



Salvation Farms

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Salvation Farms' mission is to increase resilience in Vermont's food system through agricultural surplus management. Our mission is achieved by fostering collaborative, cross-sector partnerships that engage and use available resources, skills and knowledge to create efficient practices for managing Vermont's farm surplus foods.

Salvation Farms is driven by three primary goals: 1) reducing food waste on farms, 2) increasing the use of locally grown foods, and 3) fostering appreciation for Vermont's agricultural heritage and future.

Salvation Farms is deeply rooted in the philosophy that farms are, were and always will be our salvation. Small, diversified farms are the cornerstones of healthy, wholesome and stable communities and cultures. We believe that the best way to build lasting change is to involve people in the process creating ownership and intrinsic value. Food, a common and essential resource, is an extremely effective tool for social change.

Salvation Farms built the Vermont Gleaning Collective, a network of programs that engages individuals in community-based gleaning: the reaping of un-marketed, quality crops. This is farm surplus management on the micro-level. At the macro-level, **Salvation Farms is creating** the Vermont Commodity Program. Through another tier of partnerships Salvation Farms is orchestrating the aggregation and processing of large volumes of surplus crops to ease their use by institutions that serve Vermont's most vulnerable residents.

It has been said that an average of one third of crops produced never make it off the farm.

Based on our modest estimate, unmarketable farm surplus exceeds two million pounds annually in Vermont. At best, only 15% of this resource is currently being captured; yet our state has a 14% food insecurity rate and serves 19 million institutional meals annually. The institutions serving our most vulnerable populations are often restricted by budgets that impede their ability to access Vermont-grown foods resulting in an excess of \$14,000,000 being spent on food from far away sources.

Salvation Farms is committed to the efficient rescue and integration of Vermont's farm surplus into food access sites that serve some of our most vulnerable neighbors: the young, the sick, the elderly, the incarcerated, and the hungry. Salvation Farms' partner-based programs increase local food consumption by making un-marketed farm crops accessible to the charitable and institutional food systems.

Salvation Farms is building a new segment of the food system that works in tandem to the for-profit food system, supplementing traditional food sourcing avenues. This work is dependent on citizen and cross sector participation. Because of this dependence, **Salvation Farms and our partners foster experiential learning opportunities** for a mix of socio-demographic populations, increasing individual and institutional investments in Vermont's agriculture. These experiences strengthen appreciation for agriculture in Vermont, building food system resiliency and independence.

Salvation Farms was established in 2005 under the fiscal umbrella of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont after a pilot year at a now well-known farm in Northern Vermont, where our founder was employed. Our intention at that time was to build a replicable model for community-based gleaning while increasing our community's comfort with using fresh foods and understanding of its local farms. *Gleaning is the act of reaping after the harvest, historically done by the poor.* As a proof of concept we instituted the Vermont Foodbank's gleaning program in 2008 and have advised many gleaning initiatives statewide and beyond. Since developing the practice of professional community-based gleaning more than ten years ago, Salvation Farms and our partners are capturing an average of a half million pounds of Vermont's surplus farm food per year.

Through the course of our history, especially while working closely with the Vermont Foodbank, we realized the potential of and need for an agriculturally minded organization to lead the work of managing farm surplus foods in a way that valued and served farms first. **Salvation Farms leads this work** with ethical grounding in the fact that it must be done first and foremost in service to farms, while providing a quality and safe experience for volunteers and a dignified food experience for the end user.

Out of our roots in gleaning our approach has evolved to include aggregation, processing, workforce development, and advocacy. Since obtaining our federal non-profit status in 2012 we are proud of many achievements, specifically: 1) our creation of a website to support communities as they organize gleaning and to track the impact of their work and 2) the engagement of inmates in the cleaning, quality assessment, and packaging of nearly 300,000 pounds of surplus, Vermont grown crops.

Theresa Snow, Salvation Farms Founder/Director

Theresa has worked in Vermont's agricultural/horticultural sector for close to 20 years. She founded Salvation Farms in 2004, receiving both regional and national awards. Her Sterling College degree is in Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management. Theresa has worked with well-known Vermont agricultural businesses like Pete's Greens, High Mowing Organic Seeds and has served as Director of Agricultural Resources for the Vermont Foodbank. Theresa has also served on the boards at Laraway Youth and Family Services and Rutland Area Farm and Food Link, and with the New England Grassroots Environment Fund small grants committee. Theresa has a steadfast conviction for the responsible stewardship and use of our natural resources. Theresa enjoys traveling, hiking, gardening, music and spending time with friends and family.