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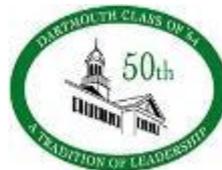
The Class of 1964 **Policy Research Shop**

Regional Food Supply Systems

**Presented to The Vermont House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry
Rep. Carolyn Partridge, Chair, and Rep. Rodney Graham, Vice Chair**

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This report was written by undergraduate students at Dartmouth College under the direction of professors in the Rockefeller Center. Policy Research Shop (PRS) students produce non-partisan policy analyses and present their findings in a non-advocacy manner. The PRS is fully endowed by the Dartmouth Class of 1964 through a class gift in celebration of its 50th Anniversary given to the Center. This endowment ensures that the Policy Research Shop will continue to produce high-quality, non-partisan policy research for policymakers in New Hampshire and Vermont.





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**What role could the State of Vermont have in supporting
the development of a regional food supply system?**



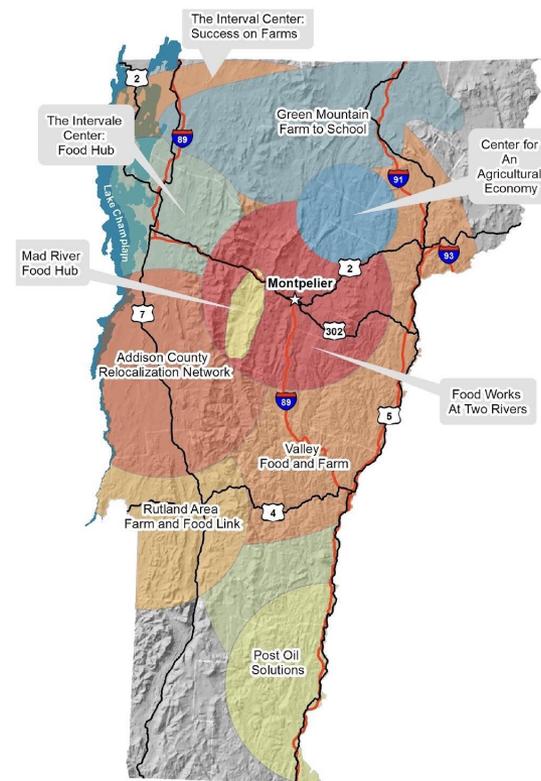
Methodologies

- Literature review
- Case study: Interviews with various stakeholders across the state
 - Growers
 - Food hubs
 - Retailers
 - Institutions
- Case study: Iowa State University Farm, Food and Enterprise Development (FFED) Extension



Literature Review

- Local and regional food supply systems in Vermont
- Types of local food markets
 - Direct-to-consumer
 - Direct-to-retail
- Regional food hubs
 - Economic and social benefits
 - Environmental benefits





The Role of Government in Regional Food Supply Systems

- Government involvement
 - Legislation
 - Vermont
 - New Jersey, Hawaii, California
 - Grant programs
- Non-governmental involvement
 - Most programs in Vermont
 - Many food hubs functions successfully as nonprofits or for-profit companies



Source: Vermont Everyone Eats
Formative Evaluation



Case Study

- Profile current status of Vermont's regional food systems
 - Growers
 - Food Hubs
 - Retailers
 - Institutions





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Growers and Farmers



Burnt Rock Farm
Huntington, VT



River Berry Farm
Fairfax, VT



Intervale Food Hub

- Burlington, VT
- >70 growers
- \$2.54 million in revenue in 2018
- Challenge: lack of institutional infrastructure
- Goal: build more cohesive network with farmers and retailers

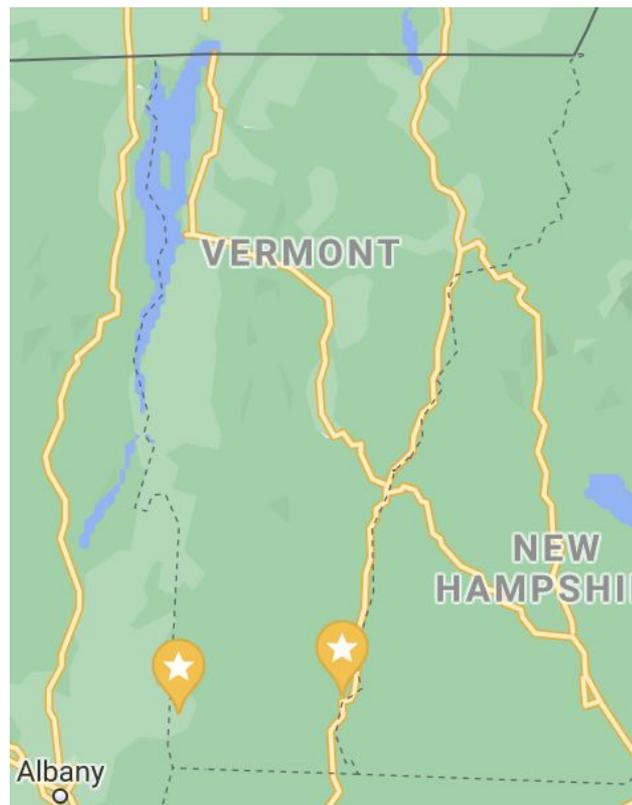


Source: Intervale Food Hub



Institutions: Farm to School Networks

- Bennington County Head Start
 - Challenges of scale
- Putney Central School
 - Lack of manpower

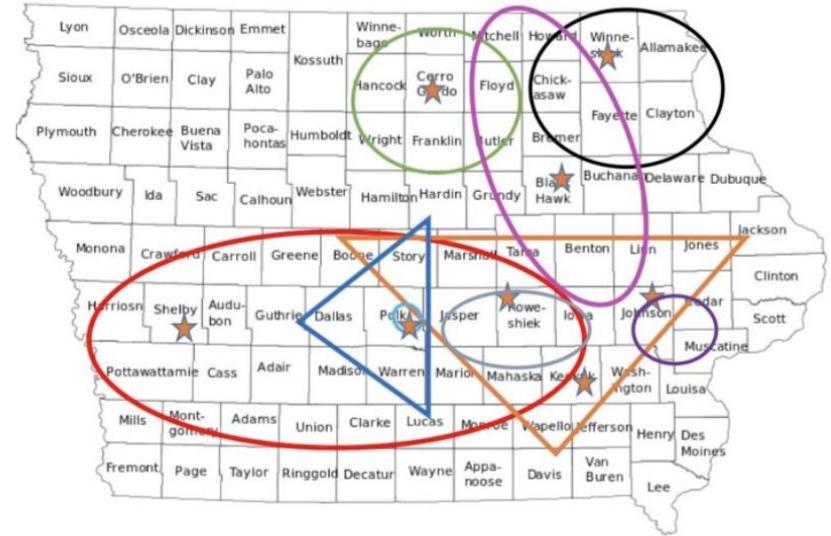


Source: Google Maps



Iowa State University: Farm, Food and Enterprise Development (FFED) Extension

- State profile
- Subject matter experts
 - Regional Food Systems
Working Group
 - Iowa Food Hub Managers
Working Group
- Food hub to school pilot program



Source: Iowa State FFED — Food Hub Directory



Recommendations

- Vermont Senate Bill 100
- Vermont House Bill 150
- Development of a Food Hub to School program
- Greater support through grant awards
- Support local processing facilities



Vermont Senate **Bill 100**

- “Farm Fresh School Meals for All”
- Universal Breakfast and Lunch
- New grant program - Agency of Education
 - Farm to School and Early Childhood Grant Program
- Concerns with reporting and grant requirements
- 5/4 — House Committee on Education



Vermont House Bill 150

- Support the language in section 3(4)
 - 1st grant = 15 cents/lunch regardless of current level of local food
 - Subsequent grant programs dependent on percentage of local foods
- 1/28 — House Committee on Education
 - Read 1st time



Development of a Food Hub to School Program

- Food aggregation
 - Reduction of organizational labor costs
- Greater purchasing power
- Challenges
 - Current scale constraints
 - Strength and diversity of networks

IOWA food hub LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM RESOURCE

Increasing the Capacity of a Local Food Hub to Service School District Nutrition Programs

Overview

By partnering with a food hub, a school district can significantly increase its local food purchases. Food hubs can partner with school district nutrition programs on identifying, procuring, and even processing local foods that meet schools' needs for a consistent supply throughout the school year.

Communities interested in strengthening their local food system will be able to use the information in this publication to support conversations around food hub development and local food procurement in schools.

School purchases of local foods are on the rise nationwide

According to results from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm to School Census released in 2015, schools across the country purchased \$789 million in local foods in school year 2013–14. That represents a 105 percent increase over the 2011–12 school year when the first census was conducted. This signifies the deepening commitment of schools nationwide to bring local food into their cafeterias and strengthen their local economies.

Schools report that farm to school programs can increase the number of students purchasing school breakfast and lunch, improve consumption of healthier foods at school, and reduce plate waste. The programs are often also heavily focused on nutrition education, helping teach children where their food comes from and exposing them to lessons about healthy eating. The census data show that school gardens, which can be both teaching tools and sources of fresh produce, have nearly tripled in number over the past two years.

The census also showed that 29 percent of Iowa's school districts surveyed said they participate in farm to school activities. That's 98 districts, incorporating 438 schools, serving 174,145 students. Seventy-five percent of Iowa's 449 districts completed the census. Iowa school districts reported spending \$3.8 million on local foods in school year 2013–14, an average of 2 percent of their budgets.

Districts reported spending local food dollars on fruits (72 percent), vegetables (75 percent), milk (16 percent), and meat or poultry (16 percent). Fifty-two percent of the districts responding to the survey say they plan to increase their purchases of local foods in the future.

See the [Iowa highlights](https://farmtoschoolcensus.usda.gov/find-your-school-district/iowa) at <https://farmtoschoolcensus.usda.gov/find-your-school-district/iowa>.



The food hub's cooler is full of product awaiting delivery to schools.

Partnering to grow farm to school in northeast Iowa

The Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative (FFI) has a long history of supporting rural school districts with its farm to school efforts. Research has identified challenges for growers selling local foods to school nutrition programs, including limited nutrition program budgets, reliability of supply, and lack of skills and/or equipment to process fresh produce in cafeterias.

A research project conducted in 2014–15 tested the benefits of a partnership between area school districts and the Initiative's Iowa Food Hub — a non-profit food



Greater Support Through Grant Awards

- Agency of Agriculture grants average \$10,000
- Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grants average \$28,000
 - \$10 million revenue increase
- Gap in support for food hubs and retailers



Source: Vermont Agency of Agriculture



Support Local Processing Facilities

- Reduction of labor costs
- Larger economies of scale
- Beneficial for both institutions and food hubs
- Vermont Farm to Plate Strategic Plan



Source: Fruit Growers News



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