

Salvation Farms – House Agriculture Committee

March 17th 2015

If Southeast State Correctional Facility Closes – what happens to Salvation Farms' Vermont Commodity Program work with the Vermont Department of Corrections?

Vision:

Salvation Farms envisions creating and integrating the Vermont Commodity Program (VCP) into Vermont's Correctional Industries in an effort to reduce food loss on farms and decrease our dependence on food from far away sources, making Vermont more independent and resilient.

The VCP vision includes raw bulk cleaning, grading and packing of crops as well as light processing by cooking and freezing, canning, dehydration or other methods of preservation. Resulting products are supplemental to traditional food-sourcing avenues for institutions.

As a result of this contract and a collaborative working relationship, the program will function at industry standards within the structure of a comprehensive and vetted business plan; the Vermont Department of Corrections and Salvation Farms will begin equipping Vermont with a responsive mechanism, dependent on cross-sector partner roles and shared infrastructure, to ensure Vermont retain a majority of its farm surplus.

A major component of the program is to engage inmates in a meaningful work experience that positively impacts Vermont communities all while providing them with marketable food-industry skills.

This work aligns with the goal of Vermont's Offender Work Program "to prepare offenders to earn a living when they rejoin society-at-large, and to be contributing members to our communities and economy."

Can this happen at another facility in Vermont?

Can Salvation Farms maintain a contractual relationship with the Vermont Department of Corrections to create a plan for Vermont to consider the above Correctional Industry opportunity?

Potential Contract Components – IF SESCOF CLOSSES:

1. Develop an Integration Plan to include:
 - a. Educational Curriculum: instructors, module development, certifications, etc.
 - b. Business Plan: budgets, revenue, products, markets, staff, inmate compensation, infrastructure, food liability, labeling, etc.
 - c. Correctional Facility use of kitchen quality crops
 - d. Compost diversion plan to comply with Act 148
2. Develop an Infrastructure Plan - needs, timeline, cost, etc. for Vermont Commodity Program raw processing and storage with integration of a certified processing kitchen and additional storage infrastructure.
3. Develop an Inmate Work and Learn Plan – structure for inmates to move from the garden or other educational/vocational work into the Vermont Commodity Vocational Program crew. Incorporate a reentry component to identify appropriate food-system work opportunities for inmates who were successful on the Vermont Commodity Program crew and vocational program.