



RAFFL's

WINTER NEWS



The latest program updates from RAFFL

December 2014



Glean Team Brings Ten Tons of Farm Fresh Food to Neighbors in Need

As gleaning slows down, we've had time to reflect on a few highlights from the season. Since June, we've gleaned over ten tons of fresh produce. Around 170 volunteers have donated 500+ hours collecting surplus veggies at the Rutland Farmers Market, harvesting crops directly from the field, and making deliveries to more than nineteen sites across Rutland County. One volunteer spent a marathon seven hours harvesting tomatoes!

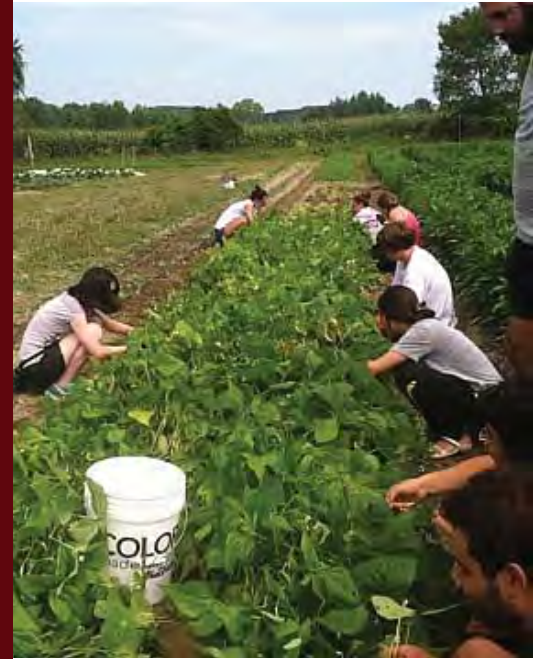
As we dropped off the fruits at a senior center meal site in Poultney, the cook's eyes lit up as planning began. "Forget about the lasagna, let's have BLTs on Monday!" was met by approving laughter in the kitchen and suddenly interested onlookers in the dining area.

It's easy to get disconnected with the population being served when gleaning produce behind the scenes. But it's the little moments, those instances of pure excitement and lasagna-abandonment, that keep you motivated to continue crawling through the mud with green-resin covered fingers in the quest to supply an underserved population.

With the help of twenty different local farms, we've made fresh, healthy produce accessible to more than 2500 individuals. To get involved with the Glean Team, sign up at vermontgleaningcollective.org.

New Farmer Program Coordinator Meets the Community

After moving to Rutland from Burlington in July, New Farmer program coordinator Jen Miller has enjoyed getting to know the vibrant agricultural community in the Rutland region! One highlight of Jen's summer was co-coordinating the CRAFT program with Scout Proft of Someday Farm. This series of on-farm workshops provides an opportunity for farm workers to learn about many different aspects of farming while networking with their fellow aspiring farmers. Recently, Jen returned from a three day Beginning Farmer Learning Network training which enhanced her ability to provide technical assistance to farmers with 3-7 years of experience.



Welcome to Rutland, Vermont Foodbank!

RAFFL would like to welcome our program partners at the Vermont Foodbank to Rutland! The Foodbank is in the process of opening their new facility on Park Street and their presence will make a big difference for area food shelves. Stay tuned for an announcement about how RAFFL's Glean Team and the Vermont Foodbank will be working together.





Farm Fresh Connect Market Expands

This fall RAFFL expanded its Farm Fresh Connect program. The online farmers market now serves the communities of Pittsford and Chittenden. In these towns, where residents identified a need for more market outlets selling local foods, pick-ups occur weekly at Lothrop Elementary and Barstow Memorial School. Parents, teachers, staff, and community members can purchase high quality local foods online and then conveniently pick them up on their way home.

In the first 11 weeks of this expansion, there have been 74 orders generating approximately \$2400 in sales between these two sites! For more details on Farm Fresh Connect as well as Farm-to-School efforts at Barstow and Lothrop, check out the October 16th Harvest Watch article at rutlandharvestwatch.org.

Farm to Institution Collaboration

This fall we partnered with NOFA-VT to further explore the Rutland-area institutional demand for local food. Farm-to-Institution efforts focus on the purchase of local and regional products by schools, colleges, and institutions such as hospitals and prisons. We met with food service managers at RRMCC and the College of Saint Joseph and at each institution were met with enthusiastic response.

This winter we will be working closely with CSJ staff to help plan the kitchen's local purchases for next season. Meanwhile, many area school food service managers, including the Abbey Group, attended trainings geared toward enabling them to apply USDA procurement regulations to the purchases of local and regional foods. Support will continue to be available this winter to both school staff and to farmers. This Farm-to-Institution collaboration has laid a strong foundation for RAFFL to continue supporting both the supply and demand sides of the local food equation.

Everyday Chef Inspires Local Cooking

From Autumn Coleslaw to Leek Risotto and Tomato Tarts to Chard Zucchini Cakes, we held more than 25 food tastings this season - providing the community with tips and ideas for using fresh local foods.

This winter, warm up with one of our many soup ideas, such as the simple leek and potato. During the holidays, consider our selection of easy side dishes, like these maple glazed carrots. And don't forget to treat yourself with something sweet, such as our recipe for oatmeal stuffed baked apples.

As always, all of our recipes are available at everydaychef.org.

Keep in touch

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