

The Senate Agriculture Committee testimony
Farm Security Fund. Proposed bill is [S.60](#).
2/27-28/2025
Simon Renault

- Simon Renault - General Manager of Scott Farm Orchard in Dummerston.
- Thank you for taking the time and listening
- I am testifying today in support of the creation and implementation of a Farm Security Fund as outlined in bill S.60
- On May 18th, 2023, the temperatures at Scott Farm dropped to 25 degrees for several hours, hence freezing the small apples in our orchards. Many orchards in Vermont that Spring experienced a major crop loss; in the case of Scott Farm, we lost 90% of our crop. During the following months, we did all we could to find resilience internally and support externally. Cutting our costs, organizing events and fundraisers helped us reduce the impact of the loss to some extent. We specialize in growing and selling heirloom apples. It is a high quality specialty product that is challenging to grow and we both need and are able to get a good price for it. Our primary income comes from sales of our fruit to specialty stores and food coops throughout New England as well as sales at our own Farm Market. We also rely on other forms of direct sales such as Pick Your Own and CSA. We are not and could not compete in the commodity market. We subscribe to a crop insurance and yet have always known that in the event of a catastrophe, the insurance payment would only cover a fraction of our loss. On a good year, we sell about \$500k of apples.
- In 2023, the crop insurance covering what was considered 100% loss in our orchard paid us \$53k. In short, our farm business survived that devastating year thanks to creativity, grit, some outside support and substantial bank loans. Thankfully, we were blessed with a good crop the following year, which has helped us get back on our feet to some extent. We would not have survived another crop loss. Going forward, we have been working on looking at our farm systems to create more resilience. We have bought a frost fan. We are increasing our production of value added products and trying to save money as an emergency fund.
- While all these steps are made in the right direction, we are well aware that more climate related severe events will impact us again, each time chipping away at our capacity to produce food. It is not a phenomenon we can face in isolation.
- For that reason, we are grateful for the initiative to create the Farm Security Fund and hope you will support and be advocates of proposed bill S.60

- Thank you for your time and attentive listening.