



# RUTLAND AREA FARM & FOOD LINK

## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2009

SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMS, FRESH FOOD AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

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### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LONG TERM PROJECTS ON TAP FOR 2009

AN AMBITIOUS FUNDRAISING PUSH HAS SECURED FUNDING FOR RAFFL TO MOVE FORWARD MANY OF OUR LONG TERM PROJECTS THAT WILL DIRECTLY IMPACT THE REGION'S AGRICULTURAL FUTURE.

By March, RAFFL will have a new, full-time Executive Director on board. This hiring will represent the next step in RAFFL's evolution as a statewide leader in charting a sustainable course towards Vermont's agricultural future and aiding the region's farms in repositioning themselves for success in times of economic unrest and uncertainty.

RAFFL's projects focus on relinking our farms with local, statewide and northeastern markets seeking a diverse range of high quality, sustainably produced agricultural products and will be well served through additional staff attention and expertise.

A Job Description is available on our website: [www.rutlandfarmandfood.org](http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org)!

This position has been made possible through many supportive funding partners including the High Meadows Fund, Ben and Jerry's Foundation and the Vermont Community Fund.



# A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM FOR THE RUTLAND REGION

RAFFL'S VISION OF A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM IN RUTLAND COUNTY INTEGRATES FOOD PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, DISTRIBUTION, CONSUMPTION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HEALTH OF A PARTICULAR PLACE. WE SEEK TO STRENGTHEN VIBRANT, SELF-RELIANT COMMUNITIES BY CONNECTING FARMERS AND CONSUMERS TO PARTNER TOGETHER.

## **IN THE LONG-TERM RAFFL ENVISIONS A REGION WHERE:**

A diversity of **Farms** producing a variety of farm products at differing scales. Rutland region farms are economically viable and providing sustainable livelihoods for their owners.

A **Landscape** that supports a diversity of farming and supports healthy soils as well as good water and air quality; where good farmland is accessible to farmers and used to produce food and agricultural products for regional markets.

A **Workforce** that is healthy, respected, well-trained and fairly compensated.

**Markets** for local farm products are varied and range from on-farm sales to institutional buyers and wholesale distributors.

**Processing** and other food-related industries that support our farms, create year-round access to local food, and meet the value-added needs of varying markets.

**Storage** and **distribution** infrastructure that is readily available, efficient, economical and geographically accessible.

**Local Government** that strengthens the regional food system by using economic development tools and facilitates that expansion of local markets for local agricultural products.

**Education**, research assistance and services that serve established farmers and provide opportunities for new farm start-up and growth.

All people have **Access** to affordable local food that is fresh, healthy and nutritious.

Residents enjoy a **Quality of Life** defined by a rural lifestyle that is integrally connected to local agriculture.

THE NEW YEAR BRINGS SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM FOR THE RUTLAND REGION. THROUGHOUT 2008, RAFFL HAS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS FARMING OPERATIONS, INCREASED AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD AND FARM PRODUCTS AND A STRONG SUPPORT NETWORK FOR NEW AND ESTABLISHED FARMERS. PROJECTS FOR 2009 INCLUDE:

**AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

**Regional Agricultural Infrastructure Hub** (the "Food Hub"). See page 4 for details.

**Community Farm and Agricultural Resource Center** (aka Rutland's "Intervale"). This year will bring a renewed search to locate property on which to house the proposed incubator farm and community farm.

**Year-Round Farmers' Market.** RAFFL will continue to support this important community market place and social hub.

**VIBRANT FARMER NETWORK**

**Annual Farmers' Gathering.** Each winter our farmers' gatherings allow growers and producers to come together to learn and problem solve around an issue affecting the region. See page 4 for a recap from 2008's gathering.

**INFORMED COMMUNITY**

**Locally Grown Guide.** The 4th Annual Locally Grown Guide will be published this May. See page 5 for ways for you can support this important community resource.

**Farm Tours.** Look forward to visiting area farms each month this summer! A schedule will be posted on our website this spring!

**HEALTH AND FOOD ACCESS**

**Workplace CSA programs.** RAFFL is working with the area's large employers to establish onsite drop off locations where employees can regularly pick up shares of fresh produce.

**Gleaning projects.** RAFFL will continue to partner with the Vermont Food Bank's Salvation Farms gleaning program and local farms to provide fresh produce to local foodshelves.

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP US REACH OUR GOALS?**

**THERE ARE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN RAFFL!**

- VOLUNTEER! CURRENT VOLUNTEER NEEDS ARE DETAILED ON OUR WEBSITE - [www.rutlandfarmandfood.org](http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org).
- ATTEND A MEETING, LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROJECTS
- JOIN OUR BOARD! ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING IN MARCH - INTERESTED? CONTACT INDIA BURNETT FARMER AT [rutlandfarmandfood@gmail.com](mailto:rutlandfarmandfood@gmail.com) OR 802-287-9311

# EXPANDED AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNED

The Rutland Area Farm and Food Link's proposed Regional Food Hub will host processing and storage facilities that will initiate the expansion of current farming operations and provide a market for excess vegetable and fruit production.

## FOOD HUB PLANS

THE FOLLOWING  
COMPONENTS ARE BEING  
ASSESSED FOR THEIR  
FEASIBILITY AND ABILITY TO  
MEET FARMER AND COMMU-  
NITY NEEDS

**COMMERCIAL KITCHEN**

**FLASH FREEZING**

**DRY, COLD AND FREEZER  
STORAGE**

**YEAR-ROUND FARMERS'  
MARKET SPACE**

**MEAT PROCESSING**

**DISTRIBUTION HUB**

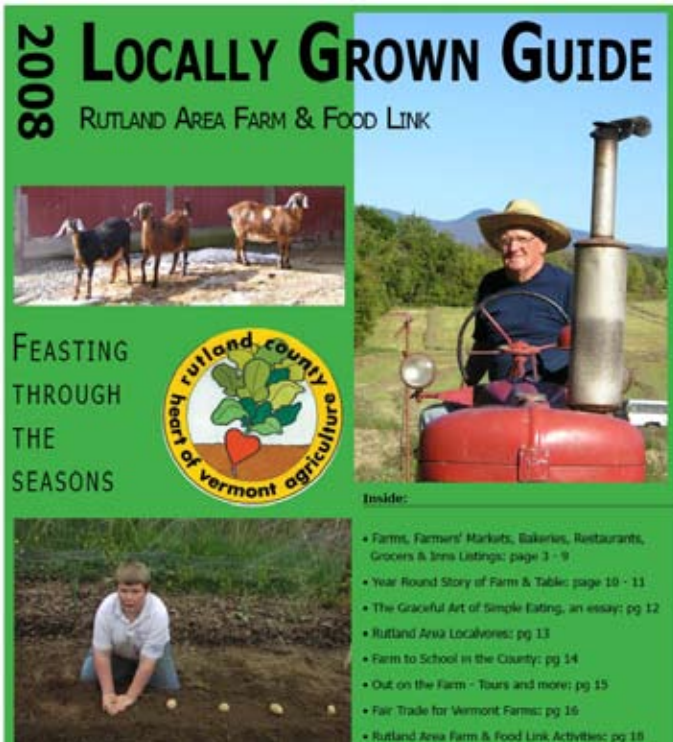
**VT FOODBANK  
CLEANING FACILITIES**

In addition, access to this type of facility will promote new farm businesses directed at mid-size production of specific crops in demand for processing. As well as serving the farming community, the Food Hub will create a mechanism for keeping and growing a larger percentage of food-related business within the Rutland region. The creation of this facility will enable existing specialty food producers to develop and produce their foods here rather than to go outside the region or even outside the state as they do now to receive the necessary services.

Over 50 farmers, food processors and community members attended the 4th Annual Farmers' Gathering, which took place at Green Mountain College on December 2nd. A panel of speakers - farmers and specialty food processors supportive of the Food Hub proposal discussed the impact such a facility would have on their family run businesses. The discussions initiated by the panelists aided in prioritizing components of the facility that will best serve the community.

This process has been supported through a Sustainable Communities Grant from the Vermont Community Fund and a recently awarded \$18,000 grant from the Vermont Community Development Program. This grant will support business planning activities for the Food Hub including market research, services and equipment offered, location, management structure and capitalization funding.

Stay involved, sign up for project updates by emailing  
[rutlandfarmandfood@gmail.com](mailto:rutlandfarmandfood@gmail.com)



# 2009 LOCALLY GROWN GUIDE PLANNING UNDERWAY!

THE GUIDE CELEBRATES AND RECOGNIZES OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITIES. SUPPORT THE 4TH ANNUAL LOCALLY GROWN GUIDE IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS!

## DONATE!

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT, DONATE ON OUR SECURE WEBSITE:  
[www.rutlandfarmandfood.org](http://www.rutlandfarmandfood.org).

The Guide is for the community and by the community! Contributions are essential in the production and publication of the Guide and will be recognized in the printed Guide.

## VOLUNTEER!

DO YOU HAVE WRITING, PHOTOGRAPHY OR GRAPHIC DESIGN SKILLS?

CALL 287-9311 TO HELP.

## ADVERTISING!

- **REASONABLE RATES**
- **COMMITTED LOCAL READERSHIP**
- **DIVERSE DISTRIBUTION** (retailers, newspapers, farmers' markets)
- **ANNUAL PUBLICATION USED YEAR-ROUND**
- **40,000 COPIES IN 2009**

RATE SHEET / ADDTL' INFO AT  
[WWW.RUTLANDFARMANDFOOD.ORG](http://WWW.RUTLANDFARMANDFOOD.ORG)

**CALL 287-9311 TO ADVERTISE**

## LISTINGS!

THE GUIDE LINKS CONSUMERS TO FARMS AND BUSINESSES SUPPORTING LOCAL FOOD IN THE RUTLAND REGION. LISTINGS INCLUDE:

- **FARMS**
- **FARMSTANDS**
- **MAPLE PRODUCERS**
- **SPECIALTY FOOD PRODUCERS USING LOCAL INGREDIENTS**
- **RESTAURANTS, BAKERIES & INNS SERVING LOCAL FOODS**
- **GROCCERS AND OTHER RETAILERS SELLING LOCAL FOODS**

MAKE SURE YOUR BUSINESS IS LISTED IN THE 2009 GUIDE.  
 LISTING FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT [WWW.RUTLANDFARMANDFOOD.ORG](http://WWW.RUTLANDFARMANDFOOD.ORG).

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greg Cox (president) WEST RUTLAND VT  
Philip Ackerman-Leist (vice-president) PAWLET VT  
David Horgan (Treasurer) RUTLAND VT  
Eleanor Tison (Secretary) POULTNEY VT  
Dennis Duhaime RUTLAND VT  
Ginger Nickerson SHOREHAM VT  
Julie Barber SHREWSBURY VT  
Lani Duke RUTLAND VT  
Marli Rupe POULTNEY VT  
Michael O'Brien WEST RUTLAND VT  
Mike Horner HUBBARDTON VT  
Tara Kelly MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS VT

## STAFF

India Burnett Farmer, Coordinator



RAFFL's Board of Directors meets at 5:30 pm on the 2nd Monday of every month.

The public is encouraged to attend.

FEBRUARY 9, 5:30—7:30 pm

MARCH 9, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

APRIL 13, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

All meetings are in the Castleton Community Center (1/8th of a mile east of Castleton Four Corners on Rte. 4A).

If you would like to receive RAFFL updates, meeting announcements and this newsletter, please email [rutlandfarmandfood@gmail.com](mailto:rutlandfarmandfood@gmail.com).



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