

**Senate Committee on
Economic Development**
February 5, 2025



Vermont
Housing &
Conservation
Board

Gus Seelig
Executive Director

Liz Gleason
Farm & Forest Viability Program Director



Grass Cattle Co, Charlotte

Farm & Forest Viability Program



Sunday Bell Farm, Danville

- In-depth, individualized business assistance
- Succession planning, financial management, access to capital, land search and access, bookkeeping, improving profitability
- 108 clients in 2024 represented **\$42 million** in economic activity and **over 300 jobs**
- 36% average increase in profitability



Honeyfield Farm, Norwich

2024 Business Vitality Metrics

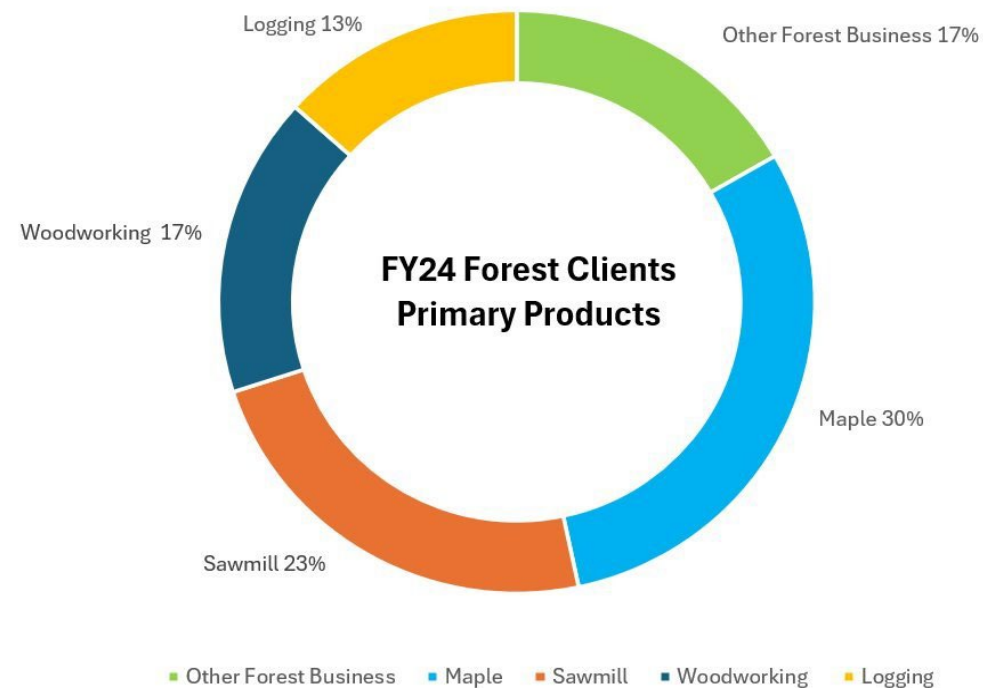




Vermont Woodworking School, Fairfax

Statewide & programmatic numbers

- Farm annual economic footprint - \$1 billion
- Forest products - \$1.4 billion
- Number of farms in Vermont selling over \$10,000: approximately 3000
- Approx. 1500 farm/forest clients served



Collaborative Network of Partners



Service Provider Network:

- Center for an Agricultural Economy
- Intervale Center
- Land For Good
- NOFA-VT
- UVM Extension

Other partners:

- Vermont Land Trust
- VT Sustainable Jobs Fund
- Liberation Ecosystems
- Healthy Roots Collaborative
- Northeast Forests
- Food Connects

Farmland access & transfer

- 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




Grants catalyze growth

“Without a doubt, my farm business has more potential for success because of the support and assistance from Farm Viability.”

—Becca Knouss

Business Plan Implementation Grants:


- 16 projects in 2024 will increase climate resilience and grow local food and forest businesses
- 170 grants made over 15 years, totaling \$840,000
- Flexible funding, easy to access, low match



The Goat Project, Bennington



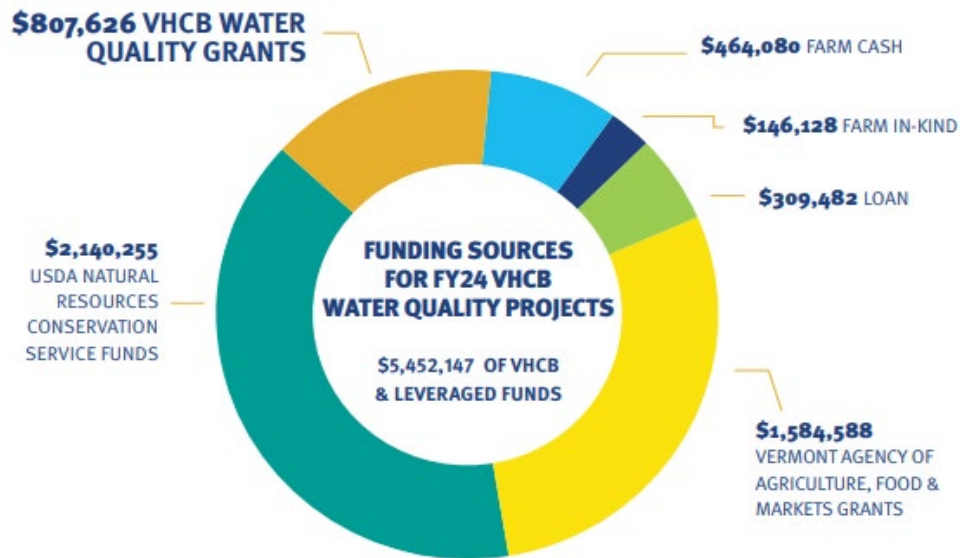
The Roots Farm Market, Middlesex



La Montañuela, New Haven

Water Quality Grants

- 20 grants in 2024 will reduce runoff, boost soil health, improve manure management, and increase grazing infrastructure
- \$807K in 2024 leveraged an additional \$4.6 million
- \$4.9 million awarded since 2017
- Flexible addition to State's clean water programming



Severy Farm, Cornwall

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

\$1,086,681 ➔ **\$22,751,701**

REDI FUNDS SINCE 2017

GRANTS TO COMMUNITIES



Champlain Orchards, Shoreham

REDI impacts:

- Assists small towns and working lands businesses access capital for critically needed economic development projects
- **\$22.7 million** secured for small communities

Focus areas:

- Community-based economic development and downtown revitalization
- Working lands
- Outdoor recreation

Champlain Orchards, Shoreham:

- Secured a \$239,000 USDA Value-Added Producer Grant to expand markets for eco-certified apples



We wouldn't have known who to reach out to for help without REDI and wouldn't have submitted such a competitive application without this support. This grant will provide the security businesses need to grow sustainably and benefit the community.”

– Corinn Julow, Town of North Hero

Water & wastewater:

- \$1.5 million in federal funds for **Highgate/Swanton** water extension
- \$1 million in federal funds for water infrastructure in **North Hero**

Rural general stores:

- **Sheldon General Store:** Historic general store secured \$120,000 in federal funds
- **Albany General Store** accessed \$90,000 in USDA funds in 2018 for store renovation



Sheldon General Store, Rupert

Supporting Small Towns to Access Big Funding



Pittsford Village Farm

- Charlotte: Clemmons Family Farm secured \$350,000 Arts Place America grant
- Bridgewater: \$430,000 from ACCD's Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) for the Bridgewater Community & Childcare Center
- Pittsford: \$395,834 in NBRC and VCDP funds secured for a community hub and childcare center on historic farm property
- Bethel: \$331,809 grant for multi-use trail development



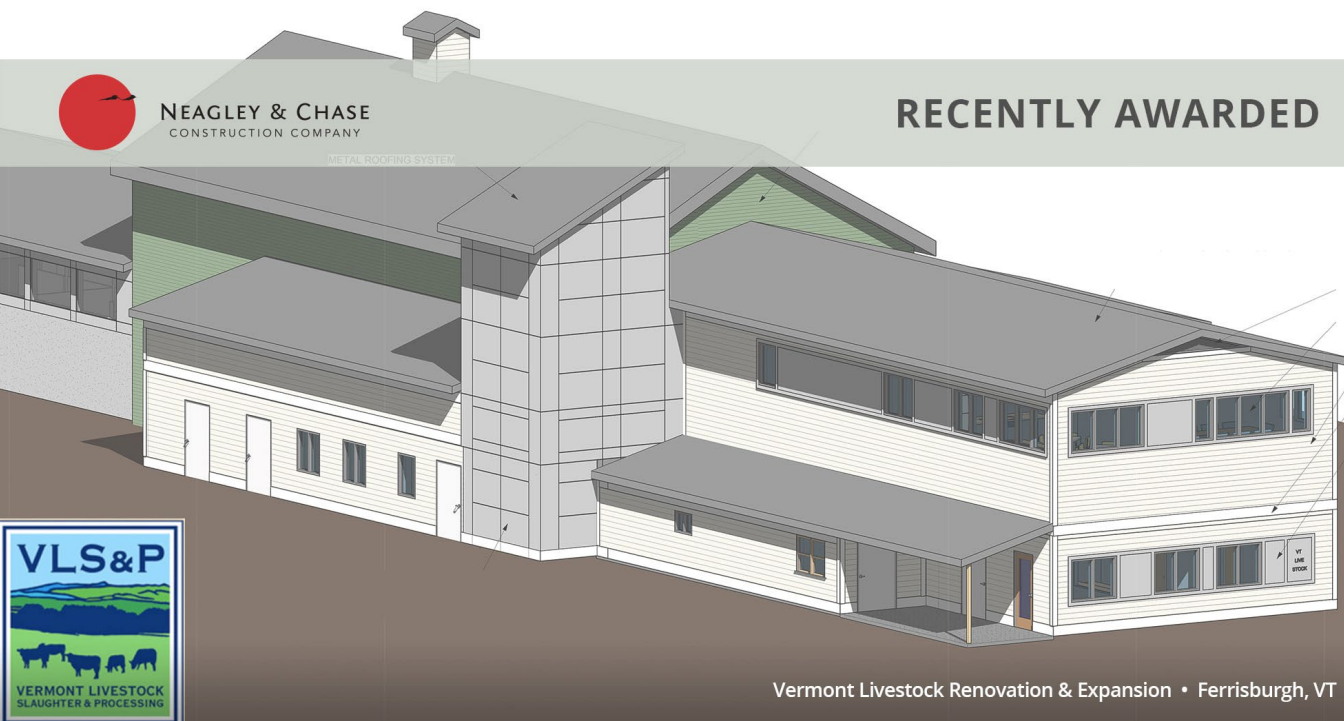
Bridgewater Community Center



Bethel Multi-Use Trails



Clemmons Family Farm, Charlotte



Vermont Livestock Slaughter & Processing, Ferrisburgh

“The support that REDI provided with our feasibility study was completely invaluable. We wouldn’t have been able to successfully apply to the USDA MPPEP grant without this key component and it was a really smooth process to get the help we needed.” ~ Sarah Wilson, Bio-Logical Capital

Photo credit: Neagley & Chase, VLSP



“In dairy, there’s never a budget for equipment improvements that are forward thinking vs putting out fires. We’ve never applied for a grant, and this would’ve been too daunting without a strong team to help us. This grant will get us to a stage in one year that would’ve taken 5+...the impact is hard to put into words.”

– Alex Englert, Maplebrook Farm

Maplebrook Mozzarella, North Bennington

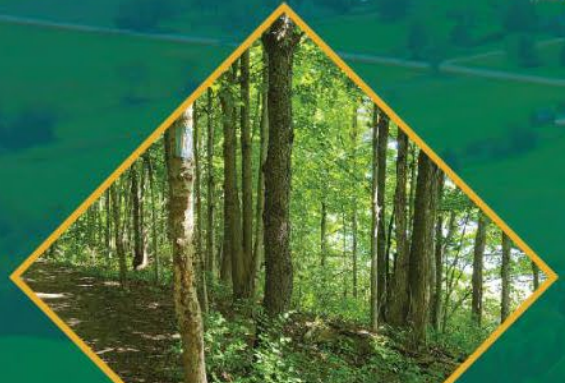
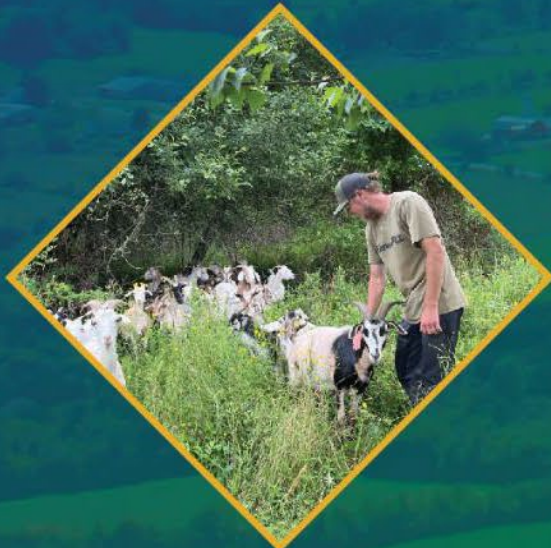
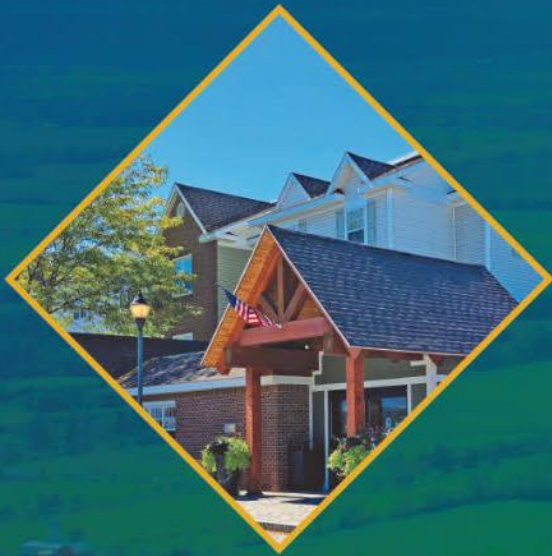
Thank you!

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