

House Committee on Agriculture

April 3, 2025



Vermont Housing &
Conservation Board

VERMONT FARM & FOREST
VIABILITY PROGRAM

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Honeyfield Farm, Norwich

Service Provider Network

Farm Transfer & Land Access:

- Center for an Agricultural Economy
- Intervale
- Land For Good
- Liberation Ecosystem
- NOFA-VT
- UVM Extension
- Vermont Ag Mediation Program
- Vermont Land Trust
- VHCB - Farm Viability

Other supports including financing, specialized TA, policy:

- Attorneys & tax accountants
- Farm to Plate
- FSA, VACC, Farm Credit, Vermont Community Loan Fund
- Land Access & Opportunity Board
- Rural Vermont
- VAAFM – Future of Ag Report





Vermont
Housing &
Conservation
Board

Farm & Forest Viability Program



Sunday Bell Farm, Danville

- In-depth, individualized business assistance
- Focus Areas: Succession/transfer planning, land search & land access, financial management, access to capital, bookkeeping, improving profitability. Legal TA, marketing
- 108 farm & forest clients in 2024 generated **\$42 million** in economic activity and **over 300 jobs**
- 36% average increase in profitability



Hillside Farm, Albany



Harlow Farm, Westminster

2024 Farm & Forest Viability Program Economic Impacts



Farmland Transfer & Land Access



Mama's Farm, Shaftsbury

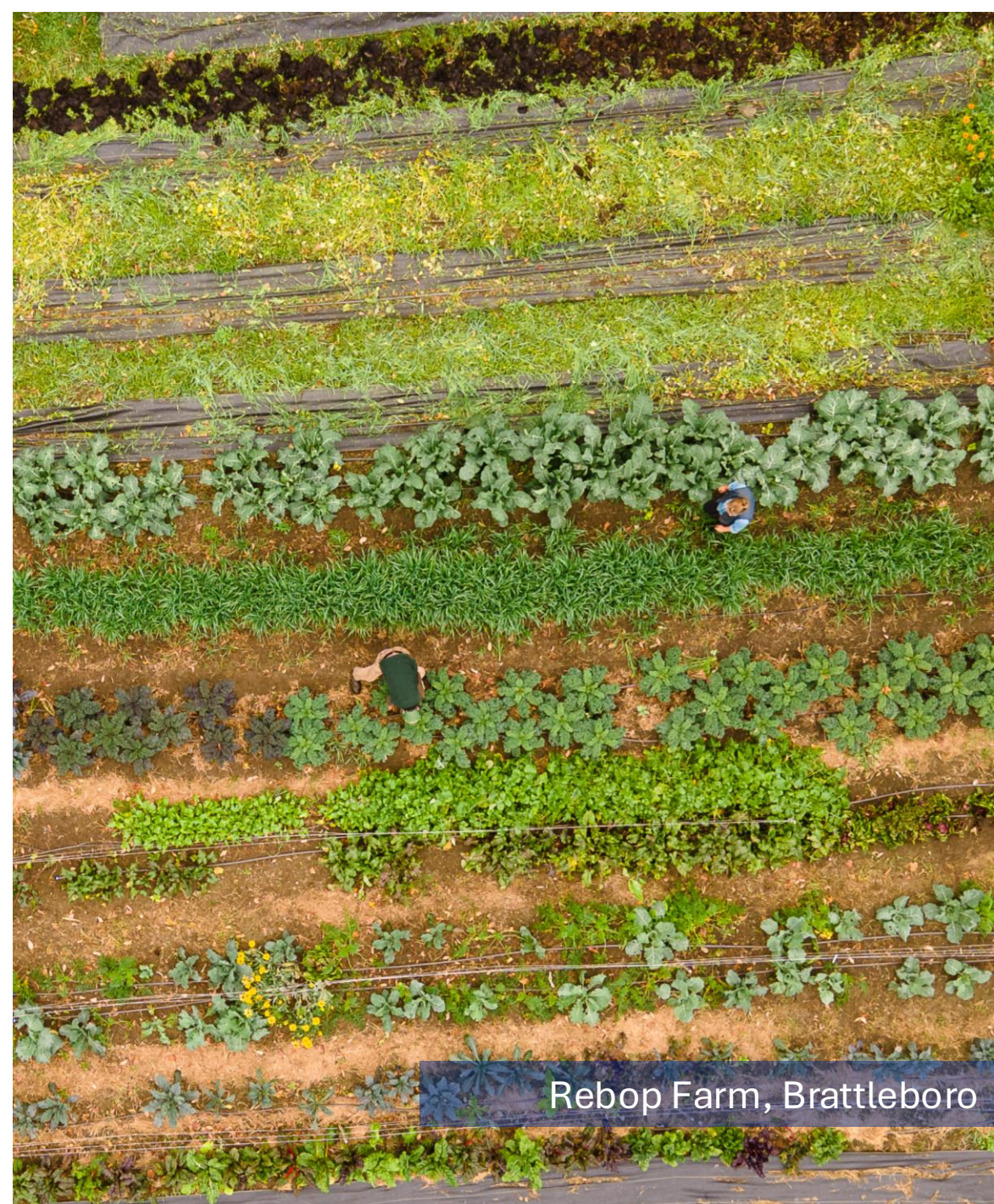


Old Road Farm, Monkton

- 100% of transfer planning clients in 2024 reported that the farm will continue after support from Farm Viability
- 10% of clients enroll to help access land – including land assessments, financing, and business plan development
- Roughly 1/3 of participants are exploring farm transfer

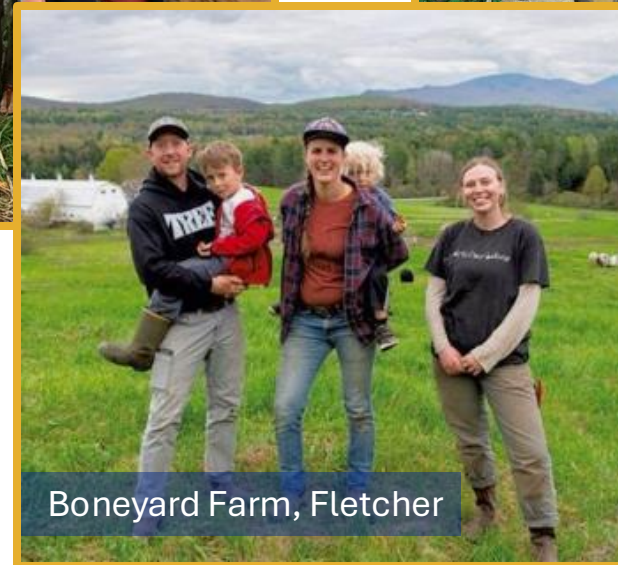
Farmland Conservation

- Number of farms conserved since 2020: 78
- Conservation easements often facilitate a transfer - about half of VHCB projects are a transfer
- Conservation easements can be a tool to get new & beginning farmers onto land more affordably
- Post-conservation farm costs are 40% of market value
- Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value is a tool we use as part of the easement to keep farms at ag value and sold to farmers
- NRCS is a major funder of Vermont's ag easements



Rebop Farm, Brattleboro

Farm Transfers on Conserved Farms



What's Going Well?

- Skilled network of direct support for farmers
- State recognition that this is an important issue
- Existing programs and people who are doing this work
- Some existing incentive structures: farm lenders interest rate buy-down, conservation easements
- Conservation easements reduce farm acquisition cost by 60%

Gaps & Opportunities

- New incentive structures
- Increased focus on affordability tools
- Increased focus on equitable land access
- Building out Vermont Land Link
- Attorneys & tax accountants
- Farm Viability transfer planning specialists
- Potential loss of NRCS funding



La Montañuela, New Haven