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The Vermont Farm Fund Initiates Emergency Loans for Farms Affected by Hurricane Irene

Loans will help meet immediate needs in the aftermath of statewide flooding

Hardwick, VT, September 1, 2011— The Vermont Farm Fund (VFF), in response to the catastrophic flooding that has devastated farms throughout Vermont, has established an emergency loan program. This program will accept applications immediately for \$5,000 loans at zero interest to benefit Vermont farms that have been directly affected by the effects of Hurricane Irene.

"I just returned from a day of farm visits," says Vern Grubinger, one of the VFF's advisors and Vermont's vegetable and berry specialist for UVM Extension, "I saw several hundred thousand dollars of damage on half a dozen farms and I have received reports of well over \$1 million in losses just from vegetable farms alone. We need to raise as much money as we can to support our local food producers so they can get through this."

The VFF, a fund created by Pete's Greens in partnership with the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE), was inspired by the outpouring of support Pete's Greens received as a result of statewide community efforts and individual donations when word got out that the farm's barn, which housed its processing facility and storage crops, burned to the ground in January 2011.

"We know these loans are modest in light of the overwhelming need," said Pete Johnson, owner of Pete's Greens in Craftsbury, "but we want to help as many farms as we can by giving a quick, zero interest loan that can give some relief. Pete's Greens has paid forward \$40,000 of the donations we received into the VFF and we are hoping that donations and fundraisers will quickly grow the fund. We believe the Vermont Farm Fund can grow into a significant resource that can help Vermont farmers in times of need for years to come."

To make a tax deductible donation, please visit hardwickagriculture.org/donate.html or write a check to the Vermont Farm Fund and mail to the Center for an Agricultural Economy, PO Box 451, 41 S. Main St., Hardwick, VT 05843.

To apply for a loan from the VFF, please visit hardwickagriculture.org/programs.html to view and download the application or contact elena@hardwickagriculture.org.

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