



Vermont Food Hub Collaborative

Presented to the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry
4.15.25





What do we mean by “food-hub”?

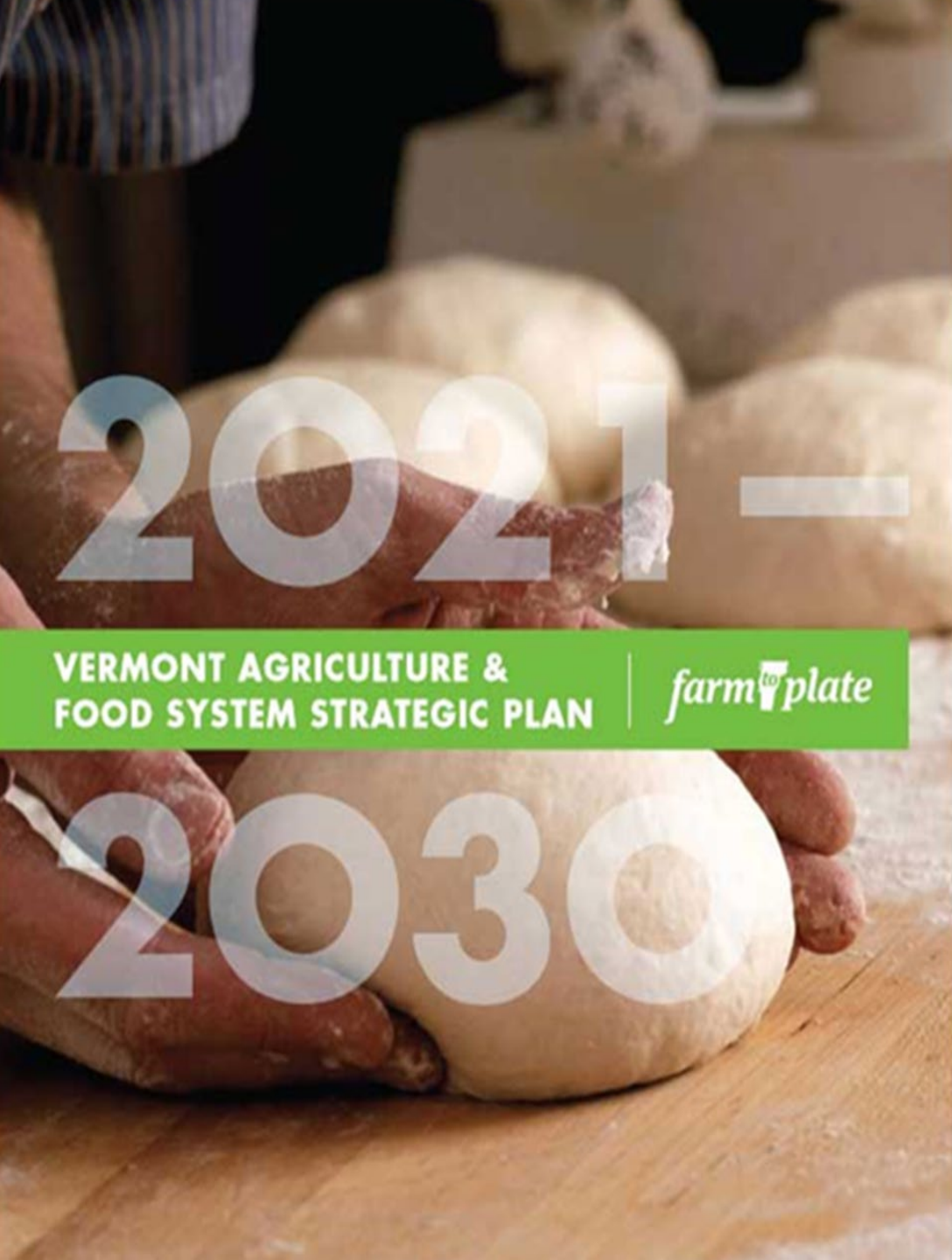
An organization that actively manages the aggregation, storage, logistics and distribution, and marketing of source identified food products from local and regional producers to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand. Source identified products that the hub aggregates, distributes, and markets may include products that the hub processes in its own facilities.



What is the Vermont Food Hub Collaborative (VFHC)?

A collaborative network of 6 non-profit food hubs spanning the major sub-regions of the state who are committed to increasing sales and market opportunities for local producers. The members are:

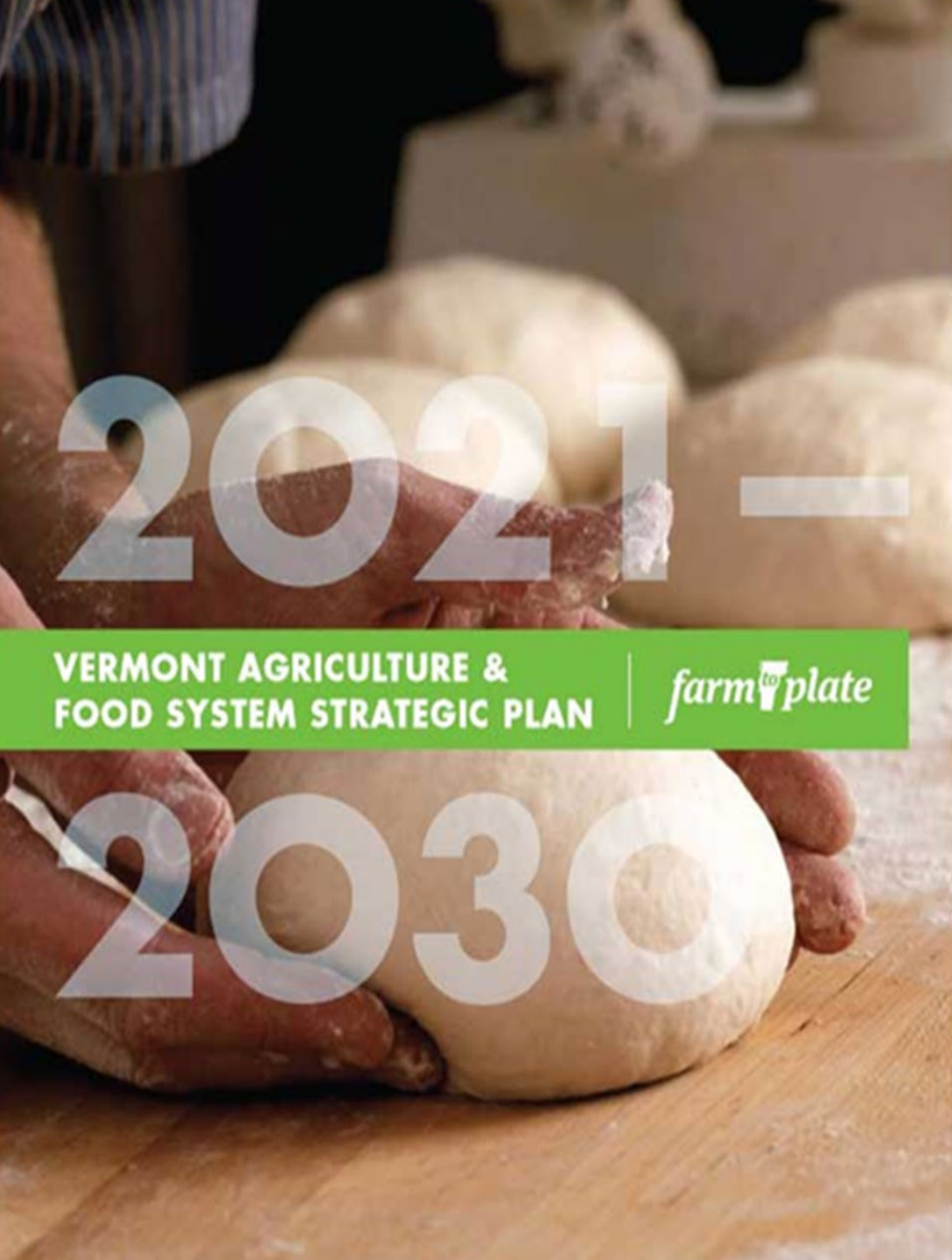
- Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN) -Middlebury
- Center for an Agricultural Economy: Farm Connex -Hardwick
- Food Connects - Brattleboro
- Green Mountain Farm to School: Green Mountain Farm Direct - Newport
- Intervale Center: Intervale Food Hub - Burlington
- Vermont Farmers Food Center - Rutland



Why VFHC Matters: Plays a Crucial Role in Helping Vermont Reach Farm to Plate's Legislative Outcomes

To start, the work of the food hubs addresses the legislative outcomes of the Farm to Plate Investment Program to:

1. Increase sustainable economic development and create jobs in Vermont's food and farm sector
2. Improve soils, water, and resiliency of the working landscape in the face of climate change
3. Improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters



Why VFHC Matters: Plays a Crucial Role in Helping Vermont Reach its Food System Strategic Goals

They directly help achieve the following Strategic Goals:

1. Food system economic output, employment, and establishments in Vermont will increase.
2. Demand for Vermont food will increase.
3. Vermont's production portfolio is more diverse, farm and food businesses of all types will increase their economic viability, and businesses have equitable access to capital and to production, processing, aggregation, and distribution infrastructure appropriate to their needs.
12. All people in Vermont are able to access locations in which local food is sold, served, or provided.
14. Vermont's food system is resilient and able to provide adequate and accessible healthy local food in the face of emergencies—including climate-related natural disasters.



Why VFHC Matters: The many reasons Vermont producers otherwise couldn't “get there from here”

- As recently as 2020, three wholesale distributors – Sysco, US Foods, and Performance Food Group – accounted for 34% of total wholesale distribution market share. This market consolidation puts downward price pressure and closes off market access for smaller producers.
- Rural nature of our state makes it unappealing for broadline distributors to service, or vulnerable to getting dropped by national or multi-national companies for economic reasons (see Horizon/Danone decision to terminate organic dairy contracts in the Northeast).
- Small scale producers may not have required volume or business scale to feasibly work with larger distributors or absorb costs of self-distribution.



Why VFHC Matters: The many reasons Vermont producers otherwise couldn't “get there from here”

The six member food-hubs of VFHC collectively:

- Sell or distribute over **\$19 million** of local and regional food annually, directly benefiting the economic viability of our state's farm and food producers.
- Work with and serve over **400 farmers and food businesses**, providing them with essential access to markets and affordable distribution services that prioritize fair and viable margins.
- Sell or deliver to over **850 customers** that includes individuals, food shelves, schools, universities, hospitals, restaurants, and grocery stores, ensuring that local food is accessible and available to all Vermonters across the state.
- Employ **50 people** who represent a range of occupations including warehouse and logistics management, sales and marketing, and commercial trucking.