



Center for an Agricultural Economy

Home of the
Vermont Food Venture Center

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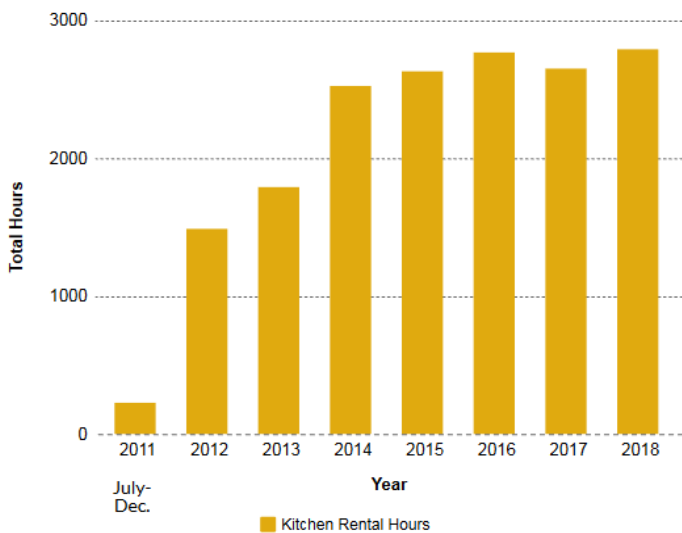
www.HardwickAgriculture.org

The Center for an Agricultural Economy was begun nearly 15 years ago, with a mission to build a **local, healthy, just and regenerative food system**. We believe in working lands, working people and local food. We run programs for our local community (greater Hardwick area) and the NEK, as well as state-wide programs, such as the Vt Food Venture Center. The CAE is one of Vermont's foremost food business incubators and food hubs and is a part of both state-wide and regional networks, including:

- *Vermont Farm and Forest Viability Network*: we are the Northeast Kingdom's farm and food business advising and technical assistance hub
- *Vermont Specialty Food Association*: we are a member, consultant, and contributor to this network of specialty food businesses statewide, and a presenter in the VSFA's annual events.
- *Vermont Farm to Plate Aggregation and Distribution Working Group and Farm Viability Indicators Task Force*: we are active members of the F2P network, with food system businesses, academics and service providers working together to advance state goals around local food
- *Vermont Farm to School Network*: We are the Caledonia County and OSSU partner in this statewide network providing leadership coordination and advocacy to advance innovation in Vermont's classrooms, cafeterias, and communities.

CAE & Vermont Food Venture Center by the numbers

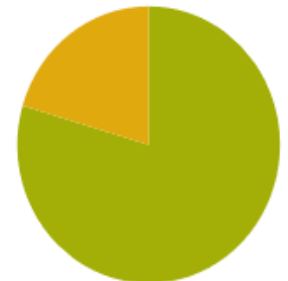
Production Kitchen Rental Hours



Business Ownership



Location of Business



OVER \$1,000,000 loaned in 8 years!

Food Business Advising–
Shared Use Food Hub,
Food Safety, Regulatory
Advising

Farm Viability and
Technical Services –
Revolving Loan Fund
and Farm to
Institution

Community Programs
– Food Access and
Insecurity,
Place-Based Ag
Education

Center for an Agricultural Economy Community Programs *Filling the gaps in food access, education and leadership systems*



- **Grow Your Own** is a collaboration among CAE, the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and NEK Kids on the Move (Wonder Arts)

- Started in 2014 with five workshops and 17 attendees. In 2018 GYO offered 12 workshops, garden mentorship program, seed giveaways, newsletter, annual meeting, 104 members. About 33 percent eligible for services such as food pantry.

- Presented twice at statewide Hunger Action Conference to other communities interested in starting similar programs

- **Northeast Kingdom Organizing** project – started after a listening project at the pantry showed transportation and many other issues affecting food access. Ten community

partner organizations and neighborhood groups, NEKO will become an independent nonprofit in late 2019 or early 2020

- A model for rural community organizing that identifies new leadership and community building as key structural pieces of institutional change
- **Place-based education** – unlocking the power of community partnerships to transform education. School gardens and kitchens, field trips to farms, nature trails, community service, entrepreneur academy
- Lamoille Housing Partnership - 12 Garden beds built at low-income housing units by high school students in Hardwick
- **Atkins Field** – property owned by CAE with an easement by Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Development project based on surveys and forums of Hardwick and neighboring towns. Historic site of Woodbury Granite Company
- Hardwick Farmers Market, community gardens, hoop house, orchard, trails, town recreational facilities. Crossed by former Woodbury railroad lines that will offer a connection to Lamoille Valley Rail Trail being built out by the town of Hardwick
- Pavilion and history trail being built this summer with help of Vermont Recreational Facilities grant of \$10,000
- For more information and a video: growatkins.org
- Phase II will include renovation of the 350-foot granite shed on the property as educational, recreational, and indoor farmers market space



Our Next Stop in Business Development...



Redevelopment of Hardwick's Iconic Yellow Barn

Building Use: Business Accelerator & Production Space for growing businesses in the Northeast Kingdom -

Critical Partners: Town of Hardwick, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, NEK Development Corporation

Timeline: Fall 2020 Construction Complete

Funding Sources: USDA-RBDG, Town of Hardwick, and NVDA for planning

Funding Sources: Vermont Community Development Program (CDBG), Economic Development Authority, Bridge Lending, and New Market Tax Credits for Renovation & Infrastructure