



Vermont Housing &
Conservation Board

Title 10: Conservation and Development

Chapter 15: VERMONT HOUSING AND CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

§ 302. Policy, findings, and purpose

(a) The dual goals of creating affordable housing for Vermonters, and conserving and protecting Vermont's agricultural land, forestland, historic properties, important natural areas, and recreational lands are of primary importance to the **economic vitality and quality of life** of the State.

(b) In the best interests of all of its citizens and in order to improve the quality of life for Vermonters and to **maintain for the benefit of future generations the essential characteristics of the Vermont countryside, and to support farm, forest, and related enterprises**, Vermont should encourage and assist in creating affordable housing and in preserving the State's agricultural land, forestland, historic properties, important natural areas and recreational lands, and in keeping conserved agricultural land in production and affordable for future generations of farmers.

The Vermont Statutes Online

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§ 303. Definitions

(3) “Eligible activity” means any activity which will carry out either or both of the dual purposes of creating affordable housing and conserving and protecting important Vermont lands, including activities which will encourage or assist:

2 (A) the preservation, rehabilitation, or development of residential dwelling units which are affordable to lower income Vermonters;

(B) the retention of agricultural land for agricultural use, **and of forestland for forestry use;**

(C) the protection of important wildlife habitat and important natural areas;

(D) the preservation of historic properties or resources;

(E) the protection of areas suited for outdoor public recreational activity;

(F) **the protection of lands for multiple conservation purposes, including the protection of surface waters and associated natural resources;**

(G) the development of capacity on the part of an eligible applicant to engage in an eligible activity.

Results: FY 2014 and FY 2015

2014

280 affordable housing units

25 farms; 2,808 acres

12 natural area projects;

3,432 acres

2 historic projects

State Investment:

\$9.9M; \$55M leverage

2015

296 affordable housing units

24 farms; 3,639 acres

9 natural area projects;

2,330 acres

2 historic projects

State Investment:

\$10.4M; \$70M leverage

Working with the Brattleboro Co-op, the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust developed new downtown housing: (24) 1-bedroom and studio apartments for seniors, individuals and persons with disabilities. EPA Award for Smart Growth.





Gary Hall photo

Armory Square in Windsor, now known as the Union Block, where the Windsor & Windham Housing Trust and Housing Vermont redeveloped 41 apartments, adding support services and reconfiguring the units.



Franklin Homestead, 23 apartments for seniors developed by Franklin Homestead, Inc.



S. McCay photo

The Addison County Community Trust and Housing Vermont collaborated on this 25-unit senior housing development in Vergennes.



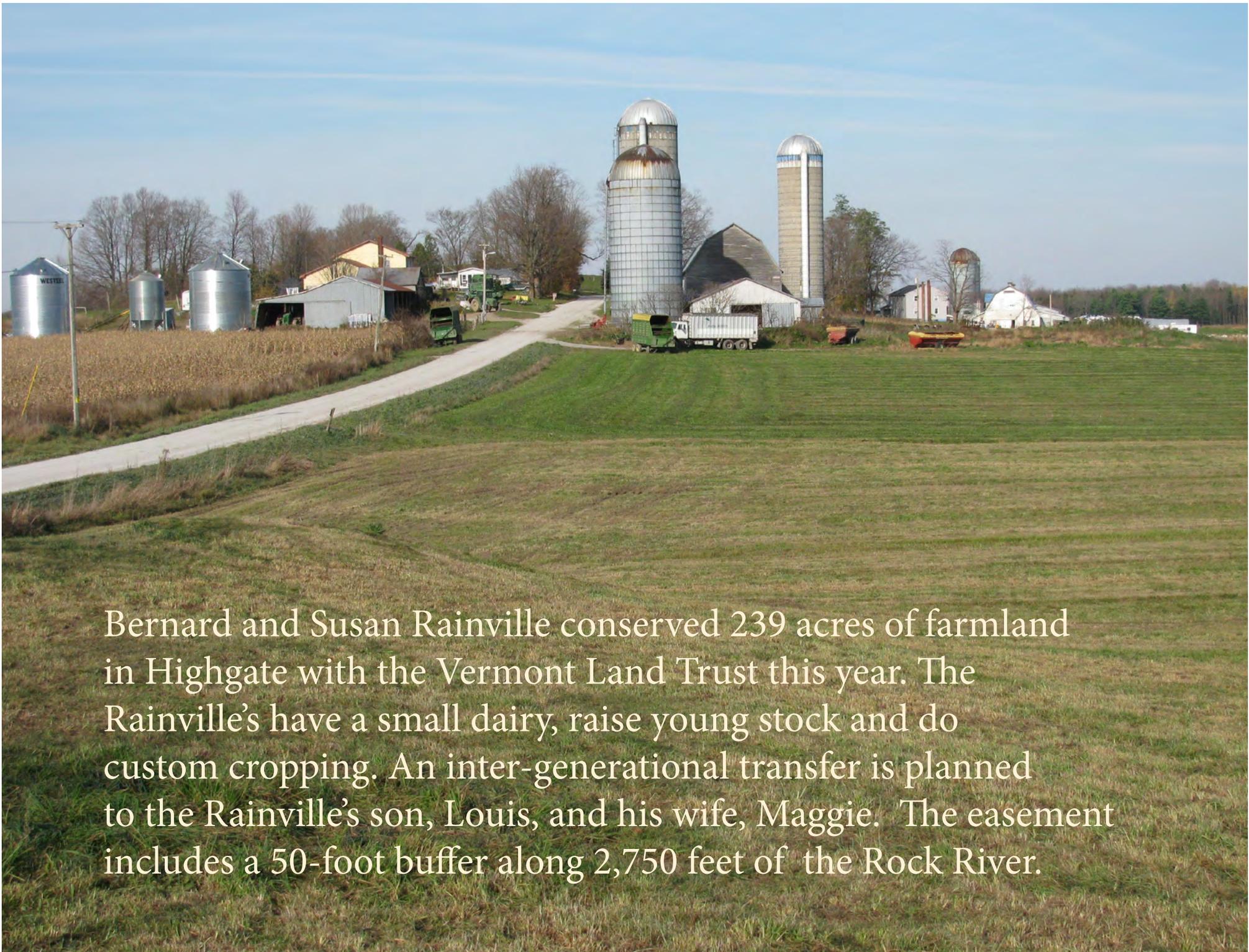
In Lyndonville, RuralEdge is redeveloping senior housing with rental assistance at the Darling Inn, also a site for meals on wheels for the area.

Impact of FY14 & FY15 VHCB Farm Conservation Investments

- \$5.11 million in VHCB funding leveraged \$6.67 million \$2.67 million in NRCS/FRPP and \$2.67 million in private and local fundraising and bargain sales
- 49 projects conserved 6,426 acres
- 28 projects facilitated transfers (over half)
 - 11 of the transfers are to new farmers (buying their first farm)
 - 6 of the transfers are intergenerational within the family (including gradual transfers over time)
- 32 out of 49 include other protections in the easement (public access, historic, special ecological protection, etc.)
- 64% of the soils conserved are prime or statewide
- 31 out of 49 protect river frontage and/or floodplain
 - 23 of these include water quality protections in the easement (almost 1/2 of total and 3/4 of those with surface water

Economic impact of 20 farms conserved in 2014:

- together the farms generate \$7.5 million in total gross income
- 135 jobs (including owner/operators);
 - 83 are part-time or seasonal
 - Range of 1 part-time to 60 (10 full-time and 50 seasonal) jobs

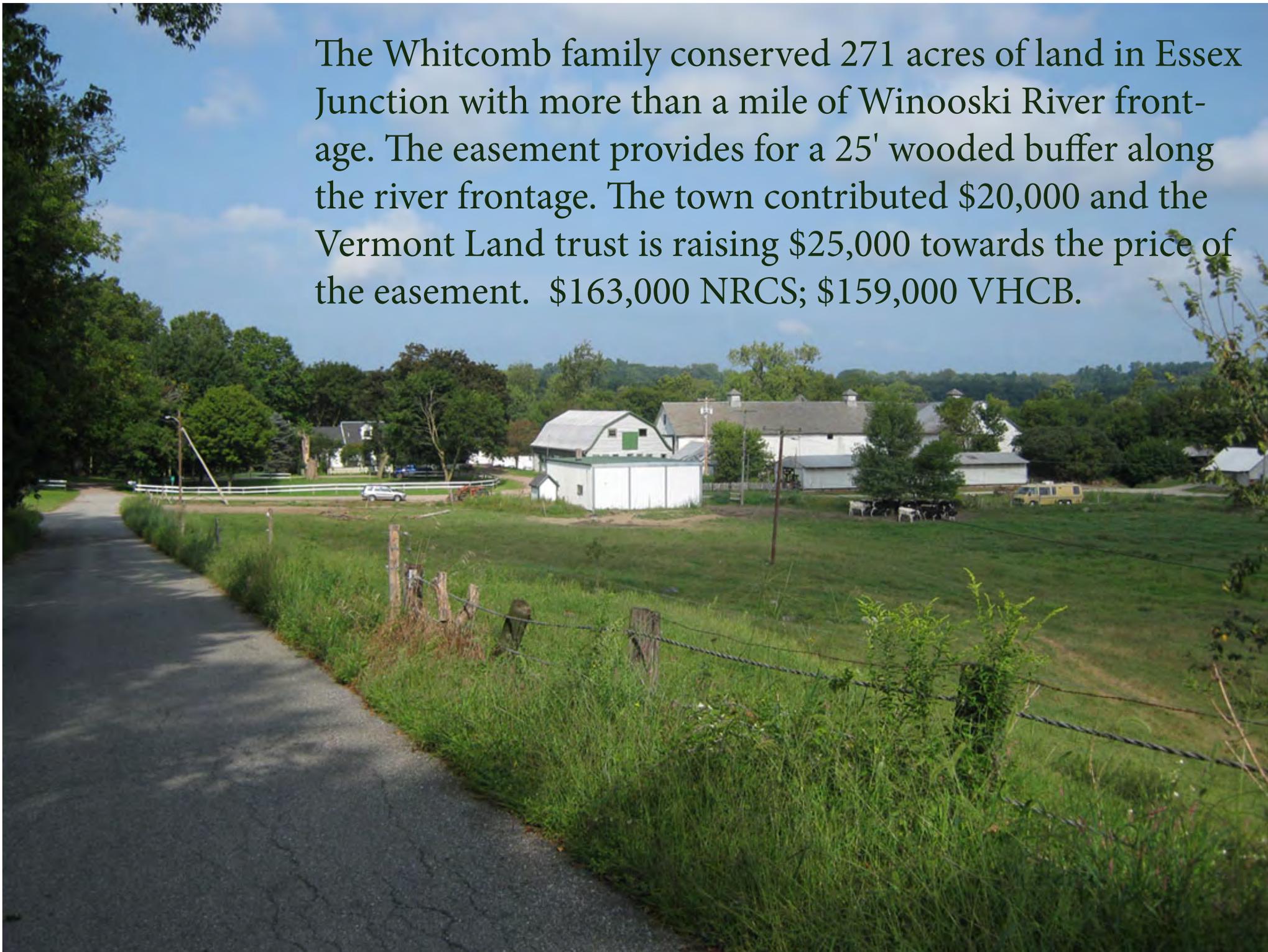


Bernard and Susan Rainville conserved 239 acres of farmland in Highgate with the Vermont Land Trust this year. The Rainville's have a small dairy, raise young stock and do custom cropping. An inter-generational transfer is planned to the Rainville's son, Louis, and his wife, Maggie. The easement includes a 50-foot buffer along 2,750 feet of the Rock River.

Louis and Maggie Rainville raise sunflowers on this farm in Highgate, bottling vegetable oil as a value-added product to complement the dairy operation.



The Whitcomb family conserved 271 acres of land in Essex Junction with more than a mile of Winooski River frontage. The easement provides for a 25' wooded buffer along the river frontage. The town contributed \$20,000 and the Vermont Land trust is raising \$25,000 towards the price of the easement. \$163,000 NRCS; \$159,000 VHCB.



In addition to the farmland conserved this year in Essex Junction, where they raise crops and young stock, the Whitcomb Family operates a 300-cow dairy in Williston.





VHCB

Vermont Farm & Forest
Viability Program



Mission

To enhance the economic viability of Vermont farm, food and forestry enterprises.

Providing...

Business
& transfer
planning
services

Targeted
technical
assistance

Growth-
stage
mgmt
coaching

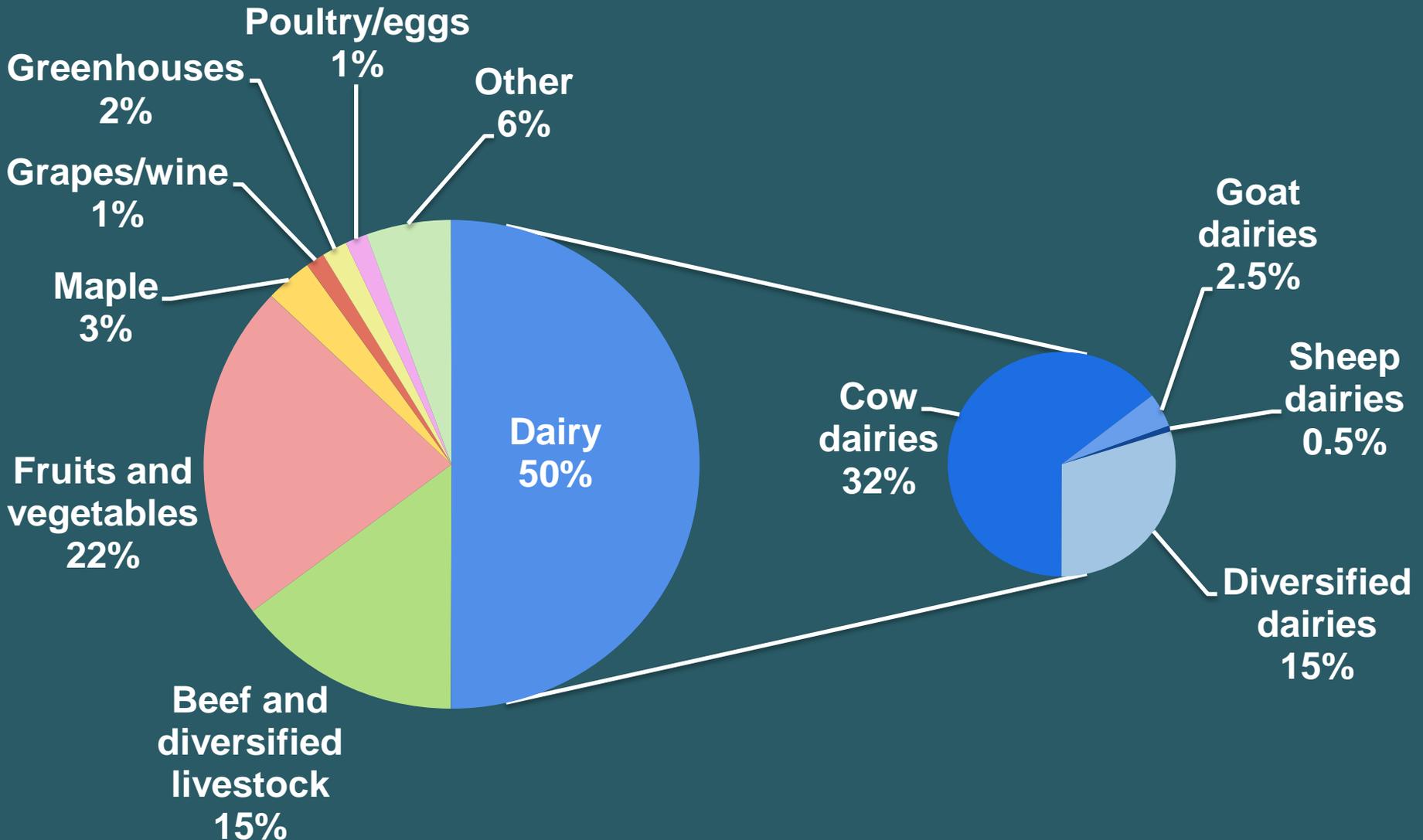
For...

Farm
businesses

Food systems
enterprises

Forestry &
forest products
businesses

Types of Farms Enrolled

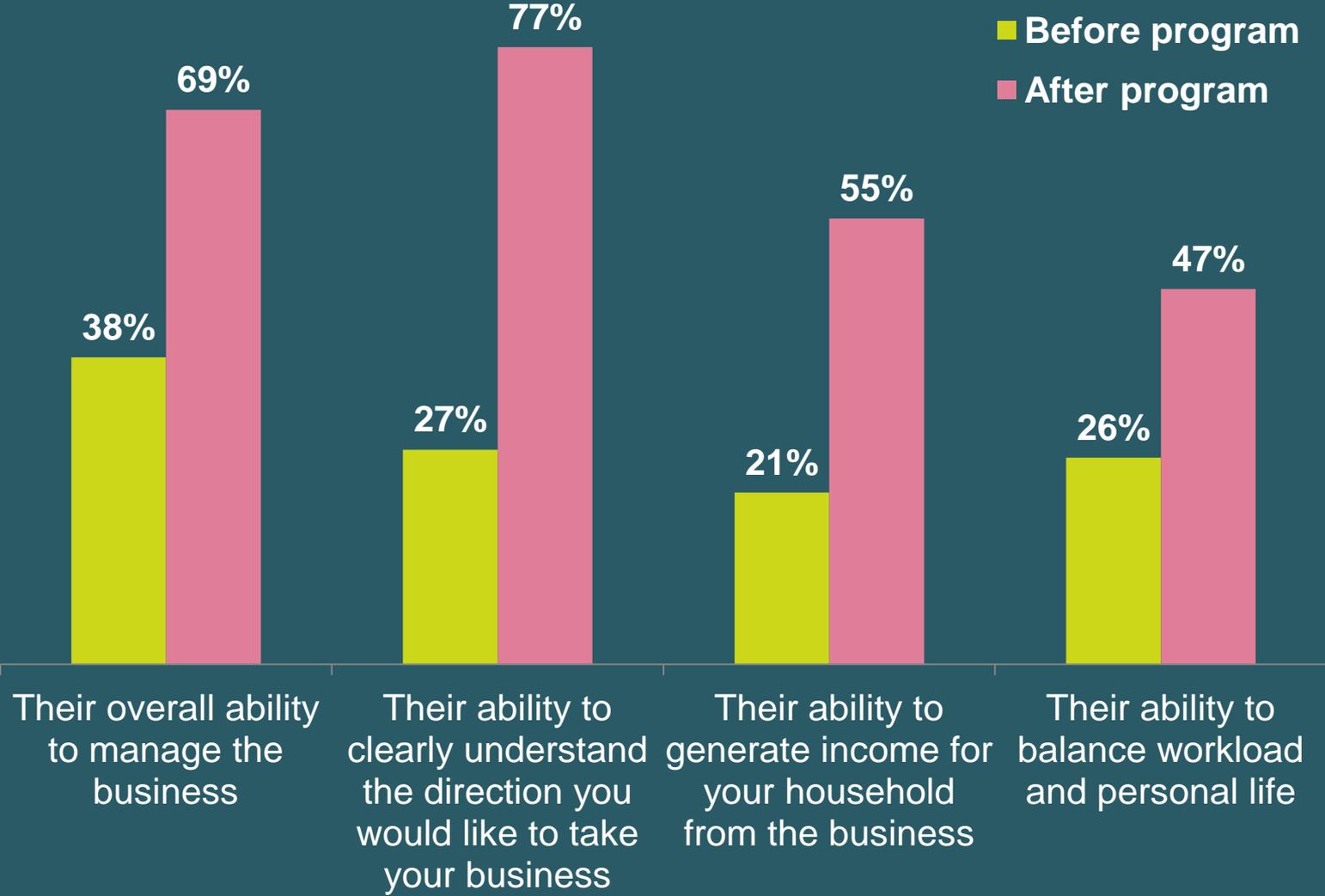


Scholten Family Farm, Weybridge



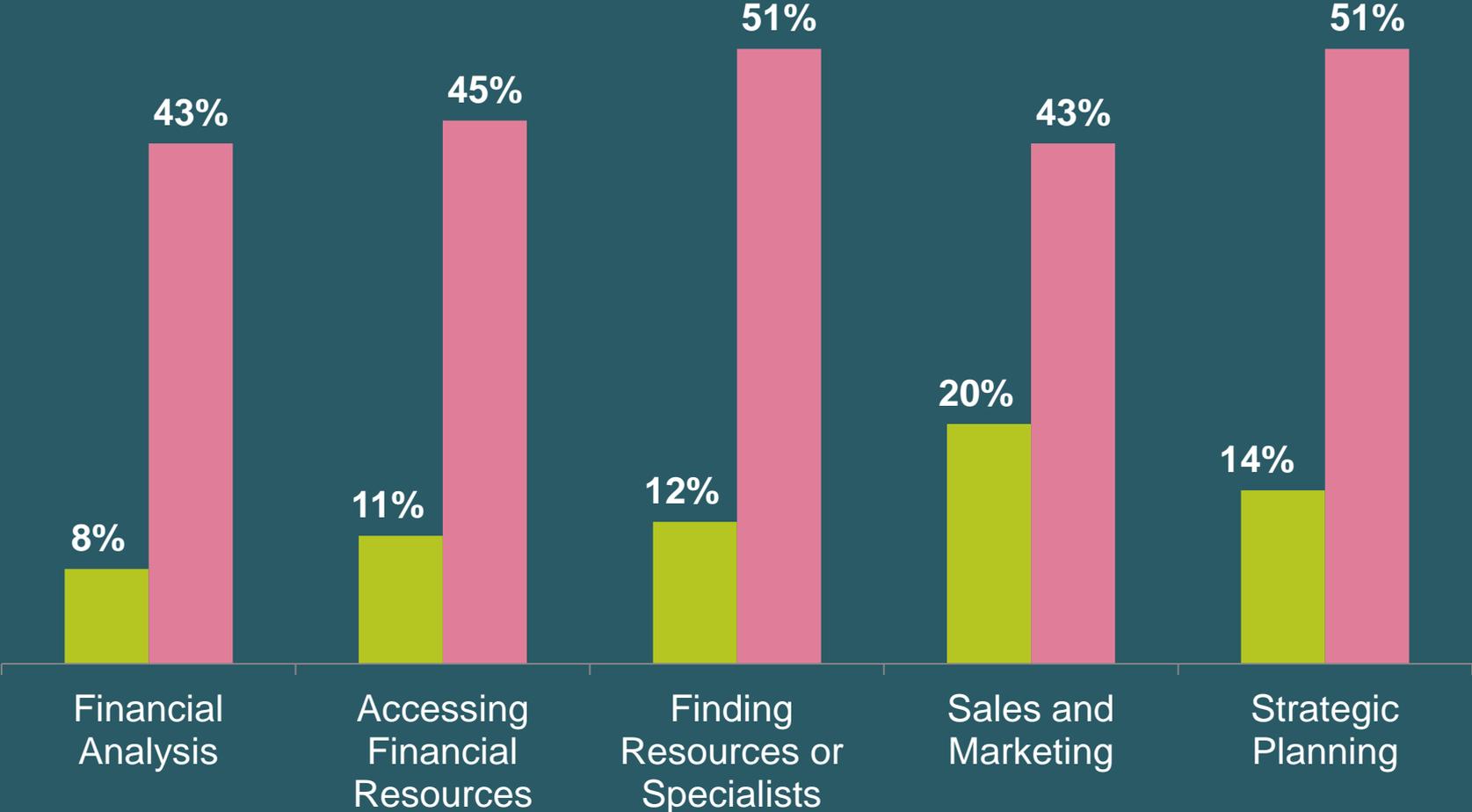
The Scholtens enrolled in Farm Viability to explore ways to improve profitability, working with Al Curler through UVM Extension to examine options for increasing energy efficiency and developing an on-farm cheese business.

Increase in the percent of participants that are satisfied or highly satisfied with...



Increase in the percent of participants that are highly skilled in...

■ before program
■ after program



Kimball Brook Farm, North Ferrisburgh



Cheryl & J.D. DeVos



Cheryl and JD DeVos originally enrolled their farm in VFVP for assistance during their organic transition. From 2008-2012 we supported an evaluation of the feasibility of value-added processing, and they now operate a organic bottled milk business in Hinesburg.

Screamin' Ridge Farm & Joe's Soups, East Montpelier



Joe Buley and his wife Lori run a small diversified vegetable and berry operation, and manage a year-round multi-farm CSA. They have recently launched Joe's Soups (and sauces), which they create and package at the Mad River Food Hub.

Vermont Wildwoods, Plainfield



Parker Nichols' specialty flooring and millwork business uses exclusively salvaged wood to supply the high-end architectural market. He enrolled in the program to streamline his business, plan for a new production process, and market a new product line.



Ela Chapin

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www.vhcb.org/viability

