grains to their menu, and the kids are enjoying these changes. They have been working with Cecilia Bissell of Lewis Creek Farm to plan for fresh local vegetables on the menu.

Community News: A partnership of parents, a teacher, and a local business, brought school gardens to the Starksboro School. Eric and Julie's Plants and Produce of Starksboro, donated 3 raised bed gardens for the school

yard so students can plan and plant gardens. They planned for a mix of bulbs, garlic, spinach, and cold hardy greens like kale and arugula.

The garlic got planted just in time, before the first snow fell. A group of dedicated parent volunteers dug sod, and spread soil in the gardens made of cedar. The 1st graders worked with parent Kris Wagner to separate many bulbs of garlic. Feeling, smelling and learning about how garlic grows was fun, but planting it and mulching in the new raised beds was even better. Then the students made garlic butter for garlic bread.

Students, teachers and parents are now looking forward to spring planting to fulfill their plan of a hardy school garden next fall. Thanks to Julie Rubaud of *Eric and Julie's Plants and Produce* for the gardens, and to Kris Wagner, for all her time and expertise!

Classroom News: Ruth Beecher, Starksboro teacher, has developed a yearlong study of Farming, Gardening, Food and Nutrition. Ruth created components of this unit during the 2001 VT FEED course. Her students are learning where food comes from, growing salad greens, and creating healthy recipes to eat in class. They have visited several Starksboro farms, including dairy and vegetable. Students have written farm animal reports and created model farm animals. They also had the opportunity to get to know local author/illustrator, Amy Huntington, who wrote a funny story about a very windy day on a farm called *One Monday*. Students were excited to write and illustrate their own stories after several visits with this engaging author. Fortunately, Funding from VT-AITC (VT Ag In The Classroom) helped carry out many of these community-based projects.



Chelsea School food service and student, working together to make vegetables strips for taste tests

WEBSITE RESOURCES

Check out these interesting websites. You will find classroom activities, valuable research, and state and national news about food, farm, and nutrition issues. Let us know if you have a good website to share.

Action for Healthy Kids national website: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>

Sustainable Table site: <http://www.sustainabletable.org/home/index.html>

USDA - Food and Nutrition Information Center site:
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/pubs/bibs/edu/preschool.html>

The **Food Research and Action Center** site: <http://www.frac.org>

The background and **History of Foods** site: <http://www.foodtimeline.org/>

The **American Dietetic Association** site: <http://www.eatright.org/Public/>

The Center for Ecoliteracy, **Rethinking School Lunch** site:
<http://www.ecoliteracy.org/rethinking/rsll.html>

National Farm to School site: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

Community Food Security Coalition site: <http://www.foodsecurity.org/>



Hardwick teachers work and learn with local farmer, Bruce Kaufman of Riverside Farm, during summer 2004 FEED institute.

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Vermont FEED

Vermont FEED
PO Box 697
Richmond, VT 05477

Phone: (802) 434 -4122
E-mail: info@nofavt.org

Visit us on the Web:
[http://www.nofavt.org/
programs/vtfeed.php](http://www.nofavt.org/programs/vtfeed.php)

WHAT IS VT FEED?

The Mission: VT FEED works with schools and communities to raise awareness about healthy food, the role of Vermont farms and farmers, and good nutrition. We act as a catalyst for rebuilding healthy food systems, and to cultivate links between the classrooms, cafeterias, local farms, and communities.

“ We have found that change in school food requires a change in school food culture. Rather than school breakfasts, lunches, and snacks being viewed as something to hurry through and FILL children, they need to become an integral part of the school and nourish children. Food, farms and nutrition can become part of the school fabric, part of the daily conversation. In schools where this has been accomplished, often as part of the VT FEED Project, you can hear students asking each other about new foods in lunch boxes, and anticipating the monthly taste testing of new foods in the classrooms and cafeterias.”

- VT FEED Staff

VT FEED Believes:

- All children and members of their community should have access to safe, affordable, healthy, nutritious foods
- Healthy diets positively and directly impact students' academic performance
- Children will make healthy choices because of their involvement with food as part of their school curriculum
- Local agriculture is important historically, and for the future
- All communities should be invested in their school food system; from the farms, to the cafeterias, to the classrooms
- School food policy must change to reflect local, healthy, and nutritious foods available to students
- Food literate children will impact and change family purchasing, cooking, and eating patterns
- Through growing, harvesting, and preparing foods, children gain confidence, develop critical thinking skills, and feel a sense of power and control over their own health and food choices