



VERMONT FRESH NETWORK

Vision: To build a flourishing Vermont food and farm economy

Mission: Advancing relationships among farmers, chefs, and consumers to grow markets for Vermont grown food.

Vermont Fresh Network Membership and Value Statement

- Last year, VFN chefs purchased **45 million dollars of Vermont products**.
- For every dollar of our 2016 operating budget (\$143,525), our chef members purchased \$313 dollars of Vermont grown and raised food products.
- VFN Farmers and Food Producers sold \$116,797,594 of product last year.

2017 Vermont Fresh Network Board of Directors

President – Jed Davis, Owner of the Farmhouse Group

Vice President – Doug Paine, Executive Chef at Juniper & Bleu Northeast Seafood

Treasurer – Ryan Chaffin, Marketing Director Farrell Distributing

Secretary – Lisa Gosselin, Editor of Vermont Ski & Ride Magazine

Sean Buchanan, President of Black River Produce & Black River Meats

Joe Buley, Owner of Scream'in Ridge Farm

Scot Emerson, Executive Chef at Okemo Mountain Resort

Annie Rowell, Vermont First Coordinator

Lyndon Virkler, Chef Instructor and Dean of Faculty at NECI

VFN Membership: 301

Chefs/Restaurants, Food Coop's, Hospitals, and Institutions: 173

Farmers, Food Producers, Distributors and Ag. Coops: 128

Vermont Fresh Network Programs and Accomplishments: See reverse side

DigInVT.com - Site Listings: 483

The goal of **DigInVT.com** is to increase the economic viability of diversified farm and food enterprises across the State of Vermont by making it easy for the public to find, support and participate in authentic Vermont food experiences.

To date, visitors have used the site to create over 100,000 agritourism itineraries. In 2016, visitors viewed over 70,000 pages on DigInVT.com, spent well over 4 minutes on the website (well above the industry average), and 20% of visitors explored the pages deeply. These visitors are a growing market, both in-state travelers and out of state visitors. The Travel Industry Association reports 60% of U.S. leisure travelers want to travel to engage in culinary activities-with a brand built on food; Vermont is poised to capture these visits.

DigInVT.com Partner Associations: VT Brewers' Association, VT Cheese Council, VT Farmers' Market Association, VT Grape and Wine Council, VT Maple Sugar Makers' Association, NOFA-VT, VT Fresh Network, VT Tree Fruit Growers Association, along with VT Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets and VT Department of Tourism and Marketing.

A Few of Vermont Fresh Network's Accomplishments in 2016!

Statewide Impact Trend of Vermont Food Purchasing – Our chef members purchase over 45 million dollars of Vermont grown, raised and produced foods. 12 years ago they were cumulatively purchasing a respectable 10 million dollars worth of Vermont grown and raised foods. Our members are the businesses that are leading the growth of the Vermont food economy.

Statewide Matchmaker – VFN facilitated 180 meetings between 30 buyers and 55 farmers/food producers in 6 sections. This event was a powerful partnership between VFN, the Vermont Retail & Grocers Association and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

Open Farm Week on DigInVT.com – VFN facilitates, in partnership with a number of other organizations, Open Farm Week. 2016 was the second annual event – 97 Vermont Farms participated and hosted 297 events to welcome the public on to their farm. Over 29 stories were printed, posted, blogged or videoed by the media. VDTM had over 60,000 views of the Open Farm Week videos they produced. 2017 Open Farm Week Dates are August 14th through the 20th.

Outreach Engagement – The Fresh Feed goes out to over 2,500 food-focused readers. We have written 38 feature stories about our members. VermontFresh.Net and DigInVT.com collectively have over 50,000 unique visitors annual. VFN runs 6 different ad campaigns on Google courtesy of a Google Adwords Grant. We post daily about our members on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and have over 12,000 followers.

VFN Food Guide with EGM - Through our partnership with Edible Green Mountains Magazine, each year we print and distribute 30,000 pocket guides, highlighting all of our members exclusively.

20th Anniversary Annual Forum – 77 of our members participated in our signature summer event. We raised over \$17,000 in tickets sales – the most we have ever raised.

2017 Programs

Grant Funded

- **Vermont Wine Project** – We will offer a variety of opportunities to bring Vermont winemakers, grape growers, distributors, wine buyers, front of the house workers and kitchen staff together to **taste and discuss Vermont wines**. The projects goal is to increase the competitiveness of Vermont wines in Vermont restaurants.
- **FishOn!** – Our members have a chance to experience and educate themselves about the issues facing our waterways. We will look at the influence food production has on our water quality and investigate solutions. We will be fishing and using Vermont fish species to help us **better understand today's water quality issues**.
- **Market Vermont** – We will be **promoting Vermont culinary tourism and agritourism** experiences in the Boston and New York City markets using DigInVT.com. We will produce a digital ad campaign to increase tourism traffic for our members and DigInVT.com collaborators.

Core Programs

- **Membership Criteria and Standards** - Maintain **checks and balances** of the Brand's **authenticity** in the eyes of our members and the general public
- **Iconic Branding** – Vermonters and visitors look for the sign when they shop and dine. VFN's brand says, **farmer endorsed and chef approved**.

- **Local Food Matchmakers** – Helping to create relationships and **build markets for Vermont farmers and food producers.**
- **Gold Barn Honor** - Recognizing **VFN chefs who raise the bar** for others. Gold Barn Awardees are prominently acknowledged in our Local Food Guide and on our website.
- **DigInVT.com** – A tool for tourists to explore and **experience authentic Vermont farm and food venues.** VFN restaurants are the only dining experiences listed on this agritourism focused website that sees over 25,000 visitors per year.
- **Open Farm Week** – Collaborative event that invites the public to **explore Vermont’s working farms** and to meet the farmer families.
- **Media Relationships and Confidence** – Through our strong connections with Edible Green Mountains Magazine, Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing and local and national press, VFN is seen as a “go to” for authentic recommendations – **our members get coverage.**
- **Statewide leaderships** – We **represent our members interests** and create opportunities to celebrate their participation in Vermont’s food revolution.
- **VermontFresh.Net** - Easy to use/**consumer friendly website** that provides: all users with a quick and easy way to search our membership by their differentiating characteristics, users a glimpse into the individual personalities, relationships and inspirational stories of the members of the Network, information about events and activities happening within the Network. Serving 26,000 unique visits per year.
- **Local Food Guide** – Through our partnership with Edible Green Mountains Magazine, each year we print and **distribute 30,000 pocket guides**, highlighting all of our members exclusively.
- **Google Ad Words Campaign** – **Increasing visibility and driving consumer traffic** to VermontFresh.net and our members.
- **The Fresh Feed** – Sharing network stories and news in our bi-weekly e-newsletter and blog with over **2,500 food-focused readers!**
- **Annual Forum Dinner** – Our annual celebration of our members, **highlighting their commitments** to support Vermont grown and raised foods.
- **Social Media** – We radiate the energy of the Network to our members and the general public in order to **celebrate, educate and inspire.**
- **Annual Meeting** - Bringing us together to **inspire each other** and strengthen our work.
- **Members-only Facebook Group** - Connect with like-minded chefs, farmers and food artisans. A quick way to **get the word out** if our members have something special to offer.