



Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2014



Prepared by:
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Dear Vermonter,

It is with great pride that I report on the success of the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative. Over the past two and a half years, we have built a new program from the ground up, through dedicated public-private partnership and multi-agency collaboration. I am honored to Chair the Working Lands Enterprise Board, and to serve with my colleagues from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, as well as the non-profit and private sector partners who have dedicated hundreds of hours of their time to launch this important new program. This Initiative owes much of its success to the diversity of voices and depth and breadth of expertise around the Board table. Most of all though, Vermont's working landscape owes its vibrancy to the innovative and committed farm and forest businesses all across our state - many of which are now growing thanks to investments from this new program.

One thing is clear – the investment in our Working Landscape is necessary to support the heritage, community and the backbone of Vermont's economy. The agriculture and forestry sectors are faced with a number of challenges, as well as significant opportunities. In the first two years of funding, the Working Lands Enterprise Board has made \$2.1 million in investments to 74 agriculture and forestry projects reaching every county in the state, and leveraging an additional \$3.1 million in matching funds. This fiscal year, the third year of the program, the Board received 129 applications and over \$5.5 million in funding requests to compete for \$1 million in funding. This investment in the businesses that produce our food, fiber, fuel, and wood products – as well as maintain the vibrancy and authenticity of our working landscape – is an investment in our future.

We are still in the early years of this initiative – only 23 of the 74 grants projects have been completed, and it is still early to see measurable impacts. However, we are pleased with the performance measures that we are seeing thus far. The 23 businesses (representing \$500,059, or approximately 23% of total) that have completed their projects reported: 25 jobs created in the past year; an increase of \$880,832 in gross income; and a 25% increase in output. These impacts will only multiply as grantee projects are fully implemented and operational. We will continue to track and report their progress over the coming years.

This report contains both quantitative and anecdotal data as evidence of the work that we are doing to promote economic development in Vermont's Working Landscape. I am encouraged by the stories captured in these pages, and encourage you to visit our website at workinglands.vermont.gov to keep informed on this important Initiative.

Sincerely,



Chuck Ross, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Program Mission & Vision

Mission

The Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board is an impact investment organization whose mission is to grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape by making essential, catalytic investments in critical leverage points of the Vermont farm and forest economy, from individual enterprises to industry sectors.

Vision

Vermont prospers and its unique sense of place thrives in large part because of intelligent investment in the people and enterprises that comprise its farm, food, and forest based systems.



IMAGE CREDIT: FLICKR USER - PETER RINTELS "FARM WITH FALL FOLIAGE, POWNAL, VERMONT, 2014"

Act 142

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative was created under Act 142. The intent of the act is to:

1. stimulate a concerted economic development effort on behalf of Vermont's agriculture and forest product sectors by systematically **advancing entrepreneurship, business development, and job creation**;
2. recognize and build on the **similarities and unique qualities** of Vermont's agriculture and forest product sectors;
3. **increase the value** of Vermont's raw and value-added products through the development of in-state and export markets;
4. **attract a new generation of entrepreneurs** to Vermont's farm, food system, forest, and value-added chain by facilitating more **affordable access** to the working landscape;
5. **provide assistance** to agricultural and forest product businesses in navigating the regulatory process;
6. use Vermont's brand recognition and reputation as a **national leader** in food systems development, innovative entrepreneurship, and as a "green" state to leverage economic development and opportunity in the agriculture and forest product sectors;
7. **promote the benefits of Vermont's working lands**, from the economic value of raw and value-added products to the public value of ecological stability, land stewardship, recreational opportunities, and quality of life;
8. increase the amount of state investment in working lands enterprises, particularly when it **leverages private and philanthropic** funds; and
9. support the people and businesses that depend on Vermont's renewable land-based resources and the sustainable and productive use of the land by **coordinating and integrating financial products and programs**.

The Working Lands Enterprise Board

The Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) represents a cross-agency, cross-sector network of partners around the same investment platform: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets; Vermont Forests, Parks & Recreation; Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development; nine designated board members from across the supply chains of Agriculture and Forestry; and Ex Officio members from the Vermont Economic Development Authority; Vermont Housing Conservation Board; and the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

Chuck Ross, Chair

Secretary, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Michael Snyder

Commissioner, Forests, Parks & Recreation

Lucy Leriche

Deputy Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Jolinda LaClair, Deputy Secretary, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Matt Langlais, Designee

Caledonia/Essex County Forester, VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation

Jared Duval, Designee

Economic Development Director, Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Eric DeLuca

Principal, Leverage Point Consulting LLC

Brian Kemp

Farm Manager, Mountain Meadow Beef Farm

Eleanor Leger

Owner, Eden Ice Cider

Emma Marvin

Director of Marketing, Butternut Mountain Farm

Joseph W. Nelson

Consulting Forester

Robin Scheu

Executive Director, Addison County Economic Development Corporation

Beverley Thurber

Owner, Lilac Ridge Farm

Kathleen Wanner

Executive Director, Vermont Woodlands Association

Jo Bradley

Manager, Vermont Economic Development Authority (VACC)

Sarah Isham

Senior Agricultural Loan Officer, VACC

Ellen Kahler

Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF)

Gus Seelig

Executive Director, Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB)

Ela Chapin, Designee

Program Director, Vermont Farm Viability Program (VHCB)



IMAGE CREDIT: 2014 GRANTEE ANNOUNCEMENT PRESS EVENT AT GROW COMPOST IN MORETOWN

Program Stats to Date



During the fiscal year 2015 application period, the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative:

- received 129 applications;
- had \$5,561,125 in requests for \$1,000,000 in available funds;
- funding decisions will be announced in May.

Funding Criteria:

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative projects are chosen based on their impacts and alignment with at least one or more of the goals outlined in Act 142. Food system organizations and businesses are also encouraged to refer to the goals of the [Farm to Plate Strategic Plan](#) and forestry and forest products businesses are encouraged to review the [Vermont Wood Products Sector Strategic Plan Update](#). Applicants must be in compliance with state regulations (i.e. land, water, unemployment compensation, taxation, child support) and in good standing with the state of Vermont.

Grants are made in three investment areas:

- 1. Enterprise Grants:** Small grants (up to \$20,000) available to start-up and emerging Working Lands businesses. Eligible expenses include infrastructure, marketing, market development, business development and technical assistance to meet a need not already filled by existing programs.
- 2. Service Provider Grants:** Grants (up to \$150,000) available to Vermont non-profit organizations, associations, educational institutions, private sector or partnership groups, or other entities that provide technical assistance directly to agricultural and/or forestry & forest products enterprises.
- 3. Capital & Infrastructure Grants:** Larger grants (up to \$75,000) available to growth-stage or mature businesses for capital investments that will have a value chain impact beyond their immediate business or organization. Eligible expenses include specialized personnel, access to land, building and equipment costs, working capital, information technology, and other collaborative ventures that build capacity within the supply chain, open new markets, and/or create a replicable, innovative model.

Program Impact

The data below reflects 23 completed projects of the 74 grants that have been made thus far, totaling only \$500,059 (approximately 23%) of the total funds invested to date. These include FY13 grantees in the Enterprise and Capital and Infrastructure investment areas.

25 new jobs created*

(full time equivalents) in the first year of grant investments

FY15 Goal: 59

Aggregated gross income increased by

\$880,831*

FY15 Goal: \$1,489,210

Businesses increased product output by an

average of 25%*

FY15 Goal: 50%

91% increased their capacity

to fulfill additional contracts

FY15 Goal: 95%

74% believe that the grant had a

high or very high impact

on their business

FY15 Goal: 100%

*Results Based Accountability Performance Goal


2015 Goals are cumulative across FY13 and FY14 grantees. These estimates are based on 2013 grantee projections for one year post-grant, and 2014 grantee projections for immediately post-grant.


2013 Grant Investments


Funded 37 Projects; Granted \$1,018,730

Enterprise Investments

Addison County


 **Dancing Bee Gardens**, Middlebury
\$6,000 for barn for honey production and beekeeping courses

 **Eddy Farm Shiitake**, Middlebury
\$3000 for log laying yard
Infrastructure improvements


 **The Last Resort Farm**, Bristol
\$15,000 for trout and strawberry aquaponic production

Bennington County

 **Green Mtn Logging & Landscape Mgt**, Rupert
\$8,000 for equipment for logging wood


 **Guild of Vermont Furniture Makers**, Dorset
\$10,000 for a comprehensive marketing plan to increase sales

Caledonia County


 **Currier Forest Products**, Danville
\$12,000 for a small kiln to support Northeast Kingdom businesses

 **Vermont Chevron**, Danville
\$10,000 for market research and tactical marketing plan development

Chittenden County


 **Vermont Goat Collaborative**, Colchester
\$10,868 for a new American custom exempt goat slaughter facility

 **Adam's Berry Farm**, Charlotte
\$10,000 for a walk-in refrigerator and freezer


 **Maple Wind Farm**, Richmond
\$15,000 for an inspected poultry processing facility

 **The Sculpted Tree**, Winooski
\$5,629 for equipment for wood turning and classes

Franklin County

 **A.S. Hudak Lumber and Logging**, Swanton
\$11,406 for a CSA model where consumers can be investors


 **Vermont Cranberry Company**, Fletcher
\$15,000 for press building, freezer space and a solar drying facility


 **Does' Leap**, Bakersfield
\$6,103 for increased pork production and sausage processing infrastructure

Orange County


 **Timberhomes, LLC**, Vershire
\$12,000 for Natural Structurally Insulated Panels made with Vermont timber

Orleans County

 **Sweet Rowen Farmstead**, West Glover
\$15,000 for a 200 gal. pasteurizer to quadruple milk capacity

 **Parmelee Farm**, Randolph Center
\$20,000 for the construction of a fixed poultry processing facility

Rutland County

 **Krueger-Norton Sugarhouse**, Shrewsbury
\$9,900 to convert to high vacuum gravity tubing system

Washington County

 **Vermont Switchel Company**, Cabot
\$15,000 for bottling and capping equipment

 **Screamin' Ridge Farm**, Montpelier
\$15,000 for equipment to boost production efficiency for Joe's Soups

Windham County

 **Sidehill Farm**, Brattleboro
\$15,000 for equipment and frozen storage capacity to expand product line

Service Provider Investments


Statewide Impacts

-  **The Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)**, Richmond
\$20,000 for professional development for farmers' market managers
-  **Patricia A. Hannaford Regional Technical School District**, Middlebury
\$55,000 for expansion of meat butchering program
-  **University of Vermont Extension Service**, Berlin
\$39,302 for poultry and grape sector business model research and development
-  **University of Vermont Extension Service**, Brattleboro
\$40,000 to increase supply and quality of local vegetable storage
-   **Vermont Housing and Conservation Board**, Montpelier
\$100,000 to expand assistance to agricultural infrastructure and forestry sectors
-  **Vermont Meat and Poultry Processors' Association**
\$15,000 to enhance innovation in Vermont's meat processing industry
-  **Vermont Solid Waste District Managers Association**, Middlebury
\$55,000 for technical planning services for food-scrap composting
-  **Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association**, Rutland
\$48,000 for workforce development for the secondary wood manufacturing industry


Capital & Infrastructure Investments

Addison County


-  **Champlain Orchards**, Shoreham
\$75,000 to expand Vermont's cider apple supply chain

-  **Vermont Refrigerated Storage**, Shoreham
\$43,369 to increase storage capacity for farms, distributors and processors


Franklin County

-  **Vermont Woodworking School**, Fairfax
\$50,000 for an incubator space for emerging woodworking businesses


Orange County

-  **A. McGovern Logging & Sawmilling**, West Brookfield
\$20,000 for a portable sawmill upgrades to increase volume


Orleans County

-  **Jasper Hill Farm**, Greensboro
\$50,000 for a cheese microbiology lab to develop "artisan cultures" to promote quality and safety


Rutland County

-  **Vermont Wood Pellet Company**, North Clarendon
\$38,153 mill upgrades to increase efficiency and quality

Windham County

-  **Vermont Woods Studios**, Vernon
\$100,000 to expand markets of Vermont furniture by building a destination shopping experience

Windsor County


-  **Black River Meats**, North Springfield
\$50,000 to build volume and value for Vermont livestock producers in new markets


2014 Grant Investments


Funded 37 Projects; Granted \$1,159,331

Enterprise Investments


Addison County

 **Doolittle Farm**, Shoreham
\$14,203 for egg washing equipment


 **Green Mountain Hardwood**, Ripton
\$9,825 for a portable sawmill and materials for solar-assisted lumber kiln

 **Windfall Orchard**, Cornwall
\$9,750 for cider presses and equipment to expand business


Bennington County

 **Wilcox Ice Cream**, Manchester
\$20,000 for a manufacturing facility

Caledonia County


 **Snug Valley Farm**, East Hardwick
\$20,000 for improving delivery of pigs and pork products

Chittenden County


 **Jericho Settlers Farm**, Jericho
\$18,200 for heated tunnels with biomass furnace to expand winter vegetable production

 **North Williston Cattle Company**, Essex Junction
\$10,000 for equipment to reclaim prime agricultural land


Franklin County

 **Bouchard Farm**, St. Albans
\$9,750 for equipment and materials for organic dairy cow housing


Lamoille County

 **Elmore Roots Fruit Tree and Berry Nursery**, Elmore
\$12,000 for kiosks to expand accessibility to product

Orange County


 **Fat Toad Farm**, Brookfield
\$15,000 for more efficient caramel equipment to expand production


Orleans County

 **Bonnieview Farm**, Albany
\$20,000 for cheese aging cave to double production


 **Cate Hill Orchard**, Greensboro
\$20,000 for an on-farm processing facility for value added products and to begin producing farm farmstead sheep cheese

 **Kingdom Brewing**, Newport
\$20,000 for a retail bottle/cannery and growler fill station


 **Lazy Lady Farm**, Westfield
\$6,000 for a solar array to secure energy requirements for an off-grid dairy

 **NorthWoods Stewardship Center**, East Charleston
\$18,200 for forwarding trailer and implementation of low-impact timber harvests

Washington County


 **Rogers Farmstead**, Berlin
\$20,000 for equipment to expand grainery capability

Windham County

 **Big Picture Farm**, Townshend
\$20,000 for materials for caramel production and cheese production facility

 **Boyd Family Farm**, Wilmington
\$20,000 to renovate existing barn


Windsor County

 **Rockledge Farm**, Weathersfield
\$10,000 for website development and marketing


Service Provider Investments

Statewide Impacts



 **Canaan Community Forest Committee, Town of Canaan, and Canaan Schools, Canaan**
\$50,000 for continued development of the Canaan Community Forest as a model working forest and educational resource


 **DairyVision Vermont,**
\$50,000 for DairyVision Vermont, a farmer led technical service effort empowering dairy farmers

 **Intervale Center, Northeast Organic Farmers Association Vermont (NOFA-VT), University of Vermont Extension, Vital Communities and Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL)**
\$50,000 for The New Farmer Project: Nurturing the next wave of Vermont agricultural entrepreneurs

 **University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Burlington**
\$27,939 for Vermont swine industry development


 **University of Vermont Department of Plant and Soil Science and Community Development and Applied Economics, Burlington**
\$40,000 for apple market optimization and expansion through value-added hard cider production

  **VT Housing and Conservation Board, Montpelier**
\$118,337 for business assistance for Vermont's food and forestry enterprises


 **VT Sustainable Jobs Fund, Montpelier**
\$20,000 for strengthening producer and processor association capacity

Capital & Infrastructure Investments

Addison County

 **Vermont Livestock Slaughter and Processing, LLC, Ferrisburgh**
\$38,000 for a computerized weight data and tracking system for livestock

Caledonia County

 **Northeastern Vermont Development Association, St. Johnsbury**
\$50,000 to catalyze the market for high-wood pellet boilers and to enhance associated delivery and service infrastructure


Orange County


 **Vermont Technical College Institute for Applied Agriculture & Food Systems, Randolph**
\$75,000 for a dairy processing plant and hub

Orleans County

 **Goodridge Lumber, Inc., Albany**
\$30,000 for land acquisition


Washington County


 **Grow Compost of Vermont, LLC, Moretown**
\$75,000 to fund a long-range strategic plan to assist businesses and farms to comply with the provisions of the recently enacted Act 148

 **Screamin' Ridge Farm, Inc., East Montpelier**
\$50,000 for a collaborative processing facility for value-added agricultural products


 **Vermont Food Venture Center, Hardwick; and Mad River Food Hub, Waitsfield**
\$50,000 for an Equipment Access Program for Vermont value added processors

Windham County

 **Brattleboro Area Farmers' Market, Brattleboro**
\$30,000 for site acquisition and expansion of the farmers' market

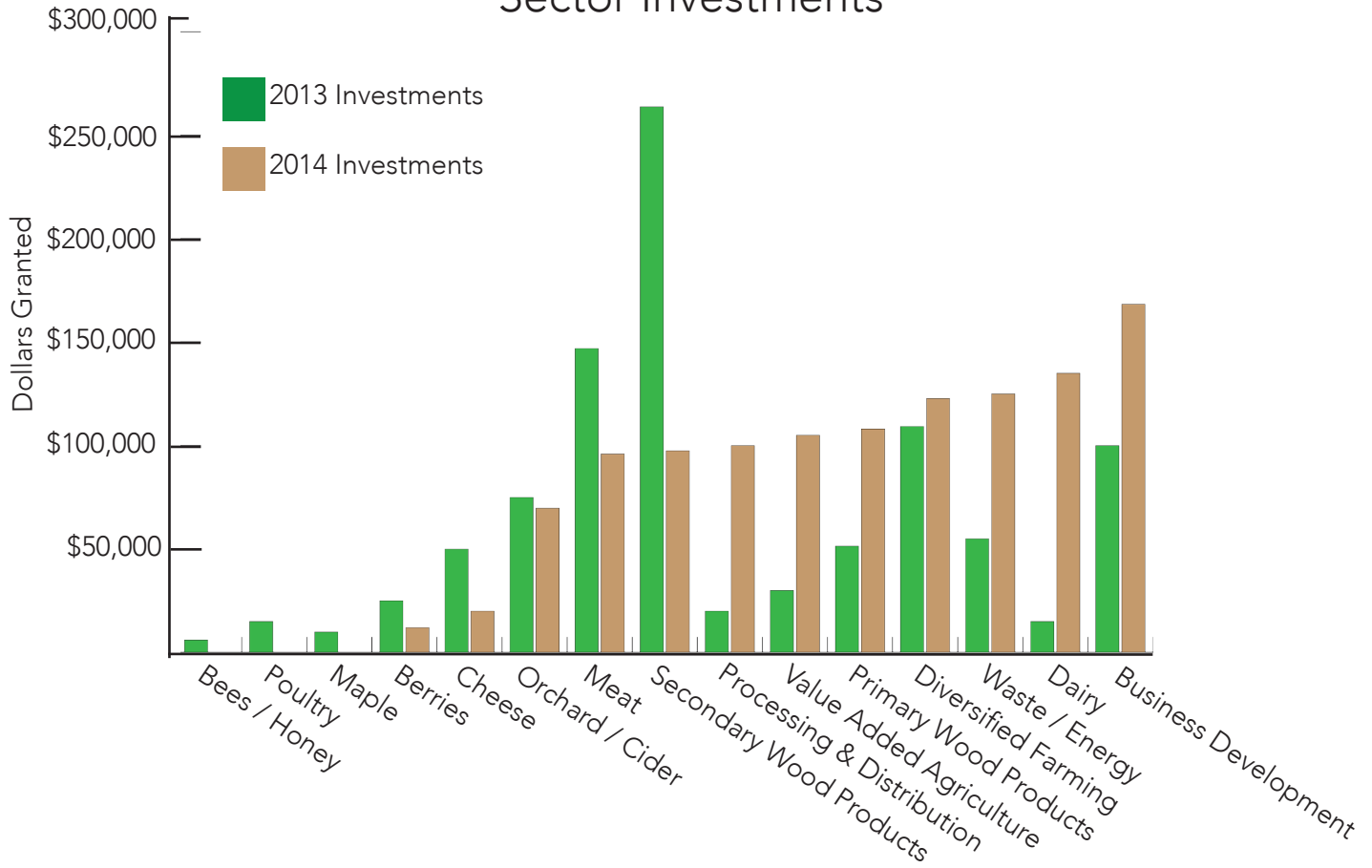
 **Ironwood Brand, LLC, Brattleboro**
\$37,500 to link native lumber with prefab, high-performance construction

Windsor County

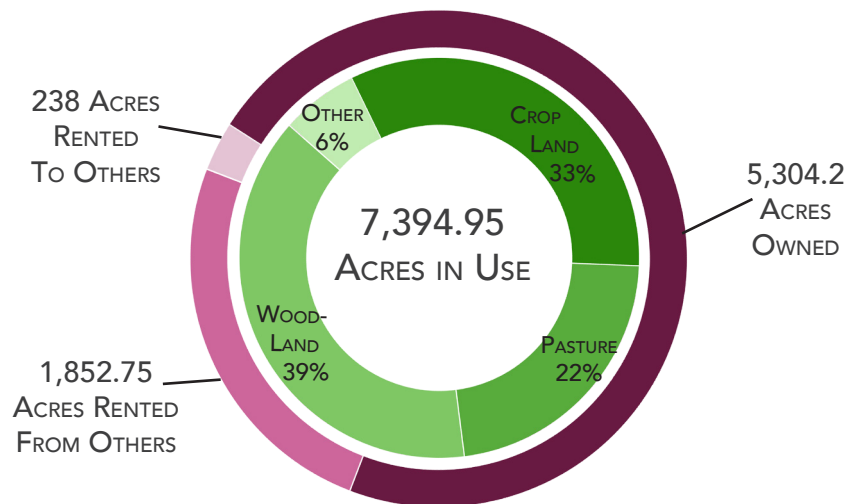
 **North Hollow Farm, Rochester**
\$24,380 for an on-farm USDA inspected meat processing plant

Grantee Snapshot

Sector Investments



2013 & 2014 Grantee Land in Use



Note: Land in Use information represents 49 of 74 grantees, or \$1,263,114 (58%) of funding distributed.



Sweet Rowen Farmstead

West Glover, Orleans County

**Hired 1
full time**
Milk Plant Manager

Awarded
**Top Quality
Producer 2014**

Increased production
by 145%

2013 Enterprise Grantee: \$15,000

Sweet Rowen Farmstead in West Glover is a family-operated, grass-based micro-dairy that produces milk and cheese. A \$15,000 Working Lands grant proved invaluable to their business, enabling them to **purchase a 250 gallon vat pasteurizer**. This investment increased their production of small-batch, whole cows' milk products and increased profit margins.

As a result, Sweet Rowen has hired a milk plant manager, and has increased their production by 145%. In addition, the farm is now able to share their state-inspected milk processing facility with other area farmers and producers. This year, Sweet Rowen Farm achieved the top milk quality award, a very high honor, at the Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative meeting in December 2014.



IMAGE CREDITS: SWEET ROWEN FARM



Vermont Wood Pellet Company

North Clarendon, Rutland County

Hired an additional
4 employees

Awarded
**Best Softwood
Pellet
of the Year**

Durability increased to
99%

2013 Capital and Infrastructure Grantee: \$38,153

Vermont Wood Pellet Company received a Working Lands grant to **install two new pieces of equipment to improve the efficiency and quality of their wood pellets**: a bi-directional auger, to reduce the loss of finished material, and a counter flow cooler, designed specifically to ensure uniform durability. These pellets can better withstand the bulk delivery,

storage, and feed systems. Partly due to the improved quality, demand has risen 120% over the last season. This increased demand has directly and positively affected their bulk delivery partner: Vermont Renewable Fuels. Additionally, they have experienced an electricity savings of approximately \$600 per month. The total outcome of these changes has brought Vermont Wood Pellet Company close to maximum production.

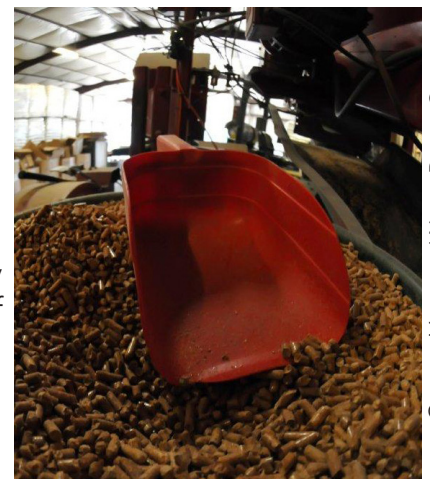


IMAGE CREDITS: VERMONT WOOD PELLET CO.



Vermont Woodworking School

Cambridge, Franklin County

Hired
1 additional employee

Increased net income by
145%

Created the capacity to house
6 incubator residents

2013 Capital and Infrastructure Grantee: \$50,000

Vermont Woodworking School offers classes and workshops, has thirty student benches for their education programs, offers a Woodworking Immersion Program, and hosts Burlington College's Craftsmanship and Design Degrees and Certificates. Vermont Woodworking School received a Working Lands grant to **build an incubator space** to serve

individuals who are in the beginning stages of their wood products business.

The project was initially designed to house four residents in the incubator space, yet, they have exceeded their goal, currently providing a space for six residents. The school is able to offer a space at a reasonable expense, and residents have access to a computer lab, a photo studio, and ongoing technical assistance.



IMAGE CREDITS: VERMONT WOODWORKING SCHOOL COMPUTER LAB



VT Solid Waste District Managers Association Statewide Impact

Permitted, designed, and built
13 new
compost sites

Provided
995 hours
of direct technical assistance

Generated
\$140,000
in compost sales and tipping fees

2013 Service Provider Grantee: \$55,000

The Vermont Solid Waste District Managers' Association consists of the ten solid waste districts and two planning alliances – the Mad River Resource Management Alliance and the Rutland County Solid Waste Alliance Communities, with authority to manage solid waste in Vermont. **The project provided over 995 hours of technical assistance** which included: comprehensive planning,

permitting, design, assessments, operational support, and training in best management practices to both existing and prospective food scrap recyclers throughout the State.

At the end of the year, VSWDMA found that there was an increase of 11.62% in total food scraps diverted to composting facilities and an 11% increase in capacity to process statewide.



IMAGE CREDITS: VSWDMA



Does Leap Farm

Bakersfield, Franklin County

Hired 1 additional
**full time
employee**

Increased gross
sausage sales by
168%

Increased sausage
production
>50%

2013 Enterprise Grantee: \$6,103

Does' Leap Farm in Bakersfield, VT, a diversified organic farm specializing in fresh and aged goat cheeses, kefir, and farm-made artisan sausage received a \$6,103 grant from the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative **to invest in the expansion of their on-farm pork and sausage production venture.**

Thanks to their grant, Does' Leap Farm was able to add a new whey pump and on-farm sausage-making equipment to their list of inventive agricultural systems. The new whey pump allows for the distribution of whey from the farm's cheese operation to different areas of the farm previously inaccessible to pigs, who feed on the whey left over from the cheese-making. This

process not only facilitates the recycling of a waste product, but also helps improve the health of the land by increasing the area in which the farm's pig population can "renovate".

"The Working Lands grant was vital in enabling us to scale up our operation to meet current demand, improve the efficiency of sausage production, and broaden the ecological role pigs play in our farm ecosystem,"
George Van Vlaanderen,
Owner

Sausage production investments included a meat grinder, which, along with various hand tools (knives, sharpeners, cutting board etc.), increases sausage-making efficiency. A new freezer and refrigerator is enabling more product storage, while a vacuum packer is improving freezer life and frozen sausage point-of-sale aesthetics.

Does' Leap's farm-made sausage is a unique business enterprise because it transforms formerly undifferentiated, low-margin commodities into a highly profitable, specialty food product. Due to their high quality meat, small-scale production process, distinctive recipes, and utilization of fresh herbs, Does' Leap Sausage is readily identifiable, unique, and highly sought after.



IMAGE CREDITS: DOES LEAP FARM



Green Mountain Hardwood

Ripton, Addison County

20% increase
in orders compared to
the same period last
year

On track to increase
net profit
by **25%**

Received their 1st
contract for a
**One Tree
Design Project**

2014 Enterprise Grantee: \$9,825

Green Mountain Hardwood, founded in 2011, offers a range of wholesale consumer products such as cheeseboards and crèches to clients such as Danforth Pewter, as well as handcrafted furniture and cabinetry. Green Mountain Hardwood received a Working Lands grant for a **portable sawmill and a solar assisted lumber kiln**. The on-site solar assisted kiln, constructed from lumber harvested

and milled from their family forest, has reduced time, energy, and transportation costs associated with sourcing lumber.

In less than a year from receiving their grant funding, Green Mountain Hardwood has seen an increase in customer orders, and is under contract to begin their first One Tree Design project – an innovative new product line for their portfolio.



IMAGE CREDITS: GREEN MOUNTAIN HARDWOOD
SOLAR KILN



Jericho Settlers Farm

Jericho, Chittenden County

Increased tomato
production by over
6,000 lbs

2 additional
year round
employees

Increased early
tomato sales by
950%

2014 Enterprise Grantee: \$18,200

Jericho Settlers Farm is a 13 year old diversified livestock and vegetable farm operating on 150 acres in Richmond and Jericho. The farm is powered by six solar trackers and they operate one of Vermont's few year-round CSA programs, through which they offer shares of eggs, grass fed beef and lamb, pasture raised pork and chicken, and certified organic vegetables.

Using the Working Lands Enterprise funding, **the farm constructed one in-ground biofuel heated greenhouse, and plans to construct a second**, to expand their winter growing capabilities and increase the supply of local food through Vermont's winter. With the installation of the bioheated greenhouses, Jericho Settlers Farm has added two additional year round employees, has increased tomato production and sales dramatically, and increased greens sales by 200%.



IMAGE CREDITS: JERICO SETTLEERS FARM TOMATO
PRODUCTION

Board Committee Briefs

Enterprise Financing Options Committee

The purpose of the Enterprise Financing Committee is to explore financing options to leverage the state investment in the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative. In July 2013, the Board convened a diverse panel of capital providers for a briefing on needs, gaps, and strategies regarding access to capital for working lands enterprises. The Enterprise Financing Committee was then formed to develop recommendations to inform future Board work and optimize the impact of the overall initiative. A work plan was developed and implemented that included analysis of input from enterprises and capital providers in the VT working lands economy. A Request for Proposals was crafted and released which will result in the development of a blueprint for how WLEB could potentially implement additional funding tools, and with whom it would be optimal to partner.

Forestry Committee

In 2014, the Board contracted with St. Albans-based Yellow Wood Associates (YWA) to conduct an in-depth analysis of the forestry and wood products industry in Vermont. In partnership with the Committee, YWA is currently engaging stakeholders across all sectors of Vermont's forest and wood products economy to better understand the current state of the industry and identify opportunities for future strategic investment or policy change. The goal of the project, slated for completion by July 2015, is to establish a strong foundation for increased strategic support and overall economic growth in this important sector of Vermont's economy.

To date, the committee and YWA has: completed secondary research on the forest economy in both Vermont and nationally; distributed over 500 surveys to participants in the Vermont forest and wood products economy and collected 175 responses (31% response rate); completed roughly 30 interviews with participants in the Vermont forest and wood products economy; and conducted four regional focus groups, bringing roughly 45 participants together for a wide-ranging discussion on challenges and opportunities.

“The working landscape is the foundation of some of our most important economic sectors: agriculture, forest products, stone and minerals, and renewable energy, but also critical for our tourism economy and helps attract business to our state. Interacting with the land in work and recreation is fundamental to our way of life.”

Lucy Leriche, Deputy Secretary, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

“Vermont’s forests provide significant contributions to our economy, environment and well-being. When we invest in support services and infrastructure for working forests and forest products enterprises, this pillar of the economy grows stronger and we bolster both Vermont’s character and integrity.”

Michael Snyder, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

This report was created by the following Agency of Agriculture Staff who have been working closely with the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative:

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