

UVM CENTER  
FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE  
Annual Report for 2014

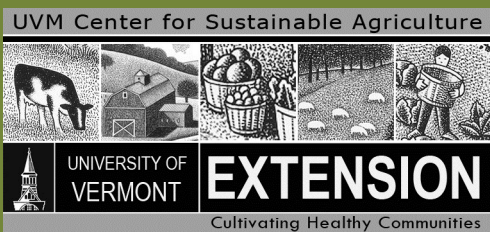


UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture



UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT **EXTENSION**

Cultivating Healthy Communities



## From the Director

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October 2014

As a group with expertise in several different areas, the staff of the Center for Sustainable Agriculture tend to bring a diversity of perspectives to the challenges we seek to address in our work with farmers, food processors, colleagues



and communities. Top among these are economic security and food justice, ways to balance farmers' honest desire to work towards environmental sustainability while needing to balance the books, the logistics of production and distribution, and the many ways that public policy presents both opportunity and challenges on small farms.

We also think a lot about how, as a multi-disciplinary group, our collaborative efforts can lead to better outcomes. For us, that includes the collective efforts of staff across the Center, as well as the outside partners with whom we shape our work. In this report we decided to share a story that shows the depth of what our united forces can offer. We believe that it captures the essence of why we have a Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and how our extended community can become richer when we work together towards a common vision.

We are grateful for your support, and for having you on this journey with us!

Best wishes,

## Farming in the Intervale:

### A Story of Farming Innovation and Tradition

What does it look like when a farming enterprise comes together in a way that's good for farmers and food producers, good for the communities they serve, good for the natural environment, and also presents an opportunity for knowledge to be openly shared?

One way it looks is right here in Burlington's Intervale: the valley where the Winooski River meanders along its last curves before emptying into Lake Champlain. Something of a mecca for visitors and locals with an interest in Vermont's vibrant food system, the Intervale has seen a dramatic return to its agriculturally productive roots from years in which it was little more than a dumping ground on the edge of the town's center.

Two new enterprises are developing on this fertile land that has been cultivated for thousands of years, and Center staffers have been enthusiastically involved in projects there. The work is in support of some of our state's newest citizens who are seeking to grow food to feed themselves and their communities, in ways that bring together new opportunities, traditional knowledge, lived experience, and a commitment to careful stewardship of land and water.

These projects are not only providing immediate access to food, dignity and independence for the farmers themselves, but they're helping teach Vermont's farmers and service providers about new varieties and breeds, new (to Vermont) techniques, new approaches to challenges, and opportunities for products and markets.

### New American Farmers' Project

New Farmer Coordinator Ben Waterman leads the Center's work with vegetable and rice growers in collaboration with staff from the Intervale Center and AALV, a Burlington-based non-profit that provides support to new Americans from many locations.

According to Ben, "there are over three hundred resettled refugees and immigrants coming to the Burlington area every year. Most have farming backgrounds. Many see agriculture as a common thread between life in America and their original homeland. But farming in Vermont is different than farming in Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, Somalia, and Vietnam! What remains constant is the strong heartfelt drive to produce healthy, nutritious and familiar food and, in some cases, to generate income from farming. The Center's New American Farmer Project helps growers to adapt farming skills in Vermont to boost household food security and explore entrepreneurship opportunities in urban farming. We have been active in helping growers both directly and indirectly.

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Vermont Goat Collaborative. 3. T  
food justice project through our Loc  
includes researching and evaluatin  
conditions. 5. Produce Safety Coordinat  
the field and in the kitchen to help them l  
extensive technical assistance, including this thro  
water from the river. 7. A New American farmer

Thanks to our donors,  
Center for Sustainable Agriculture  
disciplinary team to conduct research  
side with local organizations, farmers,  
community members  
surviving farms, strengthen Vermont's  
system, protect water quality,  
and build healthy soils.



is where the Winooski River winds before  
Lake Champlain. Its valley is home to some  
most fertile soils, as well as active community  
ons including the Intervale Center, (and the many farms  
New Farms for New Americans Program, Burlington Parks  
boat Collaborative and Vermont Land Trust.. **These pictures represent some of the  
laborative work there.** 1. A goat buckling at the Pine Island Collective is one of the  
ays that are humane, and protect vital resources of soil and water with the technical  
enter's Pasture Program. 2. Karen Freudenburger and Chuda Dhaurali of the Pine  
The Center's involvement in the New Farms for New Americans work began as a  
cal Foods Program 4. Work with the Intervale Center on climate change resilience  
g plants like elderberries, which are agriculturally productive and tolerate wetter  
or Ginger Nickerson worked with New American farmers on produce safety practices in  
bring their food to market. 6. New Farmer Coordinator Ben Waterman (left) offers  
ee-workshop series on building a solar-powered water pump to irrigate rice fields with  
r at the rice harvest in fall of 2013.

“In 2014 we offered a five-workshop series on solar water pumping, and weekly meetings to address production and marketing issues, such as organic pest control and how to build strong relationships with buyers. Through assisting the AALV New Farms for New Americans program with irrigation systems and program design, we supported farming families at the Ethan Allen and Pine Island Farm. At harvest time we saw many tangible examples: from households working together to preserve great quantities of traditional fermented dried greens, to farmers selling thousands of dollars worth of locally grown produce. We see clearly how support for these programs and direct services for farmers helped them thrive.”



### **Raising Goats at Pine Island Farm**

“Sometimes, says Pasture Program Coordinator Jenn Colby, “you get involved in a project because you know that it’s the right time even if the funding hasn’t been put in place yet.”

That’s how and when the Center got involved with Karen Freudenburger, and what would become the Pine Island Goat Collaborative in Colchester.

Located right across the river from the Ethan Allen Homestead, the farm was based on Karen’s simple observation that recent immigrants and refugees living in Vermont were seeking fresh, affordable meat like they were accustomed to in their homeland. She learned that the male offspring from the does on Vermont’s proliferating goat dairy farms were not being used. At the same time, new Americans were buying goat meat from across the world. It didn’t make sense.

The Center’s Pasture Program met Karen and got involved while the dream of raising goats to provide fresh affordable meat for an eager community was still just a concept. Jenn describes their involvement as “cheerleaders to help the project get started. We worked together to find funders and supporters. Then, as the plan was taking shape, we worked with Karen and Chuda, a New American farmer who is now the Farm Manager, to provide guidance on animal husbandry, grazing and pasture management, forage, business planning, providing guidance in the farm’s initial set up. We have continued to provide advice and guidance as part of the team helping Karen and Chuda move forward to manage the land in ways that achieve ecological and working landscape goals. And now, excitingly, we’ve started monitoring the impacts of initial management decisions to better understand how they are affecting the landscape. We’ve become cheerleaders once again. It’s so exciting to see hundreds of people access good, local meat grown for all the right reasons.”



### **The Center: Working for Vermont’s Food System Today and Tomorrow**

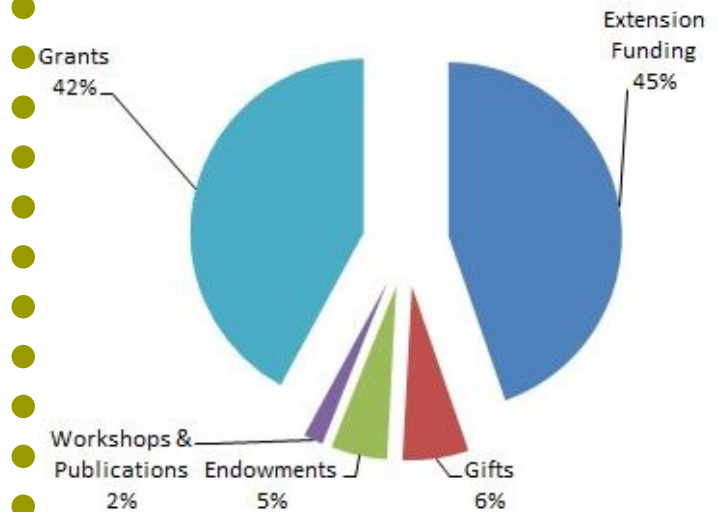
Farming and selling food are complex activities, even on a small scale and even in a small state. But with dedicated farmers, passionate supporters, and knowledgeable and experienced service providers, a sustainable future is in focus.

# 2014 Funding & Expenses

## About the Center's Funding\*

- **Extension Funding** is a combination of federal and state dollars that UVM receives as a Land Grant University.
- **Grants** are from government sources and private foundations.
- **Endowment** income is the interest that is earned from generous donations made to the Center by donors who wanted to ensure that important work can continue in perpetuity.
- **Workshops and Publications** income is derived from workshop fees and the purchases of Center books, publications, and DVDs.
- **Gifts** are donations to the Center's annual fund raising appeals, or those made spontaneously.

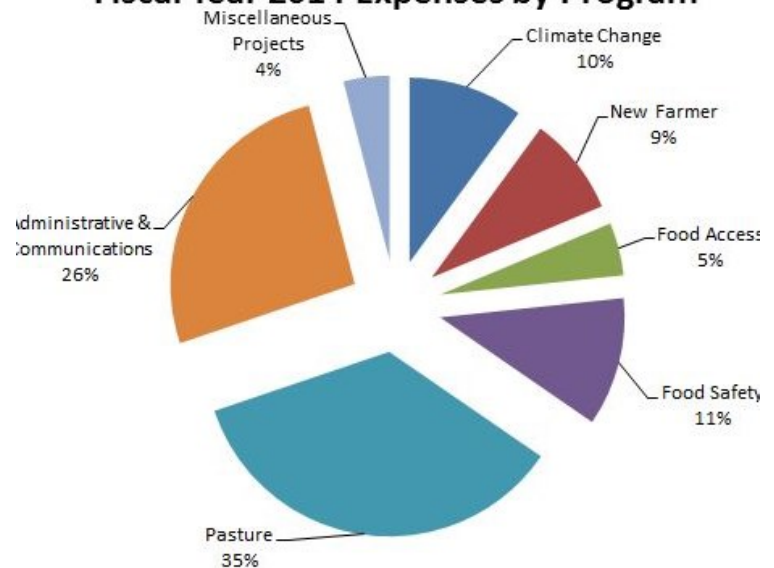
## Fiscal Year 2014 Funding by Source



## Understanding the Center's Expenses

- **Pasture** represents salaries and program costs for the Center's largest program, with three staffers who engage in research, outreach, collaboration and technical assistance with farmers around the state.
- **Admin. & Communications** monies support leadership, collaboration, development, grants management, financial oversight, support for program staff, outreach and customer service, and allow us to produce the Center's newsletters, calendars and annual report.
- **Food Safety** allowed the Produce Safety Coordinator to help farmers develop and follow plans for safe handling of their on-farm produce.
- **New Farmer & On-Farm Enterprise** expenses supported work in the areas of Land Access, Youth Ag. IDA, and New American Farmer, and projects including the Shiitake Guide.
- **Food Access** let us continue work around Vermont's locally grown dried beans, develop ways to understand the impact of food waste on low-income households, and research into how people are accessing healthy food.
- **Climate Change** expenses represent the Farming & Climate Change Coordinator's work.
- **Miscellaneous Projects** included our work supporting the Sustainable Agriculture Council, and the wrap-up of our work with the Small Ruminant Dairy Project.

## Fiscal Year 2014 Expenses by Program



\* These unaudited numbers represent income and expenses from July 1, 2013—June 30, 2014.

The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College

**CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

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**A FEW 2014 HIGHLIGHTS**

Clockwise from top left:

1. Graduates from the first Youth Ag. IDA program in August.



2. Cattle at Health Hero Farm on South Hero, hosts for soil and climate change research as well as of our October Party on the Farm.



3. Farming & Climate Change Coordinator Joshua Faulkner with a farmer in the Mad River Valley.



4. Vegetable farmers at a July micro-irrigation workshop.

