



Salvation Farms' 2023 Winter Solstice Newsletter

Looking forward... Looking back

As Salvation Farms looks upon the start of a new chapter, it is with gratitude for all who have made our work, our mission manifested, possible.

Since our humble start in 2004, we've had the honor of collaborating with and serving more than 100 Vermont farms. Salvation Farms has moved more than 4 million servings of locally-raised foods from farms to individuals who might not have had access to such nutritious, community-grown food without us. And, we've helped other organizations move millions of servings of would-be lost food to their neighbors through collaboration and providing technical assistance.

All of this work would not have been possible without the dozens of food programs and the peer organization we've partnered with over the years, or the hundreds of volunteers who have stepped up to lend a needed hand. We've been proud to work with individuals while they were incarcerated, as well as folks wanting a fresh start through our job-training program. We've developed paying markets for farmers and provided countless experiences that have given people the opportunity to learn more about local farms and local food.

All of Salvation Farms work leads to a more food secure future for us all, one where communities are increasingly fed by local farms.

Some of Salvation Farms' Milestones



Co-founders Theresa Snow & Jen O'Donnell establish Salvation Farms, a non-profit project under the fiscal umbrella of NOFA-VT, in 2005 after a pilot year at Pete's Greens farm in Craftsbury VT



Theresa, pictured gleaning at Harlow Farm in Westminster VT, joins the Vermont Foodbank (2008-2011) to integrate Salvation Farms program model into their operations and increase their capacity to handle fresh food



Salvation Farms federally incorporates and launches its Vermont Commodity Program in 2012, processing its first surplus produce at Green Mountain College with the Rutland Area Farm & Food Link

Salvation Farms' Friends ... Looking back...

My relationship with Salvation Farms, and my friendship with Theresa Snow, began in a correctional facility in Windsor, VT where I was employed as the Assistant Superintendent. From the first time I met Theresa, I was swept away by her vision and commitment to food sustainability in our beloved state of Vermont. She was brimming with innovative ideas about how a new project could make significant changes to our local food system, and the lives of the people incarcerated at our facility. Corrections is not the most welcoming environment for new and creative ideas, but Theresa was not deterred. In her quiet, respectful, knowledgeable way she persevered.

Theresa was able to get the equipment needed for the project and she then needed to train her crew. The project worked in the facility because Theresa was such a quick study of the important security practices she needed to maintain, but more importantly, was able to involve the men in a project that helped them give back to their communities. It's not hard to imagine how isolated and cut off from community incarcerated people can feel.

So many folks in our facilities have experienced food insecurity themselves and may have families that are food insecure while they are incarcerated. Learning about Salvation Farms and food loss, while also being able to work on a project that was putting food on the shelves in the communities they were from, meant so much and what they learned stayed with them long after the project ended."

*Kathy Astemborski, Director of Women's Services,
Vermont Department of Corrections*

My thoughts about my partnership with Salvation Farms. This is how I see it—Unbelievable commitment to our Woodbury/Calais food shelf—honestly, it's been amazing to have your support monthly for I can't even conjure up the number of years. The produce is delivered to us by the happiest volunteers and a cute dog—and now their growing family. What strikes me is how flawless this relationship has been, steered by the most dedicated director—yes, I'm talking about Theresa Snow—whose vision has led this organization on the right path for many years. I will truly miss her—her vision from the ground up will be a legacy and yeah, she has big mud boots to fill. Glad I'm still and will remain connected to Salvation Farms. You all rock!

*Carol Ray & Jan Brough
Directors, Woodbury/Calais
Food Shelf*



From 2012 until mid-2015, the Vermont Commodity Program cleans and packs large volumes of surplus crops with the help of incarcerated individuals moving more than 270,500 pounds of surplus to folks in need of nourishment



In 2012 Salvation Farms begins developing a web-based application to support gleaning in Vermont and launches the Vermont Gleaning Collective; three Collective member organizations are pictured together at an 11,000-pound carrot glean at Gildrien Farm in Leicester VT



Between 2016-2020 a facility is rented to further test the Vermont Commodity Program model of large-scale cleaning, processing, and packing of surplus produce coupled with job training

Our 2016 food loss on farms rese

Theresa's vision for what was possible fed Boston Area Gleaners formative years. She helped us grow up and pep talked me through some bumpy periods early on, and I hope we were able to do the same for her and Salvation Farms over the years. We are now a much larger organization, and I can safely say that millions of people in the regional foodshed have benefited because of what she knew was possible. A snowflake in Vermont reached the ocean. Thank you, Theresa.

*Laurie "Duck" Caldwell
Senior Advisor, Boston Area Gleaners*

I first learned of Salvation Farms from local news stories about volunteers gleaning food that would have otherwise gone uneaten, the first time I was aware of anyone organizing to do this in Vermont. I then met Theresa in 2014 (I think) at a display booth at a concert at Oxbow Park in Morrisville. Most people can understand why using surplus produce to feed people is a good thing. Through her vision and leadership, Theresa has inspired others to do the same beyond Salvation Farms' communities. And she has helped me and so many others understand the vital connections between the local agriculture economy, growers, processors, community organizations, and eaters. Thank you, Theresa, and keep up the good work!"

*Avram Patt, State Representative for the
Lamoille-Washington House District, Salvation Farms
Board member and President 2017-2021*

During the forming years of Salvation Farms, I volunteered alongside Theresa. There were many early mornings harvesting greens at Pete's in Craftsbury. I can still feel the morning dew and soil on my hands. I was enthralled with Theresa's vision and impressed with her perseverance to make Salvation Farms happen. Not only did she put her heart and soul into it's founding but every penny. One day after harvesting we looked for any stray quarters in the truck (her personal truck/Salvation Farms' only truck) so she could do laundry. It has been amazing to watch the organization grow and be recognized for the extremely important work it does.

Jennifer Payne, Salvation Farms' past volunteer

I have had the privilege of watching Theresa Snow grow Salvation Farms from its infancy to the amazing organization that it now is. Back in the early 2000's Theresa came to Enid (NOFA-VT's past Director) and me to ask if the NOFA Board would approve being the fiscal sponsor for Salvation Farms. Her enthusiasm was contagious! The idea of healthy food not being harvested or not sellable on a commercial level going to people in need made sense. It was another solution/link in the food chain. She worked hard and networked, attracted volunteers, and fundraised to see her dream come to fruition. Vermont is in a better place because of her efforts and tenacity.

Kirsten Bower, NOFA Vermont Finance Director, Retired



In 2017 Salvation Farms hosts Vermont's first farm surplus forum to discuss how using farm surplus could build a more reliable and resilient local food system



Salvation Farms regains ownership of its original Lamoille Valley based Gleaning Program in 2017 and expands its gleaning region in 2022 to also serve the Northeast Kingdom



Frozen food production continues in 2023 with an eye for developing paying markets for farm surplus and moving local food into Vermont's schools and prison as well as senior meal programs

Research uncovered an estimated 14.3 million pounds of edible crops remain on Vermont farms each year



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Support Salvation Farms
with a financial donation today! Ensure that we enter 2024 strong and can continue working toward a future where communities are increasingly fed by local farms.

Join us at a virtual gathering this winter — learn more and register here: www.salvationfarms.org

Salvation Farms couldn't be more excited!

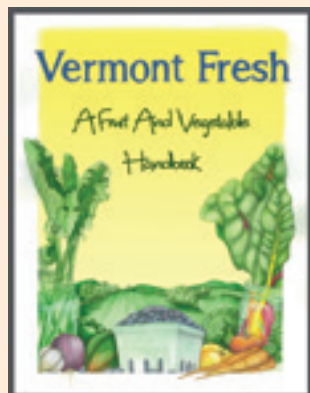
The Vermont legislature, in its 2023 session, decided to support Salvation Farms for the first time making a one-time, budget appropriation of \$500,000 to build our capacity to help Vermont eat more of the food its farms produce.

We have been working hard to find a space to fit-up to accommodate and grow our Vermont Commodity Program operations – the large-scale cleaning, processing, and packaging of surplus crops. These funds and this new facility will anchor Salvation Farms firmly in its home community in the Lamoille Valley, increase the amount of food it can move from local farms to charitable food sites and grow its purchase of surplus crops from farms for selling to Vermont institutions like schools, prisons, and hospitals.



Vermont Commodity Program trainees helped Salvation Farms clean and pack more than 497,000 pounds in our Winooski-based facility while gaining valuable job-skills for future employment.

As we look toward creating new milestones, we take a moment to remember and celebrate some additional moments from our past.



The Vermont Fresh Handbook — created by Salvation Farms, Sterling College, & the Vermont Foodbank — is released



Our long-time friends & supporters at Rock Art Brewery create a brew in our image, the Humble Harvester (2014–2016)



Salvation Farms organized several trainings for the Vermont Gleaning Collective — this one focused on safe food handling



We lead the first crew of incarcerated folks in Vermont to glean — hosted by the orchard at the Vermont Technical College

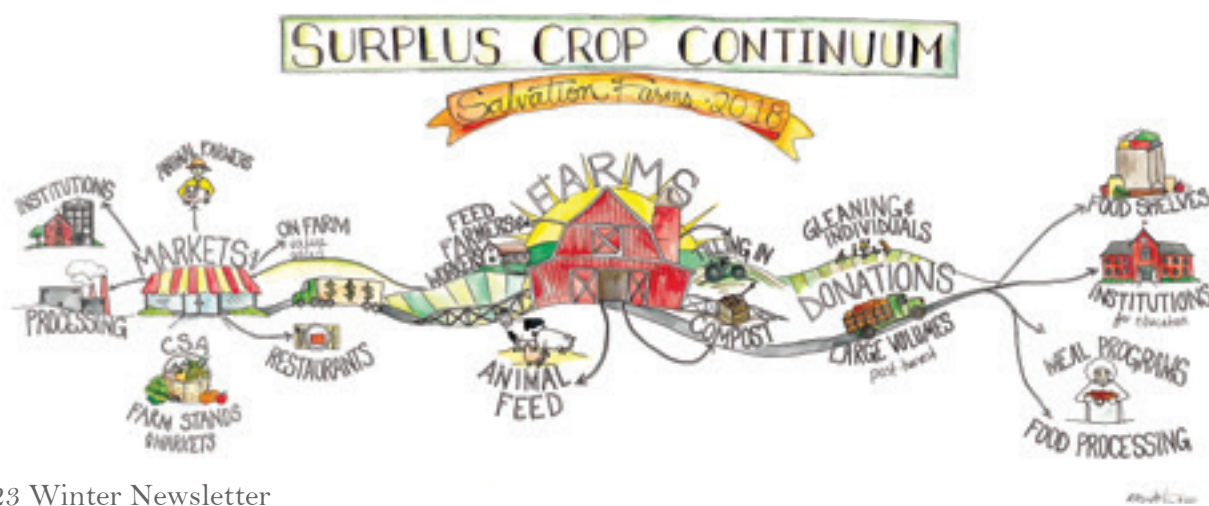


An essential purchase when we moved into our downtown Morrisville office . . . the table still serves as our main office meeting table



Marcella completes a major data organizing process to move all our donor records into a new system

Special thanks to our artists: Jay Merrill, Marcella Houghton, Morgan Wickstrom, & Abrah Griggs





We delivered a ton of surplus carrots & potatoes, plus 660 pounds of gleaned spinach to New York City for the Feeding The 5,000 event



In partnership with ReSource's LEAP program, we minimally processed and made frozen food with visually-impaired individuals



In 2017, with Meals on Wheels of Lamoille County we released a toolkit for prepared meal sites to minimally process surplus crops

Since 2012, ten AmeriCorps VISTA members have helped lay the foundation of our programs, research, and community building success! We thank them: Marcella, Laurel, Julia, Karissa, Jake, Natalie, Dani, Emma, Kacey & Jessa



Our amazing staff & volunteers persevered through COVID – in addition to our normal work, we moved more than 26,000 pounds of USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes & 1,415 gallons of surplus milk; and, we helped Black River Produce move more than \$100,000 worth of local meat, dairy products & produce in the weeks following the state shutdown

Salvation Farms 2024 Goals

Hire a new Executive Director



Advance the fit-up of a large facility within the Lamoille Valley to support our cleaning, processing, and packaging of purchased and donated surplus produce to expand market access for Vermont farmers and access to local food for eaters



Provide approximately 50 farms with services that move their quality, surplus food to an estimated 60 community-based food programs that feed youth, families, and seniors



Produce as much as 30,000 servings of frozen food made from surplus crops for distribution to schools, food shelves, and senior meal sites



Help Vermont's prisons source upwards of 15,000 servings of surplus produce



Glean more than 90,000 pounds of Vermont-grown surplus produce



Engage more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time