IT IS TRULY REMARKABLE WHAT YOU CAN LEARN WHEN YOU TAKE THE TIME TO LISTEN.

Over the last three years CAE has forged deeper relationships within our community through listening and engagement. As pandemic relief programs fade, our team had deep conversations with 85 participants to learn what the end of these supports have meant for them. What we heard was widespread struggles with transportation, social isolation, the rising cost of food, fragile markets, changing climate patterns, systemic inequities, and affordable housing. We will use that feedback to innovate and evolve. This is why CAE is dedicated to making local food accessible in as many places as possible. We are rekindling the connectedness facilitated by community meals, increasing the use of local produce in schools, colleges, and hospitals, and moving more food from farms to people.

Another impactful project that CAE is coordinating with local partners, is the construction of a new food aggregation facility. CAE is an anchor tenant in the new facility at the Yellow Barn site and the new building will provide multiple community benefits. When we listen to farmers, we hear their need for more support with aggregation, storage, market access and getting their products off the farm. This includes trucks who are willing to drive down dirt roads to the farm to pick up dairy, delivery in Vermont’s unpredictable weather, and moving product to a facility where a larger distributor can haul it out of state. CAE’s footprint in the new facility will create space for our Farm Connex program to expand services to local farmers and food producers. Increasing local food security, markets for producers, and providing another shared use facility are only a few of the anticipated outcomes. This project is putting into action many of the local food systems goals outlined in the statewide Farm to Plate plan and by partners across Vermont.

By doing this challenging work, I hope more people are nourished by local food and our community. All the outcomes described in this report could not have happened without such incredible support from many people. Thank you to CAE’s dedicated staff, the partnership and trust of supporters, our partners, the land that sustains us and to all the farmers and food producers who give so much of themselves to provide the food we all benefit from.

Thank you,

Jon Ramsay
Executive Director

WHERE WE ARE.

We honor the people and stories of the land on which we live and work. We honor the land as our partner and teacher.

CAE exists on unceded land of the Abenaki People. Please consider learning the story of the land you are on, including indigenous stewardship, past and present.

Follow this link to an interactive map to learn more: native-land.ca

An entry from our Coloring Community contest. 60 people aged 1-75 shared their beautiful interpretation of a pastoral landscape, and celebrated being rooted in Vermont.
OUR TEAM

CAE is made up of an incredible team of knowledgeable, compassionate, and dedicated people. Their connection to local agriculture, and to each other, makes this work possible. We’d like to express deep appreciation for each staff member and their unwavering commitment to the work. We’d also like to thank our board for championing local agriculture, and supporting our staff. The board’s dedication, enthusiasm, and support helps drive our work.

CAE STAFF (as of 2023)

Reeve Basom, Place-Based Education Coordinator
Kristin Blodgett
Vermont Farm Fund Manager
Colleen Crist
Production Advisor
Silene DeCiucies
Farm Business Planner
Bob Duggan
Farm Connex Delivery Driver; Community Orchard Manager
Bethany Dunbar
Community Programs Manager
Frey Ellis
Farm Connex Delivery Driver
Corey Hennessy
Deputy Director
Meryl Friets
Farm Connex Logistics Manager
Theo Holmes
Farm Connex Business Manager
Zach Hoppe
Farm Connex Delivery Driver
Allyson Howell
Food Sovereignty Organizer
Kevin Hudnell
Financial Manager
Jess Huyghebaert
Administrative Operations Coordinator
Becca Jordan
Development & Communications Coordinator
Maureen Keefe
Just Cut Production
Daniel Keeney
Farm and Food Business Specialist
Don Maynard
Farm Connex Operations Manager
Brandon Millett
Warehouse Coordinator
Kate O’Neill
Human Advocacy Director
Josh Peets
Just Cut Team Leader & Grow Your Own
Jon Ramsay
Executive Director
Linda Ramsdell
Bookkeeper
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski
Communications Manager
Neal Renaud
Farm Connex Lead Driver
Lotty Roozekrans
Just Cut Program Manager
Stuart Soboleski
Farm Connex Delivery Driver
Neil Urie
Farm Connex Lead Driver
Katrina Vahedi
Development Manager
Fawn Wells-Maxfield
Just Cut Production Manager
Malaya White
Just Cut Production
Hayley Williams
Hardwick Farmers Market Manager

CAE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (as of 2023)

Helen Beattie, Co-chair
Meredith Davis
Emily Maclure
Blair Marvin
Peter Merrill
Andrew Meyer, Treasurer
Libby Mullin
Ben Nottermann, Secretary

Margie Prevot, Co-chair
Pan Watkinson
JUST CUT IS AN ESSENTIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN FOOD GROWERS, BUYERS, AND EATERS.

Our team purchases, inspects, washes, prepares and delivers Vermont-grown produce to institutional kitchens both large and small. By partnering with local farmers, food buyers across New England, and a regional delivery network, we help ensure the viability of Vermont's working landscapes and provide greater accessibility of high-quality produce to all markets. We make it easy for buyers to support local farmers while offering peak taste, freshness, and nutrition in prepared meals. When you choose Just Cut, you are investing in the health and well-being of the people who grow your food and the people who eat your food.

NEW PRODUCT: FROZEN BLUEBERRIES!

This year we worked on research and development for a new product: frozen blueberries. We were able to contract with 2 different farms, and processed 800 pounds of blueberries, packaged into retail sizes to go to the general public and bulk sizes for hospitals. The product was a success, and we will continue to process blueberries in future years.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Now in its 8th year of operation, Just Cut purchases from 19 regional farms, using “good faith agreements” to make sure that farmers have a guaranteed sale at a known price and volume, and we can use that information to plan accordingly. In 2021, Just Cut processed 175,000 pounds of produce, so the goal in 2022 was to process 200,000 lbs. Due to environmental realities, drought, Covid, and supply chain challenges, the actual amount processed was 153,847 lbs. of produce. Though that number was less than anticipated, the program still had a huge impact in 2022. Just Cut sold to 20 institutions, distributed in Vermont and New Hampshire, and kept distance the produce travels (aka. “Food miles”) low. Just Cut also made fresh produce accessible to eaters across Vermont by donating (or connecting) 181 pounds of produce to food shelves and community meals.

Farms have to be at a certain size and scale to be a good fit for Just Cut. The continuation of our farm relationships from year to year along with adding a couple more partners is a true testament that our farmers value Just Cut as a reliable sales outlet for their farm produce. These long standing relationships allow farmers to plan crops with a guaranteed market established, invest in new equipment and improve growing methods from year to year. Bob and Barb Chappelle of Chappelle’s Vermont Potatoes in Williamstown, VT have worked with Just Cut for 7 years. Some years have proven challenging to meet our good faith arrangement as a result of environmental factors. What’s been so valuable in this relationship, and all of our farm partnerships, is transparency about the farm challenges they are experiencing. The Chappelle’s constant willingness to educate us on potato growing, harvesting equipment, and storage helps us understand their realities and collaborate with them.
Being a local farmer, we really appreciate that Just Cut is committed to purchasing Vermont grown potatoes when possible. The Just Cut team is very pleasant to work with and understand the uncertainties farmers have to deal with. The good faith agreements guarantee fair pricing—one of the few guarantees we enjoy.

— BOB CHAPPELLE, Chappelle’s Vermont Potatoes
SINCE 2012, THE VERMONT FOOD VENTURE CENTER HAS BEEN A HUB OF FOOD PROCESSING AND INNOVATION.

Food businesses can rent commercial kitchens by the hour to test or scale up their business models before investing in costly equipment and a dedicated production space. We also offer wraparound services including business planning, technical assistance, and food safety training.

YEAR IN REVIEW

For all of its success stories and outsized reputation, Vermont’s craft food industry is a pretty small world. In that world the Vermont Food Venture Center (VFVC) plays a really significant role. Our business advisors have coached over 140 food entrepreneurs in the last 5 years alone in areas as diverse as food safety, supply chain development, production efficiency and marketing. Our business services team works hard to stay relevant and provide essential advice to move food businesses forward, from idea to reality, from start-up phase to consistent production, from breakeven to profitability.

From our viewpoint, a lot of people shifted their personal and career focus in recent years toward food production and processing. On this wild ride we’ve been on throughout the pandemic and including all of 2022, our business advisors have supported these folks and many innovative/nontraditional/out-of-the-box food business concepts. This work has been fulfilling and feels incredibly important during this great economic reorganization that is underway.

Recent years have caused us to carefully examine how to make the biggest positive impact on the production of local food and the economic development of northern Vermont. 2022 began a multi-year project to rethink the Vermont Food Venture Center and what it can mean to Vermont food producers. Since we began managing the VFVC in its Hardwick home in 2011, CAE has evolved and the network of businesses we work with has changed a lot as well. While in recent years our kitchens have been a critical production resource for a core group of food businesses, we are now widening our lens to consider the broader food system landscape. As we finished 2022, we began to ask, ‘what does the Vermont Food Venture Center look like in the next ten years?’

In 2023 we are working hard to start making this goal a reality. Our baseline services of providing critical and unvarnished feedback to new food businesses will remain. But we also plan to elevate the capacity of our kitchens with new equipment, we plan to provide more follow-up advising to production clients and host cohort-based learning opportunities that have been paused since the pandemic. And most importantly we plan to listen and respond to the needs of the Vermont craft food sector, and preserve our vital role as a welcoming home for entrepreneurs, and as a testing ground for innovation and collaboration.
20 KITCHEN CLIENTS
28 STORAGE CLIENTS
2,100 HOURS RENTED

PRODUCTS:
Elderberry Syrup  Processed Vegetables
Sprouting Seeds  Hot Sauce
Switchel  Nut Butter
Jam  Maple Sugar
Oxymel (a vinegar & honey elixir)  Granola
Macaroni & Cheese

Vermont hot peppers in a steam kettle, just before being turned into hot sauce. Photo: CAE staff

Barred Woods turning their maple syrup into maple sugar. Photo: CAE staff

The piston filler, used to bottle everything from hot sauce to elderberry syrup. Photo: CAE staff
FARM CONNEX PROVIDES SMALL FARMS AND FOOD BUSINESSES WITH RELIABLE FREIGHT SERVICE, AND CONNECTS OUR COMMUNITIES WITH LOCAL FOOD.

Offering more than just delivery, our team is a partner to farms, helping them scale and grow, aggregating and cross-docking products, and expanding their reach across the state and beyond. We deliver the first and last mile of Vermont, saving producers time, energy, and money while doing so.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Farm Connex finished 2022 moving $12.3 million in local products for producers. That’s an impressive number, and even more staggering when paired with the reality that we are a small, nimble team working out of a small space with 5 trucks and one loading dock. It’s work that is challenging, but we do it because we see the critical need for the service, and to support our farmers and food businesses.

This year we’ve seen the continued impact of Covid-19 and market shifts, as some of our largest volume value-added dairy farmers are struggling with high input costs and a lack of labor. Farm Connex has also struggled to cover the rising costs of operations, staffing changes, and navigating a particularly gnarly winter. We also continued to deepen our partnerships across the state. We worked with Deep Root Organic Co-op, to move 39,980 pounds of vegetables from farms to our warehouse, where other companies picked them up to go to large accounts across the state. This practice, known as ‘cross docking,’ allows us, farms, and other partners to share our infrastructure - making the most of our existing space & routes which saves miles, fuel and other resources. We work with other Food Hubs in the state as well, picking up from them on behalf of other distributors, filling a crucial step in the system.

As we look to next year, we see a big shift for Farm Connex, as we move into a new facility that will have multiple loading docks and the space we need to be even more efficient and effective. That expanded space will also support our staff in day to day operations. More storage, more loading docks and dedicated office space will provide better working conditions and a better foundation for services.

WE GO WHERE YOU GROW!

CRANBERRY BOB

Bob "Cranberry Bob" Lesnikoski of Vermont Cranberry Company was so excited to partner with Farm Connex that he crunched the numbers on how helpful the service is to his business. By his own calculations, using Farm Connex during his 2022 season saved him: nearly $2,000 in fuel, an equivalent to almost a week’s worth of labor, and 1,600 miles of wear and tear on his vehicle(s), not to mention the hours he would have spent navigating warehouses rather than producing cranberries had he been doing distribution.
Each year Farm Connex works with over **80 PRODUCERS** and multiple Food Hub partners.

It delivers over **$12 MILLION WORTH OF LOCAL FOOD**, runs an average of 250+ stops per week, and runs 20+ routes per week.

Farm Connex works **20 HOURS A DAY, 6 DAYS A WEEK** to get local food off of Vermont farms and into Vermont bellies.
VERMONT FARM FUND

THE VERMONT FARM FUND IS A NONPROFIT REVOLVING LOAN FUND FOR LOCAL FARMERS AND FOOD PRODUCERS.

The Vermont Farm Fund (VFF) was established in 2011 through a collaboration with Pete's Greens. Since that time the Fund has grown to a value of over $1 million. In its lifetime, the Fund has made 158 loans totaling $2,720,057. A true revolving loan fund, as the community recipients pay back their loans, funds are replenished for the next cycle of borrowers.

YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2021 VFF launched a new loan program for new/beginning farmers and food businesses. The New Producer Loan was developed in response to increasing demand from farmers who were starting new enterprises and needed capital for equipment investments or infrastructure improvements. Eight businesses have received New Producer Loans including a flower farm, pig farm, wood-fired bakery, two goat farms, a goat creamery, and two diversified vegetable farms.

2022 saw record demand for Farm Fund loans. Previously 2019 was the busiest year, with 21 loans made in a twelve month period. The Fund hit that benchmark in just the first 5 months of 2022. 31 loans were made in 2022 totaling $549,600. Clearly farmers and food businesses need access to flexible capital in order to start and grow their agricultural dreams. To really understand how the Fund can best support farmers, Vermont Farm Fund staff started a listening campaign to learn more about what is working well for borrowers, and what kind of ongoing support is preferred. In 2023 staff will take that input and use it to examine how the Fund can continue to support farmers and food businesses most effectively.
We are incredibly grateful for ALL the helpful people at the Center for an Agricultural Economy and the Vermont Farm Fund for our New Producer Loan! We have so many plans and dreams for our future, and this feels like a significant first step in that direction.

– ELLA AND KRIS PRICE, Burdock Acres
FOOD DRIVES OUR WORK AND CREATES CHANGE

OUR REACH IN 2022
Our impact extends outward from our home in Hardwick, across the state of Vermont and beyond. We emphasize the strengths of our local community as we make connections and fill the gaps for many others across the region. We’re a busy hive of connections and services and support, which take shape in the programs and activities shown on the map below.

OUR HOME IN HARDWICK
We are deeply rooted in Hardwick, which is home to our main offices, facilities, and community green spaces.

Farm Connex delivers across Vermont and into neighboring towns in New Hampshire.
OUR POINTS OF IMPACT IN 2022

- **139 FARMS**
- **197 RESTAURANTS & MARKETS**
- **69 PRODUCERS**
- **38 SCHOOLS & INSTITUTIONS**
- **35 INDUSTRY BUSINESSES & NONPROFITS**

**JUST CUT** works with farmers who grow vegetables and institutions that buy, cook, and serve those vegetables.

**FARM CONNEX** works with farmers and producers who make and sell local food. Farm Connex also works with institutions, stores, markets, and partners who distribute, sell, and use those products.

**PLACE BASED EDUCATION** works with all schools in our local Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union.

**VERMONT FARM FUND** works with borrowers of our no-hassle, friendly-term loan program.

**VT FOOD VENTURE CENTER** works with clients to produce their value-added food product.

**FOOD JUSTICE** works with farmers, producers, and restaurants involved with the Greater Hardwick Everyone Eats Hub and farmers who work with Produce to Pantries.

**BUSINESS ADVISING** works with farmers and food producers to support their business planning and goals.

**MULTIPLE PROGRAMS** indicates when a client works with more than one CAE program to meet their business needs.

**FARM CONNEX DELIVERY ROUTES**
TARGETED SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES AT EVERY STAGE.

CAE's business advising team supports farmers and food businesses by providing the technical assistance needed to support their businesses. Farmers and food business operators manage complicated systems. CAE's advisors help them plan and manage these systems by bringing the insight of an outside perspective to the table.

YEAR IN REVIEW

This year marks the most Farm Viability clients the team has had, speaking to the continued need for technical assistance and support. Thinking about the future, the advising program is evaluating its capacity and ways to deepen the support to farms and food businesses. This includes finding multi-year funding for projects, growing our network of consultants, and providing more cohort learning opportunities including workshops and classes.

In 2022 the CAE business advisors supported 19 projects through the Farm & Forest Viability Program, funded by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. The farms ranged from organic and conventional dairies and creameries to poultry, beef, and pork livestock farms, as well as maple sugarmakers and vegetable farms. That diversity reflects the many types of farms in Vermont and their divergent needs. Typical support includes business planning and advising, and digging into a farm's finances, and accessing what they need help with. We work with the farmer to determine knowledge gaps, and we pursue specialized technical assistance to fill those gaps: marketing, bookkeeping, grant applications, and farm transfer planning.

Over the course of the past year we worked to secure capital through various sources for over a dozen different farms. Among the sources are Farm Viability Implementation Grants, the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, and the Vermont Agricultural Best Management Practices Program.

DAIRY UPDATE

We are working with more dairy farms than ever. Small dairies have an especially important role to play on the Vermont landscape long-term, but are pinched by unaccommodating commodity markets and rising costs of production. This work feels vital to the support of our local working landscape! Our team has continued the dairy cost of production study from 2021, gathering data to see if there has been any substantial change in the cost of milk production for small conventional farms. After crunching the numbers for 2021, our work showed that cost of production increased to $25.38 per hundred weight (100 pounds) of milk produced for the cohort of farms we engaged with for this project. Although pay price increased as well, the majority of farms are still producing milk at a cost higher than the pay price and so are in a very vulnerable financial situation. CAE deeply cares about keeping small dairy farms running and doing their important work of keeping our landscapes working and our local economy and communities thriving. We have been presenting these data to stakeholders to talk about the real issues of pay price and scale in dairy in Vermont. We were invited to share the findings of the 2021 studies at the Vermont Farm to Plate Conference, for the Ag. Development Committee and Ag. Committee at the Statehouse, and at the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership meeting. We will continue to present this work and bring up the difficult conversations necessary to implement meaningful change in the industry.
Business services client, Karen Broderick, of Whitefield Hop Yard in East Hardwick. Photo: Elizabeth Rossano

CAE is a proud member of the Northeast Grainshed Alliance, championing local grain in the region. NGA members at the Radically Rural conference in Keene. Photo: CAE staff

Cows at Sunday Bell Farm were happy to greet our business services team. Photo: Daniel Keene
COMMUNITY
PROGRAMS

COLLABORATION, LISTENING, CREATIVITY, LEARNING, SOLIDARITY & LOVE.

Our community programs are designed and led together with our partners and neighbors, and feature the ingredients we know are key to nourishing regenerative community vitality: collaboration, listening, creativity, learning, solidarity and love! Our work uses community organizing methods and falls into the three focus areas below, with many overlaps among each.

PLACE-BASED EDUCATION

CAE’s place-based education programs are grounded in partnerships with our local schools, community partners, youth, land, and food. We focus on cultivating school-community connectivity and on supporting collaborative, youth-centered programming that nurtures curiosity, connection, and a love of place in the young people of the Hardwick area. From gardening with elementary school students to community meals hosted by teens to supporting the development of a community school model, the Place-Based Education program works toward a vision of rural education with schools at the center of community wellbeing, and young people at the center of schools.

NOURISHING FOOD JUSTICE

How will we emerge from a years-long global Pandemic stronger than ever? By organizing, sharing our stories and listening to the voices of each other and those impacted by injustice in order to move toward greater food sovereignty in the Northeast Kingdom. CAE’s Food Justice programming is rooted in solidarity and relationships with each other and the NEK, from neighbors feeding neighbors to organizing with Northeast Kingdom Organizing.

ATKINS FIELD

CAE stewards a 15-acre field and forest property with wide open gathering spaces and vibrant community resources. Atkins Field is home to the Hardwick Community Gardens and orchard, the Hardwick Farmers Market, covered pavilion, beehives, historic markers of the granite industry, and trails. We partner with the Town of Hardwick, Kiwanis Club, Hardwick Farmers Market, Hardwick Area Food Pantry, Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union, the Vermont All-Terrain Sportsman’s Association, and dozens of other groups and individuals to create and implement plans, programming, events, and infrastructure.
Every month, Hazen Union students collaborate with CAE and the United Church of Hardwick to prepare and host a community meal for 100+ people. Photo: CAE staff.

Orchard Manager Bob Duggan compares apples to apples during a cider pressing event at Atkins Field. Photo: Elizabeth Antonio.

Paul Rute of Cabot and his team offered horse-drawn wagon rides at the Community Farm and Food Celebration in August at Atkins Field. Photo: Kent Shaw.
Recipe for Human Connection Class and the Hardwick Community Meal

Once a month on the third Thursday at noon, students from Hazen’s ‘Recipe for Human Connection’ class host the community meal at the United Church of Hardwick. The students plan the menu, cook and serve the food, and enjoy eating lunch with the community.

These youth have helped bring the community meal back to life after it closed during the pandemic and are now regularly serving 100 folks or more at each meal.

‘Recipe for Human Connection’ is co-facilitated by Reeve Basom, CAE’s Place-Based Education Coordinator, along with community partners from the Civic Standard. Students are design partners, too. In fact, it was student advocacy that led to including the community meal as a major component of the class in 2022. The monthly community meal is open to the public, with a particular invitation to folks who are doing work with local youth and want to connect for conversation about how to support the challenges and opportunities at play for youth right now.

Food Justice Organizing with Northeast Kingdom Organizing

At our core we believe that our community needs not only to deal with the emergencies of hunger in our region, but also bring people together by organizing to find root causes and the solutions to those root causes in a Just Transition framework. We aspire to move from extractive systems to regenerative ones. How? By organizing with other partner groups and individuals to listen to and build relationships with our neighbors, find trends, research topics that can generate issue campaigns, and act together in solidarity to create long-term change. As a founding member of Northeast Kingdom Organizing (NEKO) we have seen the power of organizing to build community, coach new leaders, and work together on issues. In 2022 CAE and NEKO worked on organizing projects in Barton and Glover focused on food sovereignty, and began exploring potential collaborations with the Vermont Foodbank. NEKO and CAE leaders were asked to teach hands-on workshops on community organizing methods and techniques at the NEK Together conference at Burke Mountain on November 11th, 2022.
Growing Collaboratively

At Atkins Field, the Hardwick Community Gardens offers 60 spaces for individual gardeners, schools, and other groups to grow their own food. And it’s a place where community grows, too! In 2022, a group of community gardeners initiated a collective, no-till, multi-variety potato patch. The harvest was bountiful enough to send potatoes over to the Hardwick Area Food Pantry after the gardeners each took their shares, and plans for more collective gardening are in the works. In another example of new things taking root in the community gardens, we were thrilled, over the course of the summer, to see a group of kids from the Atkins neighborhood transform from visitors who liked to hang out on the property to stewards and gardeners who worked with us to fix picnic tables and plant their own garden for the first time!

Seed to Loaf

In the spring of 2022, the Hardwick REACH! Afterschool Program, in partnership with the Northeast Grainshed Alliance and CAE, planted a 32 sq. ft bed of Spring Warthog wheat at the community gardens at Atkins Field. That plot of wheat, the “muffin garden” was enough grain to make a loaf of bread (16 sq. ft of grain per loaf!) and 4 muffins (4 sq. ft of grain for each muffin). After the wheat was harvested and dried, Suzanne Bader’s 4th grade class at Hardwick Elementary worked together to thresh, winnow, and grind the wheat by hand, and then baked beautiful loaves of bread with their flour. Experiencing the complete journey from seed to loaf (alas, maybe muffins next year) was an amazing learning experience for all involved, youth and adults alike.

Pies for People

Pies for People is a nearly 20-year partnership with the Hardwick Area Food Pantry. The project has evolved since the start of the pandemic in 2020. This year it was a great success as a hybrid project, with 30 pies made collaboratively at Sterling College, and 88 pies donated by community members directly to the pantry, for a total of 119 pies! (These supplement the efforts of another community group that baked 52 apple pies this year in a team effort.) The pies all went to community members, ensuring that many people had a pie to enjoy as part of their holiday celebration.
COMMUNITY STORIES CONTINUED

Vermont Everyone Eats

For the third year, we continued to be a hub for this critical pandemic era program. Everyone Eats’ mission is to bring community (eaters, farmers, and restaurants) together to address food needs, and support each other through the continued need exacerbated by the pandemic. We worked with area restaurants, food pantries, and churches to distribute meals in Albany, Craftsbury, Hardwick and Orleans communities. The power of Everyone eats is that it is rooted in solidarity and not charity.

- The Greater Hardwick Hub served 29,636 meals in 2022.
- At $10 per meal this generated roughly $296,360 for local restaurants.
- $80,432.98 was spent on local food that was turned into delicious prepared meals.
- We collaborated with 11 different local restaurants, cafes, stores and food businesses.
- Provided 1,351 free kids meals during February and April school vacations in Greensboro, Hardwick, Glover, Albany and Craftsbury.

Grow Your Own

The Grow Your Own project is a collaboration of the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and the Center for an Agricultural Economy. Our mission is to increase food independence, better health, and well-being through shared knowledge and experience. The program offers workshops taught by neighbors that focus on gardening, cooking, and food preservation. In its 9th year Grow Your Own offered workshops in fermenting, garden planning, pasta and ice cream making, and wild edibles. Workshops were held in Hardwick and in Craftsbury. This makes a total of 76 workshops since the program began. Grow Your Own has 210 members. Workshop topics are decided by member surveys and a steering committee of members that meets monthly to plan. Leaders include all ages from teenagers to octogenarians.

"Everyone Eats helped me to feed our family and 2 others over Covid lockdown and once our finances changed it allowed me to help bring food to some retired friends as well. So it gave me the opportunity to help my community in a way I might not have been able. It also meant that once a week, I interacted with several people in my community that I might not have run into in my daily life."

—EVERYONE EATS PARTICIPANT
Produce to Pantries

Produce to Pantries is a partnership between CAE and the Hardwick Area Food Pantry. CAE buys produce from local farms, which is then distributed to the community through three area pantry sites in Hardwick, Albany, and Craftsbury. Not only does this answer the demand for more quality, locally-grown produce in pantry shares, but it also intentionally seeks small-scale and emerging farm partners to build equity among small farmers in our area. It is truly an example of neighbors feeding neighbors, and communities looking out for one another. In 2022, 38,537 lbs of local raw produce has been delivered to the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and their satellite pantries in Craftsbury and Albany! Participating farms include: Morningstar Farm, Hall's Orchard, Heartwood Farm, Riverside Farm, Harvest Hill Farm, Rusty Bird Farm, Peck Good Farm, Swallow Hill Gardens, Fusda Farm, Wild Branch Valley Farm, Pete's Greens, Breadseed Farm, Slice of Earth Farm, and West Farm.

Partnership with the Craftsbury Wood Lot

Many partners, including CAE, have been collaborating with Craftsbury Schools to support learning opportunities at a special piece of land conserved for school use called the Craftsbury Academy Woodlot. Reeve and Orleans County Forester Jared Nunery work with the elementary school to lead Woodlot field trips throughout the year where students learn and share forest ecology knowledge, explore their relationship to the land, and build outdoor leadership skills. The collaborative support of school and community partners in planning, coordinating and leading this type of activity has greatly improved access to and impact of this outdoor classroom space. It is wonderful to see the strong, joyful connections students are making to this land and to each other as they explore it.

Revival at Atkins Field Post Pandemic

The year 2022 brought a new plastic cover for the community greenhouse. A revival of the Kiwanis and Town of Hardwick's annual Springfest celebration on Memorial Day weekend with a homemade midway created in a partnership with Modern Times Theater and Hazen Union students. Springfest had not been held through the pandemic.
2022 FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME BY DEPARTMENT

- Grants: $1,026,364 (34%)
- Contributions: $770,942 (26%)
- Farm Connex Delivery Fees: $729,358 (24%)
- VFF Loan Interest: $22,761 (1%)
- VFVC Kitchen, Storage, and Rental Fees: $219,774 (7%)
- Just Cut Produce Sales: $241,417 (8%)

Total Income: $3,012,528

EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT

- Farm Connex: $1,018,520 (35%)
- Community Programs: $585,759 (20%)
- Administration: $344,711 (12%)
- Just Cut: $374,096 (13%)
- Vermont Farm Fund: $34,911 (1%)
- Business Services: $153,125 (5%)
- Vermont Food Venture Center: $215,146 (7%)
- Development/Communications: $220,288 (7%)

Total Expenses: $2,946,554
THANK YOU

TO OUR FARM AND FOOD BUSINESS PARTNERS
Thank you for trusting us, and letting us be a part of your work. You have shared your dreams and hardships with our staff, and we are honored to be your companions in this work. Thank you for the endless time, effort, heart, tears, and joy you put into feeding our community, Vermont, and beyond. We know it isn’t easy work, and we are here to go through it with you, and support you along the way.

TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS
It’s only through partnership with other individuals and organizations who are doing this work that we can move the needle on working towards an inclusive and robust local food system. It takes all of us and continued communication, creativity, and trust to move conversations, projects, and dreams forward. Thank you to the co-creators and weavers of our shared future!

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS
Thank you to the diverse and passionate people who make up CAE's supporters. Your partnership and trust are the foundation of our success. The challenges of the past few years are surpassed only by the ways that our supporters have shown up for CAE, for farms, and for each other.

SUPPORT CAE

MAKE A DONATION ONLINE.
As a community-based nonprofit, we rely on both your voices and your donations to keep our programs running year after year.

To support CAE's work and connect with our team, visit hardwickagriculture.org/support

MAKE A LASTING LEGACY.
Long-term systems change means that by nature, we are planning and working for impacts that are generations in the making. By remembering CAE in your will or estate planning, your memory will keep working towards a vibrant and equitable food system, rooted in thriving rural communities. A clear, early directive helps your family understand your wishes, and thoughtful planning can prevent tax burdens for your loved ones. Let us know if you are planning to make an estate gift by reaching out to Katrina Vahedi, Katrina@hardwickagriculture.org.

Make a gift that's the right size for you. Many hands make light work of funding our programs!

Share your enthusiasm with a friend! You are the best qualified person to speak to why a vibrant, community-based food economy matters to you.

Consider a recurring gift. Monthly gifts of every size can have a great impact towards our mission.

Gifts of stock. Direct gifts of stock to CAE are sold on receipt and are put to use right away.

Support our partners. We cannot do what we do without an amazing network of community-based partners who also operate in the greater Hardwick region. Please consider supporting them directly: