



**Vermont State  
University**

Center for Agriculture  
& Food Entrepreneurship

## **CAFE: Updates and Next Steps**

*January 8, 2024*

*Glenn Evans, Executive Director*

# ◀ Where we were

Challenges

**Enrollment and financial conditions**

Changes

**Ag degrees paused; dairy herd sold**

Secret Sauce

**Ag Advisory Committee**

A dedicated 40+ person committee formed to research & report  
3+ years of work-to-date

Issued a comprehensive report with recommendations

Create CAFE

Offer diversified Ag and Food Entrepreneurship degree pathways  
with robust internship requirements

Invest in focused selection of new on-campus enterprises

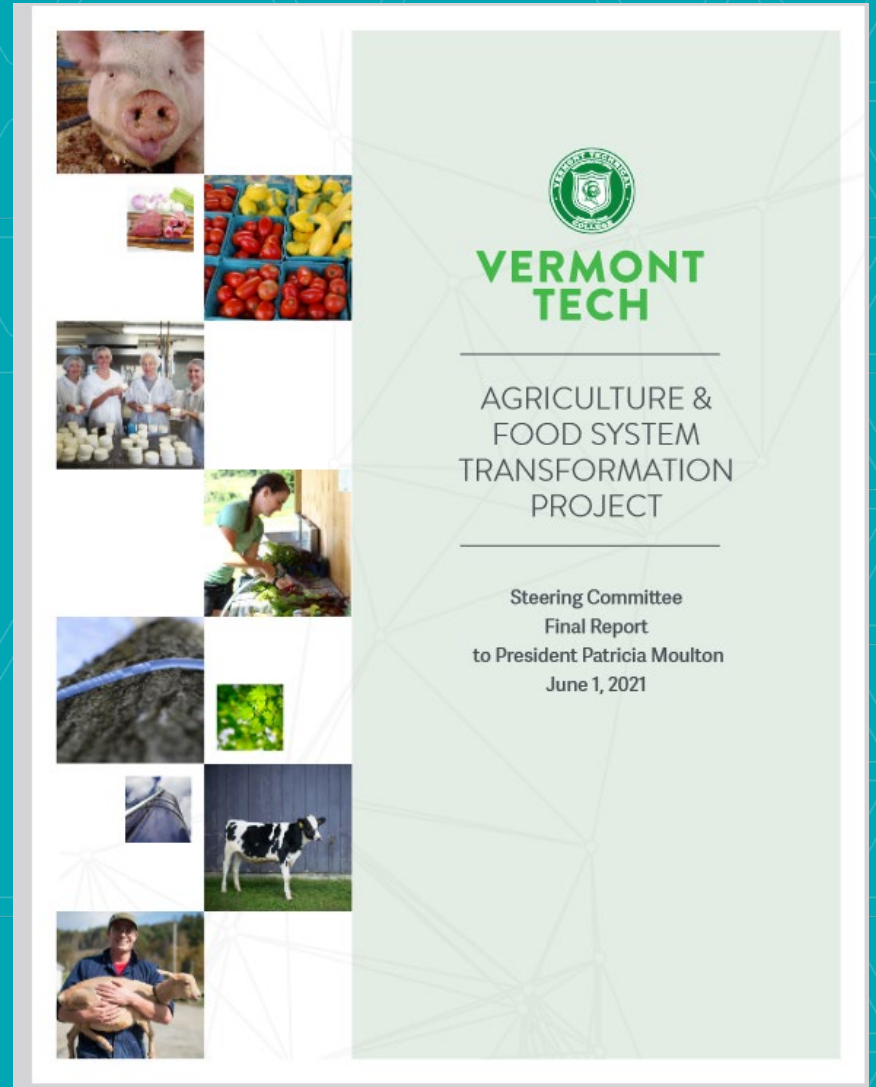
Major grant funding (\$3MM total) was secured:

EDA grant providing a 3-year runway to fund 3 Center staff

NIFA grant for farm classroom improvements, marketing trainings

NBRC grant for equipment and forestry

CRRP, Working Lands, and Leg. appropriation to fund a Meat Processing Facility



# ➔ *Where we are*

1 June 2023: CAFE officially formed with hiring of Executive Director

2 October 2023: Meat Processing Facility Director hired

3 Hiring in process for a Training and Internship Manager

4 Ag. Advisory Committee engaged to provide input in 6 focus areas

5 Meat Processing Facility a go

6 Farm equipment consolidation & prioritization, divestment & investment

7 For-credit programming paused for AY23-24

8 Foundation being laid for private partnerships across key educational areas

# The Center for Agriculture and Food Entrepreneurship (CAFE) is Vermont State University's gateway to applied skill-building within agriculture, food, and forest systems.

## Immersive workforce development opportunities:

Associates Degree (*pending*)  
Certificate-Trainings (*current*)

## Randolph-based land, facilities, equipment and instructors:

Hands-on skill building resources

## Private partnerships With businesses that are innovative and entrepreneurial:

Efficiently and effectively facilitate internships and on- and off-campus experiences



**Vermont State University** AGRICULTURAL MAP LEGEND

<p><b>= AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS</b>        • VTC Randolph agricultural use buildings</p>	<p><b>= SUGAR BUSH</b>        • Bird friendly recognition        • 1,500 taps on pipeline</p>
<p><b>= CAMPUS BUILDINGS</b>        • VTC Randolph central campus buildings</p>	<p><b>= FOREST LAND</b>        • Management Plan: wildlife, timber, recreation        • Student managed</p>
<p><b>= MEAT FACILITY</b>        • Processing facility        • Value added meat processing        • Remote classroom</p>	<p><b>= FARM FIELDS</b>        • Hay, grazing, corn        • NMP        • No till practices</p>
<p><b>= SUGAR HOUSE</b>        • Reverse osmosis        • Fuel powered arch        • Canning and processing        • Marketing and sales</p>	<p><b>= ORCHARD</b>        • Pick your own apples        • Tree pruning        • Markets and sales</p>
<p><b>= MILLING CENTER</b>        • Wood mizer sawmill        • Outdoor forestry training center</p>	<p><b>= FARM FACILITY</b>        • Rotational grazing        • Livestock        • Forage Storage</p>

VTSU CAF Update 01/03

# Degree Programming Then/Now: What's Different?

Past Enrollment Demographics

## PAST

Workforce-**focused**

**Narrow degree:**  
Pathways with limited  
workforce outcomes

**Fixed** programming  
spacing

Tailored to **Vermont**  
farm kids

## FUTURE

Workforce-**ready**

**Funnel approach:**  
Broad but focusable  
workforce outcomes

Programming that is  
**responsive to change**

Tailored to **regional**  
farm and food interests  
– farm and non-farm  
backgrounds

Future Growth Positioning

# Degree Programming

Create Sustainable Learning Options through partnerships

On-campus  
Partnerships

Cost-effective accessible experiences (*agronomy, dairy, beef, maple, food safety, value-added*)

**An  
immersive  
educational  
experience**

Off-campus  
Private  
Partnerships

In-house  
Enterprise  
Operations

Scaled for teaching first – with secondary cost offsets through sales (*orchard, forestry*)

Support for engaging labs, tours and internships at a scale that would not be sustainable on-campus

# Funnel Approach to single Ag., Food and Forests Degree



Broad Exposure to Ag., Food and Forest Curr.

Students define their core area of interest(s)

Focused for-credit Internship experience(s)

Workforce-ready graduates



# Marketability



## Differentiation

Peer institution analysis –  
28 institutions compared  
Closest comparables are  
SUNY and UNH

## Demand

Regional CTE Centers  
(600+ in Ag/Nat Res in  
VT alone) & high schools  
VT farm/food sector  
employs >64,000 and  
supports >11,500 farm  
and food enterprises

## Dynamic

Leverage unique VT farm,  
food industry and forestry  
connections.  
A work-learn model that  
prioritizes experiential  
learning on and off  
campus

# What's *next*

- Q1 2024: **Hire a Training and Internship Manager**
- Q3 2024: **Meat Processing Facility Opens**
  - Immediately supports in-demand training programs
  - Builds capacity for future degree coursework
- CY 2024: **Working Land Trainings**
  - Expand and promote wide range of trainings
- CY 2024: **Engaged Marketing & Outreach**
  - Build upon a legacy – establish a well-tuned marketing and outreach machine
  - Website, social media, alumni network, CTE centers & schools, FFA, conferences, AAFM, VT Farm to Plate and other industry partners...
- AY 2025: **Single AFF Associates Degree**
  - Pursue approval of a single Agriculture, Food and Forests Associates Degree
  - Leverage funnel-model and private partnerships