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Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets

TO: Senate Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

FROM: Diane Bothfeld, Abbey Willard and Trevor Lowell, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

REASON: Act 47 Report and Revised Agriculture Emergency Annex

DATE: January 14, 2022

As requested in Act 47 - An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects, the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets provides this report on the changes to the Agency's Emergency Annex, information regarding work with other agencies and on-going work with partner organizations to effectively address food security in Vermont and the region.

Action Steps taken

- Met with critical partners to clarify and coordinate roles between Agency's Emergency Annex, Vermont Food Security planning efforts, and SEOC Mass Feeding Group responsibilities.
 - o Established clarity about on-going statewide/regional food security efforts and responsibilities associated with emergency responses and Annex requirements.
- Participation in SEOC Mass Feeding Group to solicit stakeholder and partner input on Annex revisions
 - o Met with existing group Mass Feeding group 13 times between July 2021- December 2021.
 - o Organizations engaged included: AHS, AOE, Area Agencies on Aging, Hunger Free VT, Food Bank, SEVCA/VT Everyone Eats, VT Sustainable Jobs Fund, Capstone, Bi-State Primary Care Association and the NEK Council on Aging
 - o Determination was made to not require food insecure individuals or producers to attend meetings, but instead engaged representative organizations to capture their needs and perspectives.
- Established commitment of Agency of Agriculture to connect to local farm, producer, and processor contacts to increase access to local food during emergency feeding circumstances.
- Proposed and shared Annex language updates with Emergency Management partners.
- Confirmed that no additional statutory changes necessary to amend the Agency's Emergency Annex.



Annex Revisions

The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets has made the following changes to its Emergency Annex in conjunction with discussions with Vermont Emergency Management, Vermont Health Department and Vermont Agency of Education. The full Emergency Annex is enclosed. Revisions were made to the Annex in the following areas:

IV. Partner Responsibilities

cc. Appoint and maintain a permanent representative to the State Emergency Operations Center's (SEOC) Mass Feeding Group. (pg 5)

Respond

7. In coordination with the SEOC Mass Feeding Group, work to integrate Vermont grown food into emergency mass feeding response, when possible and appropriate, by providing contact information for local growers, producers, and processors in the State. (pg 7)

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (SEOC) CHECKLIST

- Assist the SEOC Mass Feeding Group to locate and access Vermont food and farm products during mass feeding events, as available and appropriate. (pg 9)