



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Prepared for the 2025 Annual Meeting
Held
Tuesday, January 28, 2025
DoubleTree, South Burlington, VT



THANK YOU

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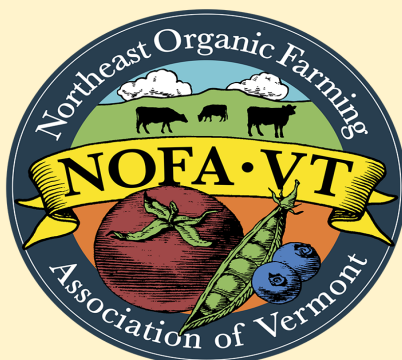




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January 28, 2025

Dear Members of the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association:

I want to start by once again pointing out the amazing work of our partners in UVM Extension. They continue to be a huge asset to our industry, helping all of us to navigate the oft-murky waters of technical improvement development, regulation, environmental stewardship, and increasingly – financial assistance. Vern, Virginia, Becky, Hans, Chris, Andy, Ann, Julie, Laura – thank you!

So, natural disasters..... 2024 was in many ways a cruel facsimile of 2023, with thousands of acres of crops once again destroyed by this summer's version of July 10th flooding. This was followed up a few weeks later by another round of even more apocalyptic flooding in the northeastern part of the state.

Those of us who suffered flooding damage in 2023 and/or 2024 have benefited from Vermont's BEGAP program, which has helped to fill the financial chasm between low/no insurance payouts and the tremendous losses faced on many of our farms. It has been a crucial lifeline for many farmers these last 2 years, and though I find this to be a naïve request, I hope it is a program we never have to see again.

However, I want to thank the state of Vermont in general, and the Agency of Ag in particular, for its support of us growers as many of us work to put the pieces back together. Other important sources of support included NOFA-VT's emergency grant fund, and countless individual community groups and GoFundMe pages.

The fact that we need something to fill that gap is itself quite a problem. It will likely not be solved any time soon, but our sector is in real need of appropriate tools to manage our financial risk. We always say we should be running our farms like businesses, but normal businesses can purchase insurance to hedge against their industry's particular flavor of risk.

This is not so for fruits and vegetables. Commodity crop growers can purchase federally subsidized crop insurance to insure 85% of their revenue; fruits and vegetables can only insure up to 65%, and at significant cost. The typical basic coverage from NAP essentially insures 25% of production. While this lower level of coverage is very affordable (free in many cases), losing 75% of one's crop before a payment is triggered is not functionally effective in a disaster.

My personal experience with NAP insurance has been generally positive, but the particulars of how it works make it so that I cannot count it as a reliable risk management tool. I will continue to encourage my fellow growers to avail themselves of what NAP has to offer, but as an industry we need something simpler, faster, and more comprehensive. Perhaps improvements can be made to Whole Farm Revenue Protection program, but to-date that product has seen very little uptake by our growers.

Federal policy of late has grown more adventurous with direct payments to specialty crop growers, be it through one-off programs like CFAP and MASC, or USDA disaster-aid programs like WHIP+ and ERP. Whatever one's individual beliefs are about the merits of these programs, the flows of money have ripple effects on the prices of inputs, machinery, land and labor. I respect anyone's choice not to put their hand out when these programs come around. But given the lack of financial tools at our disposal for hedging risk and protecting our investments in growing crops, these programs might just be the best way to seed a financial cushion of Working Capital to help put our farms in improved financial positions to better withstand future natural disasters. In an uncertain business environment, Working Capital is key.

I apologize for the focus on insurance and risk management, but I've spent the better part of the last 6 months thinking of little else on the farm front.

And since my toast went unheeded last year, I'll say it again, in hopes of gaining better traction: Here's to a 2025 with adequate – but not excessive – rainfall.

Justin W. Rich

Burnt Rock Farm

President, VVBGA



VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

[DoubleTree Hotel and Conference Center](#), S. Burlington, Vermont. (802) 865-6600

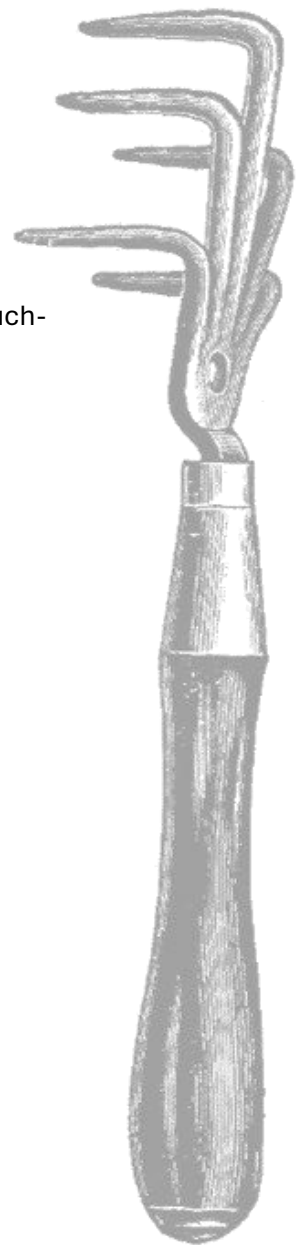
Moderator: Vern Grubinger, UVM Extension

- 8:00 **Registration**, Refreshments, Visit Trade Show
- 10:00 **President’s Remarks**. Justin Rich, [Burnt Rock Farm](#), Huntington
- 10:20 **Farmers in their Fields 2024**. Vern Grubinger, [UVM Extension](#)
- 10:40 **Flooded in July: What We Did, What We Learned**. Eric & Mary Skovsted, [Joe’s Brook Farm](#), Barnet
- 11:00 **Infrastructure Decisions for a New Market Garden**. Hannah Doyle, [Boneyard Farm](#), Cambridge
- 11:20 **From Interns and Apprentices to H2A**. Suzanne Long & Tim Sanford, [Luna Bleu Farm](#), S. Royalton
- 11:40 **Tools for Assessing Crop Profitability**. Christa Alexander, [Jericho Settlers Farm](#), Jericho
- 12:00 **Lunch Buffet** and Visit Trade Show
- 1:30 **Business Meeting**. Election of directors
- 1:40 **Cover Crops and Rotations at [Root5 Farm](#)**. Danielle Allen & Ben Dana, Fairlee
- 2:00 **Repair, Replace, Retool, or Retire: On-Farm Engineering**. [Chris Callahan](#), UVM Extension
- 2:20 **Reviving a Blueberry Farm**. Kevin Komer & Kerry Sedutto, [North Hollow Berry Farm](#), Stowe
- 2:40 **Strawberry Production and Marketing**. Stephen Park, [Full Belly Farm](#), Monkton
- 3:00 **IPM Practices on our Diversified Organic Farm**. Kevin O’Dwyer, [Langwater Farm](#), Easton MA
- 3:20 **Adapting to Climate and Market Shifts**. Kaity Mazza, [Paul Mazza’s Fresh Produce](#), Essex Jct.
- 3:40 **Tour of Vegetable Farms in Korea and Japan**. Elizabeth Wood, [New Leaf CSA](#), Dummerston
- 4:00 **Adjourn**

January 28, 2025

Annual Meeting Exhibitors

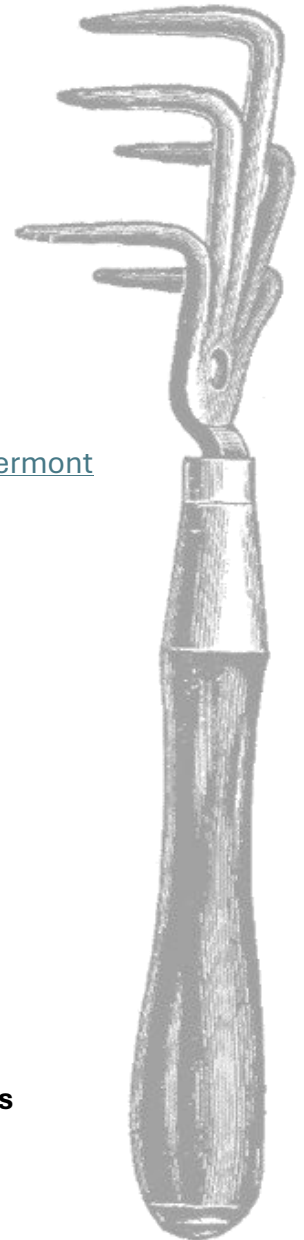
- **Agricultural Engineering Program – UVM Extension**
Andy Chamberlain (Andrew.Chamberlin@uvm.edu /
140 Kennedy Drive, Suite 201, South Burlington, VT 05403
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agricultural-engineering>
- **American Farmland Trust**
Julie Fine (jfine@farmland.org / (413)206-4023)
42 Norfolk Avenue, Northampton, MA 01060
<http://www.farmland.org>
- **Arthur Carroll Crop Insurance Agency**
Colleen Kisselburgh (colleen@arthurcarrollcrop.com / (203)695-1141)
81 Marine Street, Thomaston, CT 06787
<https://www.arthurcarrollcrop.com>
- **Center for an Agricultural Economy**
Daniel Keeney, Silene DeCiuicis, Lotty Roozekrans, Kristin Blodgett, Lylee Rauch-Kacenski (center@caevt.org / 802-472-5362)
P.O. Box 422, Hardwick, VT 05843
<http://www.hardwickagriculture.org>
- **Charles W. Harris Co, Inc.**
Jim Peeler (harrisirrigation@gmail.com / (413) 668-5006)
288 Main Street, Monson, MA 01057
<https://charleswharrisco.com>
- **Climax Conseils**
Jacques Thauriault (jacques.climaxconseils@gmail.com / (418) 802-4316)
970 rue Vauquelin, Neuville, Quebec G0A2R0
<https://facebook.com/ClimaxConseils>
- **Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS)**
Hans Estrin (hans.estrin@uvm.edu) / Emily Reiss (capsvt@uvm.edu)
<https://vvbga.org/produce-safety-caps>
- **CT Greenhouse**
Toby Fischer (info@ctgreenhouse.com / (860) 341-8707)
P.O. Box 331, East Haddam, CT 06423
<https://www.ctgreenhouse.com>
- **Deep Root Organics**
(sales@deeprootorganic.coop / (802) 730-3126)
PO Box 620, Johnson, VT 05656
<https://deeprootorganic.coop/deeproot/>
- **Farm Viability Program – UVM Extension**
Dana Ruppert, Elisa Clancy (elisa.clancy@uvm.edu / (802) 656-4837)
327 US Route 302, Suite 1, Berlin, VT 05641
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/farm-viability>



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Annual Meeting Exhibitors

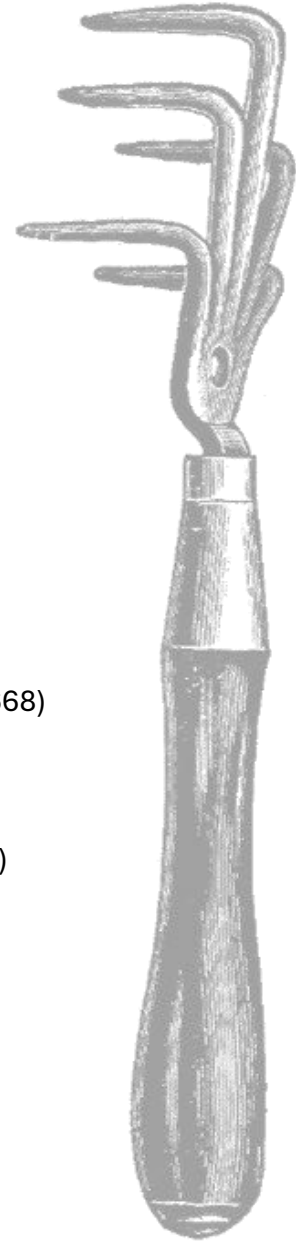
- **High Mowing Organic Seeds**
Paul Feenan (pfeenan@highmowingseeds.com / (802) 472-6174)
76 Quarry Road, Wolcott, VT 05680
<https://www.highmowingseeds.com/>
- **Jamaica Central Labour Organization**
Monique Lewis (mlewis@jaclo.org / (202) 667-6190)
1812 R Street NW, Washington, DC, 20009
- **Johnny's Selected Seeds**
Emmal Golonka (egolonka@johnnyseeds.com / (207) 660-4362)
186 Hoosac Road, Conway, MA 01341
<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/>
- **Johnstone Farm & Field**
Doug Johnstone (doug.johnstone71@outlook.com / (802) 779-2489)
P.O. Box 53, North Springfield, VT 05150
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA) - Vermont**
Cheyanne Rico (Cehyanne.Rico@usda.gov / (802) 951-6796)
356 Mountain View Drive, Colchester, VT 05446
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/vermont>
- **Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont**
(info@nofavt.org / (802) 419-0075)
P.O. Box 697, Richmond, VT 05477
<https://www.nofavt.org/>
- **NW Crops & Soils Program – UVM Extension**
Kellie Damann (kellie.damann@uvm.edu)
278 South Main Street, St. Albans, VT 05478
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops>
- **OESCO**
Russ French (info@oescoinc.com / 800-634-5557)
PO Box 540 / 8 Ashfield Rd Rte 116, Conway, MA 0134
<https://www.oescoinc.com/>
- **Osprey Hill Farm**
Kimberly Hagen (05682khagen@gmail.com/ (802) 522-6729)
28 Norton Rd, North Middlesex, VT 05682
- **Plant Health Section, Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets**
Emilie Inoue (Emilie.Inoue@vermont.gov / (802) 505-0217)
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management-division>
- **Pollinator Support Program – UVM Extension**
Laura Johnson (Laura.O.Johnson@uvm.edu / 802-656-4827)
327 US Route 302, Suite 1, Berlin, VT 05641
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/pollinator-support-resources>



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Annual Meeting Exhibitors

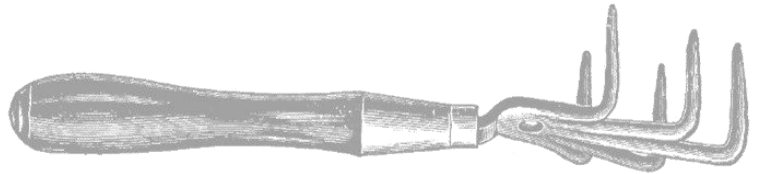
- **Produce Program -Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets**
AGR.Produce@vermont.gov
94 Harvest Lane, Willison, VT 05495
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov>
- **Reliable Labor Services LLC, DBA Bookends Associates**
Gladstone Moore (gmamoore@yahoo.com / (802) 948-2788)
546 Main Street, Orwell, VT
<https://bookendsassociates.com>
- **Rimol Greenhouses**
Mike Bisogno (mbisogno@rimol.com / (802) 495-6197)
40 Londonderry Turnpike, Hooksett, NH 03106
<https://www.rimolgreenhouses.com/>
- **Rupp Seeds**
Jeff Werner (ryani@ruppseeds.com / (419) 337-7093)
17919 County Road B, Wauseon, OH 43567
<https://www.ruppseeds.com/>
- **Seedway**
Jeremy Schulz (jschulz@seedway.com / (585) 202-7271)
99 Industrial Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022
<https://www.seedway.com>
- **Seven Springs Farm Supply**
Daniel Sweeny (daniel@sevenspringsfarmsupply.com/ (229) 366-2668)
426 Jerry Lane NE, Check, VA 24072
<https://www.7springsfarm.com>
- **Smart Farm Innovations**
Robert Arnold (robert@smartfarminnovations.com / (518) 955-7499)
27 Myron Road, South Glens Falls, NY 12803
<https://www.smartfarminnovations.com>
- **Texpak**
Douglas Kunreuther (doug@texpak.com / (516) 326-7720)
130 New Hyde Park Road, Franklin Square, NY 11010
<https://www.texpak.com/horticultural>
- **Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA)**
Sarah Isham, Andy Wood (sisham@veda.org /awood@veda.org /
802-828-5627)
58 East State Street, Suite 5, Montpelier, VT 05602
<https://www.veda.org>
- **Vermont Compost Company**
(info@vermontcompost.com / 802-223-6049)
1996 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602
www.vermontcompost.com



January 28, 2025

Annual Meeting Exhibitors

- **Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program - VHCB**
Jillian Conner (j.conner@vhcb.org / (802) 828-1098)
58 East State Street #101, Montpelier, VT 05602
<https://vhcb.org/viability>
- **Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG)**
Anna Seuberling (aseuberling@vpirg.org / (513) 479-8314)
141 Main Street, Montpelier, VT
<https://vpirg.org>



2024 VVBGA Student Scholarship Recipient:

Each year the VVBGA recognizes an outstanding student in the College of Agriculture in Life Sciences who shows promise for contributing to the commercial horticulture industry. The 2024 honoree was:

Stephania Surowiec



Stephania Surowiec, originating from Sanbornton, New Hampshire, grew up immersed in her family's farm 50-acre fruit and vegetable farm. Enrolling at the University of Vermont (UVM), she initially pursued plant biology but found her stride in agroecology, relishing its hands-on approach.

Throughout college, Stephania interned at the UVM Hort Farm, gaining practical skills and networking opportunities. The AX Fellowship in 2022 deepened her understanding of apple orchard management and entomology. She currently interns at the Plant Diagnostic Clinic.

Even before college, Stephania engaged in agricultural pursuits, collaborating on tomato plant genetics and participating in FFA activities. Her involvement at the UVM Horse Cooperative Barn added to her skill set.

Beyond academics, Stephania co-manages a farm business with her partner, Mason Palmer, in Monkton and Hinesburg, Vermont, focusing on vegetable cultivation and livestock.

As she prepares to inherit her family's farm, Stephania sees herself as a custodian of its heritage, aiming to blend tradition with modern practices. Her journey underscores the transformative potential of dedication and education in agriculture.

Summary of Technical Support Provided

Vern Grubinger, Extension Professor, Vegetable and Berry Specialist



What needs are being addressed

- Technical advice and individual support for growers statewide and beyond
- Writing and managing grants to fund Extension personnel engaged in research and education
- Organizing events, projects, and publications on topics of interest to growers
- Supporting VVBGA activities: annual meeting, BOD, grants, listserv, website

What was done in the past year

- Support farms affected by flood, worked with Becky to obtain funding for cover crop seed
- Worked with Tamarack Media, Julie, Virginia on Commercial Member part of VVBGA web site
- Worked with Tamarack and Julie to launch VVBGA Pick-Your-Own website, with public portion
- Worked with Hans and Julie to support CAPS program, hire new CAPS consultant (Emily Reiss)
- Worked with Becky to implement winter webinar series, soil health projects
- Hired UVM Extension Farmer Engagement Specialist (Julie Callahan)
- Obtained \$12.5k Working Lands grant for the VVBGA to fund web site work
- Obtained \$97k NE Risk Management grant, with Laura, for pollinator cover crop project
- Obtained \$245k grant to hire an Outreach Specialist to assist growers with NRCS participation
- Worked with Becky to obtain \$622k Clean Water funding from Agency of Agriculture
- Edited monthly [VT veg and berry newsletter](#) (998 subscribers)
- Organized program and moderated VVBGA [2024 Annual Meeting](#) with 228 attendees
- Developed VVBGA board meeting agendas, reports; reviewed budget with Virginia and Andy
- Maintained content for parts of the UVM commercial horticulture [web site](#)
- Conducted tunnel tomato survey, irrigation water testing; started to [compile results](#)
- Authored [Funding Sources for Farmers](#), [Impact of and Response to Flooding in 2023](#), [Overview of Commercial Horticulture in Vermont](#), [Preparing Farms for Potential Flooding](#), [Soil Testing on Farms and Gardens After Flooding](#); updated [Information Resources for Highbush Blueberry Growers](#). Digitized and posted five old videos featuring farmers on [cover cropping](#), [marketing](#), [sweet corn production](#), [sustainable tillage](#), and [weed control equipment](#). Check them out!

What is planned for the coming year

- Keep on consulting with growers, editing newsletter and web sites, writing articles
- Help organize VVBGA Annual Meeting, webinar series, on-farm workshops
- Support Becky, Hans, Julie, and Laura with project planning, grant proposals, reports, advice
- Apply for funding to keep projects viable into the future
- Conduct survey of membership to assess listserv, newsletter, web site, etc.
- Work with Virginia and the VVBGA board to keep the association strong and effective



CAPS Program Update
 VVGBA Board of Directors Meeting—11/12/24
Hans Estrin, UVM Extension

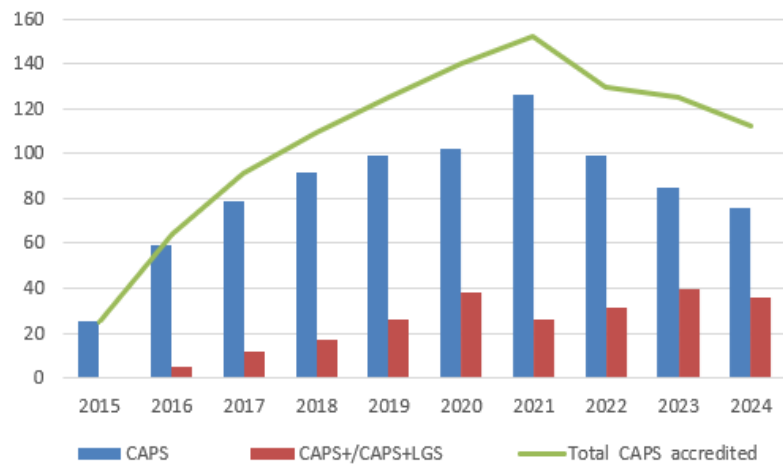
What needs are being addressed:

- Produce safety planning and individual support for farms that are pursuing CAPS accreditation and/or using CAPS materials for production of safety improvements.
- In-person & on-line training and educational materials for needs identified during 2023 (on-site training of post-harvest sanitizer use, employee training, team building & retention).
- CAPS and CAPS+ needs assessment and strategic planning to address long-term program sustainability for market access and farmer support (both CAPS on-line and CAPS+ Audit program)
- Optimize the pragmatic efficiency of recently created CAPS admin SOPs and resources base on grower needs

What was done in the past year:

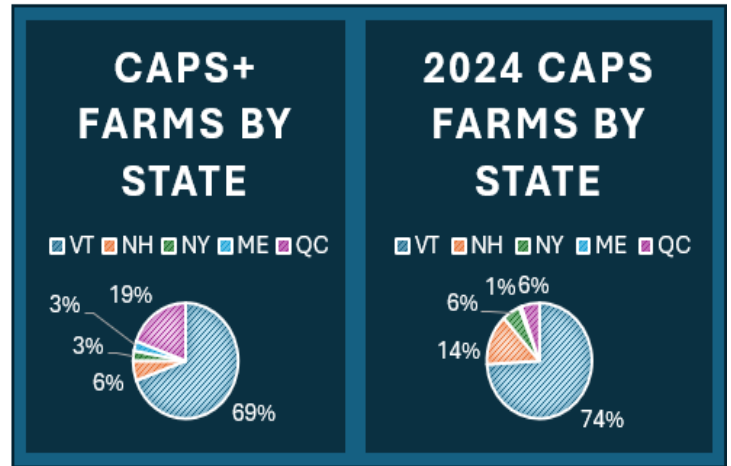
- Summary: 2024 CAPS data and -grower direct interactions suggest trends of an increasing need and import of CAPS+ for wholesale Market Access, and a slightly contracting or stalled participation in on-line CAPS.
- Since the CAPS program moved to vvbga.org, 198 farms have used the produce safety plan builder. In the last year, 137 farms used CAPS resources on the VVBGA website. Of these farms, 128 farms have potential, and 107 are expected to become CAPS accredited for 2024 (71 CAPS; 22 CAPS+; 18 CAPS+LGS).
- Assisted 136 farms with CAPS tasks in 405 distinct contacts (phone, email, on-line, in person). This ranged from simple tasks (e.g. uploading documents) to significant on-farm support (e.g. on-farm pre-audit walk-throughs).
- Created in-person training for CAPS+ auditors, new resources, and audit admin SOP, tracking and follow-up TA for the 36 Farms that remained post July Flooding.
- Successfully piloted a Hybrid CAPS+LGS Audit for Deep Root Coop, with [QC Vrai](#), a non-profit producer owned ag-certification program in QC
- Continued addition and improvement of help text in the produce safety plan builder, with several links updated or integrated to expand CAPS resources.

CAPS Accredited Farms (2015-2024)



What is planned for the coming year:

- Continue to streamline CAPS produce safety plan builder for a better grower experience.
- Recruit and support new growers to draft CAPS plans (certificate or self-serve) via kitchen table market promoted workshop (self-serve)
- Based on assessed needs and trends of CAPS growers, plan program changes for the next years (with VAAFM and VVBGA BOD)
- As part of a USDA FSOP grant, collaborated with UVM Ag Engineering and other partners to create 4-6 new grower resources and host 4CAPS workshops (wash water treatment, employee training, Start-up wash pack design and sourcing guide etc.).
- Train and collaborate with [QC Vrai](#) auditor to complete some if not all CAPS+ audits in QC.



Primary sources of program funding:

- USDA through Specialty Crop Block Grant through Vermont Agency of Ag
- FDA through Vermont Agency of Ag
- VVBGA Donations and CAPS fees
- USDA Food Safety Outreach Program grant

Board input needed on these key issues:

- Vote to accredit up to 127 CAPS farms in 2024.
- Discuss any issues with this years and forthcoming CAPS work
- Grant authority to VVBGA Executive Committee to advise/oversee forthcoming CAPS “strategic” planning and decision making.



Soil Health Program

Becky Maden, UVM Extension

What needs are being addressed

- Soil test result interpretation and recommendations.
- Support for soil health planning and cover cropping.
- Flood recovery and climate resilience.
- High tunnel management.
- Helping farmers comply with surface water monitoring regulations.

What was done in the past year

- Direct technical assistance – 154 farm visits, ~250 communications (>30 minutes).
- 75 soil and tissue test recommendations (high tunnel and field).
- Workshops and presentations – 26 in person presentations or workshops (~750 attendees); 3 virtual workshops (~150 attendees); 9 winter webinars (~405 attendees, 2205 views); 3 on farm summer workshops (~98 attendees).
- Co-led NOFA-VT's vegetable farm soil health cohort (14 participants, monthly farm visits, winter meetings) and VVBGA cover crop peer group (11 participants, bi-monthly farm visits, winter meeting).
- Secured funds from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Farm Agronomic Practices program (\$16k) and the Vermont Community Foundation (\$30k) for flood response to purchase ~35,000 lbs. cover crop seed for 19 flooded farms (some for 2023 flooding), ~600 acres.
- Worked with Vern to secure Clean Water funds from Agency of Agriculture (\$622k)
- Edited and published quarterly high tunnel newsletter.
- Installed data loggers for surface water meters on 18 farms (385 acres) to track surface water use.

What is planned for the coming year

- On-line webinar series (winter and spring).
- Publishing articles, newsletters, and fact sheets (soil cohorts, high tunnel tomatoes, soil steaming).
- Updated RAPs compliance for certified small vegetable farms.
- Expanded work with cohort groups and “mental models” approach.
- Continue and expand soil health technical assistance and outreach.
- High tunnel technical assistance and compilation of research; continue publishing newsletter.
- Continue research for delayed potato planting project.
- Continued installation of data loggers and water meters.

Primary sources of program funding

- Agricultural clean water improvement program (~65%)
- High tunnel project (Margaret Skinner) (~5%)
- Potato project (Vic Izzo) (~15%)
- Institute for Agroecology (~10-30%)



Summary of Technical Support Provided

Chris Callahan, Andy Chamberlin, and sometimes Hans Estrin

<http://go.uvm.edu/ageng> ageng@uvm.edu @uvmextageng on social media

<http://agengpodcast.com> <http://thefarmersshare.com/> @thefarmersshare

What needs are being addressed:

- Technical advice and individual support for growers statewide, in the region and across the country – post-harvest, produce safety, protected culture, bioenergy, and lots of “other”.
- Supporting farmer-to-farmer sharing via case study, social media highlights, and podcast outlets.
- Creating, collecting, and sharing knowledge in multiple formats to support grower decision making. Here’s an A-Z list: <http://go.uvm.edu/agengbrochure>
- Writing and managing grants to fund research and education.

What was done in the past year:

- Direct technical advice and support (approx. 100 projects in the year)
- New blog posts and associated guide sheets, videos, and photos on a variety of topics. [Reinventing the Wheel: Easing Movement and Adding Flexibility](#), [Planning Tames the Postharvest Beast at Wild Work Farm](#), [Shipping Container Delivers the Goods for Ascutney Harvest](#), [A Guide to Preparing High Tunnels for Extreme Weather](#)
- Website gets about 65,000 visits each year with people from all over the world spending an average of 1.5 minutes there.
- We aim to have every resource available as a blog post (with responsive mobile design for phone reading), downloadable PDF for printing, and video formats.
- [The Farmers Share Podcast](#) (Andy leading this) - A behind the scenes podcast where we visit with farmers and learn what it takes to be a sustainable produce grower across people, profits and our planet. An in-person interview show fostering peer to peer connection. 10 new episodes receiving over 8,000 downloads and averaging about 430 regular listeners.
- Active social media presence in grower communities on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#). @uvmextageng.
- Manage the VVBGA YouTube Channel (webinars, etc). (16,000 Views, 276 Subscribers, 1,800 hours of watch time.)
- Photographic capture of [Blueberry Twilight](#) and [Annual Meeting](#)
- Research and demonstration projects based on grower needs.

What is planned for the coming year:

- Focused one-on-one support, more case studies.
- Exploring new program areas in automation and ag plastics / sustainability.
- New resources that respond to specific and recurring needs expressed by you all. **What sort of “Ag Engineering” or other resources do you wish existed?**



2024 Pollinator Support Program Report

Laura Johnson, Pollinator Support Specialist

What needs are being addressed:

- Support the well-being of VT farms and understand pollinator dependent crops grown and how to support their wild pollinator food and habitat resources.
- Promote best practice adoption of practical applications and modifications of farm management to support pollinators in partnership with existing UVM and statewide partners.
- Offer educational opportunities and technical assistance for farms about wild pollinator support practices and habitat augmentation on farms, such as cover cropping for pollinators.

What was done in the past year

- Peer group: Co-led a cover crop peer group of 11 farmers learning together about planting cover crops for pollinators and soil health.
- Meetings: Organized and presented at 8 on farm meetings (100 participants), invited presentations at 3 on farm meetings (>100 participants), 6 virtual meeting presentations (>100 participants), and led 3 non-farmer outreach activities about how farms support pollinators (>50 participants).
- Technical assistance: 116 total technical assistance interactions. 60 farm visits and 56 consults regarding pollinator support planning and implementation, including cover cropping for pollinators, during farm visits or by phone, or email.
- Outreach materials: Distribute of 25 “Know Your 5” yard signs to farms, representing 5 pollinators and crops; co-publish *Commercial Bumble Bee Best Management Practices* fact sheet and AgriView article; “Know Your 5” press release; 7 VVBGA newsletter pollinator support reports.
- Research: Coordinated year two of multi-state blueberry pollinator and pest research on 10 VT farms, *Optimization of Habitat to Support Pollinators and Reduce Pests: Removing Barriers to Habitat Adoption in Highbush Blueberry*.
- Worked with NRCS to obtain technical service provider (TSP) certification to write Pollinator Habitat Design plans with farm cost share benefit.

What is planned for the coming year

- Continue and expand grower relationships and pollinator support technical assistance, grower meetings, and promotion.
- Work with NRCS and growers to sign up for NRCS cost shares for Pollinator Habitat Design Plans and pilot writing of the plan and incorporate into the VVBGA pollinator support planning tool.
- Conduct economic assessment of pollinator support on farms.
- Continue work with farms on cover crop sequences to support pollinators.

Primary sources of program funding:

- Northeast Risk Management Education
- Agriculture Clean Water Initiative Program
- Specialty Crop Multi-State grant
- Gund Apis Fund
- VVBGA Program Donation



Ann Hazelrigg UVM Extension and Giovanna Sassi, CALS Post Doc

What needs are being addressed in PDC:

- Timely and accurate disease and arthropod identification through emails, pictures or physical samples
- Unbiased recommendations for management following IPM principles
- Collaboration and cooperation with entomologists, plant pathologists and vegetable specialists in the state, region and US to assist Vermont vegetable and small fruit growers including the Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group

What was done in the past year:

- Development of a new Diagnostic sample reporting form with pictures and information
- 525 total samples processed for all crops, with the majority related to vegetable and small fruit
- Workshops and presentations – Disease and Pest presentations at the VT Veg and Berry annual meeting (~200 attendees); 5 webinars (~150 attendees); 4 on farm summer workshops (~150 attendees).
- Serve on NE Veg and Fruit Conference Advisory board for 2024 meeting
- Provided disease articles to the quarterly high tunnel newsletter edited by Becky Maden
- Provided PDC updates in the Veg and Berry listserv and UMASS Veg notes

What is planned for the coming year:

- Sabbatical planned for January 2025-June 2025 working with Ohio State on their high tunnel soil test protocol (with potential for offering it in Vermont) and attending a plant pathogenic Nematode workshop with potential of expanding those services in the state.
- Continued processing of diagnostic samples
- Participation in webinar series, workshops, etc.
- Continued contribution of articles newsletters, and fact sheets on vegetable disease and pest issues
- High tunnel technical assistance/continue contributing articles for newsletter
- Continued work on grant projects related to vegetable issues

Primary sources of program funding:

- Extension base funding (~80%)
- Agricultural Experiment Station funding (20%)
- Extramural funding (Grants) to fund program staff:
Northeast Arugula Disease (C. Bull); Northeast Plant Diagnostic Network (A. Smart); USDA NIFA EIPM (A. Hazelrigg); USDA Pesticide Education and Safety Program (A. Hazelrigg); IR 4 (A. Hazelrigg); VAAFM Pesticide Safety contract (A. Hazelrigg); OREI Grains (H. Darby); Organic Seed Production (Zystro); USDA APHIS Pest Scouting (A. Hazelrigg)



Accessing and understanding funding sources
Julie Callahan, Farmer Engagement Specialist

What needs are being addressed:

- Help growers understand the complex world of funding sources (state, federal, other).
- Work with NRCS so they better understand the needs of vegetable and berry farmers.
- Create educational materials that decode the complicated grant language.
- Connect growers with the large amount of NRCS funding available in the next four years through the Inflation Reduction Act.

What was done in the past four months:

- Begin to understand and map the agencies and organizations providing technical and financial assistance to farms.
- Create a survey to ask growers about their successes with grants and the barriers to obtaining grants. Test the survey on farm visits.
- Field visits with other Extension folks to meet growers and learn more about their areas of work.
- Learn how to be a member of the awesome UVM Extension team.

What is planned for coming year:

- Continue to gather feedback on what is and isn't working for farmers in grant programs.
- Collate that feedback to create educational products (fact sheets, presentations, field days) to help growers better understand those programs.
- Share grower feedback with agencies so they understand the grower perspective on grants.
- Work with the Extension new-hire (NRCS Outreach Specialist) who will help farms understand and enroll in NRCS programs- anticipated start date January 2025.

Primary sources of program funding:

- Agricultural Clean Water Improvement Program

Board input needed on these key issues:

- Please share your success and frustrations around getting funding.
- What resources would be helpful for you to better understand funding? What do you wish you knew about funding opportunities when you started farming?
- Schedule a farm visit or call with me so I can understand your experience with funding and help you find funding opportunities that fit with your farm goals. julie.callahan@uvm.edu; 518-944-7149

Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association Board of Directors 2024

			<u>2 year term ends*</u>
President			
Justin Rich Burnt Rock Farm	7052 Main Road, Huntington, VT 05462 justin@burntrockfarm.com	802-434-7170	2024
Vice-President			
Charlie Gray 4 Corners Farm	306 Doe Hill Road, Newbury, VT 05051 cwgray10@gmail.com	802-505-0959	2024
Immediate Past President			
Lisa MacDougall Mighty Food Farm	280 Rod and Gun Club Rd, Shaftsbury, VT 05262 farmers@mightyfoodfarm.com	781-307-6801	<u>3 year term ends*</u> 2025
Christa Alexander Jericho Settlers Farm	22 Barber Farm Road, Jericho Center VT 05465 farmers@jerichosettlersfarm.com	802-899-4000	2025
Hank Bissell Lewis Creek Farm	PO Box 123, Starksboro VT 05487 lcfarm@gmavt.net	802-453-4591	2024
Spencer Blackwell Elmer Farm	855 Case Street, Middlebury VT 05753 elmer.farm@yahoo.com	802-388-3848	2025
Ben Dana Root5 Farm	2340 US Route 5, Fairlee, VT 0504 ben@root5farm.com	802-923-6339	2026
Ryan Demarest Naked Acre Farm	3455 Centerville Rd, Hyde Park, VT 05655 ryanzdemarest@gmail.com	802-222-1774	2026
Kyle Doda 1000 Stone Farm	1102 Stone Road, Brookfield, VT 05036 kyle@1000stonefarm.com	703-901-2922	2024
Jake Guest Killdeer Farm	195 Ely Road, Fairlee. VT 05045 jake.guest@wavecomm.com	802-333-4434	2025
Andy Jones, Treasurer Intervale Community Farm	128 Intervale Road, Burlington VT 05401 andy@intervalecommunityfarm.com	802-658-2919	2026
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Susan Monahan Roots Too Farm	978 US Route 2E, St. Johnsbury VT 05819 samonahan@gmail.com	802-881-6177	2024
Howard Prussack High Meadows Farm	742 Westminster West Road, Putney VT 05346 prussack@gmail.com	802-387-6050	2024
Tim Sanford Luna Bleu Farm	96 Boles Road, S. Royalton VT 05068 lunableufarmvt@gmail.com	802-763-7981	2026
Eric Seitz Pitchfork Farm	PO Box 783, Burlington, VT 05402 pitchforkfarmvt@gmail.com	802-233-6645	2026
Mary Skovsted Joe's Brook Farm	1525 Joe's Brook Road, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819 mkskovsted@gmail.com	802-473-6074	2024
Alisha Utter Arbor Farmstead	3 Faywood Road, Grand Isle, VT 05458 alishautter@gmail.com		2026
Elizabeth Wood New Leaf CSA	111 Dutton Farm Road, Dummerston VT 05301 littlegoat1@hotmail.com	802-254-2531	2025
<i>*terms end at the Annual Meeting in January of the following year</i>			
Secretary			
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Technical Advisor			
Vern Grubinger vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu	University of Vermont Extension 130 Austine Drive, Brattleboro VT 05301	802-656-7534	



Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association

Financial Report for 2024

Prepared by Virginia Jaquish

REVENUE		
Annual Meeting Registrations and Sponsorships	\$	19,564
Farm Memberships	\$	23,516
Commercial Memberships	\$	7,484
CAPS Registration Income	\$	7,530
Donations to Research and Extension Fund	\$	2,342
Pollinator Signs	\$	278
Agency of Agriculture Grants	\$	40,474
Total Revenue	\$	101,188
EXPENSES		
<i>Annual Meeting:</i>		
Annual Expenses (Venue, Report and Supplies)	\$	27,772
Speakers	\$	1,670
Administrative Hours and Mileage	\$	5,006
Bank Fees	\$	33
Directors/Officers & Liability Insurance	\$	1,056
UVM Student Scholarship	\$	250
2023 Tax Filing	\$	788
PO Box Rental (1 year)	\$	72
Postage / Supplies / Board Meeting Expenses	\$	948
Transfer of CAPS Registration Fees to UVM Gift Account	\$	9,168
Transfer of Donations to Research and Extension Fund	\$	2,719
Direct CAPS Expenses	\$	20,336
Direct Pollinator Program Expenses	\$	445
Program Support	\$	4,013
Soil Test Analysis and Cover Crops Grant	\$	8,661
Maintaining and Improving the VVBGA Website	\$	5,689
Expanding Capacity of VVBGA Grant	\$	1,359
Total Expenses	\$	89,984
Account Balance as of 12/31/2023		\$ 50,350.22
Account Balance as of 12/31/2024		\$ 61,554.61
		\$ -
Change in Account Balance from end of 2023 to end of 2024:		\$ 11,204.39
Encumbered program support funds *		
CAPS		\$ 8,274.56
Nutrient Management		\$ 16,488.32
Ag Engineering		\$ 15,000.00
Pollinator Program Support		\$ 13,760.39
Total Encumbered Funds		\$ 53,523.27
Available Account Balance		\$ 8,031.34

**Funds that the Board of Directors have allocated for specific programs, but have not yet been spent.*

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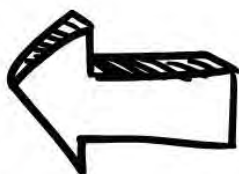
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- 329 – No-Till Residue Management
- 345 – Reduced Till Residue Management
- 512 – Pasture and Hay Planting
- 590 – Nutrient Management
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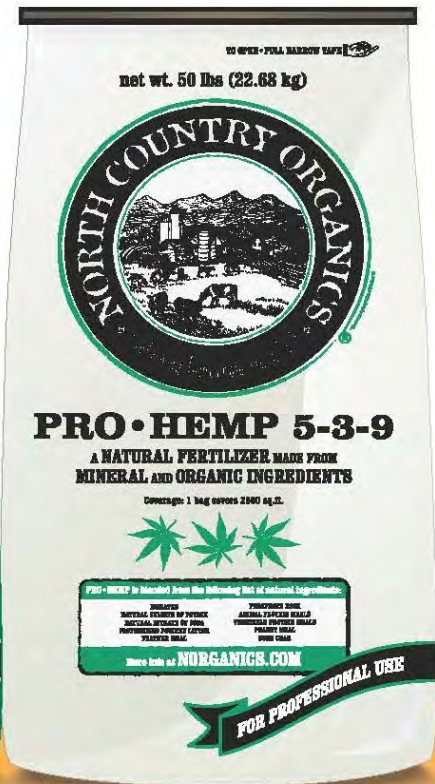
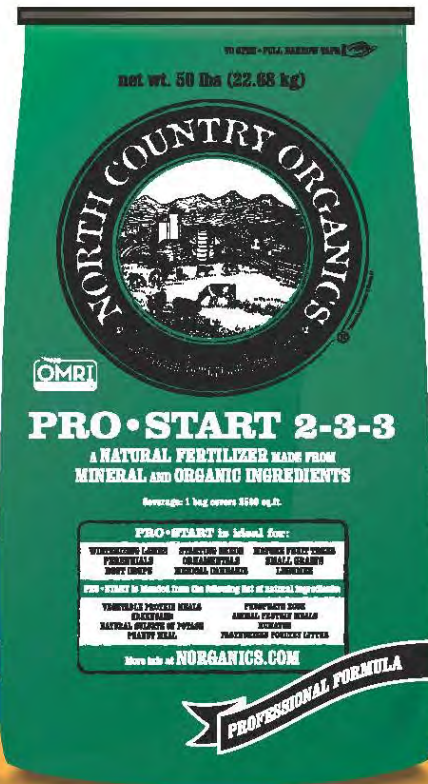
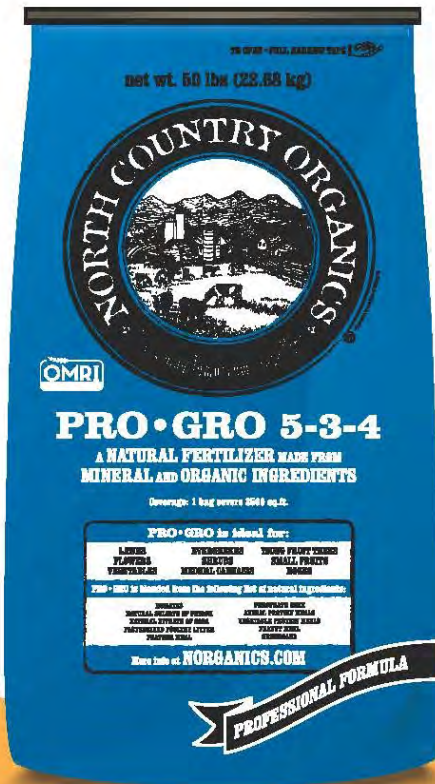
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Calling on Local Vermont Strawberry Growers

Vermont is experiencing an increase in precipitation, extreme weather events, and seasonably warmer winters. With this, growers are experiencing more severe pests and disease outbreaks. UVM Extension's Northwest Crops and Soils Team (NWCST) has received a Specialty Crop Block Grant from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets to understand disease and pest pressure in strawberry production fields. We hope you can inform our research team on issues you have been facing with your strawberry crops. With this information NWCST will be able to prioritize/focus our research and extension efforts on strawberry pest management.

Please take a moment to complete this strawberry pest and disease management survey. Survey can be found at: https://qualtrics.uvm.edu/ife/form/SV_3IqfiOMK212rmmj or scan the QR code above.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact our research team.

Thank you,

Heather Darby

Dr. Heather Darby, Agronomist

heather.darby@uvm.edu

802-524-6501

Kellie Damann

Kellie Damann, Research Specialist

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Thank you to all the farms and business who donated to the Research and Extension Fund in addition to their 2024 membership dues.

Notes



Notes





Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association

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