Governor’s Commission on the Future of Vermont Agriculture

AGENDA

- Summarize Commission’s work
- Review 2022 report
- Share successful investments
- Upcoming opportunities
- Next steps for the Commission

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Overview and History

- Commission established in Governor’s Executive Order No. 03-21
- Advise on short and long-term strategies and specific action plans, with measurable outcomes, to advance key economic, social, and environmental goals in the agriculture and food sectors
- Priorities built upon recommendations in Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan: 2021-2030
- Submit Action Plan priorities to Governor in 2021, 2022 & 2023
- Commissioners meet monthly and engage industry stakeholders

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Current FOA Commissioners

- Kate Finley Woodruff | UVM College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- David M. Roth | The Wakaya Group
- Harold Howrigan | Howrigan Family Farms
- Jed Davis | Cabot Creamery Cooperative
- Ellen Kahler | Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
- David Mance, Jr. | Mance Family Tree Farm
- Steven Schubart | Grass Cattle Company
- Mieko Ozeki | Vermont Farmers Market Association
- Josh Poulin | Poulin Grain Inc.
- Leslie McCrorey-Wells | Pizzeria Verita, Trattoria Delia, and Sotto Enoteca restaurants owner
- Richard Berkfield | Food Connects
- One vacant seat representing ‘land use’

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Reports and Process

**CY21 Commission Highlights**
- 15 total meetings
- New and young farmer panel
- Stakeholder listening session
- Consultations with experts on dairy, finance, and racial equity
- Consultations with the Vermont Climate Council’s Agriculture and Ecosystems Sub-Committee and the Payment for Ecosystems Services Working Group
- Submitted Action Plan to Governor with 18 2022 high-impact strategies, including 5 immediate action steps
- 13 of the strategies received some degree of funding, with potential to exceed $70M

**CY22 Commission Highlights**
- 12 total meetings
- Environmental advocacy organization panel
- Agriculture and food business assistance coaches panel
- Marketing, branding and agritourism experts panel
- Informal consultations with stakeholders and experts
- Submitted Action Plan to Governor with 14 2023 strategies
- 2 recommendations were included in Governor’s Proposed FY24 Budget, requesting $14M

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Focus of 2023 Recommendations

- Leverage economic development and local food funding opportunities for maximum impact
  - Unique opportunity to direct $ toward food systems
  - Ensuring funding accessibility and access
- Clarify and enhance the Vermont brand
  - Attract new entrepreneurs, travelers, and workers to VT
  - Tools to support businesses to reach new customers
  - Maintain Vermont’s market position
- Connect and build trust among agriculture and environmental stakeholders
  - Support communication and relationship-building for enhanced collaborations

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Infrastructure Investments

- Ongoing support for Working Lands Enterprise Initiative program
- Fund innovation and modernization for next generation dairy
- Support for dairy succession and transition
- Food producer and value-added processor grants
- Investments in distribution hubs
- Support CRRP awards to farms interested in Agritourism
- Climate-smart & payment for ecosystem services initiatives

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Business Assistance Support

- Navigation assistance around regulatory hurdles
- Enhanced communication and outreach about programs
- Dedicated outreach to BIPOC farmers and food entrepreneurs
- Accelerate Agencies work on racial equity efforts
- Benchmarking research on VT Brand
- Brand toolkit for small and medium sized businesses
- Experience Vermont/Made in Vermont marketing platform (longer term)
- Enhanced relationship development between agriculture and environmental organizations

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Current FOA Commission Efforts

- Support Governor’s FY24 Recommend
  - $3M one-time appropriation to Working Lands Enterprise Initiative
  - $10M one-time appropriation for Food Producer and Value-Added Processor grants (meat, maple, and produce)
- Building Coalition around priority recommendations
  - Invite groups to FOA
  - Continue panel discussions
- Present final plan by 11/15/23 to Governor
  - Share impacts of investments
  - Include asks of partners as well

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