

Food is Medicine – Benefiting Vermont Farms and Rural Communities

Food is Medicine (FIM) programs—such as produce prescriptions—help Vermonters access fresh fruits and vegetables prescribed by healthcare providers while directing food dollars to Vermont farms.

Food is Medicine is not just a health initiative -- it is an economic and agricultural strategy for Vermont that aligns with all three of Governor Scott's goals when considering new initiatives: growing the economy, making Vermont more affordable, and protecting the state's most vulnerable.

Food is Medicine programs matter. Their economic benefits have ripple effects by:

- Supporting farmers: Programs purchase food directly from local farms, creating reliable demand that helps farmers plan and stay in business.
- Keeping dollars local: FIM programs circulate dollars through local communities, supporting farm jobs, suppliers, and regional food infrastructure.
- Strengthening rural economies: Participating farms and food hubs are located in rural areas where agriculture is a key economic driver. **Every dollar spent on local food generates an additional \$1.60 in economic activity for Vermont. This funding benefits farmers, food hubs, distributors, local processors, and rural communities.**
- Improving health and reducing long-term costs: Increased access to fruits and vegetables helps prevent and manage diet-related disease.

Impact on Vermont Agriculture:

- FIM programs provide stable, seasonal markets for local farms.
- Produce prescription programs support diverse crop production, helping farms stay resilient amid rising costs and climate pressures.
- In 2024, Vermont produce prescription programs purchased \$405,430 in food from 39 Vermont farms—a 162% increase from 2023, showing strong demand and farmer participation.
- Rutland's Farmacy program has invested over \$450,000 in Vermont farms since 2015.
- Farmers report that produce prescription programs make "budget and planting decisions easier" by providing reliable markets, and creates "a perfect match" for farms committed to growing affordable, accessible healthy food for their communities.

Participating Farms:

Boardman Hill Farm (West Rutland)	Last Resort Farm (Monkton)	Stevens Farmstead (Sudbury)
Darby Farm (Alburgh)	New Leaf Organics (Bristol)	Singing Cedars Farmstead (Orwell)
Dubs Farms (Berkshire)	Northeast Vine Supply	Smokey House Center (Danby)
Evening Song (Shrewsbury)	Old Road Farm (Granville)	Spring Lake Ranch (Cuttingsville)
Familia Farm (West Pawlet)	Pete's Greens (Craftsbury)	Stone's Throw Farmstead (Shrewsbury)
Finn & Roots Farm (Bakersfield)	Pierson Farm (Bradford)	SVT Farm (Wells)
Full Moon Farm (Hinesburg)	Pomykala Farm (Grand Isle)	Tell a Tale Farm (West Rutland)
Hackett's Orchard (South Hero)	Quill Hill Farm (Poultney)	The Farm at VYCC (Richmond)
Happy Bird Poultry Farm (Isle La Motte)	River Berry Farm (Fairfax)	West Farm (Jeffersonville)
Hunger Moon Farm (Enosburg Falls)	Rocky Hill Farm (Westford)	Yoder Farm (Danby)
Jericho Settlers' Farm (Jericho)	Root 5 Farm (Fairlee)	
JK Markle Potatoes (St Albans)	Sandy Bottom Farm (Isle La Motte)	

Policy Opportunity:

State investment in FIM programs can:

- Strengthen Vermont's farm economy
- Support rural jobs and food infrastructure
- Improve health outcomes for Vermonters
- Reduce long-term healthcare costs

Source: [Vermont Youth Conservation Corps; 2024 Data Report: CSA & Healthcare Community of Practice, Farm to Plate](#)