



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund



*farm  
to plate*  
INITIATIVE



Dear Friend,

We want to let you know that the **Farm to Plate Initiative** has been launched to develop a 10-year strategic plan for Vermont's food and farm sector. The plan will be regularly revisited and updated to respond to changing conditions. We are beginning to conduct our formal stakeholder engagement process and we want to tell you about the Initiative's purpose, process, timeline, and outcomes, and invite you to get involved.

### Origins of Farm to Plate

During the 2009 Legislative session, Representatives Chris Bray and Jason Lorber, [Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility](#) (VBSR) and [Rural Vermont](#) collaborated to secure passage of legislation ([Act 54](#)) which called for the creation of a Farm to Plate Investment Program.

The ultimate purpose of the program is to foster economic development and job growth in the farm and food sector. The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund was tasked with creating the strategic plan, in consultation with the [Sustainable Agriculture Council](#) and other stakeholders by June 30, 2010.

### Purpose of the Strategic Plan for Vermont's Food and Farm Sector

The primary purpose of the plan is to set goals and strategies to strengthen Vermont's food and farm sector, thereby increasing access to healthy, affordable food for all Vermonters, supporting existing and new agricultural enterprises, and creating jobs.

The Farm to Plate Initiative aims to bolster Vermont's food system by quantifying market potential and pin-pointing critical bottlenecks, especially in processing and storage infrastructure and distribution systems so that more of Vermont's agricultural products can be enjoyed by Vermonters and throughout the Northeast.

The plan will be a blueprint to achieve a diversified and appropriately-scaled agriculture sector which serves both in-state and regional consumer markets. The plan will contain goals such as:



- ▶ Increase consumer awareness about Vermont's food system
- ▶ Help stabilize and enhance farm operations
- ▶ Create an environment that encourages new farm and food startups
- ▶ Support a profitable dairy and diversified agriculture industry
- ▶ Increase access to local foods for all Vermonters
- ▶ Facilitate a robust agricultural infrastructure with responsive local and regional markets
- ▶ Develop on-farm energy and feed import substitution opportunities
- ▶ Encourage farmland transition to a new generation of farmers

## Timeline

The strategic plan is due to be complete by June 30, 2010 and will be delivered to the Governor and Vermont Legislature in January, 2011.

The process will begin with gathering baseline data about the food and farm sector, reviewing existing studies and reports, and mapping existing activities, technical assistance and education programs throughout the state. We will then conduct extensive outreach to people and organizations (i.e. stakeholders) to gather additional information about the agriculture industry and overall food and farm system in Vermont, and how it should grow into the future.

A strategic plan will then be drafted, using all this information, and will identify specific goals, objectives, strategies and priority investment areas that will help increase economic development activity in the food and farm sector. Once drafted, we will again seek input from the stakeholder community to ensure that the plan is as complete as possible.

## Strategic Plan Process Team

A 15 member Strategic Planning Process Team has also been named to assist VSJF Staff and Researchers over the coming year. They will serve as an advisory board of the Initiative, focusing on how best to engage the broader agricultural community to provide critical content to the ten year strategic plan.

Process Team members include: **Roger Allbee** (Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets); **Marie Audet** (Blue Spruce Farm); **Stacy Burnstein** (Castanea Foundation); **Megan Camp** (VT-FEED); **Guy Choiniere** (Choiniere Family Farm); **Eric Clifford** (Clifford Dairy Farm); **Paul Costello** (VT Council on Rural Development); **Brian Dunkiel** (Shems Dunkiel Kassel & Saunders); **Amanda Ellis-Thurber** (Lilac Ridge Farm); **Bill Schubart** (formerly of Resolution, Inc.); **Will Stevens** (Golden Russet Farm); **Ryan Torres** (VT Community Foundation); **Steve Voigt** (King Arthur Flour); **Tom Vogelmann** (UVM College of Agriculture & Life Sciences); **Enid Wonnacott** (NOFA-Vermont).

For more information, visit [www.vsjf.org](http://www.vsjf.org) or contact us at [farm2plate@vsjf.org](mailto:farm2plate@vsjf.org). We'd love to hear from you today! Thank you!

Kit Perkins  
Farm to Plate Project Manager

Ellen Kahler  
Executive Director, VSJF